

Conceptualization of Roadmap of *Qur'anic* Education in Nigeria: Tribute to a Pioneer (Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam)

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Abstract

Religious and moral education offer children what is expected of them, what is normal, what is right and wrong. Education socializes children into patterns of moral behaviour and societal values. Nigeria imbibed the spirit of Islam and the concomitant influence of the *Qur'an*. From early period, *Qur'anic* education had been a precious jewel of faithful Nigerian Muslims. Notable individuals were pioneers in promoting this Islamic education. Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam was one of them. He was ranked among the first-class scholars of *Qur'anic* and Arabic Studies in Nigeria. He spent his entire life establishing and founding *Qur'anic* schools particularly for the benefit of the children of the down-trodden. His effort was crowned with outstanding successes by nurturing children who later became leaders, academicians, diplomats, and professionals, captains of industries, theologians and erudite Islamic scholars. After his departure, a review of curricula of the *Qur'anic* school has become inevitable so as to sustain the legacies he and his contemporaries left behind.

Keywords: *Qur'anic* education, Nigeria History of Education, Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam, Reform of *Qur'anic* education

Introduction

KNOWLEDGE is the concept that describes the essence of education. Education is thus, a practical expression of knowledge. Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of man's intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses.¹ Education in general term is a fundamentally optimistic human endeavour characterised by aspirations for progress and betterment.² It is a means to overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and social status.³ It is likened to a platform through which children can develop according to their unique needs and potential.⁴ It is the best means of achieving the much desired social equality.⁵ Educationists contend that the

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¹ Mabud, S.A., (2001), Education in Muslim Countries and the Makkah Declaration, Muslim Education Quarterly, The Islamic Academy, vol. 18, No. 4, Cambridge, U.K., p. 3.

² Schofield, K., *The Purposes of Education, A Contribution to the discussion on 2010: Queensland State Education*, (1999).

³ Sargent, M. (1994) *The New Sociology for Australians* (3rd Ed), Longman Chesire, Melbourne

⁴ Schofield, K.

⁵ Sargent, M.

purpose of education should be to develop every individual to their full potential and give them a chance to achieve as much in life as their natural abilities allow (meritocracy). Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and attainment of perfection.⁶ The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to God on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.⁷

Faith, as an important tool that qualifies one to be a Muslim, makes all equal in the sight of God as regards the essentials of citizenship in His Kingdom.⁸ But, there is leadership, and rank, and degree, joined with greater or less responsibility. That depends largely on knowledge – the true knowledge.⁹ *Qur'anic* education has its own historical pattern. This pattern is demonstrated and demarcated in Nigeria by two geographical frontiers – North and the South of Nigeria. As far as the South-Western Nigeria is concerned in the account of *Qur'anic* education, Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam was an epitome. He was not only an erudite scholar, but a historic pioneer of Islamic and *Qur'anic* education in Nigeria generally and Yorubaland in particular. He worked relentlessly for the promotion of knowledge. Through his efforts, many, especially children of the downtrodden were transformed from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and guidance.¹⁰

Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam left a monumental legacy. He was one of the pioneers who charted pragmatic roadmap for *Qur'anic* education in the contemporary Nigerian society. For this legacy to endure, those who succeed him must ensure that this legacy is not only sustained but also improved upon so as to be relevant in facing the modern challenges. They should not be left behind as the wave of Islamic education reform is blowing across the globe. It should be noted that the goal of education is to consider the dynamics behind internal reforms which are already taking place within the broad field of Islamic education.

0:1 Education: Historical, Theoretical and, Comparative Perspectives

Within the theoretical framework of education, religious and moral education offer children what is expected of them, what is normal, what is right and wrong. It is often

⁶ Mabud, S.A., at p. 3

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Hamzah, A.D., (2007), Ma'a Salaam – Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam!, Daily Independent, Lagos, p. E9.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

claimed that values are *caught* rather than *taught*; through their ethos, schools socialize children into patterns of moral behaviour.¹¹

At the dawn of Islam, the Prophet's mosque in Madinah was not only the first school in the Islamic State, but also the first known public school in the history of the Arabian Peninsula. Here education was free without discrimination or differentiation among the Muslims on account of race, age, colour, or gender.¹² Accommodation was provided to students (who were mostly poor) as well as those who had travelled from distance places in search of knowledge. Those who wanted to live and work in the city of Madinah were able to reside at the Mosque until they were able to secure job.¹³ The task of the Mosque is an educational one which freed human beings from the stigma of ignorance, and provided them with knowledge and virtue.¹⁴ The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah was the first school in Islam where education with its principles, values, behaviours and relations was found. Islamic education was thus based on the Mosque as a focus of relationships, an institute for teaching (education), a court of justice, a gathering point for the Army, a place for receiving ambassadors, and so on.¹⁵

During the reign of Umar Ibn al-Khatib, Islamic school methodology took a new dimension as a number of schools were founded. This was done with aim of integrating people of different backgrounds into the Islamic Ummah along advancements in the acquisition of scientific knowledge. This ostensibly required the establishment of independent institutes, organized schools, literary councils, bookstores, and of course libraries.¹⁶

Modern thinkers contend that the purpose of education is not to guzzle the pupil's minds with facts but to prepare them for a future of purity and sincerity. Thus, the total commitment to character-building based on the ideals of Islamic ethics is the highest goal of Islamic education.¹⁷ According to the Sophists of ancient Greece, emphasis is placed on education for individual excellence, rendering the interests and goals of society as a whole to a secondary degree. Sparta, on the other hand maintains that the sole-purpose of education was to submerge individual identity into

¹¹ Charles C. H., and Warren, A.N., *Taking Religion Seriously Across The Curriculum*, ASCD, (1998).

¹² Al-Otaibi, M.M., and Rashid, H.M., The Role of Schools in Islamic Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 14:4 (Winter 1997), p. 4.

¹³ Al-Salmuti, N., *School Organization and Educational Modernization*, Dar Ashrooq Printing and Distribution, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, (1980).

¹⁴ Badawi, M., Improving the Role of the Masjid to Serve the Religious Cause, *Al-Manhal*, Vol. 50, (1989), No. 467, p. 91.

¹⁵ Na'im, M., The Real Teacher and the First Prophetical Schools, *Al-Azhar Magazine* (1960) No. 8, p. 447.

¹⁶ Mutawali, M., *History of Islamic Education*, Al-Kharji Press, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, (1992); Hasan, A.A., *Islamic Education in the Fourth Hijra Century* Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, Cairo, Egypt, (1978).

¹⁷ Al-Ibrashi, M.A., *Education in Islam*, Studies in Islam series, The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, Egypt, (1967), p. 11.

the totality of the community or group.¹⁸ Islam maintains a balance between the two ‘purports’. It holds that individual excellence is not sacrificed for the good of the group nor was the goal of the group given second place to that of the individual.¹⁹

Max Weber’s postulate education framework considered to have a pragmatic perspective. Weber identifies and elaborates on three types of educational goals. He refers to the first of these three as ‘charismatic education’ which is dominant ‘in periods in which religion reaches its apex point’. The aim is to awaken ‘religious intuition and the inner readiness for transcendental experience’. The ultimate aim here is not the transfer of specific content or skill but to stir up certain innate powers’. This is exemplified by the well-known Sufis notion ‘*tarbiyah*’ which is concerned with the individual’s inner excellence.²⁰ The other type according to Webber is ‘education for culture’. This is on the belief that certain contents perceived as classical have the inner qualifications of breeding a certain social type. It is not only the substance which is valued but the style of life which unconsciously will be transferred through the ideas presented. A good example is the creation of the gentleman or of the Chinese mandarin who acquire through the study of the classics a certain mental mood, style of thought, and inner disposition and sentiment’. Here, emphasis is placed on social distinction.²¹

The third category identified by Weber is what he refers to as ‘specialist education’. Here efforts is geared toward the transfer of a special knowledge or skill and is strictly correlated with the growth of division of labor which makes the specialist indispensable in modern industrial society.’ This is illustrated by the type of education imparted in the modern secular trade schools where the whole relationship is purely based on mechanical methodology which lacks the inner depth of charismatic education and the concern for the human personality characteristic of the cultural education.²²

Islam synthesizes the three types in its own methodology giving significance to inner purity to be manifested in social consciousness and idealistic endeavor towards the mastery of any skill to which the person has assigned himself.²³ In the traditional methodology of Islamic education, the focus was never separated from other aspects

¹⁸ Badawi, M.A.Z., *Traditional Islamic Education – Its Aims and Purpose in the Present Day, in Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, (edited by Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas, Hodder and Stoughton, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, (1979), p. 104.

¹⁹ Badawi, M.A.Z., *ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Karl, M., and Stewart, W.A.C., *And Introduction to the Sociology of Education*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, (1962), pp. 161-62.

²³ Badawi, M.A.Z., *supra* at p. 105.

of society rather; it was aimed at achieving harmony with all other activities and institutions to confirm them and to be reinforced by them. That explains why the mosque, the epicenter of all religious activities, was the apex of the whole system of Islamic education. Thus, neither the educator nor the student was detached from the rest of their society. Similarly, all were involved in the daily activities of the community such that students were able to retain their close contact with everyday life. There was always a close personal relationship between the teacher and the student which guaranteed impartation of both moral and spiritual guidance alongside the teaching of various skills.²⁴ Thus, the level of success of the student under the traditional methodology was measured not only by scored marks, but by the totality of the student as a person. This means that his piety and moral conduct was regarded as of equal or indeed superior importance to his attainment in other sphere of life endeavors.²⁵

It is noted that the core subject in traditional education was the Holy Qur'an, which formed the preoccupation of the traditional school from the very moment that it came into being.²⁶ Muslim child began with the Qur'an by learning to read, recite and memorize and by this method, he develops his knowledge of Islam and derives his moral ideal.²⁷ In a comparative sense, the modern system of education which operates like a factory with a production line measuring its success by statistical tables, traditional Islamic education measured its activity by the fact that it stimulated the community as a whole to take an interest in the higher issues so fundamental to its nature and survival.²⁸ A knowledgeable individual is recognized not only on account of his academic achievement, but also on account of his contribution and close relation to the people and environment he lives in. Emphasis is thus placed on individual qualities and practical demonstration of scholasticism rather than paper qualification.

A good example of a historic scholar in this regard is Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328 CE). He was an Islamic scholar (*alim*), theologian and logician. He lived during the troubled times of the Mongol invasions.²⁹ He was a member of the school founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and is considered by his followers, along with Ibn Qudamah, as one of the two most significant proponents of Hanbalism; in the modern era, his adherents often refer to the two as "the two sheikhs

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibn Khaldoun, *The Muqaddima*, pp. 397-398; Al-Ahwani, M.F., *Education in Islam*, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo Egypt, (1957), p. 100; Al-Qabisi, A.H.A.K., *Treatise on Education*, edited by Al-Ahwani, *supra* at p. 282.

²⁷ Badawi, M.A.Z., *supra* at p. 106.

²⁸ Badawi, M.A.Z., *supra* at p. 107.

²⁹ See generally Abu Zayd Bakr bin Abdullah, *Madkhal al-mufassal ila fiqh al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal wa-takhrijat al-ashab*. Riyadh: Dar al 'Aminah, 2007

and Sheikh ul-Islam.³⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah acquainted himself with the secular and religious sciences of his time. He devoted attention to Arabic literature and lexicography as well as studying mathematics and calligraphy. For example, he propounded and elaborated a theory of circumstantial analysis of the market mechanism, with a theoretical insight unusual in his time. His discourses on the welfare advantages and disadvantages of market regulation and deregulation have an almost contemporary ring to them.³¹ Commenting on the power of supply and demand, he argued that "If desire for goods increases while its availability decreases, its price rises. On the other hand, if availability of the good increases and the desire for it decreases, the price comes down."³²

As for the religious sciences, he studied jurisprudence from his father and became a representative of the Hanbali school of thought. Though he remained faithful throughout his life to that school, whose doctrines he had mastered, he also acquired knowledge of the Islamic disciplines of the Qur'an and the Hadith. He also studied theology (kalam), philosophy, and Sufism.

His troubles with government began when he went with a delegation of *ulama* to talk to Ghazan Khan, the Khan of the Mongol Ilkhans in Iran, to stop his attack on the Muslims. It is reported that none of the *ulama* dared to say anything to the Khan except Ibn Taymiyyah who said:

*"You claim that you are Muslim and you have with you Mu'adhdhins, Muftis, Imams and Shaykhs but you invaded us and reached our country for what? While your father and your grandfather Hulagu were non-believers, they did not attack and they kept their promise. But you promised and broke your promise."*³³

Ibn Taymiyyah left a monumental mark on the path of scholasticism. In his own account Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, one of his students credited 350 works to him. Al-Dhahabi,^{another} Ibn Taymiyyah student credited 500 works to his master which has been republished extensively in Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and India.³⁴ Some of these works include *A Great Compilation of Fatwa - (Majmu al-Fatwa al-Kubra)*, *Minhaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah - (The Pathway of as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah) - Volumes 1-4*; *Al-Aqidah Al-Waasitiyyah - (The Creed to the People of Wāsiṭ)*; *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-*

³⁰ Abu Zayd Bakr bin Abdullah, *ibid*.

³¹ Louis, B., *The Mediterranean Tradition in Economic Thought*, Routledge. (1994), p. 99.

³² Hosseini, H. S., "Contributions of Medieval Muslim Scholars to the History of Economics and their Impact: A Refutation of the Schumpeterian Great Gap". In Biddle, Jeff E.; Davis, Jon B.; Samuels, Warren J. *A Companion to the History of Economic Thought*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (2003), p. 28.

³³ Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah

<http://www.fatwaonline.com/scholarsbiographies/8thcentury/ibntaymiyyah.htm> (accessed 23rd January, 2013).

³⁴ Sharif, M.M. *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Pakistan Philosophical Congress and Royal Book Co., Pakistan (2010) p. 798

‘aql wa al-naql (The rejection of the conflict between reason and revelation) - 10 Volumes otherwise known as *Al-Muwāfaqa* ("harmony") *Majmoo' al-Fatawa* - (Compilation of Fatawa) Volumes 1–36.³⁵

3:0 Nigeria: A Community of Islam and *Qur'an*

Islam entered Nigeria in the early 9th century CE, and was deeply rooted in the Kanem-Bornu Empire during the reign of *Humme Jilmi*. It had spread to the principal cities of the northern part of the country by the 16th century, later moving into the countryside and towards the Middle Belt uplands. Some historians contend that its arrival was earlier than that. For instance, Sheikh Dr. Abu-Abdullah Abdul-Fattah Adelabu argues that Islam had reached Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, as early as the 1st century of Hijrah through Muslim traders and expeditions during the reign of the Arab conqueror, Uqba ibn al Nafia (622–683) whose Islamic conquests under the Umayyad dynasty, in Amir Muavia and Yazid periods, spread all Northern Africa or the Maghrib Al-Arabi, including present-day Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco.³⁶

The South-Western Nigeria is predominantly occupied by the Yoruba speaking people and it cuts across Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo States and part of Kwara State. In the 18th century, there were about fourteen major kingdoms in the South Western Part of Nigeria. They included Oyo Kingdom, Ife kingdom, Ekiti, Igbomina, Ijana, Ijebu, Ijesha, Egba, Egbado, Ketu, Ondo, Owu and Sabe kingdom.³⁷ Yoruba myths trace their origin to Ile-Ife, an important town in Osun State. Other theories regarding their origin point to Makkah and Upper Egypt as their point of departure and the second millennium B.C as the period of their migration to Ile Ife.³⁸ That the Yoruba came from Makkah was confirmed by the fact that they traced their progeny to Lamurudu, which has the same pronunciation with Namruth in Arabic.³⁹

Islam arrived in the South-Western Yoruba-speaking Nigeria during the time of Mansa Musa's Mali Empire. This claim is supported by some African writers and historians citing the Arab anthropologist Abduhu Badawi, who argues that the fall of Koush southern Egypt and the prosperity of the politically multicultural Abbasid

³⁵ Sharif, M.M. *ibid*.

³⁶ Sheikh Dr. Abu-Abdullah Adelabu, *Awqaf Africa, Damascus: Islam in Africa – West African in Particular, and Missionary and Colonization in Africa*; <http://www.esinislam.com> (accessed 10th April, 2013).

³⁷ Olatunbosun. P.O., *History of West Africa (From A.D. 1000 to the Present Day)* Ilesha; Fatiregun Press and Publishing Company), (1979) p. 102.

³⁸ Coleman J. S. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (California: University of California Press), (1958), p. 25.

³⁹ Ibrahim, A.R., *Muslim Educational Reform in South Western Nigeria*, <http://unilorin.edu.ng/publications/adebayori/Muslim%20Educational%20reform%20in%20westthern%20Nig.htm> (accessed 23 January, 2014)

period in the continent had created several streams of migration, moving west in the mid-9th Sub-Sahara.⁴⁰ Arguing in similar vein, Adelabu notes that the popularity and influences of the Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258), the second great dynasty with the rulers carrying the title of 'Caliph' fostered peaceful and prosperous search of pastures by the inter-cultured Muslims from Nile to Niger and Arab traders from Desert to Benue, echoing the conventional historical view⁴¹ that the conquest of North Africa by the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate between AD 647–709 effectively ended Catholicism in Africa for several centuries.⁴²

A source has confirmed that Islam made headway into Yorubaland for the first time around the second half of the eleventh century by the Murabitun mistakenly taken by some historians as Hausas.⁴³ The nomenclature “Imale” given to Islam in the south-western Nigeria gives the impression that the religion came from Mali and spread by the Murabitun whom they believed to be Malians. This confirms the submission of Sheikh Adan Al-Aloory that Islam made its appearance in Yorubaland in the 13th century during the tenure of Mansa Musa of Mali.⁴⁴ Professor Danmole a Nigerian historian also claims to have come across some Muslims in Oke-Imale Ilorin who claimed that their ancestors came from Mali to settle in the town. He however doubted the authenticity of this claim since it was not possible that these Ilorin Muslims were descendants of Wangara lineages which traced their origin to old Mali.⁴⁵

Available records show that Islam had been accepted and acknowledged as the religion of the majority of the leading figures in the Bornu Empire during the reign of Mai (king) Idris Alooma (1571–1603), despite the fact that a large part of that territory still adhered to traditional animist religions.⁴⁶ He furthered the cause of Islam in the country by introducing Islamic courts, establishing mosques, and setting up a hostel in Mecca, the Islamic pilgrimage destination, for Kanuris.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ See Global Christianity, A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population, The PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life, PEW Research Center, (2011).

⁴¹ <http://www.bethel.edu/~letnie/AfricanChristianity/WesternNorthAfricaHomepage.html> (accessed 10th April, 2013).

⁴² *Mawsuaat Al-Islam Al-Kubrah* (The Big Encyclopediad of Islam) Volume 2 page 939 and volume 3 646; see also Badawi, A., *Ma'a Harak ul-Islam fi Ifriqiyah* (Siding Islamic Movement in Africa) Cairo, (1979) p. 77.

⁴³ Balogun S.U “Islamization of knowledge in Nigeria; The Role of the Sokoto dynasty” *Hamdard Islamicus* Vol. xx1 (Oct. – Dec. 1998), NO. 4.

⁴⁴ Al-Aloory, A., *Nasim Saba fi Akhbaril-Islam wa 'Ulama' Biladi Yuruba*, Maktabat Wahabat, Cairo, Egypt, (1990).

⁴⁵ Danmole H.O., The Spread of Islam in Ilorin Emirate in the 19th century” *NATAIS*, Vol. II Dec. 1981, No. 2.

⁴⁶ Joseph, K., "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a 'Secular' State". *Journal of Religion in Africa* (BRILL) **24** (4), (November 1996) p. 338.

⁴⁷ Lapidus, I. M., "Islam in West Africa", *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, (2002). p. 405.

Qur'anic School in West Africa

Islamic education was perhaps the first organized educational system that was introduced to the indigenous West African populations.⁴⁸ The spread of Islamic schools in West Africa was the aftermath of trading activities and wars. As trade routes expanded and Arabs and newly converted African kings and princes conquered new territories, Islam spread to new and wider areas. The first Islamic schools were established along the trade routes in West Africa.⁴⁹ The small hotels and restaurants along the trade routes were used as Qur'anic reading facilities. The present West African term *Marabout* used for the Qur'anic teacher is derived from the Arabic word *Murabit*, which means inhabitant of *ribat* or the way-station along the trade route.⁵⁰ The most prevalent provision of Islamic schooling in the West African context is through Qur'anic schools. As in any other regions, the Qur'anic school in West Africa is a small facility, usually attached to a mosque where children learn the Qur'an and the basic duties of Muslim life. These schools, as in other parts of the world, are mostly community-based and community-financed places.

The colonial authorities founded a few local Qur'anic schools as part of its contribution to blend both Islamic and regular school system. The schools teach regular curriculum as well as Qur'anic studies and Arabic language and their *marabouts* are much more learned than the *marabouts* in Qur'anic schools. Another form of religious education in West Africa is "Improved Koranic Schools". This term covers a variety of initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international organizations. The aim was to introduce additional subjects in the best of the existing Qur'anic schools.⁵¹ Under these initiatives, teachers are given specialized training and are prepared to teach additional secular subjects such as math, science etc. These Qur'anic schools in context adopted Arabic as medium of teaching irrespective of the mother tongue of their students. It is however noted that the only difference is that in this region, in several Qur'anic schools, the Arabic writing is semi-phonetic. It can be and is used to transcribe several of the languages of West Africa. For example, it is called 'Ajami' in some parts of the Northern Nigeria. Speakers of these languages then often acquire literacy in the course of their Islamic education even if they never understand anything in Arabic.⁵²

⁴⁸ Anzar, U., Islamic Education, A Brief History of Madrassas With Comment on Curricula and Current Pedagogical Practices, (2003), <http://www.uvm.edu> (accessed 21st Jan., 2014)

⁴⁹ Peter et al, E., *The Practical Application of Koranic Schooling in West Africa*, Florida State University, (1994) as quoted by Anzar, U., supra.

⁵⁰ Peter et al, E., *ibid.*

⁵¹ Peter et al, E., *ibid.*

⁵² Peter et al, E., *ibid.*

4:0 *Qur'anic* Schools and Their Metamorphosis in Western Nigeria

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Islamic educational institutions had started to emerge in large number.⁵³ This is in sharp contrasts to the development of Christian and Western Education and its impact on Nigerian elite before and after independence.⁵⁴

Before the arrival of British colonialists, the tasks of establishment and management of *Qur'anic* education schools were spearheaded by local Muslim scholars and preachers who considered that as a rewarding religious duty. The increased movements of Muslim traders, craftsmen, and workers, together with the rise of the *Tijaniyya* and *Qadiriyyah* Brotherhoods contributed immensely to the expansion of these *Qur'anic* schools when the region eventually found itself at the grip of the colonial hegemony.⁵⁵ For achieving result, various methods were devised with a view to make learning easy for the young children. It is possible to classify the methods into two phases, namely, the traditional and modern phases.

The methods adopted under the traditional teaching curriculum include, nursery, junior, and senior levels. The nursery level, usually took the form of kindergarten where small children were thought the art of recitation of shorter chapters of the *Qur'an* by memorization. By the time they graduated to the junior level they must have memorized the *Juz'u Amm* of the *Qur'an*. At the junior level, they were taught the Arabic letters by spelling through the recitation of the *Qur'an*. One interesting thing about this methodology at this stage was the localization of the names given to the Arabic letters which were obviously manifesting the local dialects. For example, the first letter known as 'alif' was called 'alefu', 'ha' was called 'akarami', 'kha' was called 'amirua', 'kaf' was called 'kamlasa', 'nun' was called 'nukunda' etc.

By this method, students of junior level were able to pronounce words of the *Qur'an* by themselves and thus be able to complete recitation of the Holy Book at this stage. By the time they graduated to the senior level, they were expected not only to be able to recite the *Qur'an* fluently but, also to be able to read and write in Arabic even though at this stage they might not know the meaning of their recitations.

Another interesting thing about the traditional approach of teaching the *Qur'an* at these two levels was the traditional ceremony usually attached to graduation from one

⁵³ Reichmuth, S., *New Trends in Islamic Education in Nigeria: A Preliminary Account*, *Dic Welt des Islams*, New Series Bd. 29, Nr ¼, BRILL, (1989), p. 41.

⁵⁴ See Ajayi, J.A.A., *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-91: The Making of an Educated Elite*, London 1962; Ayandele, E.A., *The Educational Elite in the Nigerian Society*, Ibadan, (1974).

⁵⁵ J.F.A. Ajayi/M. Crowder in J.F.A. Ajayi/M. Crowder (eds.): *History of West Africa II*, London, (1974), pp. 539ff as quoted by Reichmuth, S., at p. 42.

stage to the other. For example, when a child completed recitation to *Surat Al-Fil* (the Chapter of Elephant), mini-graduation ceremony was organized by serving chicken soup and other local delicacies among his or her co-students. When a junior student got to *Surat Yasin* (Chapter Yasin), a medium graduation ceremony was organized by sacrificing a ram which will be served among people including the teacher, the co-students and other well-wishers. When the students eventually completed the recitation of the *Qur'an*, the ceremony would be deferred till when he or she would be due for wedding ceremony. Then, the *Qur'anic* graduation would be combined with the wedding ceremony. It was usually in an elaborate occasion, which attracted people from far and near.

At the senior level, the students now were considered qualified enough to start the '*ilimi*' literally translated to mean 'knowledge'. At this stage students began to read the *Qur'an* exegeses under the tutelage of capable local scholars. At the same time, he would be reading books of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). Teachers and students usually held the classes sitting down on the ground. Students usually sat down either in circle or directly in the front of the teachers who will be conducting the recitation of all of them at the same time. With the passage of time coupled with the arrival and influence of colonialism this traditional method became gradually obsolete and disappeared. This marked the beginning of the second phase.

The Western education brought about by the British Colonialist with its obvious professional prospects posed a serious challenge to the Muslim communities in Yorubaland particularly in Lagos. Thus they began to organize their schools in line with the Western methodology of education. They were first inspired by the activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The few existing Muslim societies established and ran Western Schools for Muslim children in order to counter the educational impact of the Christian missions and to "promote the religious, moral and social advancement of the Muslim community."⁵⁶

The impact of this new development was overwhelming on the existing *Qur'anic* schools that have been hitherto used to the traditional system. Thus, a number of scholars began to introduce reform into the *Qur'an* teaching curriculum. The reforms include, curriculum studies, school environment, book and learning materials, and of course, training for teachers of Islamic *Qur'anic* schools. The pioneers of this movement were Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al-Aloory, Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam, Sheikh Mudathir Abdul Salaam and host of other notable Muslim scholars in the

⁵⁶ This was quoted from the Constitution of the Young Ansar-Ud-Deen Society, founded December 21, 1923 in Lagos. See also Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria: Souvenir Brochure, 1923-73, Lagos, (1973), p. 28; also, Gbadamosi, G.O., The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* IV, I, December 1967, pp. 112-115; Fihser, H.J., *Ahmadiyyah*, Oxford (1963), p. 169 as quoted by Reichmuth, S., at p. 42.

Yoruba Western-region of Nigeria. Suffice to say that it is now relevant to focus attention specifically on the subject-personality of this tribute – Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam.

5:0 The Man – Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam

Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam was a man of history. And history recognizes him as such. History testifies to the fact that he set his intention and will to achieve a totally lofty and just goal and then devoted his entire life to it in such an extremely fearless and committed manner, with personal sacrifice and exertion. The goal he set for himself was to serve Allah and humanity through the promotion of education and impartation of knowledge. He was divinely enabled to achieve these set goals.

The foot-print of Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam on the terrain of modern Islamic and Arabic education in Nigeria will remain forever. He left an indelible mark not only as an erudite scholar but also an educationist who spent his entire life-time in the struggle to promote Islamic education to all that desired to have it. He was a teacher, a father and a generalissimo in the struggle for the welfare of the downtrodden.

His humility, austerity, piety, deep knowledge of the Qur'an and Islamic sciences and his sagacity gave him great distinction among his contemporaries. He was also a great scholar of Arabic literature and pioneer in the field of grammar and rhetoric. He had a rich and versatile personality. In spite of these attainments he remained a modest and humble man. He abhorred publicity, noise and flamboyancy. And that explains why he was referred to as a 'silent achiever'.

5:1 A Resume of Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam

Sheikh Murtadha was born in 1918 to Sheikh Abdul Salaam, a prominent scholar of Yorubaland at that time. He learnt the art and diction of recitation of the Qur'an and Ilm (Islamic knowledge) under him. He went further to study under a number of scholars. Among who were: Shiekh Uthman Olanese (popularly known in Ibadan as Baba Lanase); Malam Bala, a scholar from Abuja who was a resident in Ibadan at that time; Sheikh Fahi Al-Misri (a Sudanese scholar) who was based in Odoye, an area of Ibadan; and Sheikh Abdul Riddah Duhaimi (also a Lebanese scholar based in Ibadan); and all of blessed memory.

At an early age of 15, Sheikh Murtadha had become an enigma and a reference point for scholasticism. And precisely in 1933 the enigmatic personality in him had started to manifest and attract people with thirst and desire for knowledge. Thus, he became teachers of students across all age brackets in spite of his tender age.

5:2 Pioneering Step in a Roadmap of Qur'anic Education

In 1957 he started taking steps towards establishing an institution which would later be known as Ma'ad Al-Arabi Al-Naijiri (i.e. Arabic Institute of Nigeria). The institute took off in Ita-Bale area of Ibadan a year later. In 1960, the school moved to Oke-Are which is very close to the location of the present Galaxy Television Station in Ibadan. The place belonged originally to Nawair-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria.

Speaking about the manifest commitment of Sheikh Murtadha to this set goal, Sheikh Abdul Wahab Bayo Ahmad, the Wakil (deputy and the School Principal) and who was one of the noble men around him from the inception said: "Sheikh Murtadha used to spend everything he had, just to ensure that the institution of his dream came to reality."

At its early stage, the school had four levels, namely, Sanat Al-Ulah, Al-Thanniyah, Al-Thalithah and Al-Rabi'ah (meaning years I, II, III and IV). It remained at this location until 1960 when it moved to its permanent site at Elekuro where it had remained till now. The pioneering teachers and scholars of the school include, Sheikh Abdul Ganny Salahuddin (of blessed memory, who was one of the early four graduates of Marqaz, Agege, Lagos); Ustadh Abdul Wahab Zakariyah (also a graduate of Markaz, Agege, Lagos); Sheikh Bunyamin Fazaazi (who was one of the founding graduates of Ma'ad); and Sheikh Ahmad Khidiri (a Sudanese scholar).

Sheikh Abdul Wahab Bayo Ahmad, the Wakil, and his close friend Sheikh Abdul Rauf Mustapha, one time chairman of Oyo State Pilgrims Welfare Board were among the pioneering graduates of the school. The duo attended one year-training program at Markaz Agege after which they joined the teaching staff of the school.

The school started with only 33 students. Due to poverty and other prevailing social challenges at that time, this number came down to only 7 within a short period of time as parents withdrew their children. However, the school began to witness a dramatic popularity and acceptance within and outside Nigeria after settling down at its permanent site. Muslims parents from every nooks and crannies of the old Western Region began to send their children to the institute.⁵⁷

In 1963, Al-Azhar University of Cairo, Egypt accorded the school recognition. It showed interest in sending teachers and experts to teach in Ma'ad. That year, the University asked the institute to send visa. But due to diplomatic protocol which many were not conversant with then, this was not possible. The University rather sent two teachers to the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria. This was

⁵⁷ Sheikh Abdul Wahab, A.B. (2010), in an interview with him on the subject.

understandable. Ansar-Ud-Deen Society at that time was a leading Islamic organization with membership from the Nigerian elites who have western education and connection with people in government.

However, in 1965, the school succeeded in securing a visa. “When I got to the Immigration department at Kakawa Lagos, I was looking for someone who can assist. As I could not speak English language, I was not in a good position to approach any of the officials of the department. I was holding an Arabic text-book in my hand. One Mr. Husain, an immigration official saw me, and greeted me in Islamic way. I replied and began to speak in Arabic language. As he could not converse in Arabic, he called one Abu Bakr Denge, another immigration official who could speak little of Arabic. The two finally assisted in securing a visa. The visa was sent to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. The University sent Sheikh Ibrahim Khalil to teach in the school. He was the first foreign scholar from the Arab world to have taught in Ma’ad.”⁵⁸

Shortly afterwards, some universities and Islamic organizations in the Arab world started to send teachers and scholars to the school. This development boosted the image of the school and parents began to send their wards from different parts of the country to study in the school.

5:3 School Curriculum and Its Positive Results

The curriculum of the school was based mainly on three major methodologies, namely, teaching of Arabic language; Islamic Studies and culture; Practical Morality and Teaching Methodology. Arabic language study covers all related subjects which include, Arabic Grammar, Literature, Etymology, Philology, Translation and Literary Tutorial etc. Islamic Studies were mainly on Sciences of Qur’an and Sunnah or Hadith (i.e. sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad), Theology and Jurisprudence and Moral principles.

One unique characteristic of this curriculum is that it has a mechanism of inculcating in students ability to cope not only with challenges at all stages in life, but also, serves as a stimulant propelling them to go into various branches of knowledge – science, technology, management sciences, law military and vocational sectors among others. That explains why many of its graduates though, mainly trained in art and religious subjects at that early stages in life, but later found themselves fit and capable to excel among their contemporaries from various other backgrounds. Thus, the school has made mark in the anal of educational development in Nigeria. It has

⁵⁸ Ibid.

produced world-class scholars, academicians, diplomats, professionals, captains of industries and of course theologians and erudite Islamic scholars.⁵⁹

5:4 Glorious Results

Its graduates include, Sheikh Abdur Rashid Hadiyatul Lah, the Proprietor of the Shari'ah College in Iwo and former Chairman, Osun State Pilgrims Board; Sheikh Abdul Wahab Bayo Ahmad who is the Wakil of the institute; Sheikh Abdul Rauf Mustafa, the Proprietor of the Islamic Vocational Institute in Ibadan and former Chairman, Oyo State Pilgrims Board; Professor Abdul Qodir Zubair, the former Dean of Law, University of Ilorin, and Dr. Abdul Rafiu Omotosho, who is currently the head of the Department of Islamic Law, University of Ilorin; Professor Muhibuddin Opeloye, former Dean of Arts, Lagos State University (LASU) and now a commissioner in the Osun State Oyinlola's administration; Professor Misbahuddin Rahimson, also of the Faculty of Arts, LASU; Dr. Isa Ade Bello, former head of Department of Islamic Law also, in LASU; Dr Ishaq Lakin Akintola, an Associate Professor, and Dr. M.G. Haroun both of the Faculty of Arts in LASU; Barrister Abdul Rahman Olayiwola, a Mayor in one of the British counties; Colonel Salman Agboluaje of the Nigerian Army; Sheikh Muhyideen Ajani Bello, Missioner of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Kano State Branch and renowned preacher; Barrister Muslihuddin Olawale Imran, Ustadh Abdur Rashid Lawal and Ustadh Bilyamin Abu Bakr all of the Organization of Muslim Unity (OMU); Ustadh Zikrullah Al-Shafi', Ustadh Tirmidhi Jami'i and Ustadh Abdul Hadi Abdul Ganny all of The Muslim Congress (TMC); Dr. Sulaiman Salahuddin, a lecturer at the Niger State College of Education, Minna; Dr. Husain Salahuddin, a medical doctor at the Military Hospital, Yaba, Lagos; Alhaj Maroof Lawal, a diplomat serving in the Nigeria Embassy in Sudan, Alhaj Luqman Jimoh, present Chairman, Oyo State Pilgrims Board and of course, this writer. The list is *ad infinitum*.

Ma'ad Al-Arabi Al-Naijiri has been a success story. But it did not mark the end of Sheikh Murtadha's struggle to achieve excellence and egalitarianism in the Arabic/Islamic education sector. He moved a step further. He established another giant institution – the Institute of Arabic & Islamic Studies based in Kumapayi, Olodo, and a suburb of the ancient city of Ibadan. The school was affiliated to the Nigerian Premier University of Ibadan since 1992. It awards Diploma Certificate in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

According to Ustadh Abdul Bashir Abdul Salaam, son of Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam and principal, a separate section is created within the institution to cater for

⁵⁹ Hamzah, A.D. (2007), Ma'a Salaam – Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam!, Daily Independent, Lagos, p. E9.

women folk. Similarly, plan is at an advanced stage to upgrade the school to a degree awarding institution.

5:5 His Death

On bright afternoon of Sunday 30 August, 2007, teachers and students have turned up as usual for their normal academic works. On that same day, the school alumni converged at its premises to deliberate on preparation for the school Golden Jubilee Celebration. Shortly after the Dhur (afternoon prayer) of that day, the renowned scholar, a Juris-consult, and the Proprietor of the Institute, Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam passed on to the world-beyond. He did not however leave without observing the Dhur prayer of that fateful afternoon.

At the same time in the year 2006, when Ramadan was around the corner, his private physician counseled that he should refrain from fasting and rather take time to relax by keeping away from his usual Tafsir seasons that he usually held. Sheikh Murtadha reaction was to the effect that: “if it is all because that I should not die, I will rather go on with fasting and Tafsir season.” He went ahead, fasted and held Tafsir seasons. These are exercises that are strenuous for even a young man. But Sheikh Murtadha, an octogenarian completed fasting the whole month of that year Ramadan and held his educative Tafsir seasons successfully, and death did not come.

5:6 Children, Friends and Associates

Sheikh Murtadhan was blessed with wives and children. His children include, Abdul Bashir, Nasir, Mansour, Yahya, Abdul Wahab, Ismail, Ahmad Olayiwola, Ibrahim all Abdul Salaams. His daughters include, Alimat Sa’adiyah, Maryam and Titilola.

His friends and associates include Alhaj G.O Oti, former Deputy Governor of the Nigerian Central Bank; Alhaj Olawale Kuye, former Director of Budget in Alhaji Shehu Shagari’s government; Justice Bolarinwa Babalakin, retired Judge of the Nigerian Supreme Court; and Justice Jimoh of the Oyo State High Court.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported to have said that: “When a person dies, record of his deed is closed except in three things: his knowledge that had continued to benefit people left behind; or righteous child or children that pray for him; or Sadaqatul Jariyah, i.e. a charity works that had continued to be beneficial to the people.”⁶⁰

Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam was blessed to have left all the above attributes. He was a father of righteous sons and daughters. He was a teacher of teachers and

⁶⁰ Al-Sahih al-Bukhari by al-Hafiz Abu ‘Abd-Allah Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari.

scholar of scholars. He left institutions that would continue to serve humanity till eternity, Inshaa Allah. This means that he would continue to receive the rewards and bounties of God till eternity – God willing!

Dr. Ishaq Lakin Akintola⁶¹ has once described him as: “an icon of knowledge, a paragon of humility and a power-house of Islamic reformation.” He was a practical expression of his name Abdul Salaam – the servant of Lord of Peace. Despite his knowledge, despite his monumental achievements, and despite his fame he led a simple life. He was humble to the core. He was devout and committed to the worship of God. While alive, he was a humble person who out of humility and fear of God abhorred all forms of publicity and vain glory.

But those who acquired knowledge through him and those who were born into the world of intellectualism and guidance owe a duty of showcasing his qualities so as to serve as a model for others who did not know him while alive and especially the contemporary Nigerians, many of whom have been engulfed in excessive love for materialism, show-off and vain glory.

His biological, spiritual and intellectual sons and daughters have a task of ensuring that his efforts did not end in vain. All hands must be on deck to see that the flag continues to fly. The earthquake and tremor that usually follow the death of great men like him must not be allowed to affect the legacies he has left behind. Efforts must be made not only to ensure that the institutions he labored for do not die, but wax stronger in progress.

The pioneering efforts of Sheik Murtadha Abdul Salaam had achieved a remarkable feat in the transformation of humanity and in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively. All praise is due to God for his life well-spent as a Muslim and an achiever in the cause of Islam, the teaching of the *Qur'an* and the cause of humanity.

6:0 Contemporary Debates on Reform of Qur'anic Education

For a well over a century, the question of reforms in Islamic education had been a controversial issue, particularly from at least the time that the Grand Mufti of Egypt Muhammad Abduh attempted to open space or new styles of scientific enquiry at Al-Azhar University in Cairo.⁶² Educational policies are made in any country to enable

⁶¹ An Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Department of Religions, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.

⁶² Anderson, P., Charlene, T., & Suleiman, Y., Reforms in Islamic Education, *Report of Conference Held at the Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge*, April 19-10 2011), p. 4.

the system of education more effective according to the needs of time. In these all policies and plans some basic points are considered to maintain the required standard of education.

Reform of Islamic education had generated debates among experts and stakeholders. The debate had always been on finding a pragmatic curriculum. Some recommended a secular national curriculum to which they append a discrete Islamic studies component. Opponents of this approach argue that this makes religion too mundane, since it compartmentalises religious faith away from the rest of the curriculum.⁶³ Others recommended the use of the Qur'an as a dynamic framework for organising knowledge and research. This latter approach suggests a more thorough-going approach to the "Islamisation of knowledge". However, some felt that attempts to islamise knowledge put the cart before the horse, contending that the focus in the contemporary time should be on pursuance of knowledge for the benefit of humanity, not creating an "Islamic system" for its own sake.⁶⁴ Many agreed that the formation of moral character and behaviour (known as *tarbiya*) is central to Islamic education. For some, this meant not merely acquiring knowledge, but being morally transformed by it; for example, becoming more inclined to help others; in the modern context it might mean resisting consumerism or excessive materialism, or acting in more ecologically aware ways.⁶⁵ Others argued that the ethical aspect of education means questioning the usefulness of any knowledge. This implies that research should be designed around knowledge that is useful to humanity and avoids knowledge that is harmful.⁶⁶

Alternative opinion in this regard is that moral education (*tarbiya*) means cultivating the capacity in any situation to act in ways that are both practically effective and ethically correct – in other words, wisdom (*hikma* in Arabic). However, by its nature wisdom is always situated and contextualized.

6:1 Reform of Qur'anic School in Nigeria – A Need of Moment

Qur'anic Schools in the present Nigeria educational set-up face critical challenges of relevance. In the first instance, students are not adequately prepared to either compete in the country's modern job market, or gain entrance into university. Countrywide, the test scores from Islamic private school are below the national curriculum officially adopted educational policy. Secondly, most if not all Qur'anic private schools (in most instance are privately owned and managed) operate

⁶³ Anderson, P., Charlene, T., & Suleiman, Y., supra at p. 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Anderson, P., Charlene, T., & Suleiman, Y., supra at p. 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

curricular considered by experts to be obsolete. These curricular are modelled in accordance with the need of the time as thought out by the pioneers of modern Qur'anic education in Nigeria, including, Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam and his intellectual brother, Sheikh Adam Al-Aloory. Thirdly, lack of uniformed curricular resulting in lack of cross-fertilized ideas creates wide vacuum. That underlines a number of consequences, including, lack of trust and mutual love, cooperation and of course, apparent dichotomized social values among graduates of those schools.

The curricula of the Qur'anic Schools remain unregulated, and have not undergone any significant review in their core content since the transformation from the classical system in the early 1950s to dates. Major courses taught according to those curricula put together centre on language and religion. Some subjects considered to be relevant in modern time including English language, international studies, mathematics, sciences and vocational subjects, are not allowed to be incorporated into those curricula. Computer sciences and technology that have rendered the world a global village had remained aliens to those institutions. The authorities of these schools are not only reluctant but also resistant to introduce any changes in view of their emphasis on training *ulama* well-versed in traditional Islamic learning.

Consequently graduates of these schools have limited job opportunity. A very few of them normally secures employment in the Government owned schools. Some of them get reabsorbed into their schools after graduation. In an effort to keep body and soul together majority end up engaging in activities not related to their studies like combining the practices of voodoo with Islamic teachings. The voodoo practice is an African Traditional Religion of coastal West Africa from Ghana to Nigeria. Vodun is practiced by the Ewe people of eastern and southern Ghana, and southern and central Togo, the Kabye people,⁶⁷ Mina people and Fon people of southern and central Togo, southern and central Benin and (under a different name) the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria.⁶⁸ As a result, they inadvertently distorted the true meaning of the religion and cited Qur'anic verses to support their claims and even applied its verses to suit their voodoo's practices.

⁶⁷ Akyea, O.E. "Ewe." New York: The Rosen Group, (1988).

⁶⁸ Ajayi, J.F. and Espie, I. *Thousand Years of West African History*, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, Nigeria. (1967).

As could be seen, education reform in the Muslim world generally and Nigeria in particular including reforms of religious components of the curricula is at the crossroads of globalization, social change, rapid economic development, and the presence of religious ideologies. It goes to the root of the type of leadership that are emerging in the contemporary Muslim communities. In actual fact, the emerging leadership concepts reflect genuine efforts to restructure leadership in a realistic context, based on an acknowledgement and celebration of diversity, corresponding to Islamic philosophy and to many others.⁶⁹ An Islamic leadership perspective is not a matter of notional constructions of 'knowledge-givers' through religious texts and discourses. It is a quintessence of all those principles and values associated with the 'righteous path', and which have high value for Muslims. These concepts have a bearing on the attitudes, code of conduct, behavior and demeanor of educational leaders in Muslim societies. A model educational leader, from the Muslims' perspective, has to be value-conscious irrespective of the extent they follow that path themselves.⁷⁰ Islam attaches greater commendation to diversity. Thus, it declares that faith is not a matter of imposition by force mechanism.⁷¹ From philosophical point of view, the Muslim students and community would understand differences of culture and faith, but they would expect the leaders to live up to a value model to command that respect and relationship which, in Islam, forms the basis of teaching and leading.⁷² The 'sense-making agenda' as suggested by Tim Simkins includes the ways in which leadership roles are changing and should change; the ways in which power and authority are and should be constituted and distributed in educational organisations; 'other worlds' across inter-professional and organisational boundaries; and using leadership development to understand sense-making itself.⁷³

As far as Islamic is concerned, righteousness is attained through knowledge and by application of that knowledge to every aspect of life. Therefore, the prime objective of knowledge in Islam is to prepare human beings for leading a life of 'righteousness' in a social context which sustains relevant conceptualisations on educational sites.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Shah, S., *Educational Leadership: an Islamic Perspective*, University of Leicester, UK , SOAS (2013).

⁷⁰ Jacobson, J., *Islam in transition: religion and identity among British Pakistani youth* (London, Routledge). (1998)

⁷¹ Quran 49:13.

⁷² Shah, S., *supra*.

⁷³ Simkins, T. Leadership in education: 'what works' or 'what makes sense'? *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* , 33(1), (2005), pp. 9–26.

⁷⁴ Shah, S.,

Education is for the total connection of development network, and religion is not a mere set of moral principle, but a complete system encompassing and integrating the political, social and economic, as well as personal, moral and spiritual aspects of life.⁷⁵ Acquisition of knowledge is not determined by individual choice priority, personal needs or market forces, it is rather a defined imposition as a path to righteousness.⁷⁶ ‘Self’ is the central location on which knowledge articulates, and educational leaders are perceived as playing a significant role in this process.⁷⁷ The Qur’anic notion of self is not only dynamic but also pragmatic, with an infinite capacity for development.⁷⁸ Thus the Qur’an states unequivocally that Verily We will raise you to higher and higher levels.⁷⁹ Also, self is not a passive recipient of ‘higher levels’ rather, it is an active participant in actualising its potentialities, possessing an agency in creating and developing its subjectivity.⁸⁰ The self (*nafs*) earns only that which it strives for and it changes through what it assimilates, good or bad.⁸¹

Education technology has become indispensable which must be part and parcel of modern Qur’anic Islamic education. Educational technology, known as *EdTech*, is the study and ethical practice of facilitating e-learning, which is the learning and improving performance by creating, using and managing appropriate technological processes and resources.⁸² The term educational technology is often associated with, and encompasses, instructional theory and learning theory.⁸³ While instructional technology is "the theory and practice of design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of processes and resources for learning," according to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) Definitions and Terminology Committee,⁸⁴ educational technology includes other systems used in the process of developing human capability. Educational technology includes, but is not limited to, software, hardware, as well as Internet applications,

⁷⁵ Dabashi, H. *Theology of discontent: the ideological foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York, New York University Press, (1993), p. 439; Shah, S., supra at p. 368.

⁷⁶ See generally Tibawi, A. L. (1972) *Islamic education*, Luzac, London, (1972); Ashraf, S. A. (1995) Basic principals in the formulation of curriculum for tertiary education with specific reference to humanities, *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 13(1), pp. 5–11.

⁷⁷ Shah, S., supra at p. 368

⁷⁸ Shah, S., *ibid*

⁷⁹ The Quran 84:19

⁸⁰ Shah, S., *ibid*

⁸¹ Quran 74:38

⁸² Richey, R.C. *Reflections on the 2008 AECT Definitions of the Field*, *TechTrends*. (2008). 52(1), pp. 24-25

⁸³ Richey, R.C., *ibid*.

⁸⁴ Randy Garrison, D., and Anderson, T., *E-Learning in the 21st Century: A Framework for Research and Practice*. Routledge, (2003).

such as wikis and blogs, and activities. But there is still debate on what these terms mean.⁸⁵

Modern technological education will go a long way in harnessing the Islamic education. Administrators and managers of Islamic education are under a duty to ensure its incorporation into curricular of Qur'anic education. For their educational institutions to produce graduates that are capable of facing the modern challenges, the review of their curricula has become inevitable. Sheikh Murtadha Abdul Salaam and his contemporaries have laid down a solid foundation upon which this much desired reform could be built. The challenge of this reform is on those who succeed him and his other contemporaries to ensure that the curricula are reviewed and made pragmatic. Muslim youths cannot be left out of what is going on in the modern world. While they must be versed in their Islamic education, they must also be versed in the modern sciences and technology. This will go a long way in making them self-reliant and useful to their community and the Ummah of Islam in general.

⁸⁵Lowenthal, P. R., & Wilson, B. G., *Labels do matter! A critique of AECT's redefinition of the field*, *TechTrends*, (2010), 54(1), pp. 38-46.