

Running classes to Teach Secular Knowledge

Q: Ilm-8: Is it permissible to run classes that teach secular subjects such as Gujarati, English or some trade?

Answer: Without any doubts, it is permissible to establish schools that teach as much as is necessary of secular subjects such as Gujarati, English or some trade by which people can earn a Halaal income. In fact, there are rewards in doing so. However, imparting Deeni knowledge and assisting Deeni institutions should be regarded as first priority. Whatever the subject, One must never forget one's primary allegiance to one's Deen.

Engrossing oneself in secular education while ignoring Deeni education is wrong and may attract the wrath of Allaah. Allaah says: "However, they give preference to the life of this world whereas the Aakhirah is better and everlasting."

Children should first be formally taught how to recite the Qur'aan and then taught all the requisites of Deen so that their hearts are imbued with Islaamic inclinations and so that Imaan is firmly entrenched in the hearts. The purpose of this is to make them resilient against attacks on their Imaan and to keep them unwavering. The culture and teachings of the schools and colleges are the exact opposite of what Islaam teaches. Therefore, if a child whose Islaamic background is weak has to enter such places, the toxic effects of the environment will certainly have an adverse effect on him. This will cause him to dislike the beliefs and teachings of Islaam and (Allaah forbid!) eventually take him away from Islaam altogether.

Therefore, if Deen is dear to people, they must first ensure that Deen is firmly entrenched even at the expense of worldly loss. A true well-wisher of a nation is the one whose concern for their well-being in the Aakhirah is more important to him than their well-being in this world. It is stated In Majaalisul Abraar, "A friend is he who strives to rectify one's Aakhirah even at the expense of one's worldly comfort. On the other hand, an enemy is one who strives to destroy one's Aakhirah, even though there may be worldly benefits."

It is the duty of parents and guardians to be more concerned about the Aakhirah of their children and wards rather than their worldly life. Allaah says in the Qur'aan: "Save yourselves and your families from the Fire of Jahannam." Should they be negligent about this, they will have to give an account for it because Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Each one of you is a shepherd and will be questioned about your flock."

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Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. relates a thought-provoking

incident about a father who started his child off in acquiring English (secular) education from childhood. He spent thousands of Rupees on his education and even sent him to London to study. When the boy eventually returned home, he fell ill and was on his death bed. Sitting by his son the father started to weep saying, "Dear son! I have spent twenty-five thousand Rupees on your education and have not seen the fruits of it. The boy then opened his eyes and said, "Dear father! why are you crying now when you see me heading to Jahannam? The twenty or twenty-five thousand Rupees you spent only prepared my path to Jahannam. You had purchased Jahannam for me because you deprived me of Deeni knowledge. The education I received is all useless to me now that I see the angels of death approaching. You were no friend to me by spending all that money, but were really my enemy."

This is the unfortunate result of being engrossed in acquiring only worldly knowledge and not bothering about Deeni knowledge. It is because of this that Moulana Gilani RAH. said, "Even though the lives of villagers seem to have improved from a worldly perspective after the acquisition of modern education, it is seen from the behaviour of a considerable number of people that they prefer the absence of Islaam rather than its presence. It is apparent from the doubts they create amongst the Muslims, by the manner in which they denigrate the practices of Islaam and by the things they do that they truly believe that the absence of Islaam is better for their progeny than its presence."

A great saint and orator of Gujarat Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Abdul Hayy Kafletwi Surati RAH. made the following observation fifty years ago: "This (secular) education has certainly destroyed in most people the capability to practise on the Shari'ah. There is therefore no spark of Imaan left in the hearts nor any sign of Islaam on their faces. While they advise Muslims to unite, they oppose Muslims in their appearance and dressing."

It is therefore apparent that the real reason for this decadence is the absence or weakness of Deeni education. Therefore just as someone would take an injection to prevent an illness, it is necessary to acquire the knowledge of Deen when acquiring worldly knowledge. Making the necessary arrangements for the imparting of Deeni knowledge is therefore a priority.

Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. says, "The Muslims have unfortunately made no arrangements. If the requisites of Deen are taught and then the necessary worldly education is acquired, the danger to a person's beliefs will not be very profound. However, when people have no concept of what their beliefs ought to be, then most of them are corrupted."

In these times it is therefore necessary to give priority to Deeni education than worldly education. There are many schools established for secular knowledge and for teaching skills and many are even funded by the government. The weakness is in the establishment of institutions that impart Deeni knowledge. There is a need to establish Maktabas (Madrassahs) in every village, in every street and with every Masjid. Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. mentioned, "There is no doubting the fact that in these times, the presence of the Deeni Madrassahs is such a bounty for the Muslims that anything better cannot be conceived. If there is anything in today's times to ensure the survival of Deen, it is these Madrassahs."

Hadhrat Moulana Gilani RAH. says, "The truth is that children are being snatched from the laps of their mothers and fathers and entered into modern institutions and universities, where the germs of rebellion, irreligiousness and kufr are being injected into their hearts and minds. On the other hand, we have the efforts of these Kahfis Madrassahs where the beliefs and morals of the future generations are safeguarded from the filth about, even though their numbers may be small."

The numbers of such Madrassahs therefore need to be increased. Hadhrat Imaam Rabbaani RAH. said, "The best act of virtue from those of propagating the Shari'ah and its commands is to revive a commandment of Deen, especially in these times when the commandments of Deen are vanishing. Spending millions cannot equal the propagation of one ruling." And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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