# Towards Authentic Behavior Management Models for Islamic Schools - A Framework Synthesizing Research

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## Abstract

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The purpose of learning in Islamic schools should be for transformation on the path to *ma'rifa-tul- Allah*. Transformation over compliance would therefore best characterize behavior management models that are appropriate for Islamic schools. Unfortunately, often behavior management models are adopted in Islamic schools without considered thought or evidence based either from the tradition or from empirical research. To respond to this, critical examination of current behavior management models and their embedded practices in Islamic schools is required. To what extent are common practices effective, authentic and in alignment with the vision of Islamic education? The purpose of this paper is to produce a framework that can inform the development of authentic behavior management models for Islamic schools conversant with Islamic principles and Prophetic practices. The framework offered is based upon a synthesis of research within the field of Islamic education.

## About the Authors

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## Introduction

As Islamic schools in Western contexts negotiate the next phase in their development empirical research to assess both the appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches in such schools is essential. The tragedy in Islamic schools can be the assumption that certain practices are working without empirically assessing their effectiveness. With reference to building strong school culture or a climate that manifests Islamic values and etiquettes, typically there is no indication that the systems in place foster either obedience or responsibility. While Islamic schools want to encourage and support the latter, most often the methods

applied lead to the former. This can apply to the area of behavior management which for the purposes of this paper will encompass classroom management, school discipline and all other terms used to denote a behavior management model (BMM) subsequently informing behavior management systems (BMS). BMMs and approaches can be situated within certain educational philosophies and themselves are informed by child psychology theory.

Research suggests that discipline and high standards of conduct and behavior reflective of religious and cultural expectations are a factor for parents choosing an Islamic school for their children[1]. Good character inspired by the Prophetic standard; strong and positive school culture in the spirit of Islam; dignified conduct in classrooms; and principled and healthy interpersonal relations are all arguably high priority in Islamic schools. However, there is little by way of established models or blue prints for achieving such standards. Equally, what can be grossly unfair is that in the absence of the *suhbha* (companionship) and *tarbiyah* (nurturing) exemplified by the Prophet (peace be upon him) with his companions, whether in the home or at school, stakeholders within Islamic schools can expect similar manifestations of the *sunnah*[2] or the Prophetic standard of students. An effective BMS for Islamic schools conversant with the philosophy, purpose and aims of Islamic education and in the context Muslim students live is therefore essential.

The philosophy of Islamic education entails consideration of the principles and concepts informing education in Islam. There is not one singular agreed upon philosophy of Islamic education. Rather the philosophy is dynamic in order that the principles and values which are enduring can be applied by Muslim educators and thus, Muslim students in all contexts for all times. In relation to the purpose of Islamic education, it is inextricably linked to the purpose of creation which is to worship Allah Almighty and to be His vicegerent (representative) here on earth[3]. Purpose informs the broad aims of Islamic education which this paper summarizes as to instill the desire to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty, and success in the Hereafter[4]. It is the duty of educators of Muslim children to apply approaches in which these high values

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[1] Donohoue Clyne, I. (2000). Seeking Education: The struggle of Muslims to educate their children in Australia. (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

[2] "What has been passed down from the Prophet (PBUH) of his statements, actions, tacit approvals, manners, physical characteristics or biography, regardless of whether it was before he was sent as a prophet or afterwards" (as-Salafi, p. 15; Shawaat, p. 20).

[3] Allah Almighty says, 'I have not created the jinn or humans except to worship me[3]' (Qur'an 51:56). Many commentators of the Qur'an in their *tafsir* explain that worship mentioned here in the Qur'an means *ma'rifa* (knowing Allah). In the *Tafsir* of Al-Bagaui: Mujahid said: 'to worship means to know Me. Thus a Muslim is in pursuit of *ma'rifa,* and once this state has been reached, the concept or position of *khalifat Allah fi'l - ard*, the Vicegerent (representative) of God on earth, has been fulfilled (Qur'an 2:30).

[4] Alam, O. (2007). A Dignified Way of Raising Standards of Classroom Discipline. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/a_dignified_way_of_raising_the_standards_of_c.pdf: Accessed 29th October 2015.

are practically achieved within the process of learning from the beginning to the end of student's formal school education[5].

Whilst the philosophy, purpose and aims are distinct in Islamic education, Muslim educators are not alone in valuing effective BMMs. There are a continuum of BMMs guiding contemporary approaches and practices. Some of these include the emphasis on choices, consequences, responsible behavior, restorative justice[6], and positive learning[7]. Researchers in Islamic education circles[8,9,10,11,12] question the suitability of many contemporary approaches to behavior management used in Islamic schools, and suggest the consideration, and subsequent inclusion, of a model that is both cognisant and consistent with an Islamic worldview and approach. Islamic worldview is the lens through which a Muslim sees and understands the world, rooted in the ontological and epistemological basis of existence in Islam. Islamic worldview provides useful terms of reference or parameters that ensure Islamic education philosophy, purpose and aims inform educational approaches.

This paper synthesizes research in the field of Islamic education related to behavior management, character education, the connections between purpose and path, and the central role of *adab* in the learning process. The resultant framework aims to inform the development of authentic behavior management models for Islamic schools conversant with Islamic principles and Prophetic practices within an Islamic worldview. The framework presented in this paper is being applied to a model piloted at Amanah Institute, a *madrassah* in Brisbane, Australia.

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[5] Abdul Haq, M. (1990). *Educational Philosophy of the Holy Quran*. Lahore. Institute of Islamic Culture.

[6] Woolfolk, A., Margetts, K., Godinho, S., Frydenberg, E., Lo Bianco, J., Freeman, E., & Munro. J. (Eds.). (2007). Educational Psychology. Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia.

[7] Edwards, C. (2008). Classroom Discipline and Management, 5th edn, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

[8] Memon, N. (2007). The Prophetic Standard: Incorporating the Instructional Methods of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Schools. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum Rosemont Illinois. http://www.isna.net/programs/pages/previous-education-forum-papers.aspx: Accessed 31st December, 2011.

[9] Memon, N., & Ahmad, Q. (2006). The pedagogical Divide: Toward an Islamic Pedagogy. Paper presented at the Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum Rosemont Illinois. <http://www.isna.net/programs/pages/previous-education-forum-papers.aspx>: Accessed 31st December, 2011.

[10] Memon, N. (2013). Beyond stickers and detentions: Inspiring self-motivation in students. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/2013_education_forum_presentations.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

[11] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

[12] Alam, O. (2007). A Dignified Way of Raising Standards of Classroom Discipline. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/a_dignified_way_of_raising_the_standards_of_c.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

**The Broader Context**

Behavior management is an important component within a high performing school. The challenges inherent in managing student behavior and maximising student engagement and learning in school occur amongst a backdrop of significant societal and generational changes. This is most evident in terms of advancement in technology, the impact of the internet, and the impact of social networking on society generally and young people specifically. The result is a generation of 'switched on' and 'developmentally compressed' students in the classroom; students possessing broad yet shallow knowledge who at times struggle to cope with premature exposure to concepts, ideas and thinking[13]. Family dysfunction and rising mental health concerns are additional factors that impact upon schools and their focus on student engagement[14] and motivation.

Many schools in Western contexts such as the United States, Canada and Australia can said to be diverse reflecting the spirit of multiculturalism. Islamic schools in such contexts model this same spirit of multiculturalism and exhibit the highest levels of diversity on almost every marker – cultural, ethnic, linguistic and sectarian[15]. This can present both challenges and opportunities for Islamic schools to build a strong school culture with shared and understood expectations of student behavior, as well as reconciling acceptable norms and mores in relation to school stakeholders' interactions. In many cases shared faith and the subsequent religious principles governing good character, relationships, conduct and behavior including culturally acceptable notions of respect serve as enablers to achieve the broader aim of the school in terms of student behavior and engagement with learning.

However, no significant research has been conducted to examine the prevalence and causes of students' behavior in Islamic schools, its management or impact on teacher-student relations. It is, therefore, difficult to comment on this. It can be easily assumed that Islamic schools would be having problems similar to other schools although the problem is more complex given that Muslims students face unique pressures having been raised in the post 9/11 world[16]. Students have been exposed since birth to an overwhelming negative discourse regarding Islam and Muslims in an often bias and sometimes hostile media amid a complex broader geopolitical climate. This can manifest in pressures upon students to negotiate and reconcile their multiple identities and sense of belonging, impacting on student behavior and engagement

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[13] Pendergast, D. (2015). Making great teachers: Global megatrends to Generation Z: Arts, Education and Law (AEL) Group Public Lecture, August, 2015: Griffith University Film School.

[14] Urbis. (2011). Literature Review on Meeting: The Psychological and Emotional Wellbeing Needs of Children and Young People: Models of Effective Practice in Educational Settings *Final Report*: Prepared for the Department of Education and Communities.

[15] Wise, A., & Ali, J. (2008). Muslim Australians and Local Government, Final Research Report for the Centre for Research and Social Inclusion. http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/grassroots/. Accessed: 1st February, 2013.

[16] Abdalla, M. (2010). Australian Muslims: Negative Image – Positive Contributions," in Rane, H., Ewart, J. and Abdalla. M. (eds.), Islam and the Australian News Media. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

with learning. Trauma could be an additional factor impacting on student behavior in Islamic schools. Many Muslim students in Islamic schools in the West have either negotiated a refugee experience and the subsequent acculturation process, or are the children or grandchildren of families who have. Given the absence of research in this specific field of Islamic schools, it would be inappropriate to ascertain conclusively the prevalence and causes of behavior issues within this unique classroom setting of an Islamic school in a Western context.

**Authentic Behavior Management Models for Islamic Schools – A Synthesis of Research**

In forming our synthesis we relied on Memon's concept of Islamic pedagogy as we viewed it as an overarching framework for not only assessing and evaluating, but achieving excellence in Islamic schooling[17]. We ensured that Islamic worldview was represented to maintain the integrity, relevance and appropriateness of BMMs for Islamic schools. For this we acknowledged the work of Nasr[18] and Shamma[19] in their understanding of Islamic worldview. We accepted Al-Attas's[20] heavy emphasis on *adab* in the learning process. We viewed this as a fundamental point of difference to other models limited to addressing problem behaviors disturbing learning. *Adab* instead is central to learning and its inclusion reconciles distinct notions of knowledge and learning peculiar to Islamic education. We were convinced that BMMs in Islamic schools must be teacher-modelled based on the ample evidence within the Islamic tradition of the status and role of the teacher. Also, building a strong school culture is a community effort. We were inspired by Memon and Bacchus's[21] call for character education in Islamic schools in order to create what they termed school climate with Islamic values and viewed this as a requisite preventative component. We borrowed from the domain of discipline with dignity[22] and more specifically the work of Alam in articulating Prophetic principles of teaching characterized by the maintenance of dignity[23]. We added to this the pursuit of mutually transformative experiences, being interactions between students and the educators that result in the improvement of the individual parties and of the overall relationship leading to a substantial net benefit for all. Taken together we offer the following seven requisites as the

[17] Memon, N. (2013). Re-Framing Excellence in Islamic Schooling: Elevating the Discourse. http://razigroup.com/resources/2011/11/re-framing-excellence-in-islamic-schooling-elevating-the-discourse/. Accessed 27th April, 2013.

[18] Nasr, S. H. (2012). Islamic Pedagogy: An Interview. Islam and Science, 10(1), 7 - 24.

[19] Shamma, F. (2004). The Status of Islamic Curriculum.   Retrieved August 6th 2009, from www.4islamicschools.org.

[20] Al Attas, S. (1980). The Concept of Education in Islam (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM); reprint, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)).

[21] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October 2015.

[22] Mendler, A.N., & Curwin, R.L. (1999). *Discipline with Dignity for Challenging Youth*. Bloomington: National Education Service.

[23] Alam, O. (2007). A Dignified Way of Raising Standards of Classroom Discipline. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/a_dignified_way_of_raising_the_standards_of_c.pdf: Accessed 29th October 2015.

platform from which we develop the framework for informing Authentic Behavior Management Models for Islamic Schools.

**Authentic Behavior Management Models for Islamic Schools:**

1. Align with an Islamic pedagogy (why, what and how)
2. Are informed by Islamic worldview
3. Place an unrelenting and central emphasis on *adab*
4. Are teacher-modelled and student-directed
5. Adopt a whole community approach
6. Contain preventative approaches including a character education component
7. Contain intervention approaches that maintain dignity and look for mutually transformative experiences.

## 1) Align with an Islamic Pedagogy

Islamic pedagogy is an overarching framework that defines excellence in Islamic schooling. It can be applied for its enabling function in the assessment and evaluation of approaches in Islamic schooling within a criterion of excellence.  Authentic BMMs for Islamic schools best operate when within an Islamic pedagogy. According to Dr Nadeem Memon, Director of Education at Razi Education,

> An Islamic Pedagogy is the principles of education in Islam that inform both what we teach and learn, and the way we teach and learn… An Islamic Pedagogy provides a framework of the principles of education derived from the Islamic tradition that influence our approaches to schooling.[24]

Memon further asserts,

> For Muslim educators who see Islam as a central part of our being – the *tarbiyah* (nurturing of an Islamic value system), the *adab* (comportment and etiquette), and the '*ilm* (knowledge about Islam) that we continue to gain shapes our educational values and by virtue defines our pedagogy.

Islamic pedagogy foregrounds the 'why' of Islamic education for alignment with 'what' and 'how' we teach and learn. The 'why' encapsulates the Islamic tradition, the purpose of Islamic education and Islamic worldview, informing subsequent aims as well as the various educational approaches that can be employed. In this case the approaches pertain to a BMM as a forerunner to a BMS. When such a system is

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[24] Memon, N. (2012). What is an Islamic Pedagogy? http://islamicteachereducation.com/what-is-an-islamic-pedagogy/#sthash.GFuu4NGR.dpuf Accessed 2nd December, 2015.

guided by and operating within a framework of the principles of education derived from the Islamic tradition[25] it will be both authentic and appropriate for Islamic schools.

## 2) Informed by Islamic worldview

Islamic worldview can be defined here as the lens through which a Muslim student or an educator of Muslim children sees and understands the world, rooted in the ontological and epistemological basis of existence in Islam. Islamic worldview provides useful terms of reference or parameters that ensure Islamic educational philosophy, purpose and aims inform educational approaches. Al-Attas (2005: 16)[26] explains that the worldview of Islam is,

> Characterised by an authenticity and a finality that points to what is ultimate, and it projects a view of reality and truth that encompasses existence and life altogether in total perspective whose fundamental elements are permanently established.

In other words, Islamic worldview is constructed around Islamic beliefs regarding creation, existence, purpose and destination[27]. It is this worldview that should therefore inform Muslim student's ways of knowing; ways of doing[28] and ways of being in the world[29] as well as their hopes for the hereafter[30].

Islamic worldview contains fundamental principles, placing all systems of meaning and standards of life and values in a coherent order[31]. At the center of this worldview is *tawhid*, the ontological foundation of all things 'Islamic'. Since Islam is based upon *tawhid*, the development of the whole student becomes possible when educated within this worldview rather than a confusing and crippling mix of different worldviews[32]. It is very important to note that beyond the concept of *tawhid*, there may be great diversity in how an Islamic worldview is expressed and implemented, yet the character and role of the fundamental elements remain[33].

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[25] Memon, N. (2013). Re-Framing Excellence in Islamic Schooling: Elevating the Discourse. http://razigroup.com/resources/2011/11/re-framing-excellence-in-islamic-schooling-elevating-the-discourse/. Accessed 27th April, 2013.

[26] Al-Attas, S. (2005). Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy, 1*(1), 12-52.

[27] Al-Attas, S. (2005). Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy, 1*(1), 12-52.

[28] Abdullah, M. & Nadvi, M. (2011). Understanding the Principles of Islamic World-View. *The Dialogue*, 6 (3) p 268 – 289. http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/6_3/Dialogue_July_September2011_268-289.pdf. Accessed 7th December 2015.

[29] Martin, K. L. (2003). Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing: a theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous re-search and Indigenist research. Voicing Dissent, New Talents 21C. *Next Generation Australian Studies Journal of Australian Studies*, 76, 203-214.

[30] Al-Attas, S. (2005). Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy, 1*(1), 12-52.

[31] Al-Attas, S. (2005). Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy, 1*(1), 12-52.

[32] Nasr, S. H. (2012). Islamic Pedagogy: An Interview. Islam and Science, 10(1), 7 - 24.

[33] Al-Attas, S. (2005). Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy, 1*(1), 12-52.

According to Dr Freda Shamma, an Islamic worldview encompasses three main points:

- Allah is the Creator of all mankind. He is One.
- Unity of creation. There is no dividing line between humans and the environment, between religion and mathematics
- Included in Allah's creation is a set of rules which guide all of nature; and if man chooses to follow those rules, he will be successful in this life and the life to come.[34]

The goal of the Islamic school educator is to direct the student towards the Creator via an Islamic worldview. Any BMM must do so in a holistic, growth-oriented manner.

### 3) Place an unrelenting and central emphasis on *adab*

Contemporary research has identified a strong correlation between student behavior and quality teaching and learning. Quality teachers who engage in quality teaching have higher student engagement and less behavior management issues. Orderly classrooms similarly result in increased student engagement, motivation, and academic success[35]. These principles have been found to hold true across different schools and their school communities. There are, however, certain points of difference or nuances between learning and behavior links within Islamic education. These nuances are often overlooked in Islamic schools. The link that is substantiated in contemporary research relates to the absence of problem behavior causing disruption to learning. However, in an Islamic worldview it is not only the absence of disruptive behaviors, but the addition of what is referred to as *adab* which is necessary to substantiate links between behavior and learning. The addition of *adab* is thus a most noteworthy distinction.

*Adab* is a term encompassing 'a complex set of meanings including decency, comportment, decorum, etiquette, manners, morals, propriety, and humaneness'[36]. *Adab* must play a central role in a BMS in an Islamic school since learning encompasses imparting knowledge, and also implies the acquisition of manners and the meanings mentioned above. Al-Attas posits, 'no true knowledge can be instilled without the precondition of *adab* in the one who seeks it and to whom it is imparted[37].' The *adab* mentioned here

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[34] Shamma, F. (date unknown). Integrating a consistent value system – The Missing Islamic World View. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/integrating_a_consistent_value_system-_freda_shamma.pdf Accessed Dec 2nd, 2015.

[35] Hattie, J. (2009). Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement. London: Routledge.

[36] Zaytuna College Website (2015). A Muslim Liberal Arts Education https://www.zaytuna.edu/about/our_mission/. Accessed: 1st December, 2015.

[37] Al-Attas, S. (1978). Islam and Secularism (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM); reprint, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), 1993). Page 100.

cannot be instructed, but rather it is transferred from teacher to student[38]. *Adab* in the Islamic worldview is as such an essential part of the process of education as well as being the outcome of an education[3940]. This implies a heightened role and responsibility for teachers in Islamic schools.

### 4) Teacher-modelled, student-directed

In the Islamic tradition...the teacher is both a *mu'allim* (a transmitter of knowledge) and a *murabbi* (a nurturer of souls).[41] In order to align teaching with authentic BMMs, teachers must teach within the morals, ethics, and character of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and, therefore, must embody these traits within their own personalities. If they do not have these traits they must strive to develop them in order to facilitate the ethical learning process of their students. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, president of Zaytuna College in California, traces this history of moral education from the time of the ancients,

> Regarding education, the ancients understood that its primary purpose was not economical but ethical, and while they knew ethics could not be taught, they knew it could be induced through moral example and wise childrearing techniques that ultimately resulted in moral and intellectual excellence.[42]

When teachers respond with *adab*, they inadvertently model the behavior that they expect of their students. Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas concurs with this approach to traditional education,

> In authentic spiritual traditions, the teacher is not only responsible for the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge, but also with the education of the whole being. Such traditions never divorced the training of the mind from that of the soul.[43]

The concept of training the soul is highlighted in numerous Prophetic traditions, and is the basis for the Islamic science of spirituality. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) carried the bags of the woman who was leaving *Makkah* in order to avoid meeting him, she cursed "this man, Muhammad" without knowing that it was he who was walking with her. Not once did he condemn her or return her abuses. In another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went and visited his neighbour who regularly threw filth and

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[38] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

[39] Zaytuna College Website (2015). A Muslim Liberal Arts Education https://www.zaytuna.edu/about/our_mission/. Accessed: 1st December, 2015.

[40] Al Attas, S. (1980). The Concept of Education in Islam (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM); reprint, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)).

[41] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.

[42] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.

[43] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.

trash on him as he went into his home, when she had stopped doing so. His sole aim was to simply inquire about her. In both cases, the Prophet (be upon him) returned injustice with kindness, and in doing so he became the best disciplinarian. He followed the Quranic injunction,

> Not equal are good and evil. Repel [evil] with what is best; you will unexpectedly see one with whom you had enmity become an intimate friend. [Quran 41:34][44]

Muslims recognise that the Islamic model for behavior has been taught and manifested by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is viewed by Muslims as an example for all of humanity. The behavior of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) can be found in his *Sunnah* and adhering to it is virtuous. The emphasis on excellent behavior and conduct holds a paramount importance in Islam, and is summed up by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his *Ḥadith*, "Fear Allah wherever you are. Follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will blot it out. And deal with people with excellent character". Commenting on this, the imminent classical scholar, Ibn Rajab (1372–1448), said that this is a great and comprehensive advice that deals with the rights of God and His creation.

Prophet Muhammad (pace be upon him), like all messengers, was considered a teacher and to Muslims the best of all teachers, as he declared "I have been sent as a teacher."  This is personified by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) efforts to educate his earliest followers the companions, via his model teaching approach.

Dr Allen Mendler and Dr Richard Curwin developed a way to address behavioral concerns of at-risk students with learning and emotional disabilities, within a school setting. Referred to as the Discipline with Dignity framework, this model is a needs-based approach to behavior and classroom management. The goal is to increase student engagement in a way that meets the needs of the student. Expanding on this work, Islamic school educators will recognise that Discipline with Dignity is in line with Prophetic pedagogy whereby the students are dignified through the conduct and character of the teacher in what can be referred to as a mutually transformative experience. Taking from a deeper understanding of this experience, it is recognised that at the root of this framework, is the inculcation and deep understanding of the concept of *adab*. An authentic and Islamically viable BMM must include the emphasis on noble character and concepts of discipline with dignity, *adab*, and Prophetic pedagogy and be designed for a variety of Islamic education settings.

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[44] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.

### 5) Adopt a Whole Community Approach

One of the issues facing Islamic schools is the split personality that students adopt behaving one way at school, and another way at home. In some instances the home environment is not conducive or consistent with the values presented at the Islamic school.

> Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, trained his companions in character through his own example; not in any specified training session. He created an environment that was conducive to the improvement and growth of individuals through his own character and examples. He inspired others to be like him—they wanted to hear him because it was so pleasing to them. He created an environment of growth—growth in certainty of Allah. Creating such an environment begins with a willingness to improve ourselves which starts with the top: school board members, school principal, teachers, and parents – before we can ask students to reflect on their own character.[45]

A successful BMM addresses this. Transformation must be community-wide where discussions, orientation, methodology are shared not just with the students, teachers, and administrators, but also with board members, parents and student families.

### 6) Prevention approaches including a character education component

Character education is a foundational aspect of authentic and appropriate BMMs for Islamic schools and is a sacred duty on the community as a whole, but must begin with the teacher[46] and so brings together the above requisites for the framework presented in this paper.

Memon and Bacchus[47] highlighted strongly the importance of character education. In their paper presented at ISNA Education Forum in Chicago, 2015, they stated that,

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[45] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

[46] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

[47] Memon, N., & Bacchus, Z. (2015). Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum. http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/ef_presentation_book_2015.pdf: Accessed 29th October, 2015.

The premise of character education in the Islamic tradition is to nurture an individual's attachment to their Lord. This attachment is exhibited through drawing out our innate nature to be moral human beings who naturally exhibit good character. Character education cannot therefore be reduced solely to programs, posters, and checklists. Students need to see good character around them and have the opportunity to reflect on it consistently. Seeing and reflecting on good character softens the heart and the essential elements that define character in Islam – *tazkiyah* (character refinement) and *taqwa* (God consciousness) – are connected to the heart.

BMMs that expand on opportunities for school, community, and individual transformation based on these concepts align spirituality with character education, academics with deeper sacred knowledge, *adab* as a way to transformation. In doing so, a comprehensive character education element in the BMM serves as prevention towards misbehaviour and inappropriate classroom behaviour. Borrowing again from Mendler and Curwin[48], a successful BMM considers the following:

1. Does using the method preserve dignity or cause humiliation?

2. Is the method primarily obedience-oriented or does it teach responsibility?

3. How does the method affect a student's motivation to learn?

4. Does the method lead to a commitment to change?

5. Does the method work?

## 7) Intervention approaches maintain dignity and look for mutually transformative experiences

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised his companions to take the high road based on his example. In turn, teachers should also respond in a way that honours the Prophetic model when confronted with offensive or inappropriate behaviour. This shows students that the teacher is competent enough to respond to the issue. Consistently sending a student to the office to let the principal respond to the issue, or responding in such a way that diminishes the teacher's dignity indicates to students that the teacher is either unwilling or unable to be a part of the solution. Furthermore, as Mendler and Curwin have stated, every time an educator successfully defuses inappropriate student behaviour in a manner that preserves dignity, he or she also succeed in modelling effective techniques to students. In this era of impulsive, aggressive and "have-the-last-word" behaviour, teachers play a vital role in modelling the best response for students. "Good teachers intuitively know that attacking students even in a momentary lapse of weakness takes something away from themselves" and negatively impacts their own dignified status.[49]

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[48] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.
[49] Alam, O. (2006). Discipline with Dignity: Meeting the Needs of Students through Faith and Understanding. Paper presented at the ISNA Education Forum.

Teaching within the framework of an authentic BMM model results in a *mutually transformative experience*. [50] This is an interaction between the student and the educator where they engage in actions that result in the improvement of the individual parties and of the overall relationship leading to a substantial net benefit for all. This transformation is not limited to the Islamic school walls; the goal is to include educators, administrators, board members, and most importantly the teachers and students. As wayfarers on a journey to Allah Almighty, the goal is to align spirituality with character education, academics with deeper sacred knowledge, and *adab* as a way to transformation as a community and as individuals.

**Conclusion**

Behavior management is an important component within any school, including Islamic schools. While substantial studies have been undertaken to examine behavior management approaches, Islamic schools have been neglected. The purpose of this paper has been to produce a framework that can inform the development of authentic behavior management models for Islamic schools conversant with Islamic principles and Prophetic practices. The paper has offered seven requisites as a platform for the framework based on a synthesis of research within the field of Islamic education. The seven requisites to authentic BMMs for Islamic schools include: 1) alignment with Islamic pedagogy; 2) are informed by Islamic worldview; 3) have an unrelenting and central focus on *adab*; 4) are teacher-modelled and students directed; 5) adopt a whole community approach; 6) contain preventative approaches including a character education component; and 7) contain intervention approaches that maintain dignity and look for mutually transformative experiences.

We suggest that the framework could inform authentic models for application in both Islamic schools and *madrassahs*. Such a model is being piloted at Amanah Institute, a *madrassah* in Brisbane, Australia. This broad use of the framework in informing behavior management models is yet to be tested. However, following the pilot, the framework will be tested in Islamic schools in Australia, America and the UK. It is hoped this will provide much needed empirical evidence to ensure behavior management models are effective, given they are an essential ingredient to achieving the 'Islamic' in an Islamic school.

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[50] This phrase was coined by Dr Altaf Husain of Howard University, and adopted here to explain the transformative nature of the Dignified Way approach.

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