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TEACHERS AND THEIR ROLE IN ENSURING QUALITY EDUCATION: AN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper addresses the gap between material and moral education by exploring the role of teachers in ensuring quality education from an Islamic philosophical perspective. The study investigates how Islamic principles of Towhid (oneness of God), Amanah (divine trust), and the integration of Naqli (revealed) and Aqli (rational) knowledge can guide teachers in nurturing intellectually, morally, and spiritually balanced individuals. It also puts specific focus on the concept of Hikmah (spiritual wisdom) as derived from internal Islamic sources. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research draws on Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and works of classical Islamic scholars like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi to conceptualize the teacher's multifaceted role. Finally, I argue that teachers are not merely transmitters of

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knowledge, but ethical guides, social reformers, and agents of Hikmah. Integrating these insights into contemporary education systems can enrich moral foundations and foster holistic human development.

Keywords: Islamic philosophy of education, Teacher's role, *Hikmah*, Quality education, Holistic education, Social responsibility, *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*.

1. Introduction

It is undoubtedly accepted by everyone that one of the essential bases of human flourishing and social development is education. In Islam, education is considered as one of the holy duties and responsibilities. It is a lifetime process and its aim is to foster and promote intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social development of human being. However, in contrast to this perspective, advanced and, to some extent, lavish technological development has made the Modern life extremely materialistic. To combat this man-made crisis and integrate material lofty desire with moral and divine progress, a balanced education system is a prime need. Based on the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, Islamic philosophy of education suggests a comprehensive outline of education which emphasizes both individual and social welfare. The Islamic philosophy of education refers to the branch of philosophy that discovers the purpose, principles, and methods of education grounded on the teachings of Islam. It purposes to develop individuals who are mystically, ethically, and intellectually balanced in accordance with the values of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. The decisive goal is the holistic development of the human being—body, mind, and soul—in pursuit of both worldly success and eternal salvation (Al-Attas, 1979, p. 1). In this context, teachers play fundamental role, as

they are entrusted not only with imparting beneficial knowledge for individual and societal advancement but also with nurturing a deep and meaningful relationship between the learner and Allah (SWT). In this philosophy, teacher's (mu'allim or ustādh) role is considered as sacred and transformative, exceeding the simple broadcast of knowledge to incorporate ethical, spiritual, and rational supervision. Again, the teachers are also projected as an agent of wisdom as well as an accelerator for inclusive human progress, as originated in the *Qur'anic* injunctions and the Prophetic tradition of seeking knowledge. This article reconnoiters multi-layered farm duties of teachers in ensuring quality education through an Islamic lens, emphasizing their enduring relevance in contemporary pedagogy.

1.1 Conceptual Framework, Methodology, and Rationale

To support the above-mentioned exploration, this paper accepts a qualitative method, using textual analysis of the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and classical Islamic scholarship to develop a normative and theoretical understanding of the teacher's role. Sources include chief religious' texts and secondary academic literature. The approach of the paper is analytical and explanatory, rooted in Islamic metaphysics and ethics. The theoretical outline is based on three pillars of Islamic educational philosophy: *Tawhid* (divine unity), *Amanah* (trust), and *Hikmah* (wisdom). These concepts are scrutinized in relation to the teacher's role as an ethical leader, academic guide, and societal reformer. The *Qur'an* normally acquaintances knowledge with *Hikmah*. Teachers are labelled as those who not only handover data but also foster the soul. This exalted view is further imitated in the contributions of classical and modern Islamic thinkers. Al-Ghazali's conception of the teacher as a decent agent, Ibn Khaldun's understandings into education and social solidity, Al-Farabi's stress

on righteous guidance, and Iqbal's call for rational autonomy form a complex vision of the ideal instructor. Teachers, in these views, nurture both rational investigation and divine consciousness. They counterpoise modernity's split knowledge systems by integrating morality into every discipline.

In contrast, present-day education systems, while often outshining in technological and scientific domains, commonly face the challenge of effectively nurturing the ethical and spiritual progress of students. This can lead to questions such as moral relativism, a shallow understanding of knowledge lacking deeper meaning, and social disintegration. The rationale for this paper stems from the need to discover substitute philosophical frameworks that can address these breaks and offer a more cohesive approach to education. Islamic philosophy, with its weight on the interrelation of knowledge, morality, and spirituality, offers a rich source of perceptions into the holistic development of individuals. Understanding the role of the teacher within this framework is critical for informing present-day pedagogical practices and nurturing a more balanced and meaningful educational experience.

1.2 Empirical Background and Unanswered Questions

Current literature on Islamic education has travelled its foundational principles, curriculum development, and historical evolution (Al-Attas, 1979; Halstead, 2004; Nasr, 1993; Rahman, 1982). Researchers have also scrutinized the contributions of eminent Islamic thinkers like Al-Ghazali (2000), Ibn Sina (1973), and Ibn Khaldun (2015) to educational theory. These works highlight the implication of knowledge (Ilm), the incorporation of revealed and rational sciences, and the importance of ethical and mystical

progress. Additionally, studies have touched upon the potentials of an effective teacher in Islamic tradition (Günther, 2006; Al-Zarnuji, 2007). Nevertheless, some queries, such as, how can teachers efficiently serve as spiritual guides in a modern context where worldly values often rule? In what ways can teachers subsidize to social modification and the progress of socially accountable citizens from an Islamic philosophical perspective? and so on, remain under explored in the prevailing literature. While the overall importance of teachers is acknowledged, a thorough investigation of their complex roles in *precisely ensuring quality education* that addresses the modern challenges of moral and spiritual discrepancy requires more investigation. This paper seeks to address these unanswered questions by providing an intensive analysis of the teacher's role in ensuring quality education through an Islamic philosophical lens.

2. The Concept of Education in Islam: An Internal Perspective

Education in Islam (Ta'lim), united with rational (Tafakkur), divine (Tazkiyah), and ethical (Akhlaq) development, objects to create individuals who accomplish their roles as servants ('Abd) and representative (Khalifah) of Allah on earth (*Qur'an*, 2:30). Knowledge (Ilm) is considered a spiritual gift, and the process of learning is an act of reverence when pursued with earnestness. Islamic concept of education, sketch mostly from its internal sources, is built upon several key principles. Allow me to explain these briefly one by one.

2.1 Tawhid (Oneness of God)

Central to Islamic education is the concept of Tawhid, which asserts the unity of God and the integration of all knowledge as a reflection of divine wisdom. Education is not merely a secular pursuit but a

means to recognize Allah's sovereignty. The *Qur'an* emphasizes, "Read in the name of your Lord who created" (*Qur'an* 96:1), framing learning as an act of worship. This principle dismantles the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge, advocating for a unified worldview (Nasr, 1993, p. 9). The knowledge of the Oneness of Allah prevents the fragmentation of disciplines often seen in modern education (Al-Attas, 1979, p. 14).

2.2 Knowledge as a Divine Trust (Amanah)

In Islam, knowledge is considered a divine trust (Amanah) that must be sought, preserved and shared responsibly. The concept of Amanah implies that knowledge is not merely a privilege but a responsibility that comes with accountability before Allah. The *Qur'an* repeatedly emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge (Ilm). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 224, as cited in Ibn Majah, n.d.). Knowledge should be pursued with sincerity and humility, as arrogance in knowledge leads to misguidance. Misusing or concealing knowledge is condemned in Islam. As Allah warns, "Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture—those are cursed by Allah and Cursed by those who curse" (*Qur'an* 2: 159). Thus, Knowledge as an Amanah is a sacred duty, requiring sincerity, integrity, and the intent to benefit society while remaining accountable to Allah.

2.3 Emphasis on Morality and Ethics

Rooted in the Islamic sources, Knowledge is not considered neutral. It is intrinsically linked to morality. The pursuit of knowledge is seen as a moral obligation, and its application

should be guided by ethical principles. This emphasis on ethics is crucial in addressing the moral dilemmas posed by rapid technological advancements in our time (Ibn Sina, 1952, pp. 33-35). Education should develop moral consciousness, guiding individuals to distinguish between right and wrong (*Qur'an*, 91:7–10) and stresses the importance of self-purification and ethical behavior.

2.4 Comprehensive Development

Islamic education, founded on its internal sources, aims at the holistic development of the individual – intellectually, morally, spiritually, and socially. It emphasizes the cultivation of *adab* (refined character, good manners) alongside intellectual growth. This balanced approach seeks to produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also virtuous and compassionate (Al-Ghazali, 1909, p. 17). Islamic education aims to nurture the intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions of a person. Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), a seminal Islamic scholar, argued that true knowledge cultivates piety (*taqwa*) and character (*akhlaq*), guiding individuals toward ethical conduct and social responsibility (Al-Ghazali, 1058/2007, p. 24). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) underscored this: “The best among you are those who have the best manners and character.” (Bukhari, n.d., Hadith 56, Book of Manners).

2.5 Lifelong Learning

The pursuit of knowledge (*Ilm*) is not confined to a specific period of life. The pursuit of knowledge (*Ilm*) is a lifelong obligation in Islam. It is a continuous process that extends from cradle to grave. The *Qur'an* repeatedly urges reflection on the natural world (*Qur'an*, 3:190–191), while the

Hadith states, “Seek knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim...” (Ibn Majah, n.d., Hadith 224), which implies that obtaining knowledge is a lifetime process. This ethos encourages critical thinking and adaptability—skills vital in today’s dynamic world.

2.6 Human Development and Social Responsibility

Education, from Islamic philosophical viewpoint, must prepare individuals to contribute positively to society, emphasizing justice (Adl), compassion (Rahmah), and collective well-being (Maslahah). Social responsibility, in Islamic education, manifests in the obligation to address societal inequalities, guided by *Qur’anic* principles of charity (Zakat) and communal solidarity (*Qur’an* 2: 177). Education empowers Muslims to combat oppression, aligning with the *Qur’anic* mandate to “stand firmly for justice” ensuring societal reform through informed activism (*Qur’an*4: 135). Historically, Islamic madrasas functioned as community hubs, addressing literacy, legal needs and welfare, embodying education’s role in societal development (Berkey, 1992, p. 40).

3. Teacher in Ensuring Quality Education: A Focus on *Hikmah*

Islamic pedagogy, positions teachers as mentors who embody ethical values and significantly, attempt to achieve and impart *Hikmah* (spiritual wisdom). The concept of *Hikmah*, often translated as wisdom, incorporates not only rational understanding but also divine intuition, comprehensive judgment, and the capability to apply knowledge in a justly upright and useful way. It is a dominant aim of Islamic education, and the teacher plays a crucial role in its development. Apart

from the appearance in the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, Islamic scholars have also widely imitated on the concept of *Hikmah* and its implication to education and the lives of individuals and the *ummah* (community). Prominent Muslim scholar Imam Al-Ghazali explained *Hikmah* as the principal purpose of education. He thinks that in order to effectively guide students towards ethical and divine superiority the teacher must strive to attain *Hikmah* (Al-Ghazali, 1058/2007, p. 24). Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980–1037), to elaborate the concept of *Hikmah*, emphasized the teacher's role in fostering curiosity and moral integrity, beyond mere information transmission (Günther, 2006, p. 373). Moreover, Al-Farabi, Ibn Khaldun, Allama Iqbal etc. also considered as well as mention *Hikmah* as the essence of Islamic education (Rahman, 2020, p. 45). These replications emphasize that *Hikmah* is not an inert attainment but a dynamic incorporation of knowledge, reason, and divine understanding that should infuse the whole educational process, mainly the role and character of the teacher. But before I proceed my discussion on the role of a teacher in ensuring quality education, I feel the need of the discussion about the nature of good teacher with special reference to concept of *Hikmah*. So, now I am going to give a brief description on the quality of a good teacher from Islamic philosophical perspective focusing the concept of *Hikmah* and then I will try to present some arguments on how a good teacher can play vital role in ensuring quality education in the present context from the perspective of Islamic philosophy.

3.1 Qualities and Responsibilities of a Teacher: Embodying *Hikmah*

Islamic philosophy emphasizes the importance of teachers possessing both knowledge and moral character. A teacher is not

merely a transmitter of information but also a role model for students. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “The learned are the heirs of the Prophets...” (Abu Dawood, n.d., Hadith 3641, p. 487). This statement underscores the teachers’ role as transmitter of knowledge, values, and ethics essential for both worldly success and eternal salvation. The Islamic philosophy of education is rooted in several fundamental principles that shape the teachers’ responsibilities and methods. The following qualities and responsibilities are considered essential for a teacher in Islamic education.

3.2 Teacher as a Moral and Ethical Guide, Rooted in *Hikmah*

Islamic education stresses the development of character (Akhlaq). Teachers are expected to embody and impart virtues like honesty, justice, patience, and humility. The *Qur’an* reminds believers: “Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression” (*Qur’an*, 16:90). Imam Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), in his work *Ihya’ Ulum al-Din*, emphasized that teachers’ behavior profoundly influences students. Moral education is not confined to textbooks but is demonstrated through the teacher’s conduct (Al-Ghazali, 1058/2007, pp. 33-36). In Islam, teachers are not merely instructors but role models whose conduct reflects divine ethics (akhlaq). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) epitomized this principle, stating, “I was sent to perfect good character” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1995, p. 381, Hadith No. 8729). Teachers, therefore, must embody virtues such as honesty, humility, patience, and justice. Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) argued that a teacher’s moral integrity directly impacts students’ spiritual and ethical formation, asserting that “knowledge without

action is insanity, and action without knowledge is vanity” (Al-Ghazali, 1058/2007, p. 18). By modeling ethical behavior, teachers cultivate students’ conscience and social responsibility, countering modern education’s tendency to prioritize technical skills over moral grounding. Teachers are expected to embody the values and principles of Islam in their conduct and behavior. They should be pious, honest, compassionate, and just. Their character should serve as an example for students to emulate.

3.3 Teacher as a Facilitator of Critical Thinking (Tafakkur) Guided by *Hikmah*

Contrary to misconceptions of Islamic education as dogmatic, classical scholars emphasized critical inquiry. The *Qur’an* repeatedly urges reflection (tadabbur) on creation (*Qur’an*, 3:190–191) and the use of reason (‘aql). Ibn Sina (980–1037) stressed that teachers must stimulate curiosity, stating, “The teacher should not force the student to memorize, but rather make them understand” (Ibn Sina, 1952, p. 79). This aligns with modern pedagogical goals of fostering creativity and problem-solving. By encouraging students to question, analyze, and synthesize knowledge—within the framework of Tawhid (divine unity)—teachers nurture intellectually autonomous yet ethically anchored individuals. Islamic education encourages critical thinking, reflection (Tadabbur), and contemplation (Tafakkur). The *Qur’an* frequently calls upon believers to reflect on creation: “Do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon their hearts?” (*Qur’an*, 47:24) Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), in his *Muqaddimah*, emphasized the need for teachers to promote analytical and reflective thinking rather than rote memorization. Teachers must encourage curiosity, questioning, and problem-solving, ensuring that learners develop the skills needed for lifelong learning (Khaldun, 2015, p. 277).

3.4 Teacher as a Spiritual Guide (Murshid) Imparting *Hikmah*

Islamic education integrates the material and spiritual realms, aiming to develop *insankamil* (the perfected human). Teachers are tasked with connecting learners to the transcendent purpose of knowledge: recognizing Allah's signs (*ayat*) in the universe. The Sufi poet Rumi (1207–1273) likened teachers to gardeners who “water the soul, not just the mind” (Barks, 1995, p. 152). This spiritual mentorship helps students navigate existential crises in an increasingly secular world, offering a counter-narrative to materialistic paradigms.

3.5 Teacher as a Social Reformer (Muslih) Acting with *Hikmah*

Islam positions education as a tool for societal reform (*islah*). Teachers, as agents of change, are responsible for addressing inequities and nurturing a just society (*adl*). The *Qur'anic* concept of *khalifah* (stewardship, 2:30) underscores the teacher's duty to empower students to combat oppression, poverty, and environmental degradation. For instance, the 14th-century scholar Ibn Khaldun highlighted education's role in civilizational progress, warning that “injustice ruins civilization” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 352). In contemporary contexts, this translates to teaching empathy, sustainability, and civic engagement. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is described as a “beautiful example” (*Qur'an*, 33:21). Teachers in Islamic education must follow this model by demonstrating integrity, compassion, and patience.

3.6 Teacher as a Builder of Social Responsibility Grounded in *Hikmah*

Islamic education aims to create individuals who contribute positively to society. Teachers must nurture a sense of *Maslahah* (public good) and *Ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), emphasizing justice, compassion, and social responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated: “The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1995, Hadith No. 23406). Education should equip students with the knowledge and values needed to address societal challenges such as inequality, injustice, and environmental degradation.

3.7 Teacher as a Source of Knowledge and Wisdom (*Hikmah*)

The Islamic worldview does not separate secular knowledge (*Aqli*) from religious knowledge (*Naqli*). Teachers must integrate both, helping students see the interconnectedness of all knowledge under the concept of *Tawhid* (the Oneness of God). Al-Farabi (872–950) stressed that knowledge should lead to virtuous action. A teacher’s role is to ensure students acquire knowledge that benefits both individual and societal well-being (Farabi, 1985, p. 124).

3.8 Teacher as a Lifelong Learner (*Talib al-‘Ilm*) Seeking Greater *Hikmah*

The Islamic tradition mandates that teachers remain perpetual students. Scholars like Al-Zarnuji (12th century) in *Ta‘lim al-Muta‘allim* emphasized humility in learning, advising teachers to “learn from those younger than you” (Nyazee, 2009, p. 73). This ethos of lifelong learning ensures educators stay relevant amid

rapid technological and societal changes, modeling adaptability and intellectual humility for their students.

4. The Transformative Potential of the Teacher Rooted in *Hikmah*: Understanding and Arguments

Based on the above discussion, I contend from an Islamic philosophical perspective that the teacher is far more than a mere transporter of information. They are an ethical model, a spiritual leader, a critical thinker, a social transformer, and an explorer of wisdom (*Hikmah*). Grounded in the principles of *Tawhid* (the Oneness of God), *Amanah* (trust), and the quest of ethical knowledge, the teacher's role spreads far beyond the limits of the classroom, shaping impartial, empathetic, and spiritually aware societies. At a time when modern education systems often highlight utilitarian consequences and technical competence over holistic development, the Islamic vision of the teacher offers a persuasive framework—one that integrates intellect with ethics and knowledge with divine purpose. By representing *Hikmah*, teachers do not merely convey facts; they foster souls, modify societies, and build bridges between the holy and the worldly.

As formerly stated, the vital purpose of this paper is to explore the essential and multi-dimensional role of teachers in ensuring quality education through the lens of Islamic philosophy. In doing so, it draws on classical Islamic thought as well as contemporary scholarship to highlight how the role of the teacher exceeds conventional pedagogical functions and becomes a divine responsibility aimed at cultivating morally and spiritually grounded individuals.

To achieve this, the paper begins by emphasizing the consecrated nature of education in Islam, which is resolutely rooted in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Education, in this practice, is not merely the attainment of knowledge but a means of realizing *Tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) and inclusive human development—intellectual, mystical, ethical, and social. This all-inclusive understanding of education lays the foundation for the following arguments in favor of revitalizing the teacher's role, showing how Islamic philosophy can suggest meaningful perceptions into reimagining quality education in the modern world.

In the contemporary world, education systems face challenges such as moral relativism, intellectual superficiality, and social fragmentation. In determining the rational, ethical and spiritual development of the pupil's teacher role vital. A teacher is not the person who only convey knowledge rather He implants different values and standards, develop critical thinking capability and create a thirst for knowledge as well as learning among students. As a mentor the influence of the teacher among his pupils is insightful and prolonged because the choices, aspirations and eagerness to contribute to the society of the learners are often impacted by the teacher. That is why teachers are measured as the most important instrument in building strong and thriving communities. By the cultivation of ethical, and responsible individuals through the insight of knowledge, teachers conduce to the overall well-being and progress of society. They play a dynamic role in protecting and transmitting cultural heritage, encouraging social cohesion, and promoting a sense of civic responsibility.

As I have mentioned earlier that the welling attention on scientific development and technological skills in contemporary education frequently disregards the importance of developing ethical character. To address these gaps between science and humanity as well as to integrate moral contemplation with that of modern education system the Islamic emphasis on morality and ethics can be helpful. On the other hand, ethical substance is a need for quality education. In this context Teachers with the quality of good character can incorporate moral education across all subjects, using real-life examples from the *Qur'an*, Hadith, and Islamic history. Besides, the specialization of disciplines in contemporary education can lead to a disjointed understanding of the world. A teacher who had knowledge on The Islamic concept of Tawhid can help to tie these deficits by highlighting the interrelation of all knowledge.

In this epoch of globalization, one of the important aims of education is to create global citizen with comparatively secular mind. Islamic educations with its importance on general worths like justice, empathy, and esteem for can contribute to the expansion of accountable global citizens. An accomplished system of education emphasizing on Islamic norms and values can develop a durable basis for critical thinking and moral reasoning, making students less susceptible to extremist ideologies. The spirit of Islam is to promote peace and tolerance among all human beings of all time and a teacher with profound familiarity with that spirit can be an efficient mentor and able contribute strongly in countering extremism from the world.

The undeniable truth about the contemporary society is its materialistic character. Education system with over emphasis on

science, technology and objective reality is one of the causes of such nature of the modern society. My intention is not to deny or to belittle the importance as well as the relevance of science and technology in human worldly life. Rather, the purpose is to highlight the importance of the mutual interaction between material and spiritual education. Islamic philosophy of education, by its nature, give logical importance to metaphysical progress along with the inevitability of material knowledge, can help to fulfill the void between these two interrelated phases of knowledge. This philosophy also accepts the importance of fostering a more sensible and persuasive life. It also discards the contrast between sacred and worldly knowledge. Teachers, with substantial knowledge and understanding about Islamic philosophical principles and ideologies, are the most influential authority, who can validate the significance and application of Islamic principles in modern scientific, social, and technological contexts, which on the other hand, is very much relevant in ensuring quality education. Moreover, the interactive learning methods advocated by the Islamic scholars can be implemented in modern teaching in order to engage students in discussions, debates, and projects that enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

5. Conclusion

After the detail discussions on the nature of education, teacher, their distinct features, duties and responsibilities to the society, described in Islamic philosophical trend, we can say that the role of a teacher in ensuring quality education, from an Islamic philosophical perspective, is both reflective and multi-layered. Teachers are not merely transmitters of information; they are

moral guides, intellectual mentors, and community builders. On the standard of accountability, the way Islamic philosophy of education measured the role of teachers, if we can integrate that ideal with contemporary education system, it can undoubtedly play a significant role in addressing the current educational crisis, facing global challenges as well as with the firm believe it can also be said that the new model with the combination of religious and scientific method, can foster a generation who will be enlightened with highmorality, socially responsible and capable of meeting the challenges of the modern world.

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