Teaching, Learning and Their Proprieties

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Q1310. Should man be held guilty for abandoning the gaining of knowledge about religious issues which are usually encountered by him?

A: He would be considered as a sinner if it results in his neglect of an obligatory deed or committing a ḥarām act.

Q1311. A theology student has finished the first stage of his study. He is confident that he can carry on attaining the level of ijtihād. Does it become obligatory on him, as an 'aynī obligation, to finish his studies?

A: There is no doubt that to gain religious knowledge and to peruse it up to the attainment of the level of ijtihād is a great merit in itself. However, the mere ability to reach the level of ijtihād does not make it an 'aynī obligation on the student to do so.

Q1312. What are the avenues of reaching certitude in matters of the fundamentals of religion?

A: It is often reached through rational proofs and evidence. However, the proof varies in accordance with people's intellects. If it so happened that someone had reached certitude through a different avenue, this would be sufficient.

Q1313. What is the ruling in the matters of lethargy in gaining knowledge and time wasting? Are they ḥarām?

A: Wasting one's time by doing nothing is a problematic issue. Should the student be benefiting of the grant and concessions normally accorded to the students, he should have no alternative but to be bound by the curriculum. Otherwise, he is not allowed to avail himself of student grants, scholarships, etc.

Q1314. In the school of economics the professor, in some lectures, deals with certain matters pertaining to ribā-bearing loans and compares the ways of borrowing with interest in trade and commerce. What is the ruling in the matter of teaching this subject and getting paid for it?

A: Teaching and discussing the subject pertaining to ribā-bearing loans per se, is not ḥarām.

Q1315. What is the right way for the devout specialists and other professionals in imparting their knowledge to the people in the Islamic Republic? And who, in government departments, is entitled to have access to important information and technology?

A: There is no objection to anyone learning any discipline; provided that it is done for legitimate and sensible reasons and that there is no risk of getting corrupted or causing corruption, except for those sciences and information about whose teaching and learning the Islamic state has passed some laws.

Q1316. Is it permissible to teach and study philosophy in Islamic seminaries?

A: There is no objection to learning or studying philosophy for those who are confident that it would not weaken their firm religious beliefs. Indeed, in certain circumstances, it becomes obligatory.

Q1317. What is the ruling in the matter of buying and selling misleading books such as "The Satanic Verses"?

A: It is not permissible to sell, buy, or keep misleading books unless for a person who wants to answer/refute their contents and is knowledgeable enough to do so.

1318. What is the view on teaching and storytelling of fables and fictions that deal with human beings and animals if there is any benefit that could be gained from doing so?

A: There is no harm in it if it is understood from the context that it is imaginary.

Q1319. What is the ruling on enrolling in a university where men mix with women, especially when some of the women are not wearing ḥijāb?

A: There is no objection to going to educational institutes for acquiring knowledge and teaching. However, it is incumbent on women and girls to observe ḥijāb; it is equally incumbent on men to avoid looking in ḥarām way and keeping away from mixing with the opposite sex, which normally leads to temptation and corruption.

Q1320. Is it permissible for a woman to learn driving with the help of a non-maḥram instructor if she observers ḥijāb and chastity throughout?

A: There is no objection to learning driving with the help of a non-maḥram instructor provided that she observes ḥijāb and chastity and ensures that no vile deed is going to be committed. However, it is advisable that one among her maḥram should accompany her. Indeed, it is even much better if she learns driving with the help of a female instructor or one of her maḥram.

Q1321. University students of both sexes meet each other and discuss matters ranging from study to exchanging light-hearted jokes. Of course this is done without any questionable intentions or sexual pleasure. Is it permissible?

A: There is no objection to it provided that female students observe proper ḥijāb, no questionable intention is involved, and one is immune from corrupting practices. Otherwise, it is impermissible.

Q1322. Which scientific specializations are more beneficial to both Islam and Muslims these days?

A: It is advisable that scientists, professors, and university students pay due attention to all useful scientific fields, which Muslims need, so that they have no need of foreigners, especially those who harbor enmity to Islam and Muslims. To determine which field is the most beneficial is the responsibility of the officials concerned, taking into consideration the existing conditions.

Q1323. What is the ruling in the matter of reading misleading books or the books that belong to other faiths in order to acquire insight into them and get more knowledge and information about them?

A: If it is done just to get acquainted with them and increase one's information, it is problematic to rule it permissible. However, it is permissible for a person who is capable to

sift through such books with a view to distinguishing falsehoods and refuting them provided that one is absolutely confident not to go astray.

Q1324. What is the ruling in the matter of enrolling one's children in schools that teach false beliefs, assuming that they are not going to be affected by what they are taught?

A: There is no objection to it if there is no risk of the children's belief, it does not contribute to promoting falsehood, and they can skip the study of false and misguiding subjects.

Q1325. A university student is in his fourth year in the school of medicine. He has a burning desire to be a theology student. Is it obligatory for him to continue with his study of medicine or can he make a change?

A: The student has the choice to follow any discipline he prefers. However, it is important to stress that although religious studies are important for providing a service to the Islamic society, training in medicine is also important in order to provide medical services to the Islamic nation, to treat sick people, and to save their lives.

Q1326. A teacher severely punished one of his students in front of his classmates. Is the student justified to retaliate against him?

A: He does not have the right to retaliate in a way violating the status of the teacher. Indeed, it is obligatory on the student to preserve the dignity of the teacher and keep order in the classroom. However, he can solve the problem through legal ways. By the same token, the teacher should preserve the dignity of the student before his classmates and accord due regard to the Islamic code of teaching.