TEACHER IN ISLAMIC SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

(a) The Prophet as a Teacher.

(b) The Place of Teacher in Islam.

(c) His qualities.

(d) His role.
The Prophet as a Teacher:

Tritton says, "Prophets rule the minds and bodies of nobles and the crowd; Kings rule the bodies of nobles and the crowd; the wise rule the minds of nobles and preachers rule the mind of the crowd." 1

The power and influence of a Prophet is evident from Tritton's above-mentioned assessment. Muhammad (P.B.H.) the last Prophet of Islam, ruled over the minds and hearts of the followers as none before or after him has done. However, it is not our purpose here to discuss his multi-dimensional personality, or, to ascertain the influence it exercised on various aspects and areas of human life and society. Our purpose here is to discuss only one aspect of his personality---that, which is connected with education. We have to consider the importance he attached to education, the aims and objectives he set for it, as the various educational and quasi-education institutions which came to be established under his influence and inspiration.

The Prophet of Islam was an educationist and a teacher in the widest and truest sense of the word. He was a teacher par-excellence. There are few in human history who, have exercised

1. Tritton, A.S., Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages, p.77.
as much influence on human mind and character and revolutionized the way of life so thoroughly as he succeeded in doing. In a way, the world has not seen a greater revolutionary, crusader for social-change and justice. He was an institution-builder and educator primarily and above all. His civilizing influence on men and morals runs through history and is eternal.

The Prophet remained teacher all through his life. He taught his people the basic values of new civilization that he was establishing; he taught them Islam; he taught his followers all that they needed for the betterment of this life and the life hereafter. And this all achieved, not through preaching alone but also through the example of his own practice. And this was not all. Though he himself was a Ummi (illiterate), he taught his followers the importance of the acquisition of literacy, learning and knowledge. And it was under his dynamic guidance and inspiring leadership that a community of almost illiterate and ignorant persons turned into torch-bearers of knowledge, culture and civilization, and his companions and their followers spread-out to the nooks and corners of the world. Though the Prophet's teaching was based on oral instruction it laid the firm foundation of education through written materials.

As far as the question of the very high value and
importance he attached to education is concerned, there are instance galore to illustrate it. For example it is reported that when the Prophet came upon two groups of people in his mosque (Masjid-i-Nabawi) who were engaged in two different kinds of activities—the one was praying and the other was having some scholarly discussion on some subject—he observed: “They are both engaged in what is good, but one of them is superior to the other. These ones, who are praying and supplicating to God if He wills, He may answer their prayer, but, if He wills, may refuse them. Those one are learning knowledge and teaching the ignorant, so they are superior. I was sent only as a teacher”. Saying this the Prophet joined the group of learned men. Semaan remarks that “His activity was not only that of a Prophet, as we know such activity from Biblical sources, but also among his other functions that of teacher (is most important) in classical sense”. Tibawi declares that though the message of the Prophet was for the whole of humanity, for all times to come, as he himself claimed, but

4. Education in Islam from Jahiliyyah to Ibn Khuldun, p.188.
those who believed in his mission and were taught by him personally were really fortunate and more privileged than others. He did not expect any return or reward for his pains: he did it only for the sake of God. While Ibrahim and Ismail were raising the foundation of Kaba, Ibrahim prayed, "Raise up in their midst a messenger from amongst them who shall recite into them thy revelation and shall instruct them in the scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow. It is believed that the Prophet was the fulfilment of this prayer. Royster remarks that the Prophet's authority as a teacher is based, in the mind of Muslims, on his Ascension (Meraj). This journey disclosed to him the reality of man and universe and gave him true knowledge. He further says that, the Prophet's success as a teacher is acclaimed by Husayan: "The truth and maxims, the precepts, which from time to time during the past twenty years the Prophet had delivered to his followers, were imprinted on their hearts and were the ruling principles of actions." All that the Prophet said or did his followers took to heart and tried to follow faithfully in word and deed.

5. Muslim Education in the Golden Age of Cabhette, p. 419.
8. Ibid., p. 240.
Teaching is entirely unworthy if it is not put into practice. First of all a teacher should translate his teachings into practice. The success of the Prophet lies in the fact that, while he presented some ideals, he at the same time practised or acted up to them. There is no single ordinance or injunction in the Quran that he did not acted upon in practice. First of all he himself practiced these teachings of the Quran, then he taught and conveyed them to others. In his farewell sermon of Arafat he is reported to have said: "I am leaving something, which, if one holds fast to it will never fall into error— the Book of God and my sunnah— so give good heed to what I say". This is why there exists a desire in Muslims to learn the Prophet's sayings and to initiate and follow his example and footsteps in whatever they do.

Arabs laid great stress on purity of language and it was greatly prized by them. The pre-Islamic period was an era of great literary output especially in the field of poetry and oration. This output was marked for its extraordinary felicity and beauty. It was due to this keen interest in the language and


10. Hadith transmitted by Bukhari and Muslim as quoted by Mohammad Farooque Khan in Kalam-e-Nabuwat, Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, 1977, p. 32.
its literature that the poets and orators enjoyed such a predominant influence on the mind of the people. The Prophet as a teacher excelled even in this field; he surpassed even the best among them. The command he enjoyed over the language was extraordinary. His sayings are considered the best specimens of the purity, beauty and excellence of language after the language of the Qurah. Once he himself pronounced that he was the most eloquent person among the Arabs. As a teacher also, he maintained the same standards. Once, in his presence, an Arab made an idiomatic mistake about which he addressed his companions and said "Instruct your brother as he was strayed". It was this interest in maintaining the highest standards of language, and also the example set by Qurah, which inspired the Muslims to demonstrate unprecedented activity in the field of literature.

Prophet's interest in education was not confined to verbal instruction only. He is reported to have evinced keen interest in the practical education of his people and suggested many improvements in the method of writing. Some serious defects, which badly affected the style of writing, he advised them to be

removed in the cause of betterment of the script. The Prophet instructed his students to dry the ink on the paper with use of dust. He also suggested to write the letter "seen" with its three curves (١٠) and not with a single go (١٠) because one who writes with a single stroke shows his carelessness and laziness in the art of writing. 

Hameedullah believes that the Prophet first started the method of raqsh (literally meaning putting dots) to distinguish between letters having similar shapes. Before the application of raqsh, the Arabi script was very defective.

The Place of Teacher in Islam:

The Prophet as well as the Quran strongly exhort the believers to opt for the career of a teacher. In these two sources there are a lot of information discussing the place and position a teacher holds in the Islamic society. The Quran says: "There is no God but He: he is the witness of God, His angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no God but He, the Exalted in power, the wise." 15.

13. Hameedullah; Educational system in the time of the Prophet, Muslim World, Jan. 1939, p. 56.
Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them - so that they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)\textsuperscript{16}. Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?\textsuperscript{17} God will raise up to (suitable) ranks and positions, those of you who believe and who have been granted (insight into) knowledge.\textsuperscript{18}

These verses show that only the learned (\textit{Ulema}) who are expected to assume the position of teachers recognize the Supreme Reality. Their unique position distinguishes them from common people. The Quranic statement that those who know and those who do not know are not equal, means the behaviours of the learned are quite different from those of the ignorant. It is knowledge which creates difference in the behaviour and attitude of persons. On account of these differences there appear different spectacles in the life of this world and also in the life hereafter. It is also clear from the above quote references that gaining insight in knowledge for the purpose of properly discharging the duty of a teacher is considered essential, so much so,

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\item[16.] Tauba: 122- This verse suggests that even in the war time, a party of the believers should be engaged in achieving insight in knowledge for the purpose to educate common people. See \textit{A.Yusuf Ali, Glorious Quran}, p.478.
\item[17.] Zumar: 9 English tr.by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.
\item[18.] Majadila: 11, English translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.
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that the people engaged in this work are exempted from the obligation of physically participating in Holy war (Jihad)\(^{19}\). Thus the believers engaged in spreading knowledge have been exalted to the high rank and pedestal. The teacher in Islam acquires a very lofty place. He, on account of his knowledge becomes nearer to angels and to God.

In the early days of Islam, teachers did remarkable service in spreading true Islamic knowledge. They were conscious of their status and hence took every trouble to fulfil their responsibilities. They were not full-time teachers, neither they obtained any special training to discharge their duties as teachers. They were simply brave soldiers of Islam inspired with the missionary spirit. Hence wherever they went, they carried on the teachings of Islam.\(^{20}\) Teachers of the early Islamic period can be classified into three categories. Firstly, the Prophet's companions, their successors and those learned people, who directly acquired knowledge from these forerunners. Although they were engaged in different professions they were fully aware of their responsibility of spreading knowledge. They, without taking any remuneration voluntarily performed this task. Secondly, there was the group of religious chroniclers. They also had independent

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19. Azdi reports that when he sought permission to take part in Jihad, his learned teacher Abdullah bin Masood advised him to build a mosque and sit therein to teach ignorants. He was said, this is more excellent work than Jihad. See Ibn Abd at -Bar, op.cit., p. 56.

professions to carry on their living and devoted considerable time to educate the people. Thirdly, the poor and the captives undertook this responsibility. They were paid by Baitul-Mal (the public Treasury). This classification of teacher shows that the well-to-do as well as the poor, the independent as well as the slaves the highly learned and the less knowledgeable—in short, people from every section of society, were contributing their might to the educational regeneration of the society launched by the Prophet. Now, it is a subject of study as to where from they got such inspiration and zeal to contribute to and spread mass education.

Besides the Quran from which a few references have been quoted above, we have a good number of Prophetic Tradition in this regard. These precious words of the Prophet greatly encouraged the early Muslims and are still pointing to the high rank of the teacher in the Islamic society. It is related that the Prophet said "If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, God will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise, the angels will lower their wings of tidings for the one who seeks knowledge, and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in deep waters ask forgiveness for

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21. Ibid. p. 142.
The superiority of the learned over the devout is like that of the full moon over the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets who leave neither dinars nor dirhams, their only possession is knowledge, and he who aspires for it is granted an abundant portion (of blessing). It is a very comprehensive Hadith covering every aspect of the teacher's personality. In Islam knowledge for the sake of knowledge has no place. According to the Islamic spirit, knowledge shall be acquired first, to be put into practice, then to be propagated amongst the people, ignorant of it. If these two purposes are not served the high rank of the learned mentioned in the Hadith can hardly be attained by anyone irrespective of the volume of his acquired knowledge. Declaring the learned superior to the devout points out to this very fact. A devout purifies his own life through prayers and devotion but, the learned, through their knowledge and wisdom save their people from being misled.

The work of such a learned has similarity with the mission of the Prophets. This is why in the Hadith under study, the learned have been appointed as heirs of the Prophets. It also appears from the study of the Hadith concerned that teachers must not care for monetary benefit or any sort of reward in return of the service they render for the cause of knowledge, and for the

22. Mishkat al-Masabin; op.cit., p.53, Ahmad, Trimidhi, Abu Daund, Ibn Maza and Darimi transmitted this Hadith.
23. Ibn Abbas reported God's messenger as saying: "One fagih (the learned) has more power over the devil than a thousand devout man" Mishkat, op. cit. p.54.
elimination of ignorance and illiteracy. \(^{24}\). There is one more Hadith similar in meaning to the above but clarifying even more pointedly to the high rank and status of a teacher engaged in spreading knowledge in the Islamic society. "God, His angels, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, even the ants in their holes and even the fishes (in waters) invoke blessing on him who teaches men what is good." \(^{25}\)

The learned is considered to be the trustees of God on this earth. \(^{26}\) It is because they possess the knowledge which is acknowledged as the best endowment from God. Muawiya reports that the Prophet said" when God wishes good for anyone, He grants him insight into religion." \(^{27}\) How this insight in knowledge becomes the source of reward to the learned can be estimated from the Hadith which says that if the learned instructs ignorant, their reward will continue even after their death. As long as their teachings influence and instruct other

\(^{24}\) Ibn Abd al-Bar quotes a Hadith on the authority of Suhail b. Saad that once the Prophet said to Ali that guiding a person to the right way is better than having red camels. Red camels were considered very costly in those days. See Jamia-ul-Bia-nil Ilm, p. 91.

\(^{25}\) Trimidhi transmitted it from Abu Umama al-Bahili but Darimi transmitted from Makhul in mursal form, see Mishkat, op.cit. p. 54.

\(^{26}\) Ibn Abd al-Bar, op.cit., p. 48.

\(^{27}\) Mishkat al Masabih, op.cit., p. 50.
their soul in the heaven will receive the reward for this service. Thus acquired knowledge becomes a source of perennial bliss for the learned but it is only when they utilize the knowledge in the proper way and act up to it. If a teacher teaches some good things to his students and the students act accordingly and achieve God's pleasure and reward then the teacher will also be the recipient of the reward without its being diminished for in case of the taught. Contrary to it, if the teacher teaches something erroneous or sinful, and the students act accordingly, he will also be guilty of the students' faults. And this will continue as long as the evil practices last. Thus, the teachers' position seems very delicate. All the good tidings given to him are conditioned by how sincerely and honestly he carry out the obligation on him. Being the heirs of the Prophet, it is quite expected

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26. Hadith has been quoted in Mishkat as follows:
"Among the actions and good deeds for which a believer will continue to receive reward after his death are knowledge which he taught and spread, a good son whom he left behind, or a copy of the Quran which he left as legacy, or a mosque which he build for the traveller, or a stream which he caused to flow, or a Sadaqa which he gave from his property when he was alive and well, for which he will continue to receive reward after his death."

p. 58-59.

that they will be questioned in the hereafter as to how they
performed the duty given to them.\textsuperscript{30} It appears very significant
to note here that once the Prophet was asked to explain as to
what is evil. He replied, "Do not ask me about evil, but ask me
about good, saying it three times, then he said, "The worst evil
consists of the learned men who are evil and the best good
consists of the learned men who are good."\textsuperscript{31} This Hadith shows
that the teacher on the one hand is highly praised and on the
other he becomes the target of severe condemnation and censure.
This perverse role of the teacher has been explicitly defined in
another Hadith. It is related that the Prophet said: "One who
would have the worst position in God's sight on the Day of
Resurrection, would be a learned person who did not benefit from
his learning."\textsuperscript{32} The soundness of Islamic society depends upon
how properly and efficiently the teachers discharge their social
duty. If they do not act up to their knowledge in their personal
lives and do not discharge the obligation made incumbent on them,
the entire society is shaken or disintegrated. The plight of society
in such a critical moment has been discussed by the Prophet in the

\textsuperscript{30} Anas (the well-known companion of the Prophet), as quoted
by Ibn Abd al-Bar, \textit{op.cit.}, p.42.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Mishkat}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.61.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p.61.
following Hadith: "A time is soon approaching when nothing of Islam except its name would remain and only the written form of the Quran will be there. Their mosques will be in fine condition but will be devoid of guidance, their learned men will be the worst people under the heavens, (corruption will engulf them from all side)." 33

In Islam, the actions and deeds of the teacher are taken as examples for his students. If on the one hand Islam raises the teacher's status, on the other, it demands him to be conscious of his responsibilities. Abdullah bin Masood has rightly proclaimed that even little mistakes of a teacher are of great consequence, for, once he expresses his opinion or, gives any verdict on the basis of his knowledge, but later on retraces from the view held by, he refers back to the sources and forms new views. His followers being ignorant of this revision, follow his former opinion and act accordingly. Thus, it is suggested that students should join the teaching circles of the learned other than their own teachers. In this way they may be aware of the mistakes made by their teachers. 34 This does not mean that the Islamic system of education erodes the value of teachers or

34. Ibn. Abdal-Bar, op. cit., p. 211.
reduces their importance. This is simply for maintaining the purity of knowledge. As far as the dignity of the teacher in the Islamic system of education is concerned, Tritton has rightly observed: "Hence the idea that knowledge obtained from a teacher of higher value than that gained in other way: It is better to go wrong with a teacher than to right alone."  

Educational history of the early Islamic period presents a lot of information indicating the prestigious position that the teacher held in that era. It is related that Jabir bin Abdullah was highly honoured by the society as he occupied the high office of delivering lectures in Masjid-e-Nabawi (the mosque of the Prophet).  

Abu Da‘da at the time of coming to the mosque of Damascus to deliver the usual lecture there, was followed by such a large number of students as to appear like a king coming with his courtiers. Abu Sayeed is reported to address the crowd of students who gathered for him in very long rows. In the normal course when a companion of the Prophet transmitted Hadith, the gathering was so large around him that, for the convenience of proper communication, he was compelled to ascend the roof of his house to deliver his lecture.

35. Tritton, A.S., Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages, p. 31.
37. Zahbi, Tazkaretul Huffaz, Vide. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
Qualities of Teacher in Islam:

Ibn Abd al-Bar says that *ilm* (knowledge) is to cognize the known in that very form it originally exists when a fact is known to man in such a way he naturally becomes learned in that particular area. Thus learned is non-conformist, for he predicts on the ground of sound knowledge. As for conformist is concerned, he relates something without having the indepth knowledge supported by sound arguments. The teacher in Islamic system of Education is expected to be non-conformist having original knowledge directly acquired through the original sources. The Quran too confirms this view when it says "And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge," and "Do ye say of God what ye know not?" Ilm (knowledge) in Islam is something other than presumption and conjecture. About conjecture (*zann*) Quran says that sometimes it becomes very harmful, and also sinful. Apart from the special circumstances Quran declares that conjecture can never be equal to Truth. Thus, the teacher in the Islamic system of education must be original in thinking, should rely only on the knowledge acquired through reliable sources. It is his prime quality that he directly investigates the ins and outs of the matter before imparting something to his students.

41. Araf: 28
42. Hujrat: 12
43. Yunus: 36
The above view in regard to the teacher's role in educating students should neither be misunderstood nor misinterpreted. Teacher, in the Islamic system of education, bears quite apparently the role of a committed person. He is after all loyal to the Islamic ideology of life. Teaching for him is not merely a profession of life. He is committed to produce a virtuous generation of students and also assumes the responsibility of advancing Islamic society. This, on the one hand, makes him the key person in the entire educational set up and, on the other assigns to him the onerous task of enriching the society by strengthening the moral ideals of Islam. His work is not only to instruct and train the students in the set courses of studies but, more than this, he has to act as a model to instil the Islamic values in the heart and mind of the students. Teacher in Islam is considered unworthy if he fails to translate the teachings into practice. He is expected to actualise all those that he utters from his mouth. The highly knowledgeable but immoral teacher gets no place in the Islamic system of education. The western tradition in this respect is quite different. There no body questions about the personal affairs and the private lives of the teachers. The immodesty and indecency of a teacher are relegated as his personal affairs which need not be questioned. Contrary to the case of a teacher working under the Islamic system of education he is
expected to be at home only in the subjects and skills he has to impart. Teacher in Islamic system of education accepts greater responsibility of moral training than the mere instruction of the subjects. Ibn wahb used to say about his teacher, Imam Kalik that what moral training (Adab) he obtained from him was more valuable than the knowledge he received through him. The teacher in the Islamic system of education is described as having God-fearing quality which regulate his moral character. The Quran makes it clear that only the learned (Ulema) fear God. When the learned observe any incident systematically he recognizes the power of God as the motive force. The greatness and wisdom of God becomes evident, consequently the learned accept His supremacy and bow down before Him.

The fear of God also makes the teacher sincere towards his duty. It is related that once Abu Huraira was criticized as to why he so extensively transmitted Hadith of the Prophet. Abu Huraira's answer to this criticism shows one of the most important qualities of teacher. He is reported to have said that if the following two verses did not exist in the Quran he would have no need to transmit Hadith. Those who conceal God's

45. Ibn Abd al-Bar, op.cit.p.94.
46. Fatir: 28 Commenting this verse Alla bin Rabbah writes that only God-fearing persons are learned. Vide Ibn. Abd al-Bar, op.cit.p.157
47. Ibn Abd al-Bar op.cit.p.76.
revelations in the Book and purchase for them a miserable profit, they swallow naught but Fire.\textsuperscript{48} and -"Those who conceal the clear \textsuperscript{signs} we have sent down and the guidance, after we have made it clear for the people in the Book.... on them shall be God's curse and the curse of those entitled to curse.\textsuperscript{49}

The above-quoted verses make it clear that without curtailing and concealing the knowledge a teacher should sincerely impart what he knows. He must adopt a generous attitude in this regard. This generosity about knowledge raises his status so much that a teacher occupies the third position after God and His messenger. The Prophet is reported to have said, "Do you know who is most generous? On receiving the reply that God and His messenger knew best, he said, 'God is the most generous, then I am the most generous of mankind, and the most generous of them after me will be a man who acquires knowledge and spreads it. On the Day of Resurrection he will come as a prince alone.\textsuperscript{50}

Teacher should have a big and tender heart. He should always show forbearance and forgiveness. He must be friendly and kind to his students. Prophet's commandments in this regard indicate how a teacher should pursue his educational activities.

The prophet is reported to have said: "People will follow you, and

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Baqara: 174}
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Baqara: 159}
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Mishkát}, p.60.
men will come to you from all regions of the earth seeking understanding about the religion; so when they come to you, give them good counsel. It was the influence of this instruction that teachers in the early Islamic period became kind and friendly to their students. They used to show compassion and kind heartedness whenever any seeker of knowledge came to them. Kathir b. Qais reports that while he was sitting with Abu Darda, a distinguished teacher of Hadith, a man came and asked him to relate a Hadith from the Prophet and for this very purpose he had taken pain of the long and arduous journey and travelled from Madinah to Damascus. Abu Darda appreciated his quest for knowledge and transmitted a Hadith in which the high rank and degree of the seeker after knowledge had been mentioned.

How much the teachers were sympathetic and helpful to the students is evident from the information quoted by Az-Zarnuji. He says that teachers used to prefer teaching to any other work. The interest of students was very dear to them. Sometimes they overlooked even the academic interests of their own sons with a view to discharge their duty as teacher. Once the sons of a teacher complained to their father that he did not spend enough time on their education. The father answered "Foreigners and the sons of the great come to me from various regions of the earth. Hence I have to take up their instruction first".

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51. Ibid., p. 54
52. Ibid., p. 53.
the instances which prove that there exists a strong desire in
the heart of the teacher to transmit the knowledge they possess
and also to be extremely sympathetic and helpful to the students.
Most surely the close and cordial relation between the teacher
and the student was an imitation of the Prophet's tradition
which he himself adopted. His leniency and kind heartedness have
been praised by the Quran itself. And it was because of these
characteristics that people flocked around him to take moral
and material guidance. The Quran says that if the Prophet were
harsh and hard-hearted the people would have been geared away
from him. This shows that the teacher must tolerate students'
weaknesses and should not be harsh in treatment and bitter in
conversation. Vindicative attitudes and cruel persecution are
considered evil practices which are below to the dignity of a
teacher. Ibn Abd al-Bar quotes on the authority of Abu Sayeed
Khudri that the Prophet instructed both the student and the
teacher to be humble and lowly. The learned were particularly
directed not to be oppressors. In every educational system,
it is at least in principles realised that harshness to students
does them harm. It encourages bad habits and suppresses their
inherent potentialities for good. Being afraid of the tyrannical
treatment of teachers they tell lies and practice trickery.

54. Al-i-Imran: 159.
55. Ibn Abd-al-Bar, op.cit., p.93.
Their outer behaviour differs from their inner feelings and they always try to deceive the teacher. Thus the good moral qualities do not develop in them. Imam Shaaby has rightly defined the qualities of a teacher. He says when a good teacher observes virtues in his students he praises them and when the students make mistakes he forgives them, scolding to the students does not behave him, he teaches wisdom when his students show stupidity; in short, he always benefits them. Az-Zarnuji points out one very important quality of those learned persons who are engaged in teaching the ignorant. He says that the teacher must not be involved in acrimony or altercation, for these are time wasting job. Az-Zarnuji quotes the wise saying of a renowned scholar in the following words: "Send the man away. Do not punish him for the misdeed he committed. His character and his deeds will be sufficient (punishment for him)." But it is not proper to apply such a principle in the educating process of the young generation. A teacher is certainly the well-wisher of his students. It is his prime duty to remove every short-coming in them. He must play the role of a reformist in order to save his students from baseness and to

57. Vide Ibn Abd al-Bar, op. cit., p. 95.
58. Sultan as-sharia (the prince of cannon law), Yusuf al-Hamadi.
inculcate in them goodness and piety.

The one very important quality which appears in the teachers of early Islamic period is their stateforward behaviour with regard to teaching. They neither knowingly concealed the knowledge that they possessed nor they in the name of knowledge gave false information to the ignorants and innocents. Their behaviour was in accordance with the norms Islam has fixed in this regard. A Abdullah bin Umar reports that a man once asked the Prophet the kind of question which he did not know. He, without any hesitation, expressed his ignorance. The following Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim declares that expression of ignorance is not ignorance at all, it is rather knowledge itself. Abdullah said: "If any of you knows anything he should make it known, but if anyone does not know he should say God knows best, for, saying this when one does not know, is a part of knowledge." It was because of such unambiguous instruction with regard to the maintenance of purity of knowledge that in the early Islamic period every bearer of knowledge was quite conscious of what he did not know. Saying (Laadri (I do not know) was very common in those days. Abu Darda says that saying La adri (I donot know) is half knowledge. The argument behind this appears to promote

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60. Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "He who asked about something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on the day of resurrection." Ahmad, Abu Daud and Trimidhi transmitted it and Ibn Maja transmitted it from Anas. See Mishkat op. cit. p. 55.
61. Ibn Abdul Bar p. 158.
62. Abdullah bin Masood.
knowledge as when one accepts ignorance in a particular field he will naturally turn towards knowledge to acquire it. Thus, this practice is instrumental in raising the teacher's efficiency. This is also because the teacher may not be fond of getting undue praise, for, knowledge in Islam, is something sacred and truth can not be sacrificed for any price. Even the prophet was instructed to declare that he did not want any reward in return the task of instructing the people. Imam Ghazali goes so far as to say that the teacher should not be desirous of getting any reward from his students, rather he should be grateful to his students, for they provided him the opportunity to attain the high rank of teacher. Sufyan Sauri is quoted to have taken an oath to go to his students to instruct them if they would not come to him to take lesson. Thus Islam saves teachers from vanity and pride and urges them to adopt simplicity and humility. Ali's statement that vanity is the death of wisdom is a very important element of the

64. Ibn Abd al-Bar, p.162, Ibn wahb quotes that Imam Malik was very speedy in pronouncing La Adiri (I donot know). He says if we recorded his utterance many of the pages would have been filled by them only. See Ibid., p.161, Imam Malik supports this view from Quranic verse that accepting ignorance in certain matter does not injure man's dignity. Angels are the Holy creature of God but they also pronounce La ilmalana (we do not know) See Quran, Bagara:32.

66. Anam: 90
68. Vide. Ibn Abd al-Bar, p.89.
training of the teacher. The qualities of persistence and fortitude also play important role in making a teacher competent in performing the difficult task. The Quran instructs believers to seek help from fortitude. Teaching, at its best and with all of its importance and urgency is undoubtedly a very difficult job, hence a teacher must show fortitude in the persuance of his task.

Role of Teacher:

Abu Qalaba says that the learned are of three categories. The first who neither himself takes any use of his knowledge nor does he benefits others from it. The second whose personal life illuminates from the knowledge he acquired but the other people do not get any profit from his knowledge. The third, and the best of all, is that learned man whose knowledge is useful for him and for other people of the community. Only such learned play the role of the teacher in the true Islamic sense. The same view is evident from the following Hadith of the Prophet. "God brightens a man who

70. Bagara: 45.
hears what I say, gets it by heart, retains it, and passes it on to others. Many a bearer of knowledge is not versed in it, and many a bearer of knowledge conveys it to one who is more versed than he is. There are three things on account of which no rancour enters a Muslim's heart: Sincere action for God's sake, good counsel to Muslims, and holding fast with their community, for their invitation includes those are beyond them. The teacher in an Islamic society is an element of social change and is motivated by the general instruction of the Prophet, "Pass on information from me, even if it is only a verse of the Qur'an." Teachers of the early Islamic period were the true followers of the Prophet and paid full attention towards the educational principles propounded by the Prophet. Abu Umama, being satisfied that he had properly imparted the lesson to his students used to urge on them to disseminate the knowledge he had handed over to them. This practice was very attractive and alluring as the prophet himself declared that such teachers are his heirs and deserve the special grace of God. Teachers under the Islamic system of education shoulder the responsibility resembling that of the Prophet.

72. Mishkat, op. cit., p. 55
73. Mishkat, p. 50.
74. Ibn Abd al-Bar, op. cit. p. 91.
75. Ibid., p. 45.
Assuming and discharging the duty of a teacher, in the true Islamic sense, is difficult. The learned being fully conversant with his knowledge shoulder this arduous responsibility. According to Ghazali, knowledge advances through four stages, the first is the acquisition of knowledge (T-tab-i-ilm), the second is to become so much conversant with the acquired knowledge that learned may not feel any need to enquire anything more in the particular sphere of knowledge. In the third stage the learned expands, improves and enriches his knowledge through reflection, induction and deduction. The fourth and the last stage which Ghazali considers the best of all is to utilise the acquired knowledge for the benefit of the common people. 76

Teacher, in the Islamic system of education, tries to awake the natural instincts of the child—instinct, which according to Quran, are inherited by man in the beginning of his life. It is considered that at the time of Adam's Creation, God gathered at one place all mankind— all those who were to be born up to the end. 77 Then He took a covenant from them.

77. The incident under which the whole of mankind brought into existence at one and the same time appears irrational but not for those who have faith in the limitless power of God.
At that time He asked them whether they recognised their creator and they spoke out with one voice, yes, our Lord, we recognise thee. Thus mankind in the beginning acknowledged God as their master and agreed about His Supremacy, sovereignty and Lordship. They bore witness to the fact—the fact which is known as the creed of Islamic Monotheism. So the role of a teacher in the Islamic system of education is to inculcate and resurrect this concept of pure monotheism in the young learners. To achieve this chief objective of education the teacher consciously tries to shape his teachings in the moulds

78. A’araf: 172-173, some people take these verses as a symbolic narration and do not believe in the occurrence of the event of covenant taken by the whole of mankind before their creation. But the original text of the Quran does not permit to form such an idea. Believing in the limitless power of God it also appears to reason that God is quite capable of assembling all mankind before their birth. Hadith also throws light on the event as to how the covenant was taken from Adam. This too does not suggest that the verses quoted are mere symbolic narration. The Quranic statement in this regard is quite unambiguous. Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad vide Kalam-e-Nabuwat, vol. I, p. 151.
of the Islamic faith. His generalisation, specifications, inferences and conclusions in the context of the lessons imparted bear an imprint of his faith. His conscious effort is to refresh the memory of the covenant taken from the whole of the mankind at the beginning of creation in the Heaven—the covenant that God alone is worthy of being worshiped. This effort of the teacher is in accordance with the objective for which the Prophets were sent. The Quran, time and again, declares that Prophets were raised to inculcate in mankind the concept of Tawheed (oneness of God) already inherent in their nature. The covenant taken from the whole of the mankind bears a strong proof in support of the Islamic theory of reward and punishment in the life after death. At the time of judgement in the life hereafter man would be accountable to God. There it would not be possible for him to shift the responsibility of his sinful act or deviation from the right path to his predecessors or to his environment. For, at that time the memory of the covenant taken in the beginning of creation and now oblivious from the human mind, would be refreshed and revived by God.

80. The Quran says that in the hereafter when the evil practices of wrong-doers will be exposed no one would have dare to falsify them. Everyone shall have confess one's guilt in the clear words. See An'am: 130.
A teacher in Islamic system of education is expected to refresh the memory of the original covenant so that the young learners growing up might obey God's Command and thereby might earn His pleasure.

The Quranic statement confirms that Islamic monotheism is retained in the sub-conscious mind of man. So when an effort is made to refresh it from the outside, the response of the people towards it is positive. Other adverse external factors of the environment pervert human nature but do not totally efface it from the subconscious mind of man. Like the other potentialities this too requires some external stimuli to bring it to force or to find its expression in practical life. The Prophets whom the Quran considers as the best teachers of humanity perform this function. They do not present any new thing but try to refresh and revive what is already latent in mankind. The teacher in Islamic system of education is expected to keep an eye on the Prophetic method while performing his duty.

It is accepted that every child is born true to the Islamic nature (Al-Fitrat) and it is afterwards that his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian. God shapes human

81. This has been effaced from the memory and conscious mind because God intends to take trail and test. If it would have been retained in the memory the trail for which has man been created would have become meaningless.

82. Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi vide Kalam-e-Nabuwat, p. 149.
nature in the same way and affects no discrimination. The Quran pronounces that one would not find even the slightest difference about the nature on which God has moulded His creation. Everybody is functioning on the intended lines already set by Him. They are actually following the way of Islam. We in our daily life see man's deviation from Islam to un-Islam and it looks un-believeable that man was born on the nature of Islam. Here is the character of Satan as a villain and interloper and he is the open and manifest enemy of man. He tries his utmost to misguide man. His job is to bring change in the human thinking by creating doubts and thereby he commands man to legalise all those things which God has forbidden and declared unlawful for mankind. He also instructs man to associate false Gods as partners in creation with the one Almighty God. These are the ways through which Satan approaches mankind to make them his followers. The teacher under Islamic system of education is fully aware of the fact. He is a witness to the fact that God alone is worthy of being obeyed in every walk of life. Hence it becomes his fundamental duty to ressurrect this belief in the child in all of his educational activities. He should also

83. Rum: 30.
84. Nas: 4
85. Muslim, Vide Kalam-e-Nabuwat, p. 150.
86. Al-i-Imran: 18.
suppress the Satanic urges and demands which occur in children and are expressed by their emotions. The teacher enters in the emotional world of children and shapes their behaviours in the manner he wishes. And what would be the wish of the teacher under Islamic system of education other than Quran describes, "Hasten to follow the path of God that leads to forgiveness from the Lord." 68

The method by which a teacher having true Islamic spirit tries to carry out educational programmes is quite different from that of a professional teacher. He wants to transmit the knowledge he possesses—the knowledge which is deeply rooted into his faith. Ghazali quotes a Hadith 89 and rightly infers from it that the teacher should treat his students with fatherly affection. He further proclaims that the teacher's right is more than the right of the parents. Parents care for the betterment of the worldly life only of their sons while the teacher following the footsteps of the Prophet saves them from the doom of the hereafter. 90 This does not mean that the teacher under Islamic system of education overlooks the worldly and material interests of the students.

87. Naeem Siddiqui, Mohsin-i-Insaniat Bahaysiat Moallim-i-Insaniat, Mahwer Taleem Number, p. 16.
88. Al-i-Inran: 133
89. The Prophet is like the father for his followers, Abu Dawud, Nasai, vide Ghazali, Ahyayl-uloom, p. 137.
90. Ahyayl-uloom, p. 137.
On the contrary he searches for material and worldly prosperity within the framework of morality prescribed by Islam.

The teacher is the destiny maker of the younger generation. He exhorts them to work for the future life. In Islam the concept of future life is very wide and encompasses life-after-death. To lead a better and comfortable life in future the teacher inspires to acquire more and more knowledge, skills and insights. He cultivates a flair for research so that they may know the unknown (ma 'lam ya'lam) and thereby discover the ultimate reality. This leads the students to the eternal laws operating amongst God's creations, and makes them firm in their faith. Their conduct and character is influenced and they devise in its light the programmes of action (Amal al-Salih). Thus it appears that the role of the teacher in a Muslim society is quite different from that of the teacher working under any other society. It can be summarised as follows: (1) Inculcating faith in one God, (2) Creating the sense of research and enquiry so that the students might be able to discover God's laws, (3) Motivating the students to use their skill for the betterment of society. The role of the teacher in a Muslim society is judged not only in the light of his professional efficiency but also in terms of his personal conduct and character which is the practical expression of his faith.
It is said that the aim of Islamic education is to conserve Islamic culture, to serve it and to enrich it. Education without a system of values is hardly imaginable. It is practically impossible to impart anything which has no specific colour of its own. The educational system of a particular nation represents the temperament and spirit of the culture of that nation. If any educational system conserves western culture and civilization, it should not be regarded different from the western system of education. As far as Islam is concerned there is no dichotomy between religions and secular education. Islam takes knowledge as an unified whole. Those teachers who are versed only in the Islamic faith and are unable to impart Islamic teaching in the context of contemporary social situations and requirements, cannot properly discharge their duties in the Islamic system of education. Likewise, the teacher fully conversant with the modern techniques but unaware of Islamic teachings does not deserve to work in educational institutions being run on the Islamic lines.

The success of teacher is conditioned by the criterion as to how he develops a critical sense in his students. During the teaching and training period the teacher, through the whole set of educative materials and programmes along with diverse educational

91. cf. Mawdudi, Taleemat, p. 25.
93. cf. Ibid., 27.
activities tries to give his students a perspective that touches every aspect of life. If the teacher succeeds in inculcating such taste in the light of which the student becomes able to judge every social problem and other complexities of life, he is a successful teacher. This critical wisdom leads students when they study secular sciences. During their studies they imbibe only those parts of these sciences which are in accordance with the Islamic ideas and, discard all those elements which are contrary to Islam. This process of teaching as well as learning is very complex and the role of the teacher here is very crucial. The critical faculty a teacher wishes to develop in his students is possible only when he is able to understand and appreciate the achievements of modern sciences and technologies, on the one hand, and, on the other, he is able to make use of the original sources of Islam. The source material of Islamic literature are to be found in the Arabic language. Hence the teacher must have full command over the language. This provides him the opportunity to consult the sources of Islamic literature. The task of a reconciliation between Islam and the west is a very difficult job and can not be performed simply on the basis of old commentaries on the original Islamic sources. This is possible only when a teacher directly infers from the Quran and the Sunnah, the eternal source of true knowledge; the unchangeable tenets of Islam, and uses

94. cf. Ibid. p. 18.
them in the study of the different branches of modern sciences. In this way he would be able to reshape the various branches of science in an altogether fresh manner. The Islamic element added to modern sciences taught in our educational institution can convert them to Islamic sciences. Thus the teacher under an Islamic system of education serves Islamic culture and fulfils the aim of Islamic education. The teachers always concern about his students falling a prey to Jahilya (ignorance of Islam) hence he endeavours to keep them of the unhealthy ways of thinking. He does not import wholesale the theories and heresy contained under the garb of modern scientific discipline.

It is evident from the prophet's life that everything he said or did was education. The Quran says that there is a good precept in the prophet for the believer and that the believers should take whatever the messenger of God gives them and must abstain from whatever he forbids. These teachings indicate that from Islamic point of view the teacher influences every aspect of the students' life. His personality, behaviour and teaching are example for his students. First of all he himself translate, into action the teachings that he theoretically imparts to his students. Sometimes his saying and doing appear to be quite different from the fashion and mode of the time.

95. Ahzab: 21
These are viewed as incongruous with the social norms and customs. In such an adverse atmosphere and incongenial situation, he gets the opportunity to play the role of a true teacher. When a right thing or a correct principle becomes alien and unacceptable to common people, doubt and suspicion prevent them from adopting these principles, a true teacher however, with his full vigour proves the validity of his teachings irrespective of the fact that these might be unacceptable to the common people. The teacher's stand is supported by his convincing arguments. He becomes the torch-bearer in the atmosphere of darkness, doubt and confusion. In a situation when truth is treated as falsehood, it is very difficult to bear out the truth and stand against falsehood. This is why the prophet praises the learned who come forward to pronounce truth.

The teacher in the Islamic system of education knows well as to how to restore the value of knowledge. Knowledge deteriorates and degenerates when it is assigned to unworthy people, and naturally its safety lies in its proper transmission to worthy persons. The prophet has made it clear that although the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim but the teacher who commits knowledge to those who do not deserve, tries to put the necklaces of jewels, pearls

97. Prophet Muhammad Salam vide Aamash as quoted by Ibn Abdul Bar, op.cit., p.48.
and gold on the swine." Thus it is the responsibility of the teacher to assess the intellectual and moral level of the students and to teach them accordingly, otherwise his efforts to educate the student will go in vain. If the student does not imbibe the knowledge imparted to him he will certainly be disinclined and indisposed towards his studies. This is because of the teacher's failure in the assessment of student's attitudes and inherent potentials. The Prophet is reported to have instructed to talk to people according to their wisdom. He is again quoted to have said that if any one presents before the people a problem which is above their intellectual level and beyond their understanding he initiates to create trouble. In view of the above fact the teacher should take account of the individual differences among the students in order to impart proper guidance and training. It is not good for the teacher to impart all the knowledge at his command to the students irrespective of the fact that they deserve it or not. Hazrat Ali is reported to have said that he carries the treasure of knowledge but there are few who can share. This was not mean to discourage the students. Creating interest in study and motivating the students to acquire more and more knowledge is the prime duty of a teacher. Students should never be disheartened at any stage. They should rather be encouraged.

to question their teacher whenever and wherever they are accessible. In this connection any formality should not become a hinderance. There are traditions that the learned always disapproved of such formalities as might prove as obstacles in the way of learning. They always encouraged the students to ask questions whenever they found the students hesitating to do so.  

It is reported that Abdullah Ibn Masood whenever found the students studying, used to say: "You people are the fountainhead of wisdom, the light in the darkness, though your garments are ragged but your hearts are pure, though you are like the Captives in the house of knowledge, cut you are the blooming flowers of the nation." Such encouragements have always proved to be conducive to the learning process and have always been recognised as the important characteristics of the Islamic system of education.

Teachers in an Islamic society are identified as Sayyid al-Nas (leaders of the people) and Sayyid al-Muslimin (leaders of the Muslims). This high position the teacher occupies in the

102. Ibn Abbas quotes that he wanted to enquire from caliph Umar something of a Hadith but due to hesitation he could not approach him for a long time. One day when he got the opportunity to discuss the problem with the Caliph he was instructed by the Caliph not to be hesitating in the matter of acquiring knowledge. See Ibn Abdal-Bar. op.cit.p.86.

103. Az-Zarnuji, op.cit.p.49.
Islamic society, making his social responsibility wider and more onerous. The first conference on Muslim Education held at Jeddah, describes the role of teacher in the following words: "Since Islamic society can be sustained and advanced only on the basis of Faith, knowledge and Education, the role of teacher assumes the highest importance both in the educational system and in society in general." 105 Teacher in Islamic society is not only a professional worker who has to implement within a framework the principles and policies formulated by the administrator. He, rather, comes forward as a committed person to implement educational programmes. He is free to develop educational plans and procedures. In the Islamic system of education the functions of a teacher and the responsibilities of an educational administrator can not be segregated. Apart from an educational administrator, every educational worker of the institution takes care to implement the educational programmes. The greatest share of this responsibility, undoubtedly, goes to the teacher's shoulder. However the Islamic system of education does not deny the office of the educational administrator, but it is significant that every educational worker takes pain for smooth running of the institution, and this is because of their adherence and their loyalty to Islam. 106

105. Recommendations of committee on Teacher Education as quoted in *curriculum and Teacher Education*, p.209.
The duties of a teacher can be summarized as follows:

(1) Showing kindness to his students, (2) Following the example of the Prophet in his daily life, (3) Paying full attention towards the inherent potentialities of students and trying to impart the kind of knowledge suited to them, (4) Preventing students from obtaining the amount of knowledge beyond their comprehension, (5) Watching minutely the conduct and character of the students. In case of indulgence in obscenity and misconduct the students should be gently advised. (6) Simple and easy problems should be introduced first. (7) The teachings should be corroborated by actions. (8) Preparing students to use their senses. (9) Treating the poor and the rich alike. (10) Fulfilling social responsibilities as far as possible. (11) Realising himself accountable to God for every action specially for duties related to instruction and education of the new generation of the nation.

In the educational set up the heavy responsibilities that lies on the teacher's shoulder can not be properly discharged unless the students fulfil their own duties. In the ceaseless pursuit of knowledge they should come into closer contact with the teachers to take direct advantage from their multi-dimensional personality. This can not be achieved through the text-books only or through the formal stereotype lessons. The Quran records the story of prophet Moses who remained with his teacher and took pains of an arduous journey to acquire knowledge. The choice of a

107. Kahf: 61
A competent teacher is also a very serious affair. The students are expected to select their teacher from amongst persons who are advanced in age, pious in their personal life and learned in the discipline concerned. After the selection of a teacher the student should not skip off to another teacher for guidance and advice. If they do so they will not see any blessing in their studies. This will not only dishearten the teacher whom he has himself chosen, but his studies too would suffer. Showing lack of patience and perseverance, he will lose the opportunity of gaining knowledge. The Prophet enjoins that the teacher should be highly honoured and treated with great respect. At another place he says: "This knowledge is a kind of religion; so consider from whom you receive your religion." This Hadith indicates that knowledge in Islam is sacred and the person who imparts it, deserves honour. How much respect and reverence are due to the teacher is best expressed in the following words of Hazrat Ali, "I am a slave of the man who taught me one letter of the alphabet. If he wishes he may sell me; if he so desires he may set me free; and if he cares he may use me as a slave." The etiquette from students

110. Al-Jameus Sagheer, vide, Naeem Siddique, Muhsine Insaniat bahasiat Moellim-i-Insaniat, Mahwer Taleem Number, p.17.
111. Mishkat, p.62.
112. Az-Zarnuji, op.cit.p.32.
considered essential are innumerable and a few important ones have been discussed elsewhere. Here only one tradition of Islamic system of education is noted to show the gravity of the matter. It is reported that the reverence of teacher includes to respect the teacher's sons and his relatives also. Imam Burhanuddine, the author of Hidaya says that one of the Imams of Bukhara used to lecture in a mosque and in the course of his lecture he sometimes stood up from his seat. It was due to the reverence and respect of the son of his professor who during his play time appeared at the gate of the mosque where the Imam used to lecture.

It is evident from the present study that the Prophet of Islam was a teacher in the truest and the widest sense of the word. Though he himself was a ummi unlettered he taught his followers the importance of literacy, learning and knowledge. He is reported to have said that 'He was sent only as a teacher'. This is why the teacher in an Islamic society holds the most prestigious place and is realised to be the heir of the Prophet. In the early days of Islam the teacher made very remarkable services. He is considered superior to the devout. God, angels and the inhabitants of the heaven and earth send their blessings for him. He occupies the third position after God and His messenger. His reward in the hereafter continues as long as the influences of the knowledge -
imparted by him remain on the horizons of the world. But at the same time his common mistakes are of great consequence. He is sentenced even after his death if he leaves bad influences on the society. Though the teacher under Islamic system required to be loyal to the Islamic ideology, he is not expected to be a conformist. He is required not to depend on conjecture (Zann) but to be original in thinking and to rely on the knowledge acquired through the reliable sources. Before imparting something he should directly investigate its ins and outs. Apart from imparting formal instruction, he is required to be a precedent setter for his students. Taqwa (fear of God) compels him to honestly transmit the knowledge. His forebearance, forgiveness, compassion and kindheartedness encourage students in the process of learning. Harsh treatment, bitter talk, vindictive retaliation and cruel persecution are not permissible. Severity to the students is believed to harm them. So punishment in the Islamic system of education is generally avoided. Teachers are advised not to be involved in recrimination or altercations. Accepting ignorance about the unknown is praiseworthy. Saying La adri (I do not know) was a common practice in the early days of Islam. The teacher, under the Islamic system is not only a professional worker but also an element of social change. He utilises his knowledge for the benefit of the common man. He enkindle the learner's natural instincts. He believes in the
the covenant taken by God from the whole of the human beings at the very beginning of creation. One may not be aware of this covenant but it is always there in the sub-conscious. The role of the teacher is to revive and refresh it. He not only saves his students from the doom of the hereafter but also searches the means of worldly prosperity for his students. He awakens in his students a passion for research work to know the unknown (ma' lam ya' lam). The teacher is expected to derive the eternal principles, to learn the established facts, the unchangeable laws of nature from the primary sources and to relate them with the different branches of modern science. He, in fact, serves, conserves and enriches Islamic culture.

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