e-ISSN: 2148-0494

dergİabant (AİBÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi), *Güz 2017, Cilt:5, Sayı:10, 5:40-61*

Gönderim Tarihi: 29.11.2017 Kabul Tarihi: 12.12.2017

TEACHER IN THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION –BAGHDAD–*

Ayhan ÖZ**

Abstract

This research has been focused on teachers in Islamic history, especially between ninth end twelfth centuries in Baghdad. In this context their learning lives, career paths, roles in both education process and socio-cultural life, teaching methods, tenures, social status etc. have been addressed. Finally, it seemed that even after the arrival of the madrasa, including the most eminent one, the Nizamiya Madrasa, teachers were at the centre of the education process, and almost all of the teaching activities were controlled by them. In addition to that they were held in esteem by public people, state officials as well as ruling elites.

Keywords: The History of Islam, Islamic Education, Teacher Training, Baghdad.

İSLAM EĞİTİM TARİHİNDE ÖĞRETMEN –BAĞDAT-

Öz

Bu araştırma İslam tarihinde, özellikle de IX. ve XII. yüzyıllar arasında Bağdat'taki öğretmenleri (ulemayı) konu almaktadır. Bu bağlamda onların öğrenim hayatları, kariyer basamakları, gerek eğitim sahasında gerekse sosyo-kültürel hayattaki rolleri, öğretim metotları, görev süreleri, sosyal konumları vb. ele alınmıştır. Sonuçta şu görülmüştür ki, en meşhuru Nizamiye medresesi olan medreseler oraya çıktıktan sonra bile öğretmenler eğitim sürecindeki merkezi konumlarını sürdürmüşler ve neredeyse tüm eğitim faaliyetlerini kontrol etmişlerdir. Buna ilaveten gerek toplum, gerek devlet görevlileri gerekse yöneticiler tarafından büyük saygı görmüşlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslam Tarihi, İslami Eğitim, Öğretmen Yetiştirme, Bağdat.

Introduction

In the Islamic tradition, teacher plays a crucial role in transmitting knowledge to the next generation. It is believed that gaining knowledge from books, without a teacher, is a big calamity. Imam Shafi'i has stated that someone who tries to become a *fakīh* solely through books, loses *ahkam*. Abu Hanifa has also claimed that people who try to learn *fikh* without a teacher in the masjid cannot be a *fâkih*.[1] Therefore, in order to understand the development of the history of Islamic education well, it is important first to clarify the roles of teachers in both education sectors and society at large.

---

* This research has been prepared as part of International Post Doctoral Research Fellowship Programme which supported by TÜBİTAK (The Scientific And Technological Research Council Of Turkey) in 2015, and has been partly revised for this work.

** Yrd. Doç. Dr. Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Bölümü, Din Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, ayhanoz37@hotmail.com **ORCID ID** 0000-0003-4597-1970.

1 M. Şevki Aydın, "İslam Eğitim Geleneğinde Öğretmenlik", *Erciyes Üniverstiesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11 (2001), p. 63.

Teachers are the main focus of this research. The following questions will be addressed: How did teachers in the Islamic world acquire their training and what kinds of qualities did they possess? Who appointed them? How did they organize their instructional environment? What were their influences on the development of Islamic and foreign science? How did they contribute to social, cultural and political life?

In the history of Islamic education, instructional institutions were divided into two periods: pre- and post-madrasa. The pre-madrasa institutions (which excluded foreign sciences), were the jamis with their halqas and the masjids. On the other hand, the dar, bait, khizana, libraries, hospitals and maristans were the locations that were used for post-madrasa institutions, and were inclusive of foreign sciences.[2]

Muslim teachers would normally teach in mosques or masjids. After that, masjid-khân complex, in which the khan or hostelry served as a lodge for students who came from outside of town, began to be constructed. The tenth century witnessed the rise of a new institution for adult education, known as the madrasa, which combined the functions of both the masjid and the khan. In a short period, the madrasa began to spread all over the Islamic world. According to the historical sources, the first madrasa was the Dâr al-Sunna, which was established by Abu Bakir Ahmad b. Ishaq al-Sibkhî in Naisabur in the tenth century.[3] Although it is possible that Madrasas could have been founded in the ninth century, the first real known college was nonetheless in Naisabur in the tenth century. Mosques that also served as an education center remained an important place of Islamic education.[4]

In the Islamic tradition, education was built around the teacher. Therefore, Islamic education can be described as a "teacher-centred" education. In Islamic history, the first teachers were individuals who had been sent out to new communities that had embraced Islam. Also, in these communities, the mosques became the first schools in Islam.[5] These teachers were in the center of the education, and they were also leaders of these communities. In addition, teachers were recognized as people of authority. They were individuals that transmitted knowledge to those around them, including people who would travel long distances to learn from them. The Muslim seeker of knowledge was known as a great traveller and travels in the Muslim world were unrestricted, unlike the Latin West.[6] In the Islamic tradition, seeking knowledge is considered as a kind of worship, which must be sought by Muslims regardless of their gender. In fact, the prophet Muhammad has stated that "Wisdom is the goal of the believer and he must seek it irrespective of its source."[7] The Prophet Muhammad has also said, "God eases the way to paradise for him who seeks learning."[8] According to the Islamic tradition, teachers

2 George Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1981, p. 9.
3 Nebi Bozkurt, "Medrese", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*., 2003. Web. 10 Feb. 2015, p. 324.
4 Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Islamic Education: Its Traditions and Modernization into the Arab National Systems*, London: Luzac, 1972, p. 24.
5 Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, p. 24.
6 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 5.
7 *Tirmidhi*, Ilm 19.
8 *Muslim*, Dhikr, 39.

are recognized as people of wisdom and knowledge, and are, therefore, highly respectable and valuable. The important role of teachers in the Islamic education continued even after the arrival of the madrasas. In fact, Tibawi has noted that Islamic education remained essentially linked to the person rather than to institutions.[9]

There are many learning institutions and important individuals involved in education that can be investigated in the history of Islamic education. This research, however, will focus primarily on teachers in both madrasa and other institutions like jami, masjid and khanqah. However, the more attention will be paid to madrasas, especially to the Nizamiya Madrasa. Since madrasas spread all over the Islamic world in different regions, it is very difficult to investigate all of them. Therefore, Baghdad[10], where so many madrasas were located, will be the only region to be investigated in this research. Around 830 AD, Baghdad held the Bayt al-hikma, which is known as one of the most significant educational institutions in the history of Islamic education. It was after the Bayt al-Hikma that madrasas were established. Through these institutions, Baghdad became the cultural centre of the Muslim world, until the Mongol invasion in 1258. In light of this, this research project will focus only on the period between the ninth and thirteenth century.

1. Concept of "Teacher" in Islamic Tradition

The most general term that describes those who teach various subjects was "ulama". However, this term did not only refer to professors but also to judges. In addition to that, a number of titles that have been used to designate those who transmitted knowledge to the next generations could be found in sources. A teacher or a professor of higher learning who used to teach in a madrasa was known as a

9 Daphna Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni "ulama" of Eleventh Century Baghdad*, Albany: State U of New York, 2000, p. 8.

10 Baghdad was established by al-Mansur, the second Abbasids Caliph, in 762 as the capital of the new empire and it was called as "city of peace" by its founder (Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*, New York: Cambridge UP, 2003, p. 113). Al-Ya'qubi, the famous Arab geographer of the ninth century, described Baghdad as being the center of the world. In the same vein, Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi defined Baghdad in his famous work, Ta'rikh Baghdad, as the "navel of the universe" (Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 21-22). Apart from being political center of Abbasid age it was the most popular scholarly center of this period. Baghdad, with its institutions was the center of the learning from about middle of the ninth century to the beginning of the twelfth century (Mansoor A. Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, Baroda: Centre of Advanced Study in Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, M.S. U of Baroda, 1970, p. 34). It was a scientific center that was comparable to that of Rome in law, Athens in philosophy, and Jerusalem in religion (Hitti 94). It was hosting numerous learning institutions. Ibn Jubayr, the famous Magribi traveler who visited Baghdad in 1184, noted that there were no less than thirty madrasas only in the eastern part of the city (Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 30; A. Khalil Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, New York: Teachers College Columbia U, 1926, p. 32). Totah gives the number of the madrasa in Baghdad as forty (Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 23). Furthermore, it was said that Baghdad numbered 30.000 mosques and each of them likely employed both a prayer leader and an instructor (Charles Michael Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period, A.D. 700-1300*, Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990, p. 18; Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 23). Before the Mongol invasion, there were more than 100 booksellers in Baghadad (Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 127; Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 17). "In brief, hardly an intellectual movement appeared in early medieval Islam without Baghdad's sharing in it" (Hitti 103).

"mudarris", and he was also called "ustad".[11] The term "mudarris", when used without any complement, referred to the professor of law in madrasa.[12] Ibn Khallikan used this term for the lecturers at the Nizamiya Madrasa when Al-Qalgashandi applied it to a teacher of the legal sciences such as fiqh, hadith and exegesis as well as nahw.[13] Makdisi used "Shaikh" to describe professors of other fields, apart from fiqh, like exegises, hadith, grammar and literary arts. Indeed, both mudarris and shaikh were the topmost teaching careers in madrasa.[14] However, the highest title was "imam"[15] which referred to those who was authority in his field. All these titles probably were given unofficially.[16]

Teaching was required to attain a licence, the ijaza, from a shaikh, but some premature or unqualified people would teach without licence and they were called "mutasaddir".[17] "Mu'allim" or "mu'allim kuttab" were used to designate the teacher of elementary school who simply taught the Quran to children in "kuttab".[18] At the same time, there were also private tutors, mu'addibs, who taught sons of wealthy families as well as those of princes and Caliphs. In some cases, the term mu'addib was also applied to refer to an ordinary elementary teacher.[19]

The professor in a certain religious science sometimes had also a specific title. For instance, professor of Koranic science was called shaikh al-qira'a, and those of hadith were called shaikh ar-riwaya.[20] An-Nahvi, the grammarian, was used to designate the professor of grammar, as well as those of literature, belles-lettres.[21]

It should be taken into consideration that one of the main functions of informal institutions was education. Their leaders somewhat were teachers and they also had different titles. The leader of the ribat was called "shaikh al-ribat", "shaikh al-khanqah", or "shaikh al-zawiya".[22]

During this research, to prevent confusion both "professor" and "shaikh" will be used to refer to teachers of higher learning institutions. However, "professor" especially will be used for the teacher of madrasa, including both mudarris and shaikh, when "shaikh" will be applied to the teacher of other institutions who had a study circle there. In case of necessity to refer all learned men including professors and shaikh, the term "ulama" and to refer to only teacher of law "mudarris" will be preferred.

11 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 65; Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 41.
12 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 153.
13 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 41.
14 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 153.
15 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 65.
16 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 41.
17 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 203.
18 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 219; Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 34.
19 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 35, 40.
20 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 210, 215.
21 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 214.
22 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 216.

2. Importance of the Teacher in Instruction

Teacher was the most essential part of Muslim education whether before or after the arrival of the madrasa. Turning of the geographical schools into personal schools is a striking example showing the centrality of the teacher before the appearance of the madrasa. In addition to that, halqa, which survived as the main teaching method even after the advent of the madrasa was based on the centrality of teacher, and was convenient with his central position. The seating arrangement in the halqa was such that teacher would sit leading against a wall or pillar and his students would sit on their knees in a semicircle around him, is another striking example showing the centrality of the teacher in Islamic tradition. The seating next to the professor was accepted as a big honour and only ashab, the fellows of the professor, were entitled to sit there. The significance of the seating next to the professor was brought out by the phrase of "qarrabahü ilaih" (brought the student close to him).[23] Since the study circle was formed around the shaikh, upon his death the original study circle normally dissolved. His students either would attach themselves to another master or form their own study circles.[24]

According to sources, it seems that choice of a good teacher was more important than that of madrasa. Biographical dictionaries and other sources cited only shaikhs of students, not their madrasas or places, except for the Nizamiya Madrasa. For instance, the great traditionalist al-Nawawi (1277) in his own biographical notice listed at length the shaikhs with whom he had studied but did not mention any name of madrasa. Likewise, Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi (1256) only gave details about the shaikhs with whom he studied but did not mention any word about madrasas.[25] In addition to that, most treatises focused on the qualities should be looked for in a teacher, and it was expected that a student should have spent as long as two months to choose a proper teacher.[26]

Teacher was in the center of education from the beginning of Islamic history. Study circles in the mosque often bore the name of the shaikh. The size of the study circle depended on the popularity and renown of the shaikh.[27] Abu Hamid al-Isfara'ini (d.1016), one of the famous Shafi'i scholars of eleventh century Baghdad, taught law in the mosque of Mubarak and his study circle is said to have numbered seven hundred law students.[28] As in the case of Imam al-Haramain al-Juwayni (d.1085), his class, according to Ibn Khallikan, contained four hundred, but according to al-Subki, three hundred students.[29] Even after the arrival of the madrasa teachers kept their crucial roles in education. Some madrasas were founded for the sake of a professor, and some of them bore the name of a reputable mudarris. The most striking example was ash-Shirazi, the first professor of the Nizamiya Madrasa, accepted his appointment after Nizam al-Mulk formally declared

23 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 92.
24 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 76-77.
25 Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, Cambridge: Cambridge U, 2002, p. 75-76.
26 Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2014, p. 22-23.
27 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 30.
28 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 52.
29 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 43.

that the Nizamiya Madrasa had been established only for his sake.[30] Other example was al-Mujir al-Baghdadi (d.1195) for whom one of the Seljuk Sultans built a madrasa in Shiraz.[31] The Nuriyya Madrasa in Damascus started to be called as al-'Imadiyya following the appointment 'Imad ad-Din al-Isfahani as secretary by the Ayyubid Sultan Nur ad-Din.[32]

Since the lack of a religious authority like the Pope and the Church in Islam, ulama assumed many important roles in their societies. This circumstance made them more estimable in the public. The forceful Mihna implementation and its failure made ulama stronger in Baghdad because in a way it meant the triumph of ulama over ruling elites. It strengthened their positions as the representative of religious authority.[33] In addition to that the support of Seljuk sultans and ruling elites to ulama and to higher learning institutions made them stronger and more responsible in society. On the other hand, it made them more dependent on the ruling elites.

Higher learning institutions basically were based on the existence of ulama and their important roles there. According to Berkey, Islamic education was mainly personel, informal, flexible.[34] This could be acceptable to some extent because the instruction mainly came under the control of the instructor. He set the curriculum and the tone of instruction, so he was somehow the textbook and curriculum.[35] Madrasas had no established program or curriculum nor provided specific body of knowledge for students to be master. Rather, students chose their subjects and sought out their shaikhs by themselves.[36] Nevertheless, sources refer to stipulation in the deeds of some waqfs about the teaching topics. In this case, professors of madrasas should have taught in fields for which the madrasa was founded. Otherwise, according to Subki they would be thieves of the waqf.[37] Although the curriculum must have been set according to the stipulations of the founders in the deeds of the waqf, the wishes and repertoire of the teachers and directors were more dominant in shaping the curriculum.[38] If the professor wanted to deliver in other fields of knowledge, beside his major field, he could have done this too.[39] Nevertheless, foreign sciences like chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, matephysics, and music were extra-mural, and they were mostly taught by private masters outside the madrasa.[40] Scientific studies could be learned at two institutons; medicine in hospital under the guidance of private phyicianss; matemathic and astronomy in observatories like at the Shammasiyyah in Baghdad.[41] Although there were some institutions, the main place for these studies was private homes.

30 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 79.
31 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 116.
32 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 114.
33 Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo,* p. 128.
34 Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo,* p. 18.
35 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 98.
36 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 87.
37 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 83.
38 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 2; Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 42.
39 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 191.
40 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 53.
41 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 55.

Actually, shaikhs had more freedom in choice of subject to teach in their study circles. They could teach a specific subject or a variety of fields in a single halqa or in study circles throughout the city.[42] Perhaps only mu'addibs were given a list of subjects in order to teach. Parents who hired private tutors for their children could offer them what they would teach their children. For instance, the Caliph al-Rashid offered his son tutor, al-Amin, to teach them Quran, history, poetry, traditions and appreciation of eloquence and accustom him to respect the Shaikhs of the Hashim family.[43]

Teachers were the main authority in accepting new students to their study circles as well as in choice of their subjects to teach. There was not any formal admission procedure for joining lectures, especially in mosques. Shaikh would decide to accept a new student to his study circle as well as on sequence and method of instruction.[44]

Although instructors were at the center of the education, it does not mean that the essential role of learning institutions, both formal and informal, in the scientific and academic development of Muslims was ignored. These institutions contributed to the prestige and career of the ulama as well as their disciples. Many instructors moved from mosque to mosque during their professional career to teach more prestigious institutions.[45] For instance, Abu Bakr (d.1114), the closest disciple of both as-Sabbagh and ash-Shirazi, taught Shafi'i law in a madrasa located in the eastern side of the city, then in the Tajiyya Madrasa and finally assumed the position of mudarris in the Nizamiya Madrasa.[46] That point also should be taken into consideration; madrasas were established for a specific subject of learning such as hadith and the Quran, making their professors more respectable. For instance, with the establishment of the first college of hadith in Damascus (1174) by Nur ad-Din Zanki, the level of the mutahaddith rose to that of jurisconsult in the college system.[47]

In addition to that, instruction was conducted not only by the professor but also by a teaching staff heading by him, so besides professorship madrasas held several teaching positions. The number of the staff of the madrasa was basically depended on its size, revenue and the wishes of the founder, so the number of the stuff differed from one madrasa to the other. However, in general, apart from mudarris there were a number of teachers of Quran (shaikh al-qira'a) and assistants (muids) as well the teacher of hadith (shaikh al-hadith) and of Arabic grammar (shaikh an-nahw). A librarian and a preacher could also be employed in madrasas.[48] In each hall there was also a "naqib" who arranged and organised the class.[49] Among this staff especially mu'id (repeater) and mufid (tutor) were employed almost in all madrasas.

---

42 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 84.
43 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 16.
44 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 79-80.
45 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 30.
46 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p.166.
47 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 211.
48 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 105.
49 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 29.

The muid was chosen by professor and was usually the most brilliant and advanced among the fellows of the professor. He could also be a graduate student or an accomplished jurisconsult without his own chair of law.[50] This title was usually applied to the assistant of the mudarris. Nevertheless, it would use to describe the assistant of other fields' professors (shaikhs). The assistant of hadith professor was called "mustamli".[51] On each side of the teacher sat a muid or mustamli.[52] The role of muid was to repeat and explain the lectures to students, to give them private help when they need, and to help teacher to dictate notes. The mufid, like muid, was either a fellow qualified to help lower-classmen in their lessons, or a graduate student, or an accomplished jurisconsult. He also could be a learned man to whom other scholars came to consult important issues. His function was to do research and import its useful results to students, and to provide extra help and guidance to less advanced student with their lessons.[53] The other mostly occupied staff in madrasa was deputy of professor (naib). His role was to replace the professor during his absence. He acted as a substitute teacher when the professor or shaikh was far away, or engaged in administrational works, or held a number of study circles at the same time. Therefore, he was expected to be a master in his field. Haitami said that, deputy-professor's qualification had to be as good as or better than those of the professor whom he replaced.[54] Assistant teaching staff, such as muid, was occupied not only in madrasa but also in some masjids which afford to pay them both before or after the arrival of madrasa.[55] Nevertheless, before the advent of the madrasa muid was only used in the field of law when mufid was only used in the field of hadith and Quranic studies.[56] In addition to that, some shaikhs who held several posts in different mosques also had deputy- professor.

The other point is that, in addition to the teaching staff, students played a crucial role in their own learning process. At first, learning and teaching would start with their eagerness to seeking knowledge and choice of a qualified teacher. Indeed, they would choose, even change, their shaikhs by themselves, so could study with different shaikhs in a variety of places. They traveled from one city to another to study with masters. The intimate relationship between teachers and students would shape learning activities. Although teachers dominated this process, the liberty of students to select their teachers and travel among the centers of Islamic learning prevent us to call it completely as a teacher-centered educational approach. It is emerged from the biographies that major figures in the history of Islamic education had a large number of shaikhs with whom they studied even from different legal schools.[57] Ibn Khallikan relates that Abu al-Qasim Sulaiman, born in Persia, journeyed to Mesopotamia, Hijaz, Yaman and Egypt to study. He spent thirty-three years and took lessons from one thousand professors.[58] In according to that we can say that students would have responsibility in choice of destination of their journey for seeking knowledge and that of their teachers with whom they would study even

50 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 193, 195.
51 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 213.
52 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 50.
53 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 195-196.
54 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 189.
55 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 34.
56 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 109.
57 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 81.
58 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 42.

if the last decision was not made by themselves, but then the teaching process was completely controlled by teachers.

The choice of a qualified teacher perhaps was the milestone of disciples' learning process. Students were suggested to select the most learned, the most pious, and the most advanced in years.[59] Zarnuji, advises student to seek the advice of his elders about the teacher, travel a large city if he lives far from the learning centers, then settle down there for a couple of months for seeking advice and consultation, then choose the teacher. He also emphasises that students should remain with their teachers long enough to learn the subject preciously. Otherwise, this case causes a bad reputation for these teachers.[60]

3. Distinctive Characteristic of Teachers in Early Islamic History (in Baghdad)

Teachers were not specialist in the modern sense in early Islamic education. Most of them were well-versed in different body of knowledge. The early Islamic scholars teaching in private circle usually were polymath and emphasized the unity of all kind of knowledge, including foreign sciences, so they were called "hakim".[61] They taught different foreign sciences like philosophy, natural science and medicine, in their circles. Even if some were interested only one among the foreign science would not ignore others.[62]

However, education in Islam was mostly oriented towards religious purpose and most of them were involved with only religious sciences. Seeking knowledge was accepted as an essential part of devotion, so education rested on religious purposes. Zarnuji has stated, "the object of education is to attain the pleasure and goodwill of the Almighty and win eternal life".[63] Another scholar, Ibn Jama'ah, said that whosoever seeks 'ilm for other motives his place will be in hell.[64] Therefore, at the beginning teachers did not make their living from their teaching only. They either were supported by a wealthy man, even sometimes by the caliph himself, or they would perform certain civil duties like legal advising, healing, tutoring and even diplomats in some instances.[65]

Teacher's first responsibility is to read and try to understand of the Quran.[66] In addition to that, one of the main characteristic of learned men were being qualified in hadith because it was considered as a central ingredient of 'ilm. In fact, the advanced level of religious education would start with study of hadith.[67] It laid the foundation for other religious sciences and the future establishment of higher learning institutions.[68] Almost all of the ulama, especially those of Hanbali, were well-versed in hadith as well as in their special subject area. Therefore, they were

59 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 87; Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 66.
60 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 113-114.
61 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 70.
62 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 125.
63 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 4.
64 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 6.
65 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 82.
66 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 98-99.
67 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 101.
68 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 10.

described in sources as muhaddith-faqih, muhaddith -zahid, muhaddith -qari, muhaddith -abid, muhaddith –nahwi or only as muhaddith.[69]

Journey for seeking knowledge called "rihla" was one of the main distinctive characteristic of the ulama in early Islamic history. Like seeking knowledge, traveling for it was also a devotion strongly encouraged in Islam. The Prophet said that "Those who go out in search of knowledge will be in the path of God until they return".[70] Ibn Jama'a mentions that no one could attain knowledge unless he leaves his brothers and dies away from his family.[71] Biographical dictionaries describe journeys of ulama at length and relate the esteem shown to renowned scholars traveling to various Islamic regions. The rihla survi[72]ved even after the arrival of the madrasa. Especially muhaddithun preserved this practice.

In early Islamic history the intellectual life was very lively and the group of ulama were fluid. Students would travel from one teacher to another as well as from one city to another one. In the same vein, ulama would travel between cities for the sake of seeking knowledge or teaching. Baghdad was the most attractive center of learning for Muslim scholars especially during eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries. The support of Seljuks to religious scholars and religious institutions made Baghdad a more attractive city for students and ulama even from far distances. Abu al-Hasan al-Andalusi (d.1146), a native of Valencia, came to Baghdad to study law under al-Ghazzali in the Nizamiya Madrasa.[73] Nevertheless the big majority of immigrant and transient ulama moved from the eastern part of Muslim world, mainly from Iranian cities. In addition to that, Baghdad was on a principal pilgrimage road, the Khurasan Road, hence transients, including disciples and ulama, coming from the eastern provinces used to pass through Baghdad to Mecca. This circumstance also helped Baghdad to become an international and cosmopolitan center of learning.

The learned society in Baghdad was cosmopolitan, scholarly and religious elites were composed of native-born, immigrant and transient ulama.[74] Among the immigrant ulama who came to Baghdad in eleventh century there were 54 Shafi'i, 26 Hanbali, 23 Hanafi. In addition to that, there were 27 Shafi'i, 4 Hanbali and 3 Hanafi scholars in transient ulama. The total number of the immigrant ulama was 154, and the transient was 77.[75] The big majority of the immigrant and transient ulama were consisted of Shafi'is and they were mostly from western Iran and Khurasan. The number of these Shafi'i scholars was more than double the number of native-born members of the Shafi'i school.[76] Nearly one half of the Hanafi scholars were composed of immigrants and transients. It appeared that the increase in the number of the immigrant and transient ulama from both Shafi'is and Hanafis was closely related with the establishment of Shafi'i and Hanafi madrasas in Baghdad in this

69 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 42-46.
70 *Tirmidhi*, Sunan, III, 2.
71 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 110.
72 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 60.
73 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 62.
74 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 150.
75 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 42-45.
76 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 46.

period. On the other hand, Baghdadi Hanbalism was dominated by native-born ulama.[77]

The number of immigrant ulama rose especially during the second half of the eleventh century, the period in which they established a large number of madrasa and ribats.[78] In fact, more than half of the professorships in Shafi'i madrasas were held by immigrant and transient ulama. Out of three great fuqaha' dominated the Hanafi school in eleventh century Baghdad two, as-Saimari (d.1045) and Abu 'Abd Allah ad-Damaghani (d.1085), disciples of Al-Quduri (d.1037), were also immigrants to Baghdad. On the other hand, the native-born Hanbalis filled the big majority of teaching positions in great mosques of Baghdad.[79]

Sources show that a decline seemed in the number of the immigrant ulama to Baghdad due to dissolution of Seljuk Empire during the first half of the twelfth century as well as the rise of the other scholarly cities like Damascus and Cairo. The Ayyubids founded madrasas and ribats in Damascus and the great cities of Egypt and provided great stipends for the immigrant ulama.[80]

Some of the Baghdadian ulama, who emigrated to other cities from Baghdad, were invited to teach there, when others traveled on their own decision or on the request of their shaikhs. Al-Baihaqi (458-1066), the renowned Hadith professor, received a call from Nishapur to teach there, and accepted it.[81] Some of them were sent by their shaikhs to propagate their legal and theological doctrines. The Hanbali scholar, al-Qadi Abu al-Ya'la (d.1066) sent his two closest disciples, Abu al-Fath al-Bahdadi al-Harrani (d.1083) to Harran and Abu-Faraj ash-Shirazi (s.1094) to Jerusalem and Damascus for the purpose of propagation.[82]

Though Baghdad attracted large number of ulama and even sent many of them to other cities, the Baghdadian ulama could not build an organized community.[83] In Baghdad there were a number of independent formal and informal institutions which could not be brought into a single system.[84] Such as the case of institutions, ulama of Baghdad mostly worked individually and independently. As the ijaza referred to the intimate relationship between the shaikh and his disciples and gave the disciples authority to teach individually, they did not need to create an organized community. The network between the members of same halqa or school was vertical which linked the disciples through their shaikh to an unbroken chain of teacher rather than horizontal which bound members of halqa to each other's.[85] In addition to that there was only one professor in the most of the madrasas in Baghdad, so they did not have opportunities to collaborate with other professors about sequence or method of teaching.

---

77 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 47.
78 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 55.
79 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 51, 138-139.
80 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 57.
81 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p., 212.
82 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 50-51.
83 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 182.
84 George Makdisi, "Madrasa and University in the Middle Ages", *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970): 255-65. Web. 5 May 2015, p. 259.
85 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 76.

4. Social status

Ulama came from different social levels including poor and humble ones. The education was accessible to all children regardless their social and economic differences, so everyone, according to his capability and diligence, may have had a chance to be master in different fields of Islamic science. For instance, Al-Jahiz, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Ghazzali, eminent scholars of their age, rose from humble origins.[86] Nevertheless, according to biographical dictionaries nearly one-half of the ulama were coming from merchant families.[87]

Teachers, especially renowned ulama, regardless their origin and family background were well respected by the common people. Ibn Khallikan narrated that when Abu Ishaq Shirazi went to see Sultan Malik Shah, thousands of people gathered to meet him, so he hardly moved on. Even non-muslim scholars were held in high esteem by the big majority of the Muslims. Totah related that when Ibn al-Tilmidth, a Christian Arab physician, died "no one left on either bank of the Tigris who did not hurry to the Church in order to attend his funeral".[88] This is a striking example indicating the esteem of both knowledge and learned man regardless his origin or belief.

Not only the common people but also ruling elites would hold them in esteem. Even the caliphs and sultans respected them. One day Harun-ar Rashid, the Caliph between 786-809, himself poured water on Allama ibn Muawiya's hands, who was blind, from a vessel and his sons, Amin and Ma'mun, used to quarrel to set their tutor Far's shoes right for him to put on.[89] Some teachers beyond attaining the respect and support of the ruling elites were appointed to high-ranking legal and governmental positions as chief qadi, qadi or mufti. Especially Hanafi ulama had a closer relationship with ruling elites than others and they were the first who accept the governmental positions. Indeed, fifteen of the thirty six qadis were from Hanafi school as thirteen were from Hanbalis.[90] In addition to that Hanafi schools were patronized by the Seljuk ruling elites especially starting with the death of Nizam al-Mulk until the middle of the twelfth century.[91] In some aspect it could be seen as a big honour to have been appointed to like these positions by a big majority of the public. On the other side, sometimes, especially in early Islamic period, this case would be accepted as a bad reputation for the teachers, because by accepting these positions they made themselves more dependent on rulers.

In fact, many reputable jurisconsults refused appointment made by ruling elites, in some cases even in spite of the insistence of the caliph. Some accepted it only without any payment or with other special conditions.[92] They tried to keep themselves away from ruling elites to protect their religious and scientific freedom. They thought acceptance of these positions would make them more dependent on rulers, and rulers would expect their loyalty. Although holding high-ranking positions in civil services contributed the popularity and renown of ulama,

86 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 44, 97.
87 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 96.
88 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 6.
89 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 73-74.
90 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 127-128.
91 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 130.
92 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 200.

assumption of this kind of responsibilities was seen as a kind of pollution. Therefore, those who refused them for living quietly and benefiting their students were praised by sources.[93] They were also held in esteem by the common people and drew more followers.[94] Even professors who held more than a post in different institutions and hired substitutes to work in their place to get more revenue were censured by some ulama like Ibn Taimiya.[95]

The funeral of a learned man is a striking example for how much he would be well respected by ulama and the common people. Ibn Khallikan relates that on the day of Imam al-Haramain's funeral all the shops were shut, whole population mourned for him, all scholars broke their pens and ink-horns and gave up studying almost for a full year.[96] Sibt b. al-Jawzi relates that the funeral of Abu Fawaris (d.1105), who taught Quran and hadith to thousands of people, was attended by a large number of ulama and the common people, and the city markets were closed for a week.[97] It is also related that the gate of the Nizamiya Madrasa had been closed almost for an entire year after the death of ash-Shirazi.[98]

The other demonstration for high esteem of ulama was the inaugural lecture of the professor newly appointed this position. Since becoming a professor was accepted as a great honour, a special ceremony would be organized by the founder for his first lesson in the madrasa, which is called inaugural lecture. This lecture was given by the professor newly appointed, and often accompanied by the attendance of the government officials and ulama. In these lecture, a robe of honour was bestowed upon him. "The inaugural lecture had the function of displaying the qualifications of the new professor, the extent, depth and quality of his knowledge".[99] Inaugural lectures especially were held for chief qadis and professors of law. For example, Abu Nasr b. as-Sabbagh and al-Ghazzali gave an inaugural lecture when they were appointed as professor of law in the Nizamiya Madrasa.[100]

Respect to teacher would also include his children and those who belong to him. Zarnuji relates that one of the greatest imams of Bukhara rose in the middle of his lecture when he saw his teacher's son in order to show his respect to his teacher.[101] It should be kept in mind this respect was shown for teacher not for his son. Nevertheless, this case also might be seen as a threat for the turning of the respect for knowledge and learned man into an appointment procedure based on heritage and descend, as appeared in the next periods.

Although by and large, teachers were well respected, muallim, the teacher of elementary school, were held in relatively low esteem comparing with those of high learning institutions. Even some spoke of muallims as "sots" and "little-minded" and it seemed a sufficient indignity for a man to be a teacher of boy. They usually taught at private homes which considered as an inconvenient place for men, and confined

93 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 101.
94 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 144.
95 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 167.
96 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 74.
97 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 136.
98 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 79.
99 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 159.
100 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p., 154-155.
101 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 77.

themselves and their students there.[102] It is related that, 'Abd Allah ibn al-Muqaffa, the famous translator of Kalilah wa Dimnah into Arabic, refused the suggestion of Isma'il ibn 'Ali to be tutor of his child by saying that "Do you wish that I should be classed among fools?".[103] On contrast, Al-Jahiz objected this and said, "How can you call such a man as al-Kasa'i (tutor of Harun al-Rashid's sons), Qutrub, and others, fools?".[104] It seems that it is very difficult to say that all muallims were held in contempt. In fact, it can be said that, all teachers were well respected except some unqualified elementary teachers. Actually, as their basic role was to teach the Quran, the holy and most respectable book for Muslims, and teaching by itself was considered one of the most valuable prayers in Islam, it is not reasonable to hold elementary teachers in contempt.

Teachers were ranked between themselves in terms of superiority as well. Mutasaddir, the premature teacher, was on the bottom of the list. Although some were held in contempt, muallim placed on it. Mu'addib, the private tutor, was superior to muallim.[105] Nevertheless, all teaching staff of higher learning was more respectable than all above. Muid and mufid were ranked below the deputy professorship.[106] Indeed, professorship had superiority to all of them. Moreover, the main subject taught in madrasa was law and the professor of that course would hold the high-raking position among the teaching staff even among the professors.[107] However, with the establishment of college of hadith and Quran, professors of these courses could have an equal rank with those of law.[108]

5. Appointment

The affiliation with a legal school played a crucial role in occupation of the learned man. In Baghdad, almost all of the ulama belonged to a legal school by the twelfth century[109] and a great majority of them were affiliated with three Sunni schools; Shafi'i, Hanafi and Hanbali. The Nizamiya Madrasa was a Shafi'i school and the professors of this school should have been Shafi'is. In general, madrasa professors were dominated by Shafi'is and eighty percent of the thirty-one professorship, between 1018-1154, belonged to this legal school.[110] Hanbalis were reluctant to adapt madrasa to their learning system; therefore, they began to establish their first madrasa almost a half century later than Shafi'is and Hanafis. On the other hand, the big majority of the teaching positions in great mosques of Baghdad were filled by Hanbalis.[111]

Appointment of ulama to teaching post was made in different ways. Not only stipulations in the deeds of waqf, but also the founders of the madrasas, the professors, ruling elites and local ulama, although their tenures in appointments changed time to time and place to place, were essential determinants of this process. The appointment to the teaching positions in great mosques sometimes caused

102 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 37-38.
103 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 38.
104 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 38.
105 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 35.
106 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 210.
107 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 78.
108 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 215.
109 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 137.
110 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 130.
111 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 139.

conflict and discussion between ruling elites as well as between different legal schools. Furthermore, it was also possible to be witnessed the internal conflict in the same school. Especially in the Shafi'i school, native and foreigner scholars competed over the position of mudarris in great Shafi'i madrasas.[112]

Before the advent of the ijaza, teachers were normally appointed to a teaching post according to their superior qualifications with the recommendation of the candidate's professor, or the consensus of the local ulama. Even after the advent of the ijaza, it was also the most common way.[113] However, the way of appointment differentiated from one legal school to another, even from one madrasa to other one. This process mostly came under the control of the founder in the Shafi'i school whereas the choice of professors was left to the decision of the leading scholars in the Hanafi school. These scholars usually selected their most promising and closest disciples to succeed them.[114] In the case of the Nizamiya Madrasa, appointments were made by Nizam al-Mulk, the founder, in the name of his own name. In some madrasas appointment to the post was made by local elites or ulama. Ibn al-Banna related that in the Shrine College of Abu Hanifa, the first Hanafi school in Baghdad, people, who made appointment locally, played a role in the appointment of the professor when its first professor died. Nevertheless, in all cases appointments should be made according to the stipulations of the charter if it was existence.[115]

In the early Islamic history, the closest disciple whom was granted the ijaza by his teacher to teach in a certain body of knowledge was the stronger candidate of the teaching post. On the other hand, in some instances, the control over the appointment to teaching position was the first prerogative of the founders. In addition to this, the rulers, especially sultans and chief qadis and other powerful men were closely involved with appointments to posts as in the case of Cairo in the Middle Ages.[116] However, in Baghdad, particularly Seljuk rulers, who strongly supported Sunni religious institutions, especially those of Hanafi, kept themselves away from the internal affairs of the ulama.[117]

In fact, it should be mentioned that there is not enough evidence about the appointment of teaching staff in madrasa, for the deeds of the waqf dating from the early madrasa period are not accessible. Indeed, our sources, mainly biographies, attest that many students succeeded their predecessor without any appointment of the founder or ruler. The appointment to a post was open to those having different scholarly backgrounds, so these sources played down the family background of the scholars and stressed their quality and knowledge. Nevertheless, starting from the late eleventh century family background started to be one of the most important criteria to have been appointed to this position.[118] Therefore, some held this position by line of descent, and some founders stipulated that the post should be reserved only for the descendant of the founder. It was also possible to find some examples for the sale of post.[119] Especially following the decline of the Seljuk Empire, the

112 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 140.
113 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 170.
114 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 120.
115 Makdisi, "Madrasa and University in the Middle Ages", p. 264.
116 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 91-107.
117 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 8-9.
118 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 118-122.
119 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 170-171.

phenomenon of inherited teaching positions became more visible. Indeed, during the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries a number of the professors in the Nizamiya and Mustansiriya madrasas were descendants of professors in one of the madrasas in Baghdad. Not only teaching positions but also high-ranking offices changed hands between the members of the same family. Thus they acquired more prestige and wealth.[120] It appears that at the beginning the post was commonly succeeded by a favorite student, but by passage of time it turned into a heritage passed from one generation to the next one.

In general, teaching positions in mosques was also succeeded by the most promising fellow of the shaikh, though in some cases it became an inherited teaching position in the next periods. In great mosques, appointment of the teaching staff would be made by the caliph or his designate. In the case of smaller mosques, this function was performed by the local officials and respected religious leaders with the approval of the qadi. Nevertheless, in mosques belonged to a certain sect, appointment of the shaikh was made by the members of this sect. In mosque-colleges supported by an endowment, the donor of the endowment stated the way in which the mudarris should be appointment. Eventually, both of them required to be approved by the qadi.[121]

Professors could hold more than one post in different institutions, even in both formal and informal ones. In this case, they hired substitutes at nominal fees to work in their place.[122] Furthermore, it was also possible to hold different governmental positions in addition to professorship in an institution. Some would hold different positions like qadi-mudarris and mudarris-nazir at the same time. Particularly, new law schools provide access to a large number of positions such as qadi, the shahid, the mufti, the khatib and the imams. In fact, nearly a third of 103 madrasa scholars were also employed in the administration of the law (qada'), especially in the position of qadi. The Hanafi jurist Abu al-Husain al-Yazdi (d.1175) would hold both the post of mudarris at the Sultan Mahmud Madrasa and the post of na'ib-qadi. Likewise, the chief qadi Abu al-Qasim Abu Talib az-Zainabi (d.1148) taught the law in the great Hanafi madrasa.[123] It was common that the qadi also held the professorship of a college of law even if he was not sufficiently expert to teach the law.[124] Some ulama could also enter the state bureaucracy or be charged with the administration of one or several madrasas' endowments.[125] The attainment of high ranking position in bureaucracy was not reserved for the scholars who taught in madrasa. Shaikhs of great mosque of Baghdad could also assume these positions.[126] For instance, al-Qadi Abu-Ya'la (d.1067), a renowned Hanbali scholar, was referred to in sources as mudarris, shaikh al-hadith, shahid, qadi and ra'is al madhhab. Abu Jafer 'Abd al-Khaliq (d.1078) was also mudarris and mufti.[127] In fact, since the central position of knowledge and learning in Islam, it is not surprising that ulama assumed different important positions in social and cultural history of

120 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 123.
121 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 32.
122 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 167.
123 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 110.
124 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 201.
125 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 112.
126 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 112-114.
127 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 156, 159.

Islamic societies.[128] "The religious scholars of eleventh-century Baghdad shared an ethic of public service, providing educational, religious, and legal guidance to the Muslim community".[129]

Like professors, it was not unusual for a shaikh to preside over a number of circles in different mosques. On the other hand, some teaching posts were shared by more than one professor, which first appeared in Baghdad in eleventh century. Abu 'Abd Allah at-Tabari (1102) and Abu Muhammad al-Fami ash-Shirazi (1107), both were law professors, shared the same post in the Nizamiya Madrasa in Baghdad.[130]

Usually they held high-ranking positions in the legal administration positions after performed as professors, but in some cases it was also possible to acquire professorship after the charge of legal administration. Abu 'Ali an-Naharawani al-Isfahani (d.1130) first occupied the qadiship in one town of Khuzistan and then came to Baghdad and assumed chair of mudarris in the Nizamiya Madrasa.[131] This example might indicate that the chair of professorship in the Nizamiya Madrasa was more valuable than the qadiship in some other places in some aspects. But it should be also kept in mind that some professors of the Nizamiya Madrasa left their positions to teach in other cities or to assume the administrative positions. Perhaps the most striking example related with that case was Abu Nasr 'Uthman (d.1165), grandson of Nizam al-Mulk, who acquired an advanced legal education in the Nizamiya Madrasa and assumed the professorship after the death of his professor, then moved to Damascus and was appointed to the chair of professor in al-Ghazaliyya Madrasa.[132]

6. Career Paths

"Students built their careers on the reputation of their teachers."[133] Therefore, choice of a proper teacher was the first and main step of their career. After their choice the decision to accept a new student to his study circle was left to the teacher. There was no restriction in terms of age, origin, or previous educational path.[134] Nevertheless, it was expected that the candidate should have basic knowledge about recitation of the Quran, literacy, and arithmetic.

There was not a specific time for learning, so it was from the cradle to the grave. The biographies of many Muslim scholars show that Muslim scholars continued their education under the same or different ulama even after they finished their formal education under their teacher. They needed to learn constantly to refresh their memory and to attain new knowledge. This life-long learning activity was called "ishtighal".[135] Actually they were proud of being known as pupils than as teachers. Abdullah bin Wahh Malik, successor of Imam Malik, had spent twenty years under Imam Malik. Abu Ishaq Shirazi, studied under Qazi Abu Tayyab for more than ten years as his pupil.[136]

---

128 Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo,* p. 13.
129 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 136.
130 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 168.
131 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 117.
132 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 114.
133 Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo,* p. 23.
134 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 101.
135 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 209.
136 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 79-80.

Although, almost all of the Baghdadian ulama belonged to a law school, they also benefited from the professors of other legal schools through their career path. This case made the ulama more acquainted with each other's and more tolerant of member of other law schools. Especially hadith teaching and Hanbali scholars played a crucial role in this process. As mentioned before, the advanced level of religious education would start with the study of hadith. The Hanbali scholars paid a special attention to the prophetic traditions and opened their study circles to the members of different law school. Two famous Shafi'i scholars, ash-Shirazi and al-Katib al-Baghdadi, studied hadith under the Hanbali shaikh Abu 'Ali al-Hashimi (d.1037).[137]

Indeed, there is no fixed curriculum or an organized, scholarly career courses which would be followed by candidates of teacher. However, according to sources many renowned professors started their career as a mu'id for a famous professor. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Faruqi (d.1206) and Al-Mujir al Baghdadi (d.1195) served as-Suhrawardi as mu'id.[138] Even some scholars, whether by their own choice or that of their shaikhs, sustained their positions as mu'id for a long time. For instance Abu Ja'far, a scholar of the eleventh-century Baghdad, served Qadi Abu Ya'la for more than seventy years as his mu'id.[139] Then after, by receiving ijaza from their teachers, many muids formed their own study circles either in where they studied or in another place. They usually passed through several career pathes. For example, Abu'-Hasan 'Ali al-Faripi fallowed these steps in his career: "..from basic law course, to the suhba of Sufism, to graduate student of the Nizamiya law college, to muid, to mufti, deputy-qadi, shahid-notary, to deputy-professor at the Nizamiya, and finally professor of law of another madrasa".[140] Likewise, Abu Ishaq ash-Shirazi first was the mu'id of Abu't-Taiyib at-Tabari before he became professor of law in a masjid in Bab al-Maratib, and then assumed the chair of law in the Nizamiya Madrasa.[141]

7. Ijaza

In early Islamic period, there was no certification for teaching activities. It was only in the ninth century, when the text books came in vogue, ijaza came out as the certificate of teaching. Receiving this certificate was based on studying with a teacher and getting his permission to teach from his book or that of his teachers. The permission was usually written in the book which would be taught by newly authorised teacher as a text.[142] By and large, the professor signed his name on the flyleaf of the book. The ijaza could be granted for a single text as well as for a collection or a whole body of knowledge. The ijaza granted to al-Maqqari by Abu Hayyan is a good example: "I have certificated you (may God grant you success) in everything I have learned from my teachers in Spain, Africa, Egypt, and the Hijaz, and in everything in which I was, myself, licensed to teach in Syria and Iraq".[143] Even

137 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 91.
138 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 115-116.
139 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 88.
140 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 194.
141 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 194.
142 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 65.
143 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 57.

lectures dictated by a teacher could be used in teaching activities by his students only by his permission.[144]

In fact, the licence was issued first to transmit hadith. After that two types of licence came into existence in the field of law: first, the licence to issue legal opinions, al-ijaza li'l-ifta'; and later, after the arrival of the college of law, the licence to teach law, al-ijaza li't-tadris.[145] Furthermore, these ijazas gave right to its owner to develop his professional career in the civil service acting as a jurisconsult. In other religious sciences, ijaza gave the recipient the chance to pursue a career as adviser or tutor in bureaucracy and as leader in a mosque or teacher in masjid or madrasa.[146]

The ijaza only was given by the shaikh to certify the qualification of his student to teach whether his book or the book of other author who authorized him to teach. By another word, ijaza should be received either from the author of book or from a chain of transmitters extended back to the author.[147] Neither caliph nor other ruling elites had any right to grant ijaza even they were the founders of the institutions. There was not a fixed period of study for the ijaza, so the time required to receive a licence to teach was changeable from one student to another. Receiving an ijaza was basically depended on the teacher and it did not require a fixed curriculum either. The ijaza remained a personal act of authorization until modern times.[148]

By and large, reading a text with a shaikh and being dictated by him was the most common way for attaining a licence. Nevertheless, it was not mandatory to be dictated or read a book, but sometimes hearing was also sufficient to receive an ijaza as in the case of Ibn al-Banna' (d.1078) who granted one of his disciple an ijaza by the way of hearing.[149] The licence usually was granted following an oral examination in which the candidate proves his competence in a specific subject through defending one thesis or series of theses.[150] In addition to that, students of medicine required to pass an examination and acquire a license before they performed. Sinan ibn-Thabit was the chairman of the Board of Examiners in Baghdad in tenth century.[151]

The ijaza could be given also by shaikhs who did not have any mansab in madrasa, so it is difficult to describe it as a formal certificate or system for transmission authority.[152] Not only in madrasas but also in other high-learning institutions was also asked a letter from the shaikh with whom they studied confirming their success and ability to teach a specific work of the shaikh. This letter

144 Quraishi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*, p. 66.
145 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 270.
146 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 49.
147 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 103.
148 Makdisi, "Madrasa and University in the Middle Ages", p. 259,262; Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 271.
149 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 69.
150 Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges*, p. 217; Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 49.
151 Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*, p. 7.
152 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 88.

had a similar function with that of ijaza issued by a professor in formal learning institution.[153]

Students could receive a number of ijaza in different scope of knowledge by the approval of the shaikh they studied with. Furthermore, physicians, beside medicine, were to engage in the study of philosophy, science, and religion.[154] Especially students of the law had to collect ijazas from as many as different jurists as possible.[155] However, it should be kept it mind that the ijaza was only one part of their quality or a larger category of documents that attest to their learning.[156]

Research results

Baghdad hosted many renowned ulama between ninth and thirteen centuries. In ninth century, especially starting with the caliph al-Ma'mun, many non-Muslim scholars who were well-versed in different foreign sciences, especially in medicine, came to the court in Baghdad. Bayt al-Hikma, the first institution of higher scientific studies among the Arabs, gave support these scholars to access to new and rare manuscripts. Many works were translated into Arabic from Greek, Persian, and Syriac in this center of learning and its huge library contained them. It seems that although teachers of foreign sciences played significant role in transmission of knowledge, access to a large number of written sources and attaining knowledge directly from these books was common too.

Nevertheless, after the triumph of the ulama over ruling elites, who accepted the Mutazilite creed, in mihna, religious scholars and those who well-versed in these fields of study became more dominant. By the effect of the traditional view, the centrality of the ulama in teaching activities grew stronger. Teachers were more important and well-known than the places where they taught. Therefore, students would look for teachers rather than institutions. This central position of teacher survived even after the arrival of the madrasas. Although some famous madrasas, especially the Nizamiya Madrasa, were attractive places for seeker of knowledge, essentially, instruction was formed around the professors. In addition to that, the traditional teaching method, the study circle (halqa), referring to the central position of teacher, was still the main method used in madrasa as well. However, it should be mentioned that, with the appearance of the madrasa teaching staff who helped the professors during their courses became more visible. Especially muid, mufid, naqib, and naib undertook essential roles in teaching activities. This circumstance changed the central position of the teacher to some degree. Furthermore, holding a teaching post in famous madrasas, even in some famous mosques, was seen as an important stage in the career of ulama. Most professors taught in a number of madrasas, and mostly moved through the most prestigious one during their career. It shows that beside the professors, madrasa as a formal institution played a crucial role in the history of Islamic education. In fact, the madrasa and the professor were close partners, and both contributed to the reputation of each other.

153 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 124.
154 Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam*, p. 135.
155 Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition*, p. 103.
156 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*: 1190-1350, p. 90.

By passage of time, teaching posts became more valuable than teachers and inherited teaching posts came into existence. In some cases, scholarly family background was accepted only criteria for appointment to the post of professorship. Furthermore, some posts changed hand by sale. In addition to that high-ranking legal and governmental positions became more attractive for ulama than the post of teaching. These circumstances also negatively affected the value and centrality of teacher to the some extent. Nevertheless, licence (the ijaza) system which basically was based on the teacher rather than institutions kept central position of teachers in teaching activities. Since the ijaza would be granted by teachers individually and almost all of them taught independently, even they held the posts in madrasa, Baghdadian ulama of this age could not form an organized community. A large number of immigrant and emigrant ulama might have an advance impact on the creation of a uniform community.

Training of the teacher candidates was also based on the close relationship with their teachers. Most of the ulama started their career as a fellow and muid of their teacher. They spent long time, even in some cases a number of decades, with their shaikhs. After receiving the ijaza, they formed their own study circles. They did not only attain knowledge from them, but also imitate their piety and manners. Furthermore, this intimate relationship and their loyalty to their shaikhs continued even after the death of the shaikh.

This research only focused on Baghdad between ninth and thirteen centuries. Therefore, it only included a small part of history of Islamic education. It is clear that more comprehensive researches should be done to understand the role of the teachers in the long time Islamic education history.

Bibliography

Aydın, M. Şevki. "İslam Eğitim Geleneğinde Öğretmenlik." *Erciyes Üniverstiesi İlahiyat Fakultesi Dergisi* 11 (2001): 59-74. Print.

Berkey, Jonathan Porter. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.

Berkey, Jonathan Porter. *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2014. Print.

Bozkurt, Nebi. "Medrese." *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (DİA)* 2003. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

Chamberlain, Michael. *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus: 1190-1350*. Cambridge: Cambridge U, 2002. Print.

Ephrat, Daphna. *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni "ulama" of Eleventh Century Baghdad*. Albany: State U of New York, 2000. Print.

Hitti, Philip K. *Capital Cities of Arab Islam*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1973. Print.

Makdisi, George. "Madrasa and University in the Middle Ages." *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970): 255-65. Web. 5 May 2015.

Makdisi, George. *The Rise of the Colleges Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1981. Print.

Quraishi, Mansoor A. *Some Aspects of Muslim Education*. Baroda: Centre of Advanced Study in Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, M.S. U of Baroda, 1970. Print.

Stanton, Charles Michael. *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period, A.D. 700-1300*. Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990. Print.

Tibawi, Abdul Latif. *Islamic Education: Its Traditions and Modernization into the Arab National Systems*. London: Luzac, 1972. Print.

Totah, A. Khalil. *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*. New York: Teachers College Columbia U, 1926. Print.