138104 - Islamic Schools in the West - Negative Effect on Students?

the question

Is it true that the person who is used to studying in Islamic schools, and has no previous experience of studying in non-Islamic schools, will never be able to connect with the environment that surrounds him, where most of the people are non-Muslims and that he will grow up shy and will never find any way to succeed either in his academic life or in the workplace? What is your opinion about that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

No rational person doubts that in Western countries there are dangers to the religious commitment and morals of those who live in these countries, and the schools that the children attend pose a serious danger to the students, both male and female, who have no defense against those dangers in those schools; the rates of crime, disputes, sexual activity and assaults on females in the schools is something that we hear a great deal about. This has made people look for a way out of these dangers, and some of them look for schools that are free of those sins and problems, and they found what they were looking for in “Islamic schools”. The more these schools apply Islamic rulings, the morefree they are of those problems and sins. We only say that because we have come across schools that are Islamic in name only, but not in reality.

Secondly:

What is well known is that the student who studies in a centre for memorisation of the Qur'aan or in an Islamic school where the administration is successful in running that school or centre will be of good character and will have a good education, and sound and broad knowledge. All of that is what Islam calls to and encourages, and what proves that is the fact that there are geniuses

among Muslims in all fields of knowledge and science who are righteous and religiously committed. In Islam there has never been any separation between religion and science or religion and education. The first verses that Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) started with the word Iqra' (Read) and also mention the pen. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).

He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).

Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.

Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.

He has taught man that which he knew not"

[al-'Alaq 96:1-5].

Dr. 'Abd al-Rahmaan al-Jumhoor -- may Allah guide him -- the head of the English language department of the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ood Islamic University and a consultant of the American Curriculum Institute said:

Islamic schools in the West are based on sublime foundations and goals, as follows:

1.teaching Muslim children about their religion

2.instilling noble Islamic values and attitudes

3.protecting Muslim children from being assimilated into Western cultures

4.providing Muslim students with academic teaching of a high standard

5.representing the Muslims in Western societies

Majallat al-Bayaan, issue no. 173.

Our advice to every Muslim is that he should strive to escape from non-Muslim lands whenever he can manage to do that. For the one who has no choice but to remain in a non-Muslim society, he should fear Allah with regard to himself and his children and keep them away from bad places such as schools and centres; he should warn them against keeping company with evil and corrupt people and he should strive by all means possible to give them what is good by making good choices with regard to accommodation, friends, neighbours and schools. We reaffirm that it is very important to choose an Islamic school that teaches beneficial knowledge and gives a good education, and no attention should be paid to the words of those with ulterior motives who speak badly of these schools, for they have fallen into evil themselves and they want others to do as they are doing. If we assume that there is some weakness in the Islamic schools from the academic point of view, it is not true to say that they are weak in all aspects. It is sufficient for the people in charge to be paying attention to their children's religious commitment and the language of the Qur'aan. This is a great gain for the one who venerates the religion of Allah and the one who is concerned about protecting his children.

It should be noted that the Islamic school on its own is not sufficient to educate and raise Muslim children; rather the mosque also has an important role to play and the home has the chief role. With this integrated approach we can, with the help of Allah, raise a Muslim generation that is educated in its religion and adheres to Islamic attitudes – and modesty is one of the most sublime of Islamic attitudes – and this generation will grow up loving its religion and respecting the laws of its Lord, may He be exalted.

It is not possible for any of the students of the Islamic school to be isolated if the school is based on communal actions with regard to study and prayer and its program includes communal sports and communal laboratory work. Some of them also teach students public speaking so that they may become teachers or khateebs (orators) or daa'iyahs (Islamic callers). Where is the isolation in an environment where hundreds of students gather? Where is the isolation in a class in which there are dozens of students?

When the Muslim mixes with the non-Muslim environment that surrounds him, that is not

something good, such that you would be keen for your children to be in such an environment; rather it is pure evil or mostly evil. We do not mean that Muslims should withdraw completely and isolate themselves. Rather we are calling for protecting Muslims at the age of adolescence from improper mixing. And we are calling for taking care of those who are younger than them so that they will not grow up with bad habits. And we are calling for those who have passed the age of adolescence to avoid places of temptation in the workplace and in the home. What matters is that in all of these ways he will be a Muslim who adheres to obedience to his Lord, who mixes a great deal with righteous company and wisely avoids bad company. Where he has no choice but to mix with others, it should be only to the extent that is necessary.

Please see the answer the question no. 38284, where you will find a discussion of the danger of studying in non-Muslim schools.

In the answer to question no. 4237 you will find a discussion of how to protect children and their thinking in the West.

We ask Allah to help you to achieve that which is best for your religious and worldly interests, and to help you to do that which will please your Lord, and to help you to raise your children and take care of them.

And Allah knows best.