

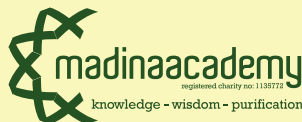
5 Main Objectives of **Makātib**

PRIMARY CENTRES OF ISLĀMIC LEARNING

Mawlana Abdullah Kapodrawi 



TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
Sulaiman Kazi



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Foreword

MAWLĀNĀ ABDULLAH KAPODRAWI ﷺ was an eminent Islāmīc scholar of Gujarat, India. His educational endeavours and solicitude for the Ummah were widely acknowledged by the ‘Ulamā and Muslims in general.

For over three decades, he served with distinction as teacher and rector of Dārul ‘Uloom Falāḥ-e-Darain in Tadmashwar, Gujarat. Mawlānā Abdullah ﷺ was well-known for his sincerity, humility, selflessness, educational commitment and unwavering service to Islām. His recurring message to Muslims concerned the protection of their faith, developing excellent character and counselling them to become worthy human beings. In his lectures he spoke with intense religious fervour, touching the hearts of his listeners.

From time to time, Mawlānā Abdullah ﷺ visited England. Taking advantage of his presence, in different parts of the country, he would be invited to deliver talks at specially arranged programmes in Masājīds and Islāmīc institutes. In this regard, his itinerary usually included Batley, West Yorkshire where he would take time out to meet local Imāms and ‘Ulamā, some of whom were his students. Notwithstanding his commitments, he would grace me and my family with a personal visit. He was

full of kindness and affection, sharing with us his knowledge, experience and wisdom.

During his visit on 2nd April 2013/21 Jumadal Ula 1434, Mawlānā Abdullah ﷺ accepted my invitation to deliver a speech at Madīna Academy, Dewsbury. This institute was established in 2010 by my eldest brother, Mawlānā Khalil Ahmed Kazī with the blessings of Muftī Muḥammad Faruq Mirtī ﷺ (1950–2015/1369–1436), founder and rector of Jamia Mahmoodia, Meerut, India and a senior disciple of Muftī Mahmoodul Hasan Gangohi ﷺ (1907–1996/1325–1417), who served as the Grand Muftī of Dārul ‘Uloom Deoband. Apart from the Maktab, Ḥifẓ classes and a Dars-e-Nizāmī course, Madīna Academy also run a nursery for children

On an earlier visit, Mawlānā Abdullah ﷺ showed a keen interest in the development of Madīna Academy and its educational activities. Therefore, he used this occasion to talk in Urdu on the fundamental aims and objectives of Makātib. In his speech, he underscored the importance of these primary Islāmīc institutes, highlighting their invaluable function and asked the public to offer their full support to ensure they develop and prosper. He was clear that these institutes were indispensable in safeguarding the Īmān of our children and future generations.

I am grateful to Mawlana Samiullah Kholwadia who assisted with the publication of the Urdu edition of this lecture, which was published by Madīna Academy under the title “Makātib Kay Pāch Bunyādī Maqāsīd”. I have largely relied on this publication for preparing the English translation.

I am confident Mawlānā Abdullah’s address will prove highly beneficial in emphasising the importance and significance of

Makātib. I pray this lecture serves to motivate ‘Ulamā and Muslims in general to value these institutes for the indispensable function they serve in preserving and protecting the faith of our young children and future generations.

May Allāh enable us to serve and strengthen our Makātib. Āmeen.

—SULAIMAN KAZI

Batley

2nd May 2021

21st Ramadhan 1442

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

*I have offered my blood and sweat to
the flower buds of this garden,
It will remember me for centuries.*

THE DISTINGUISHED ISLĀMIC scholar of Gujarat, India, Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawi ؒ hardly needs any introduction. My family and I were blessed by his love and affection and my dear brother, Sulāiman Kazi, enjoyed a special rapport with him.

I was fortunate to attend his lectures when he visited the UK. He always spoke of his deep concern for the welfare and progress of the Muslims, advising them at all times to preserve their Islāmic identity. He advised Muslims to live responsibly as good citizens and work towards the preservation of their faith and religious values.

Whilst praising the attributes of Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawi ؒ, Shaykh al Ḥadīth Mawlānā Yusuf Motala ؒ (1946–2020/1366–1441) once remarked: “Every aspect of Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawi’s life is a testimony to his commitment and dedication to the cause of Islām.” In his condolence message

on the demise of Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawī ﷺ, he said: “O Allāh, grant the Muslim community men like him!”

On 2nd April 2013/21 Jumadal Ula 1434, Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawī ﷺ delivered an important speech in Urdu, in front of ‘Ulamā and youths, on the fundamental objectives of Makātib at Madina Academy, Dewsbury. The message he delivered makes me invoke the words of the great Urdu poet, Dr Muḥammad Iqbāl, who said: “I wish and pray that these youths assimilate all that is the best and they may spread light everywhere.”

I am indebted to Mawlānā Samiullah Kholwadia for diligently transcribing the audio recording of the speech and preparing the Urdu publication, titled “Makātib Kay Pāch Bunyādī Maqāsīd”. This was recently published by Madina Academy. I am grateful to my brother Sulaiman Kazi, lawyer for translating and editing the booklet for the benefit of English-speaking readers. My thanks are also due to Ibrahim Hasan, lawyer for his kind assistance in proofreading the text and my niece, Hafiza Fatimah Hans for her valuable comments and suggestions regarding the manuscript.

May Almighty Allāh reward all those who have assisted with the publication and shower His infinite mercy on Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawī ﷺ, accept his efforts and enable us to benefit from his timely advice. Āmeen.

—MAWLĀNĀ KHALIL AHMAD KAZI

Madina Academy

Dewsbury, England

12th May 2021

30th Ramadhan 1441

Five Main Objectives of Makātib

*All praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds and peace
and blessings be upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ, his
family, his companions and all those who follow him
until the Last Day.*

*Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is reported to have said: “The
best among you is he who learns and teaches the Qur’ān”
(Sahih Al-Bukhārī).*

MY RESPECTED ‘ULAMĀ, youngsters and friends! On my earlier visit to the UK, I came to Madina Academy when it was newly acquired from a former unused church. At that time, it was a derelict building and in need of substantial repair. Brother Sulāiman and Mawlānā Khalil informed me then of their intention to establish a Madrasa. Masha Allāh, today I am pleased to observe the initial renovation work has been completed and I understand there are further plans for expansion to include additional classrooms. I am also delighted to learn that the Maktab has started, which includes a

Ḥifẓ class. I am informed that this is only the start and in time the intention is to increase Islāmic educational activities in this Academy, Insha Allāh.

Devout ‘Ulamā

MAKTAB IS ESSENTIAL for Muslims. No matter where Muslims live, it is their first and foremost duty to arrange for the religious education of their children.

The significance of ‘Ulamā who teach young children at Maktabs is not to be underrated. Mawlānā Yusuf Binnori رحمہ اللہ علیہ used to say about them: “These ‘Ulamā are the devout servants of Allāh.” I have personally heard him say that those who teach at Makātibs are “‘Ulamā Rabbāniyyeen” or devout scholars. The Qur’ān mentions: “You should be devoted to God because you have taught the Scripture and studied it closely” (Al-‘Imrān 3:79). In respect of this verse, the outstanding exegetist of the Qur’ān, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbas رحمہ اللہ علیہ was asked who are the “‘Aalim-e-Rabbāni”? He replied by saying: “It is a reference to that scholar who teaches the young before those who are older. Indeed, it is quite a task to perform.”

Gradual Learning & Training

CHILDREN MAY HAVE various mother tongues — Gujarati, Marathi, or Hindi. When teaching them Arabic, they are gradually introduced to the phonetic sounds of the Arabic alphabet and then taught how to pronounce letters with their distinctive qualities. This can be an onerous task. Imparting such knowledge takes considerable time and patience. Over time, however, the

children slowly complete recitation of the entire Qur'ān. At the same time, they are also taught moral lessons. The entire process is slow and gradual, but children will make progress.

Similarly, we do not offer bread to a newly born immediately. A mother first introduces the baby to the taste of honey and water. After a few days, Almighty Allāh produces milk in her breast, and she feeds the baby. A few months later, the baby is introduced to some other foods. This gradual process of introducing the baby to different types of food is also a form of training. A child also needs to learn and be trained in Islāmic education gradually, progressing from one stage to the next.

Our elders have spelt out the objectives of Makātib found across the Islāmic world. Some people wrongly believe that children should be taught to complete reading the entire Qur'ān as quickly as possible and then they can leave Maktab. They harbour a misunderstanding that further religious education can be gained later in life. However, this is not the objective of Maktab.

The First Objective

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE of Maktab is to familiarise children with the Arabic language. The Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic and the language has its own stylistic features. At Maktab, we should ensure children are pronouncing Arabic words correctly. There should be great emphasis on the correct pronunciation of Arabic letters and words, so that the children are able to recite the Qur'ān correctly. Almighty Allāh has instructed us to recite the Qur'ān properly. He says: "Recite Qur'ān slowly and distinctively" (Al-Muzammil 73:4). What is the meaning of Tartil? Tartil

means reciting each word properly and to be aware of pauses.

Tajwīd is a derivative of the Arabic word *Jawdat*, which stands for something good. It is the opposite of bad. As the child masters the Arabic phonetics he will be able to recite each and every word properly with Makhraj.

The fundamental duty of teachers at this Maktab and others is to teach children the rules of Tajwīd properly, covering all the letters of the Arabic alphabet. In earlier times, it was wrongly assumed by some parents that children can learn to recite however they wish at Maktab. In later life they can join an Arabic Madrasa, where they can learn to recite the Qur'ān correctly with Tajwīd. This is a totally wrong notion. Tajwīd should be taught from the very first day at Maktab. This is essential so that whenever a child recites the Qur'ān, s/he should be able to do it properly. It is obligatory to recite the Qur'ān with Tajwīd. One who fails to recite the Qur'ān with Tajwīd will be considered a sinner by Allāh.

The Qur'ān has been revealed in the Arabic language. Almighty Allāh says: “We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān” (Yusuf 12:2).

The unbelievers alleged that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ presented to them what he has heard from others. The Qur'ān refutes this allegation by saying: “They also say: ‘(The Qur'ān) is a tale of the past which he (the Prophet) has got written. And then the same is recited before him morning and evening’” (Al-Furqān 25:5).

The Qur'ān rejects the allegation of the disbelievers by saying: “We know very well that they say, ‘It is a man who teaches him,’ but the language of the person they allude to is foreign, while

this revelation is in clear Arabic” (Al-Naḥl 16:103). Look at the words of Almighty Allāh! The disbelievers were alleging the Prophet ﷺ was learning from the Ahle Kitāb and then reciting what he had memorised. However, the Qur’ān makes it clear that the mother tongue of the Ahle Kitāb was non-Arabic (Syriac or Hebrew), whereas the Qur’ān which was revealed upon the Prophet ﷺ was in chaste Arabic.

It is therefore the foremost duty of Muslim parents to ensure, no matter where they reside, that their children are able to recite the Qur’ān in Arabic with correct pronunciation and in an Arabic tone.

It is a pity that even some adults cannot recite properly Surah Al-Fātiḥah or other Qur’ānic Sūrahs which are read in Ṣalāh. They do not correctly remember the Du’ās. While performing Ḥajj, some Indians recite the Labbayk as follows: “Labbayk Allāhumma Labbayk. Labbayk la *sarika* laka labbayk...” I have heard the utterance “la *sarika* laka labbayk”. There is no word as “*sarika*”. They spend so much money on the pilgrimage, yet they cannot recite properly the Labbayk. On the other hand, a young Arab can be observed asking the pilgrims to follow him in doing Ṭawāf. As he commences, he utters correctly and effortlessly “Labbayk Allāhumma labbayk. Labbayk la *sharika* laka labbayk...” I have heard many Indians mispronouncing the word “*sharika*”. Their pronunciation is markedly inferior to the Arabs. Mispronunciation of Arabic words is a serious flaw in some sub-continent Muslims. Maktab is the right place to ensure correct pronunciation and recitation of Arabic. It is therefore the duty of Maktab to ensure correct teaching of Arabic.

The Second Objective

THE SECOND OBJECTIVE of Maktab is to ensure children have correct beliefs. For example, they should know what their belief is about Allāh, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the Day of Judgement and the Messengers of Allāh ﷺ. These are essential articles of belief. When I was about 8 years old, I read *Beheshtī Thamar* in my village. Our teacher first taught us the essential elements of faith. He told us that before there was nothing, it was Allāh who created everything. This is the first doctrine described in *Beheshtī Thamar*. He made us memorise this article of faith and repeat it the following day in class. At the time, we did not understand the meaning or significance of “What is creation?” or “How did it come out of nothing?” However, the doctrine I learnt in the village when I was young, in 1937 or 1938, is still etched firmly in my mind even today.

I also read in the same book that the most pious person cannot compare with an ordinary Ṣaḥābī ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ. At the time of reading this, I could not make out its meaning and significance. Only with age I realised that a Ṣaḥābī is someone who spent time in the Prophet's ﷺ company as a believer. As such, the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ have such an exalted rank with Allāh.

THE STATUS OF SAHĀBIYAT

IT WAS ASKED: “Who is superior: Hazrat ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz ﷺ or Ameer Mu‘āwiyah ﷺ?” The latter had a conflict with Hazrat ‘Alī ﷺ. Since Hazrat ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz ﷺ was a pious Caliph from the Umayyad dynasty, the question arose who was more superior between the two. The reply was:

“Ameer Mu'āwiyah ﷺ joined the Prophet ﷺ in Jihād, so the speck of dust which stuck to the hooves of his horse in Jihād is better than ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz ﷺ.” This is the high rank of Ṣaḥābīyat. It was only later in life that we truly grasped the significance of this point. However, it was at Maktab that we initially learnt this essential article of faith, namely, that the most pious person cannot compare to an ordinary Ṣaḥābī. Hence, it is imperative for Makātib to ensure the correct teaching of doctrinal beliefs. After spending five years at Maktab, children should be firm in their beliefs so that no other ideology can influence them.

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

A FEW YEARS AGO, I visited a Madrasa in England. Children were being taught Talīm Al-Islām. I interacted with the children and asked them to recite the first Kalimah. They replied: “Lā ilāha illā Allāh Muḥammadur Rasūl Allāh.” I asked them to recite the second Kalimah and someone quickly replied: “Ashhadu an lā ilāha il Allāhu wa ashhadu-anna Muḥammadan ‘abduhū wa rasulullāh.” They also translated the Kalimahs. I then asked the children: “Is it wrong to leave out ‘abduhū’ in the recitation of the second Kalimah?” It was a sizeable class of children and I also asked them why they were being asked to learn the Kalimas, but none could offer me a satisfactory response.

I thus explained to the children, referring to the verse in the Glorious Qur’ān: “The Jews say that ‘Uzair is God’s son and the Christians say that Christ is God’s son. This is only a saying from their mouths. It is like the saying of the earlier unbelievers” (Al-Tawbah 9:30).

What Almighty Allāh says in this verse is that the Jews hold 'Uzair ﷺ to be the son of God, while the Christians maintain that Jesus ﷺ is the son of God. But, both the Jews and Christians are mistaken about their Prophet. In a similar way, approximately 850 million Hindus in India look upon Krishna as the incarnation of God. Thus, these three major world religions have stumbled in conceptualising the meaning of "Messenger of Allāh".

The Kalimahs, therefore, are taught to safeguard us from making the same colossal mistake. We are categorically asked to testify: "We bear witness that there is no god besides Allāh and Muḥammad is Allāh's servant and Messenger." He is not a son or incarnation of Allāh. So, who is Muḥammad ﷺ? He is a servant of Allāh. This basic doctrine is instilled into the minds of young children.

Muslims are asked to affirm that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the "servant of Allāh" so that they may not go astray like other people. The Qur'an is so particular about this issue that at places it speaks of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as a servant of Allāh. The following verse is illustrative of this point: "Glory be to God Who carried His servant (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) by night from the holy Masjīd (in Makkah) to the farther Masjīd (in Jerusalem). He has blessed its surroundings. This so that He may show him His signs. He is All Hearing, All Seeing" (Al-Isra 17:1).

This verse removes any misconception about the Prophet ﷺ as a servant. On the other hand, Christians have misconstrued Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ and believe in the concept of Trinity (three gods in one and one god in three). Muslims must not harbour any such misunderstanding about Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. This

fundamental point must be explained to children at Maktab.

The Third Objective

CHILDREN NEED TO be taught how to pray Ṣalāh. They need to be shown how to perform Wuḍū. Their teacher should make them perform Wuḍū under their supervision. The teacher should illustrate how the Prophet ﷺ did Wuḍū. During the Caliphate of Hazrat ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ, a delegation of Muslims arrived. They asked: “O Leader of the Believers, show us how the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ performed Wuḍū.” The Caliph got a bowl of water and performed Wuḍū. They observed him attentively. When the Caliph finished, he told them: “The Prophet ﷺ used to do Wuḍū as I have shown you now.” This was a practical demonstration.

TAKBĪR-E-TAḤRĪMAH

IN SCHOOLS, THERE is considerable emphasis laid on learning through practical knowledge. We should redouble our efforts to imbibe sound beliefs in children. We should demonstrate to them how to offer Ṣalāh, showing them how to fasten hands. I have observed people who have been offering Ṣalāh for the last 30 to 40 years yet they do not raise hands properly while uttering Takbīr-e-Taḥrīmah. They do not know the posture of raising their hands. Likewise, some people raise their feet whilst in Sajdah. Certain acts, such as failing to keep the feet on the ground in Sujood for the duration of three Subḥānallāh, can spoil the Ṣalāh. Sadly, ignorance about how to offer Ṣalāh correctly is widespread.

Children need to be shown repeatedly how to raise their hands when facing the qiblah, highlighting the position of the fingers. One of my teachers at Jamī‘ah Islāmīyah Ta‘līmuddīn, Dabel, who taught me Nur al-Īdāh, demonstrated to the class how to fasten hands when offering Ṣalāh. He asked us all to do it practically, pointing out the position of the three fingers and the thumb. By repeatedly teaching children how to fasten their hands during Ṣalāh, it will eliminate any mistakes.

Dear Brothers! Many Muslims do not know that uttering “Allāhu Akbar” is mandatory when commencing Ṣalāh. They think that they are supposed to fasten their hands only and misunderstand this to mean Takbīr-e-Taḥrīmah. They perform ablution quickly and raise their hands along with the Imām without uttering “Allāhu Akbar”. How can such a Ṣalāh be valid? At Maktab, we should emphasise to children that Takbīr-e-Taḥrīmah is mandatory and this should never be neglected. They should be instructed about how to fasten their hands properly in Ṣalāh. Maktab must take the responsibility of teaching correct recitation of the Qur‘ān, sound beliefs and practically demonstrating the Masā’il.

The Fourth Objective

THE SĪRAH OF the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ should be explained to children in Maktab. They should also be told about the Khulafā Rāshideen and how the Ummah is indebted to them. If you were to ask high school students what they know about Caliph ‘Umar ؓ, they will largely plead ignorance. Once I went to a Masjid in Bharuch, India. The congregational Ṣalāh in the Masjid had already finished. After performing my own Ṣalāh,

I met a group of students from high school. I asked them their names and established what they did. They told me they were students of class 10, 11 and 12.

I was pleased to learn about their studies and see them attend the Masjid to offer their Ṣalāh. I exhorted them to remain steadfast in offering Ṣalāh. However, when I asked them what they knew about Sayyidina ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, it was a pity that they were unable to tell me anything. Furthermore, they did not know the difference between desirable and prohibited matters.

OUR STATE OF AFFAIRS

YESTERDAY, I MET a Mawlānā in London. He told me that a wedding was going to be officiated at a local Masjid where cameras and filming equipment was set up. He told the organisers that this is a Masjid and you cannot take photographs and film the wedding. They retorted: “What kind of a Muslim are you that stops us from taking photographs!” Regrettably, what is lawful is now considered unlawful and what is unlawful is now seen by some as lawful. People’s perceptions have changed altogether. Undoubtedly, this is a sign of the Qiyāmah. In society, it can be increasingly observed that vice and virtue are mixed up. Good is frowned upon and evil is celebrated. Indeed, the Muslim community is in a very pitiful state of affairs.

AN EXEMPLARY EFFORT

IT IS ESSENTIAL for ‘Ulamā to make effort for the reform of the masses. Two weeks ago, I attended a programme at Sodagarwad, Surat. An announcement had been made in the local Masājids

that people could attend for improving their Qur'ān recitation. Whether it was the morning, afternoon, evening or night, some 'Ulamā would be available at hand to assist people in learning to recite the Qur'ān properly. I was really pleased to learn that there was uptake of around 150 people. I was even more delighted to learn that 'Ulamā had made themselves available to render this invaluable service, helping the Ummah recite the Qur'ān correctly. 'Ulamā should not grow complacent about offering five daily Ṣalāh and teaching for a couple of hours in the day, thinking they have discharged their religious responsibility. This is not sufficient. We should constantly be thinking about strategies to draw the servants of Allāh, teaching them Qur'ān and Masā'il. This service should be rendered without expectation of any return.

A WORTHY EXAMPLE

THERE ARE SOME highly educated people living in Toronto, Canada, who originally came from Hyderabad, India. One of them is a retired mathematics teacher. He recently announced that he was willing to help children with free maths tuition for two hours every week. I was extremely pleased to learn of his selfless service. He could have easily charged for the tuition but did not. He was content with his retirement pension and wanted to help Muslim children.

In our community, there will be many retired teachers and professionals but not all of them will be willing to offer voluntary work. Sadly, we are generally devoid of the worry and concern for the Ummah.

In particular, ‘Ulamā should pay particular attention to the religious needs of school children and college students. They should make a special effort to draw them closer to Allāh with the utmost love and affection. This is very important. Try and find out what situation they are in and their level of religious commitment. Those children who attend our Maktab and Madāris barely account for 10% of all children, however the remainder 90% only attend schools and colleges. We do not know what type of education they are receiving.

With rapid changes in society, people are engulfed in evil more than ever before. In such circumstances, ‘Ulamā should strive to save the children of the Ummah. We owe a responsibility to stop them falling into evil. We should draw closer to them, affectionately explaining to them the salient traits of Muslims and our distinct religious culture. Remind them we are not meant to mimic others and that there must be a marked difference in their identity as Muslims compared to others.

DISTINGUISHING TRAITS

I OFTEN HAVE occasion to visit different villages in India. During my last visit to Italva village I asked some children: “A Hindu eats bread and so does a Muslim. Please explain the difference between the two?” I asked this question to illustrate the Islāmic culture. The children remained silent, as such issues are not discussed in the Maktab. I then explained to them as follows: “Does a Hindu wash hands before he takes food? No! Does he utter ‘Bismillāh’ before eating? No! So, there are many differences. A Muslim recites ‘Bismillāh’, washes his hands and eats

only with his right hand.” I used this example to impress on them the significance of the Islāmīc culture.

You should explain to children that people travel by car or bus, however Muslims do it differently. Before a Muslim sets foot on his journey he recites “Bismillāh” and the Du‘ā “Glory be to Allāh who has given us control over this; we could not have done it by ourselves. Truly it is to our Lord that we are returning” (Al-Zukhruf 43:13).

You should ask children if they follow this practice. There is a pressing need to impress on the minds of our children the importance of Islāmīc culture. It is essential to explain to them we have a distinct culture. The Prophet ﷺ emphasised this point very firmly to the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, exhorting them to maintain a distinction and not imitate other customs. He said: “He who resembles another community becomes one of them” (Sunan Abī Dāwūd).

The Prophet ﷺ also urged Muslims to shun the practice of imitating others. For instance, fasting on the 10th of Muḥarram was an earlier Jewish practice. He said: “We have a greater right on Mūsā ﷺ than them. So, he commanded its fasting” (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī). However, he recommended fasting one extra day either side so there is no imitation with Judaism. He did this in order to be seen as different from the Jews. Thus, Muslims were asked to fast for two days to avoid any imitation. The Prophet ﷺ insisted that Muslims should have their own distinct culture. It should be instilled into the minds of our children that we have our own culture which is different from others.

Christian children will wear certain objects and dress in a manner which will not befit Muslims. They will urinate whilst

standing and not wash themselves. However, it is essential for Muslims to perform *Istinjā*. Undoubtedly there is a clear difference in the culture of Muslims. This should be impressed on children at Maktab, so they remain conscious of their Muslim identity and culture and are also able to differentiate themselves from others. As the Poet of the East, Dr Muḥammad Iqbāl quite succinctly stated: “The community of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is distinct from others in their characteristics.”

The Muslim community stands apart from others. There are significant differences between the practices of Muslims and other faith communities, whether this be in terms of eating, drinking, sleeping or walking. In all respects, we should be different and distinct in terms of our noble conduct.

UN-ISLĀMIC CULTURE

NO MUSLIM CHILD should ever do this to an elder. Once I attended a wedding feast and people were waiting for the groom. An elderly man asked a young boy if he could get him some water. The boy replied: “I’m sat here. Are your legs broken? Go and get the water yourself.” If the boy had been observant of Islāmīc culture he would have immediately acceded to the request of the elder. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: “He who is not kind to the young and does not respect the elders is not one of me” (Sunan Al-Tirmidhī). Clearly, the boy had not understood this Ḥadīth. He was not nurtured to think in the correct way. Instead, he retorted to the elderly man’s request by saying: “Are your legs broken?!” Allāhu Akbar! Is this the moral condition of the Ummah, that a child mocks an elder?

We should offer up our seats to passengers who are standing on a bus. When travelling from Surat on the bus, I have noticed how school children jump on board and race to occupy seats, often placing their bags on the free seat next to them. Nevertheless, these are children and can be forgiven. However, I have seen elderly men and ladies standing on the bus whilst youngsters occupy seats. I have admonished them by saying: "Are you Muslims? There is an elderly person with a white beard and he is standing! This is not part of our Muslim culture." Our culture teaches us to offer a seat to a lady or an elderly person.

A LAWYER'S EXAMPLE

THERE WAS AN acclaimed lawyer in Radhanpur called Kalè Khan. He was known to be very pious too. Some Muslims from a predominantly Hindu inhabited village came to him and said: "O lawyer! We want to construct a Masjid in our village but the Hindus will not allow us. The head of the village is strongly opposed to the construction of the Masjid. If you are able to mediate it may assist us." The lawyer agreed.

On a certain date, he boarded a bus at Radhanpur. Not only was it a hot day, the bus was overcrowded on a busy route. During the journey, a Hindu lady boarded the bus holding her baby in her arms. She had to stand as the bus was full and no seats were spare. The lawyer waited to see if any Hindu youngsters would offer the lady a seat. When no one offered, he stood up. Although he was aged with his beard dyed orange, he said: "Sister, please sit in my place. You are carrying a baby. How can you remain standing?" In this way, the lawyer gave up his seat.

By coincidence, the lady hailed from the same village where the lawyer was going. More importantly, she was the daughter of the village chief. He did not know this. When they reached the village, the lady asked him the purpose of his visit. She said, “Why don’t you visit our house as I want to thank you for offering your seat when everyone else remained seated. You stood throughout the journey for my convenience.” The lawyer said, “I have come here for a specific reason to meet the village chief.” The lady responded that this person was actually her own father. The lawyer was astonished. She took him to her house and recounted to her father how he had vacated his seat for her. Her father was deeply touched by his kind gesture.

Then he enquired of Kalè Khan, the lawyer, the purpose of his visit. He told him: “O brother, some local Muslims who reside in this locality need a Masjīd for worship.” He replied: “Do not worry. I will ensure it is constructed.” This is the impact of good manners!

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ exhorted us to be kind to the weak and the poor. He said: “Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you” (Sunan Al-Tirmidhī). This is an important Ḥadīth and should not be overlooked. Every Muslim should act upon it. The lawyer helped a lady standing with a baby on the bus. He realised the value of Islāmīc teachings and gave up his seat. Thus, he practised upon the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. As a result, the issue of establishing a Masjīd in the locality was resolved in no time.

This is an example of the moral teachings of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. We should teach our children how to treat elders, how

to help others - whether they be Hindu, the rich, the poor or the sick. If one does not have a vehicle, offer him a lift. Learn to be considerate and help others.

WORKING AMONG PEOPLE

ONCE VISITED Ladysmith, South Africa, where a friend of mine called Mawlānā Ismā'īl 'Abdul Razzāq used to reside. He was my classmate in Dabhel, Deoband and Al Azhar. He also served as an English teacher at Al Azhar for some time.

When I reached Ladysmith, I enquired about his residence. I was surprised to learn that he lived several kilometers away in a nearby black township. I knew such places could be dangerous.

Anyway, I reached his house and asked him why he lived in such a daunting neighbourhood. He told me: "Mawlānā, it is necessary to make effort for the guidance of these people. They quite often drink and fight and I take the victims in my car to the hospital." I asked him if he was not fearful of them. He replied, "For my protection, I keep security dogs in the yard. This serves as a deterrence for trespassers." In this way, he takes good care of people in the township, arranging for their food and hospital treatment. As a result, he is respected by all in the township. As the saying goes:

*Impress with good conduct,
Prevail with good conduct.*

I exhort the Muslim community that it should stand out for excellent morals and manners. We should educate our youngsters to find out about their neighbours. Our conduct should be such that they realise our excellence. They should notice

our polite manners, our service and care for them. However, we have lost sight of these good qualities. It is noteworthy that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ excelled in morals and manners even prior to advent of his Prophethood.

SUBLIME CONDUCT OF THE FINAL MESSENGER ﷺ

AN OLD WOMAN was carrying a heavy load and walking in Makkah Mukarramah. Some Quraish chiefs made fun of her. The Prophet ﷺ disliked their comments and decided to help her. He took her load and carried it to her house. This incident happened before the Prophet ﷺ was conferred with Prophethood. It is documented by Dr Muṣṭafā Sibā'ī ﷺ in his book "The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ". He has mentioned that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ used to carry out social work before he was appointed as a Prophet. We should also participate in social and humanitarian work. We should engage in welfare work and be of service to people, including non-Muslims. Invite them to meetings and discussions which concern our common good. The Prophet ﷺ used to do all this before he was appointed a Prophet.

Once, while going somewhere in Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ heard someone groaning. He looked around and found an African slave sitting next to a grinding machine. He was shivering owing to high fever. The Prophet ﷺ was deeply moved to see his plight. He went close to him and asked: "O my brother, what is your problem?" He was stunned to see someone from the Quraysh, a noble and dominant tribe, calling him his brother. Then he recounted: "I have a fever. However, my master is so callous that if I do not grind the grain he will beat me up. That is

why I am so anxious. This is why I'm groaning." The Prophet ﷺ asked him to move away and he did his job for him. On the contrary, do we ever carry anyone else's load? We tend to waste time on gossiping and petty talk. However, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ set an example of helping fellow human beings.

HELPING OTHERS

ISLĀM DID NOT spread out of nowhere or without good reason. Part of its phenomenal spread was largely due to the good conduct of Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best amongst you is the one who helps others." Helping others is not restricted to helping only Muslims. The best person is the one who helps others. He works for the goodness and welfare of all humans – whether they are white or black, Muslim or non-Muslims. We should be helpful and compassionate to everyone. We should provide them with food and preach faith to them.

I have observed some houses in Malawi and in Zambia where there can be up to three to four domestic servants. They often work relentlessly day and night, yet their masters do not take any care of them or their family, nor do they take on board their dire financial situation. In Zambia, where my son Muḥammad lives, he employs a revert Muslim, a youngster, who helps in the house. After staying a few days at the house, I said to my son: "All day I see this youngster is at your service, however, do you have regard for his religious education? Why don't you take some time out to teach him the fundamentals of Islām. It is your duty to do so. Neglect in this matter is not acceptable."

The Fifth Objective

DUE TO THE activities of this Academy, I have briefly discussed the main objectives of the Maktab, namely, children should learn to correctly pronounce Arabic letters and have a proper understanding of 'Aqā'id. Modes of worship, like Wuḍū and Ṣalāh, should be demonstrated to children in a practical form. They should also become familiar with the illustrious life of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. The fifth objective of Maktab is to infuse Islāmic morals and manners. Children should be aware of the distinguishing traits of good Islāmic conduct.

The difference between us and others is that we are Muslims. We must follow our beliefs and convictions. We cannot be like a smartly dressed person who enters the public toilets at a motorway service station and urinates while standing. A Muslim will always sit to relieve himself and perform Istinjā to clean himself. This is the difference between our lifestyle and theirs. Non-Muslims may appear outwardly well-dressed and clean, but in reality they remain impure and unclean.

You should teach children the virtue of remaining in a state of purity. Not even a drop of urine should pollute their body, otherwise their Ṣalāh will become invalid. They should be urged to ensure they remain pure and clean. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allāh is clean and He loves cleanliness" (Sunan Tirmidhī). Almighty Allāh loves purity. The Qur'ān says: "Verily Allāh loves those who turn to Him in repentance. He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean" (Al-Baqarah 2: 222). These distinctive features should be instilled into the minds of Maktab children.

You should interact with the children in class. At least once a week you should tell them about Muslim culture. They should be encouraged to acknowledge Allāh's grace upon us for blessing us with Īmān and granting us our own distinct Islāmic culture. They should realise the difference between their own religious culture and of others. Otherwise they will be swayed by the glitter of the world, such as wealth, luxury cars and large mansions. Such matters should not cross their mind. Rather, they should believe in the superiority of their faith and culture. If you can do this at Maktab, it will be a great achievement.

STRATEGY FOR YOUTH

AT THIS ACADEMY you should arrange weekly, fortnightly or monthly programmes for the youths, namely, school children, college and university students. You should invite them to discuss topical issues. University students might critically challenge established viewpoints and question the rationale behind certain commands and injunctions of Islām. You should explain these to them with wisdom and intelligence. For instance, they may raise doubts and objections regarding the prohibition of alcohol, which also has some benefit. The Qur'ān says: "They ask you (O Prophet) about wine and gambling. Tell them: 'In them there is a great evil and some benefit for people. But their evil is greater than their benefit'" (Al-Baqarah 2: 219). Students should be told about the harms of alcohol and intoxicants. Explain to them the hazardous effects of drugs and how they impair the mental faculties, rendering one useless. That is why the Sharī'ah has forbidden drugs. You will need to present a

cogent argument to make youngsters understand why the Sharī'ah has prohibited drugs and alcohol. Simply stating that drugs are prohibited will not suffice. To respond satisfactorily to questions and doubts, you will need to know the fundamental objectives of the Sharī'ah. 'Ulamā should familiarise themselves with this branch of knowledge. They cannot afford to overlook the five objectives of the Sharī'ah. Please consider publishing small pamphlets and booklets for youngsters on matters of interest. I urge you to consider all this seriously.

Finally, I urge the 'Ulamā to work among the public, teaching adults to properly recite the Qur'ān and explaining Masā'il to them. They also need to explain Islāmic teachings to the youngsters. Please strive to fulfil the objectives of the Makātib as I have highlighted. This is what I have understood from our senior scholars and pious predecessors. Now, it is your duty to manage your Maktab accordingly and I urge you to convey this message to others.

All praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.

Glossary

ĀLIM-E-RABBĀNĪ:

Devout scholar.

ʿABD: Slave.

AHLE KITĀB: Christians and Jews.

AMEER: Ruler.

ĀMĪN: O Allāh, accept our invocation.

ʿAQĀʾID: Beliefs.

DARS-E-NIZAMĪ:

Curriculum for training as an Islāmic scholar.

DĀRUL ʿULOOM: Islāmic educational institution.

DUĀ PL. DUĀS: Supplications.

ḤĀFIẒ: One who memorises the Qurʾān.

ḤAJJ: Pilgrimage.

ḤAZRAT: Title used to honour a person.

ḤIFẒ: Memorisation of the Qurʾān.

ṬMĀN: Faith.

ISTINJĀʾ: Act of purifying oneself after urination and defecation.

KALIMAH PL. KALIMAHS:

Sentences reflecting a Muslims belief.

KALIMAH ṬAYYIBAH: The Purest of Words, which is the first Kalima.

KALIMAH SHAHAADAT:

Testification, which is the second Kalima.

KHALĪFA: Caliph.

KHULAFĀ-E-RASHIDEEN:

Refers to the four Rightly Guided Caliphs.

MUFTĪ: Islāmīc Jurist.

MAKTAB PL. MAKĀTIB:

Primary centres of Islāmīc learning.

MAKHRAJ PL. MAKHĀRIJ: Point of articulation of letters.

MASĀ'IL: Issues and problems.

MASJID PL MASĀJID: Mosque.

QIBLAH: Direction of the Ka'aba.

QIYĀMAH: Day of Judgement.

ŞAĤĀBĪ PL ŞAĤĀBAH:

Male companion of the Prophet ﷺ.

ŞAĤĀBIYAT: The companionship of the Prophet ﷺ.

ŞALĀH: Prayers.

ŞARĪĀH: Islāmīc religious law.

ŞĪRAH: Way of life, biography of the Prophet ﷺ.

TAKBĪR-E-TAĤRĪMAH: The Takbeer of Prohibition. The formula to commence prayer by raising the hands up to the ears and bringing them down saying Allāhu Akbar and then putting them below the naval is called "*Takbeer-e-TaĤrīmah*". It means that all other things are now forbidden than the prayer.

TAJWĪD: Rules governing the correct recitation of the Qur'an.

TARTĪL: Reading the Qur'an as the Prophet ﷺ used to recite and as he was ordered to by Allāh.

WUḌŪ: Ritual washing to be performed in preparation for prayer and worship.

MAKĀTIB, OR PRIMARY CENTRES OF ISLAMIC LEARNING, play a significant role in preserving the religious and moral identity of our children and future generations. In this sense, they are more than places for learning the basics of Islamic education. In this booklet, five main objectives of Makātib are outlined in a clear and concise manner. It is an English translation of a speech delivered in Urdu by Mawlānā Abdullah Kapodrawī ﷺ before a group of ‘Ulamā, youngsters and professionals at Madīna Academy, Dewsbury, England. This will prove essential reading for not only those managing or teaching at Makātib, but also parents and Muslims generally.



MAWLĀNĀ ABDULLAH KAPODRAWI ﷺ (1935–2018/1354–1439) was born in Burma and raised in Kapodra, Gujarat, India. He studied at Jāmī’ah Islāmīyah Ta’līmuddīn, Dabhel and specialised in Ḥadīth at Dārul ‘Uloom Deoband, where he achieved distinction in his studies. His distinguished teachers included Shaykh al Islām Mawlānā Ḥussain Aḥmad Madanī ﷺ (1879–1957/1296–1377), Mawlānā Muḥammad Ibrahim Balyawī ﷺ (1886–1967/1304–1387) and Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Muradabadī ﷺ (1889–1972/1306–1392). After graduating, he served as a teacher at various institutes and chancellor, for over three decades, at Dārul ‘Uloom Falāḥ-e-Dārain, Tadmekshwar. His books in Arabic and Urdu include Adhwā ‘Ala al Harkat al ‘Ilmiyyah fi Gujarat (Shedding Light on the Educational Renaissance in Gujarat) and Afkār-e-Pareshān (Scattered Thoughts). He will be best remembered for his reformatory efforts, advising Muslim to adopt good character, excel in learning and work for the upliftment of the Ummah.