

bureaucrats but to those teachers who read Egyptian magazines and were aware of contemporary leftist and Marxist literature, with which they sought to radically alter the status quo. These educators, in a sense, refused to be educated.

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## Be Masters in That You Teach and Continue to Learn: Medieval Muslim Thinkers on Educational Theory

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Insufficient awareness of the educational achievements of the past bears the risk of not recognizing what is genuine progress in the field of education and what is mere repetition. In other words, without knowledge of the history of education, we may fail to achieve the level of understanding and reasoning reached by former generations while, at the same time, keeping ourselves busy with self-postulated problems, the solutions to which have long been available in the stores of historical knowledge.

Part of the issue is that there is a tendency in contemporary Western research on education to neglect theories, philosophies, and intellectual movements originating from cultures and civilizations other than the occidental one. For instance, studies in education in the West are often concerned with the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian foundations of a European-centered history of learning, while educational concepts and practices of other cultures and civilizations are not given adequate consideration. This is somewhat surprising in view of the complex challenges Western societies are facing at the beginning of the third millennium. In fact, the increasing ethnic and religious diversity of the population in nearly every large city in North America and Europe (and in most institutions of primary, secondary, and higher learning) seems to call rather urgently for a change in the approach toward education, both nationally and internationally. At the same time, it seems necessary to recognize fully that the study of educational thought is a key tool for a better understanding of cultures, civilizations, and religions other than "our own."

For more than one reason, this latter point is particularly true of Islam: a critical, unbiased, and systematic study in the West of Islam's diverse values, concepts, and beliefs—especially those relating to the educational theories and philosophies developed by Muslim scholars—is a pressing and real need. Thus, this article is dedicated to shedding light on a spectrum of issues in educational thought in Islam, which may—due to their universal relevance—be of interest not only to specialists but also to a wider readership. This article aims to accomplish the following. First, it will provide an idea of the edu-

The title makes reference to chap. 3, verse 79, of the Qur'an, "Be you masters in that you teach the Scripture and in that you yourselves study [it]." This article presents some initial results from research for my book, tentatively entitled "Medieval Muslim Thinkers on Education: Insights into Islam's Classical Pedagogical Theories," planned to be completed in 2007. Sections I and II of the present article revisit certain topics also discussed in a previous article (see n. 6 below). All dates are given in Common Era (CE). Arabic expressions use a simplified transliteration. Different diacritic marks serve to distinguish between the Arabic consonants hamza (ʾ), a voiceless glottal stop, and ʾayn (ʿ), a laryngeal voiced fricative. All translations from the Arabic are my own, unless otherwise specified.

newspapers, jailed reformists, and cracked down on protestors. Nevertheless, pressure from Iranian civil society as well as numerous international human rights organisations prompted the government from the early 2000s, during Maḥmūd Hāshimī Shāhrūdī's tenure as head of the judiciary, to restore the office of public prosecutor (abolished shortly after the revolution) and to make other mild attempts at reform.

The situation deteriorated again, however, with the crackdown on the Green Movement and its leaders in the 2009 post-election uprising, manifested in the mass show trials that followed, the use of torture and rape in the course of interrogation, and the deaths of young protestors in the notorious Kahrīzāk prison. At the height of the protests, in June 2009, new regulations were introduced that effectively nullified the independence of the Bar Association. Although these regulations were later suspended, they were replaced by a new bill of attorneyship, which, if passed, would transform the Bar Association into a branch of the judiciary, removing its independence and, with it, one of the few due-process safeguards remaining in the Iranian legal system.

Another recent development is the 2013 revision of the penal code originally commissioned by Shāhrūdī, in part at least as the result of growing international criticism of the provisions of the penal code. The revised code was touted by the government as an improvement on the older version, and one that broadly complies with international human rights standards. Although explicit reference to punishments such as stoning was removed, in reality the revised code employed a great deal of sophistry and vaguely worded articles to retain and even enhance many of the negative features of the old code.

For example, the code allows judges to refer to non-codified law in the form of Shī'ī jurisprudence (which prescribes stoning for adultery) and widens the ambit of crimes like "sowing corruption on earth" (*al-ifsād fi l-ard*) and "warring with God" (*muḥaraba*) for which the punishment is death. More radical reform of the judicial system is likely to come eventually, but it will probably require deeper political reform in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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### Literacy, Ottoman Empire and Turkey

The subject of **literacy** reflects the changing social conditions across the long lifespan of the **Ottoman Empire** and the transition to its core successor state, the Republic of **Turkey**. Despite the paucity of reliable statistical information for