

In a recent article I had mentioned the scientific confirmation of the concept of accountability according to the faith and belief. I remember the example of a person to show how the concept of accountability could be put into practice in our days. I come from a small village in eastern U.P. About a dozen Ulama have lived in that village in our time. One of them was late Molvi Bakhshish Ahmad Sahab. He was teaching in a Madrasa in Gorakhpur and lived there alone. His wife and a son, who later became a Molvi and a Hafiz and taught in the Same Madrasa after the demise of his father, lived in the village home. Molvi Sahab lived a very simple life as it generally happens with such persons. But still there was something unusual about him. If someone ever came to see him while he was teaching his students he would note down the time of his distraction or absence from his duty and at the end of the month he would tell the Munshi of the Madrasa that that much time should be deducted from the total time he was supposed to spend on teaching and accordingly deduction should be made from his salary.

The practice of Molvi Sahab is an example of following the principle of accountability and observing the general principle of morality in worldly dealings. One obvious consequence of that of a teacher's duty was that students were well prepared with their courses of study for the forthcoming examinations. In our days tuitions by school teachers were not common, hardly parents, that too the rich ones, engaged teachers for home tuitions of their children. Teachers devoted full time and devotion to thoroughly teach their students. Perhaps the morality in teaching profession was to a great extent common. Our Political Science teacher in the Christ Church College, Kanpur, an Englishman, was so prompt that he hovered around the class room a few minutes before the bell for the beginning of the period and immediately with the bell he used to enter the class room. He never wasted even a few minutes in taking the attendance. He used to pass a slip towards the students for them to sign their names and he started his lecture. On the completion of his lecture on any given subject he would dictate a summary. At the end of the academic session, and before the beginning of examinations, if any student asked about something important he would flatly say that everything is important and I have taught you everything included in the course so you should know everything.

Another example is that of Molvi Azizur Rahman Sahab who had retired after teaching for forty-two years in Shibli High School, Azamgarh. He was my elder cousin. He told me that he had never taken leave, even for a single day throughout his teaching career. It is really amazing that it never occurred to a person to take leave, for any reason whatsoever. His due leaves lapsed every year. He thought that why he should have taken off when he did not need. Thus he devoted all his time to teaching. I have mentioned these examples only to bring home the fact that if the teaching community is faithful to the profession and believes in the final accountability they can change this world. The sense of final accountability is a matter of faith for a person, even otherwise it is a very important social requirement, especially these days when our children are slipping towards a decline leading to the ditch of backwardness. Our children are facing the hurdle of inequality in an unjust and cruel society. In these circumstances our teachers can give them a helping hand to walk straight to a successful life and for this great service they need not go an extra mile, strict adherence to the principle of accountability will bring forth the required result. Let us plead to our teachers to do that.

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ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRACTICE

By Rizwan Ullah

Here I would like to give another example of how some teachers go to another extreme. It is about a teacher when I was in class IV of Faiz Aam School, Kanpur. Our math teacher always came to the class with a cane in his hand and would put it on the table in front of him. Whenever he wrote a sum on the blackboard he would invariably always call Ejaz Ahmad to stand by the side of the blackboard. Ejaz was rather weak in math and when he failed to answer the question or could not give the correct answer the teacher used to thrash him with the cane. One day I could not bear the sight of tears rolling down his cheeks and decided to boycott the teacher. In those days such an idea was utterly foolish and was certain to invite severe punishment. That is what actually happened.

However, on the next day I acted according to my plan. The math period occurred after the interval so immediately after the interval on that day I announced that the teacher should not be allowed to enter the class and accordingly I shut all the four doors of the classroom from inside. The teacher arrived. He was very furious to see the doors shut from inside. He shouted but no student moved. Then he started pounding the door only then a student from amongst 25-30 students got up and opened the door. The teacher rushed in all fire and fury and asked who had shut the doors. None answered. Then he threatened to cane the whole class, only then the same student, Ismail by name, told my name.

The hell broke upon me. I was severely thrashed. But as a consequence two things happened. The teacher got the message, he never canded Ejaz after that day and the boy who had shone weakness and happened to be the son of a tailor got the nickname "Kafan Chore" and he was put to great shame in the school. As for the behavior of the teacher, it was neither a good teaching practice nor the adherence to the principle of accountability. It was sheer cruelty to the tender age children affectionately loved by their parents and sent as a trust to the teachers.

Shaikh Sadi, the great Persian sage has written the anecdote of a saint who lived a lonely life at a distance from the population and spent his time in prayers. Once it occurred to his mind that he should come out of his seclusion and take to teaching. He did so. Naturally people asked him why he had chosen to give up such a noble life and had indulged in worldly affairs. His reply to them was that by indulging in prayers was like taking his own boat to the safety of the shore but by teaching thye boat carrying all people could be carried to the safety.

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