



WASATIA EDUCATION

Exploring the Palestinian Curriculum

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WASATIA
Academic
Institute



IMPACT-se



WASATIA Academic Institute

WASATIA Academic Institute (WAI), a moderate educational initiative, was established in Palestine in January 2007 as a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political institute. The term *wasatia* means center or midway between two extremes. It is used in the Holy Qur'an to indicate justice, moderation, temperance, mid-ground, and balance: "And thus We have created you as a mid-ground nation [*Ummatan Wasatan*]" (2:43).

WAI aims to spread moderation, reconciliation and peaceful concepts and values to mitigate religious extremism and reduce political radicalism; to strive toward ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through peaceful means; to teach creativity and sharpen critical thinking through peace education; and to enable knowledge of different cultures and empathy for others.

For more information, see **WASATIA**  groups:
WASATIA Movement, WASATIA Academic Institute.



IMPACT-se

The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) is a pioneer in the field of textbook analysis, clarifying how different nations educate their children about religion, societies, cultures, democratic values and the Other, as derived from UNESCO declarations and resolutions. It is dedicated to peacemaking between peoples and nations by encouraging acceptance of others and rejection of violent conflict.

IMPACT-se publishes comprehensive reports assessing curricula in various nations and cultures. The research is submitted and presented to policymakers, media, think tanks and civil society—instrumental not only in raising awareness but also in stimulating demand for concrete measures to bring positive change.

For more information, visit www.impact-se.org

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Preface

This booklet suggests Wasatia Education for the Palestinian educational system. It explores the present Palestinian school textbooks and identifies areas where the curriculum incites, demonizes and delegitimizes the Other while proposing concepts and values to allow for a future of coexistence, tolerance and prosperity. It is hoped that the Palestinian Authority would consider revising its curriculum along the lines of the international standards for peace education presented here.

This booklet uses selected examples to present general patterns found throughout the curriculum. Five problematic categories have been identified from the current Palestinian textbooks. They are: encouragement to violence; subliminal violent messaging; demonization of the Other; indoctrination to militancy; and degradation of women.

An integral part of peace education and religion, in this case Islam, should be to promote positive values rather than ultra-nationalistic goals and violent means. Based on a decades-long educational framework designed by the **WASATIA Academic Institute**, the Islamic faith should be taught as purely moderate, peaceful and tolerant. While some texts include anachronistic martial elements, such as militant *jihadism* against the infidels, these bear no relevance to today's world. Their origins were in defending the very existence of the faith as it was born. Cherry-picking of Qur'anic verses and Hadith of the Prophet to fit into a conflict agenda does not serve the cause of peace and reconciliation. We contend this should be amended for the sake of both faith and education.

The methodologies of both the UNESCO-derived standards of **IMPACT-se** and the **WASATIA Academic Institute** are the criteria for our work.

WAI Educational Standards

The Seven Pillars of Wasatia Education: **learning to... know; do; be; coexist; respect; tolerate;** and **inspire.** **Objectives:** To develop among the youth the necessary knowledge and skills required to prevent and solve conflict issues and advance peace, moderation and reconciliation as responsible citizens. The following are the **WAI** academic standards:

- 1. Moderation & Temperance:** To espouse moderation and temperance in manners, conduct, behavior and language as a way of living.
- 2. Reconciliation & Compromise:** To embrace resolution and compromise with oneself and others, both friend and foe.
- 3. Liberty & Freedom:** To allow oneself and others the freedom to make political and religious choices.
- 4. Pluralism & Coexistence:** To adopt pluralism and coexistence and appreciate cultural diversity as a way of life.
- 5. Equality & Fairness:** To treat fellow humans as we want to be treated; men and women have equal rights, duties and responsibilities.
- 6. Apology & Forgiveness:** To have the courage to express forgiveness and apology even to those who hurt us.
- 7. Truth & Knowledge:** To provide students with truthful information and useful knowledge.
- 8. Consultation & Consensus:** To allow students to make decisions through consultation (*shura*) and consensus (*ijma'*).
- 9. Tolerance & Compassion:** To express understanding and compassion for others who are different or are less fortunate.
- 10. Dialogue & Diplomacy:** To employ soft dialogue and diplomacy while debating with others who oppose us or hold different views, ideas or faith, and improve the ability to understand other perspectives.
- 11. Kindness & Empathy:** To encourage the propensity to help others and practice compassion and empathy for the suffering of the Other.
- 12. Reading & Learning:** To foster a culture of reading, learning, and knowledge.
- 13. Creativity & Innovation:** To empower creativity, innovation, and originality.
- 14. Reason & Rationality:** To coach and train rational thinking, objectivity and critical thinking.
- 15. Moral Courage:** To believe in doing “what is right” irrespective of any opposition.
- 16. Environmental Concerns:** To care for and endeavor to improve the environment.

IMPACT-se Methodology

IMPACT-se applies methodological standards which are based on UNESCO and UN declarations, recommendations and documents on education for peace and tolerance. Our method is designed to take into account every detail within a curriculum's textbooks; it does not paraphrase, rely on interpretations, or attempt to illustrate preconceived notions. The following are the **IMPACT-se** UNESCO-derived standards for peace and tolerance in school education:

- 1. RESPECT:** To promote tolerance, understanding, and respect toward the "Other," his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.
- 2. INDIVIDUAL OTHER:** To foster personal attachment toward the Other as an individual and his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated.
- 3. NO HATE:** To be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for different groups or peoples.
- 4. PEACEMAKING:** To develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace.
- 5. UNBIASED INFORMATION:** To have up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and impartial educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides, maps, illustrations, aids) and use uniform standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.
- 6. GENDER:** To foster equality and mutual respect between men and women, and refrain from stereotyped gender roles.
- 7. SOUND PROSPERITY & COOPERATION:** To educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations, and encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.

For more information on **IMPACT-se** and its methodology, see: <http://www.impact-se.org/methodology/>

Palestinian Curriculum

Selected Examples:

Encouraging Violence

الحكمة من قتال الكفار:

- أَخْبَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ قَادِرٌ عَلَى إِهْلَاكِ الْأَعْدَاءِ وَقَتْلِهِمْ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ أَمَرَ بِمُقَاتَلَتِهِمْ؛ لِحُكْمٍ عَدِيدَةٍ، مِنْهَا:
- ١- أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُمَيِّزَ بَيْنَ الصَّادِقِينَ وَغَيْرِهِمْ مِنَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي مُقَاتَلَةِ الْكُفَّارِ.
 - ٢- أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهَدَاءَ يُكْرِمُهُمُ بِالشَّهَادَةِ؛ لِيُغْفِرَ ذُنُوبَهُمْ، وَيَرْفَعَ دَرَجَاتِهِمْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "لِلشَّهِيدِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ سِتٌّ خِصَالٍ: يُغْفَرُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دَفْعَةٍ، وَيَبْرَى مَقْعَدُهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَيُجَارَى مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَيَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْفَزَعِ الْأَكْبَرِ، وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَارِ، الْيَاقُوتَةُ مِنْهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا، وَيُزَوَّجُ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ زَوْجَةً مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ، وَيُشَفَّعُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَقَارِبِهِ".

Students are taught that those who die as martyrs while fighting their enemies receive seventy-two virgin brides, among other rewards in paradise. This idea doesn't exist in the Qur'an but is falsely tied to the Qur'an's Surah Muhammad [47], taught in a textbook on Islamic education. Moreover, the use of this passage is anachronistic—the battles during the Prophet's lifetime are irrelevant for today's reality and circumstances. Given the fact that no historical context or explanation is given to students, this passage is inciteful and encourages acts of terror.

The Wisdom behind Fighting the Infidels:

Allah informed [us] that he is capable of annihilating and killing the enemies. Instead he commanded [us] to fight them, for several reasons:

1. Allah wishes to distinguish between the truthful and others, such as the hypocrites, in fighting against infidels.
2. Allah wants to take *shuhada'* [martyrs] from among the believers and honor them by *shahadah* [martyrdom] to forgive their sins and raise their class in Paradise. The Messenger of Allah said: **'There are six qualities for the martyr with Allah:** he is forgiven in the first group [of the resurrected dead], sees his seat in Paradise and is saved from the torment of the grave; is safe during the Great Fear; a crown of honor is placed on his head, and one sapphire from this [crown] is better than the entire world and what is in it; **he will be married to seventy-two wives**

from among the Houris [virgin companions—Hoor al-'Ayn]; and he [may] intercede for seventy of his relatives.' (Recited by al-Tirmidhi, and corrected by Al-Albani.)

Islamic Education (Vol. 1), Grade 9, 2018, p. 13.

Adding historical context to this Surah is essential, as well as replacing the glorification of martyrdom and its rewards with Qur'anic verses about forgiveness and mercy toward the Other, such as: ***"The believers are those who spend in charity during ease and hardship and who restrain their anger and pardon the people, for Allah loves the doers of good"*** (3:134).

Martyrdom is taught to be an integral part of *jihad*, and rewards await those who follow this path. The sole meaning of *jihad* as expressed in the curriculum is warfare. The title, image and six Qur'anic verses are selected to support this interpretation without context. The content covers the psychological and practical dimensions of war. In this lesson students are encouraged to discuss the goals of militant *jihad* and the wonders of martyrs. No other interpretation of the meaning of *jihad* is offered.



من فائق يتكون كلمة الله
هي الدنيا
(درس لتفاعلي)

يُنَاقِشُ الْمُعَلِّمُ الطَّلَبَةَ فِي الْمَوَاضِيعِ وَالْأَفْكَارِ وَالْمَفَاهِيمِ الْآتِيَةِ:

- ١ يَعْرِفُ الْمَفَاهِيمَ الْآتِيَةَ: الْجِهَادُ، الْمُجَاهِدُ، الشَّهِيدُ.
- ٢ التَّدْبِيلُ عَلَى الْجِهَادِ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ، وَبَيْنَ الشُّعْرِ النَّبَوِيِّ الْمُسْتَرْفَعِ.
- ٣ يَبَيِّنُ أَثَرُ الْجِهَادِ عَلَى الْفَرْدِ وَالْمُجْتَمَعِ.
- ٤ يُعَدُّ ثَوَابَ الْمُجَاهِدِ وَالشَّهِيدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.
- ٥ يَذْكُرُ غَايَاتِ الْجِهَادِ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ.
- ٦ يَذْكُرُ مَوَاقِفَ جِهَادِيَّةَ لِلْمُضَاهَاةِ - رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ -.
- ٧ يَحْرُسُ عَلَى إِخْلَاصِ الْبَيْتِ فِي الْجِهَادِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ -، وَفِي كُلِّ عَمَلٍ.

التعرف إلى مفهومي: المجاهد، الشهيد.

قصص

قال تعالى: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (١٠٩) (النحل: ١٠٩)

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شريعة

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- ١ بالتعاون مع أفراد مجتموعي أكثب غايات الجهاد في سبيل الله.
- ٢ أبخث عن كرامات للشهداء، وأكتبها في دفتر.



He who Fights for the Word of Allah to be Supreme (Interactive Lesson)
[Among the goals of the lesson]:

Acquaintance with two terms: *Jihad* fighter [*mujahid*] and martyr [*shahid*]

The teacher will discuss the following subjects, ideas, and concepts with students:

1. Define the following concepts: *jihad*, *jihad* fighter and martyr.
2. Demonstrate that *jihad* relies on the Holy Qur'an, and from the Sunnah of the Prophet.
3. Clarify the impact of *jihad* on the individual and society.
4. Describe the rewards awaiting the *jihad* fighter and the martyr in the way of Allah.
5. Indicate the goals of *jihad* in Islam.
6. Point to *jihadi* positions of the Companions—may Allah be pleased with them.
7. Emphasize the true faith in *jihad* in the cause of Allah and every action.
 - Fighting has been enjoined upon you [even] while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing, and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing, and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not [2: 216].
 - Fight them until there is no [more] *fitnah* [in-fighting] and [until] worship is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors [2:193].
 - Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory [22:39].
 - And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war, by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged [8:60].
 - And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women and children who cry, 'Our Lord? Rescue us from this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper' [4:75]?
 - And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision [3:169].
1. Cooperating with members of my group, I will write the goals of *jihad* in the way of Allah.

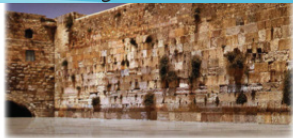
2. I will discuss the wonders of the martyrs and write them in my notebook.

Islamic Education (Vol. 2), Grade 8, 2018, pp. 49–52.

A full explanation of the different meanings of *jihad* should be taught to students. According to the Prophet, the “Greater Jihad” [Al-Jihad al-Akbar] is any strenuous individual effort or spiritual struggle to reform bad habits and cleanse oneself from evil [jihad al-nafs], while the “Lesser Jihad” [al-Jihad al-Asghar] is the struggle waged by Muslims in self-defense, which should be conducted through tireless engagement, dialogue and reason. This concept exists both in the Qur’an and the Hadith: ***“As for those who strive in Our cause, We shall surely guide them to Our ways. Indeed Allah is with those who do good”*** (29: 69). According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet himself ascribed importance to the *jihad* of the self: ***“The Mujahid is one who strives against his own soul”*** (Tirmidhi). These distinctions should be taught and the “jihad of the self” should be emphasized.


In a lesson about the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem, students are encouraged to “sacrifice for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque.” The Western Wall is part of Al-Aqsa Mosque complex and portrayed as belonging exclusively to Muslims, denying the right of Jews to pray there and acknowledge it as a holy Jewish site that could be shared by people of the Abrahamic faith.

لا إله إلا الله، أنا مسلم، أضحي من أجل تحرير المسجد الأقصى.



حائط البراق

إشاعة: شئني حائط البراق بهذا الاسم؛ نسبة إلى البراق الذي حمل الرسول ﷺ في رحلة الإسراء والمعراج، وحائط البراق جزء من السور الغربي للمسجد الأقصى وهو حق خالص للمسلمين وحدهم.

تحرير المسجد الأقصى واجب الأمة الإسلامية.  pp. 63–65.

The Buraq Wall is part of the Western Wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and is a pure [property] right for Muslims alone.

- The liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque is the duty of the Islamic nation.

Banner: I am a Muslim; I sacrifice for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Islamic Education (Vol. 1), Grade 5, 2018, pp. 63–65.

To emphasize moderation in education, the holy sites of Jerusalem may be used as a platform to teach coexistence and mutual respect in the land. In this context, students could learn the many pluralistic and inclusive messages of the Qur’an: ***“He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of men”*** (3:3-4).

Subliminal Violent Messaging

Newton's Second Law is taught through the image of a boy with a slingshot targeting soldiers. In other words, to explain power, mass and tensile strength, circular motion and elastic energy are taught through the use of such slingshots. This example is one of many in science, mathematics, physics and biology textbooks, where subliminal violent messaging is used to teach neutral universal laws, structures and equations.

Newton's Second Law:

During the first Palestinian uprising, Palestinian youths used slingshots to confront the soldiers of the Zionist Occupation and defend themselves from their treacherous bullets.

- What is the relationship between the elongation of the slingshot's rubber and the tensile strength affecting it?
- What are the forces that influence the stone after its release from the slingshot?

Science and Life (Vol. 1), Grade 7, 2018, p. 57.



Demonizing the Other

Palestinian textbooks teach religious stories and narratives in an anti-Semitic framework, interpreting the Qur'anic text and the Prophet's biography (*Al-Sirah al-Nabawiya*) in a hostile context against Jews. In a sweeping generalization, a story narrates how a Jew humiliated a Muslim woman in public. The narrative is used to elicit hatred toward Jews. Children should be taught not to generalize about ethnic groups, but to live with them peacefully.

جَلَسَتْ امْرَأَةٌ مُسْلِمَةٌ إِلَى صَائِعٍ يَهُودِيٍّ فِي سَوِّي بَنِي قَيْنِقَاعَ، فَعَقَدَ الصَّائِعُ طَرَفَ ثَوْبِهَا إِلَى ظَهْرِهَا وَهِيَ لَا تَشْعُرُ، فَلَمَّا قَامَتْ انْكَشَفَتْ سَوَاتِئُهَا، فَضَجَّكَ الْيَهُودُ مِنْهَا، فَصَاحَتْ، فَوَثَبَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ عَلَى الصَّائِعِ فَقَتَلَهُ، وَهَجَمَ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ فَقَتَلُوهُ.

2- A Muslim woman sat next to a Jewish goldsmith in the Banu Qaynuqa Market. The goldsmith tied the edge of her garment to her back without her noticing. When she got up, she revealed her privates. The Jew then laughed at her and she screamed, and a Muslim man jumped on the goldsmith and killed him. The Jews then attacked the Muslim and killed him.

Islamic Education (Vol. 2), Grade 7, 2018, p. 66.

Students are repeatedly taught unsubstantiated anti-Semitic allegations that the Jews attempted to kill Prophet Muhammad and finally succeeded in poisoning him. Lessons teach that Jews are the “enemies of Islam.” According to religious scholars, the Prophet did not die as a result of being poisoned; rather he died as the result of an illness.

Jewish Attempts to Kill the Prophet

Let’s watch a video from the attached disc about the attempt of the Jews to kill the Prophet:

1. The attempt by the Jews of Banu-Nadhir after the Battle of Badr to kill the Prophet by throwing a big rock at his head, while he was sitting next to their fence. But Allah in His power sent him the revelation of Jibril [Gabriel] who informed him that the Jews were planning to kill him. So [the Prophet] left them and hurried to Medina, prepared the Muslim army, then besieged them, fought against them, and expelled them from Medina.
2. There was an attempt by a Jewish woman to kill the Prophet with poison. She gave the Messenger of Allah a sheep, inserted the poison into it and served it to the Prophet. He ate from it and his disease relapsed from the effect of eating that poisoned sheep, until he died (from the Bukhari narrative).

The enemies of Islam never stop at any time and place to use all means and methods to fight Islam and the Muslims, fight those inviting [others] to the faith, and try to turn off the light of Allah on earth. But Allah helps his religion and adherents, no matter how many methods of distortion and abuse are there.

Discussion Topic: The repeated Jewish attempts to kill the Prophet.

Islamic Education (Vol. 2), Grade 5, 2017, pp. 65–66.

ثانياً: محاولات اليهود قتل النبي ﷺ

هنا بنا نشاهد مقطع فيديو من القرص المرفق، لمحاولة قتل اليهود رسول الله ﷺ.

١- محاولة يهود بني النضير بعد غزوة بدر قتل الرسول ﷺ، وإلقاء حجر كبير على رأسه، وهو جالس إلى جانب جدار لهم، لكن الله بلغه أمره أرسل إليه الوحي جبريل عليه السلام، فأخبره أن اليهود يخططون لقتله، فأنصرف عنهم مسرعاً إلى المدينة، وجهر جيش المسلمين، ثم حاصروهم، وقتلهم، وأخرجهم من المدينة المنورة.

٢- محاولة امرأة يهودية قتل النبي ﷺ بالسَّيْمِ، حيث أتت رسول الله ﷺ بشاة، ودسَّت فيها السَّيْمَ، وقدمتها لرسول الله ﷺ، فأكل منها، وكان يعاوده المرض من أثر الأكل من هذه الشاة المسمومة، حتى توفي ﷺ. (من روى البخاري)

إن أعداء الإسلام لن يكتفوا في كل زمان ومكان عن استخدام الوسائل والأساليب كافة؛ لمحاربة الإسلام والمسلمين، ومحاربة دعائه، والسعي لإطفاء نور الله في الأرض، لكن الله ناصر دينه ودعائه، مهما تعددت أساليب التشويه والإساءة.

قصيدة للفتاوى:

تكرار محاولات اليهود قتل النبي ﷺ.

Instead of demonizing the Jewish “Other” by use of false tales and generalizations, lessons should focus on teaching the history of cooperation between Muslims and people of other faiths and cultures. For example, stories of the prosperity and coexistence between Muslims, Christians and Jews in Al-Andalus during the Middle Ages could be taught. In addition, students should learn about the values of human dignity and respect to people of other religions, which are rooted in the Islamic faith. For example, a well-known Hadith of the Prophet could be taught: ***“A funeral of a Jew passed before the Prophet. As a sign of respect, the Prophet stood up. The Prophet was asked ‘Why did you stand up for a Jewish funeral?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Is it not a human soul?’”*** (Al-Bukhari).

Indoctrination toward Militancy

In lessons such as “Hooray for the Heroes,” individuals affiliated with war, violence, religious extremism and even terrorism are glorified. Children are encouraged to die “with glory” and see these heroes as their role models: “each of us wishes to be like them.” Dalal Mughrabi, who participated and died in the 1978 Palestinian Coastal Road terrorist attack in Israel, killing thirty-eight civilians—including thirteen children—is portrayed as a national female hero. Children are taught to follow Mughrabi’s footsteps, leading them to adopt violence as a way of life. The model the curriculum uses for heroes centers on those involved in violent conflict.

[illegible]

We are proud of them, we sing with their wonders, and study their march, and give their names to our children; we put their names on our streets and squares and the cultural places. We spray our gatherings with the perfume of their memory, and **each of us wishes to be like them**. They have decorated the pages of history. They taught people that **drinking the cup of bitterness with glory is much sweeter than a pleasant long life accompanied by humiliation**. Indeed, they created an illustrious history to the nation. They are the heroes. Who among us will forget Khalid ibn al-Walid; Umm Ammarah Nusaybah bint Ka'ab al-Ansariyyah; Khawlah bint al-Azwar; Tariq ibn Ziyad; Saladin [Saif ad-Din] Qutuz; Omar al-Mukhtar; Izz al-Din al-Qassam; Dalal al-Mughrabi; Yasir Arafat; and others of these moons that never set, which light the darkness of our black nights? These are all embraced by our great homeland, ancient and modern, from Palestine to Egypt and Libya, all the way to Andalusia.

Dalal al-Mughrabi

Our Palestinian history is brimming with names of martyrs who have given their lives to the homeland, including the martyr Dalal al-Mughrabi. **Her struggle portrays challenge and heroism**, making her memory immortal in our hearts and minds. The text in our hands speaks about one side of her struggle.

Arabic Language (Vol. 1), Grade 5, 2018, pp. 13–14.

Arabic Language (Vol. 2), Grade 5, 2018, pp. 51–54.

There are many examples of individuals who made a positive contribution to Palestinian society, such as activist Hind al-Husseini who in 1948 established a school for orphans; well-known educator Khalil al-Sakakini; and other social activists and peacemakers. Students are not taught about builders as heroes and role models.

In a grammar exercise following the same chapter, eleven-year-olds learn that martyrdom and *jihad* are “the most important meanings of life,” especially for the Palestinian people. This passage teaches young students a distorted perception of self-sacrifice and reduces Palestinian life to violence and hatred.

Giving one's life [*fida'*], sacrifice, fight, *jihad*, and struggle are the most important meanings of life, especially for a people suffering from the scourge of occupation,

البيداء، والتضحية، والنضال، والجهاد، والكفاح أهم معاني الحياة، خاصة لمن يحب بلده
وولاب الاختلال من جدار، وقمع، ومضايقة، وغلام، واغتيال من أجل نيل الحرية، وإقامة
الدولة وتحرير المنصر، هذا هو الشعب الفلسطيني الذي عثر عن أجمل صور الأتباء والضمود،
والتب أبطالاً يتسلحون بالإيمان والعلم وحس الوطن.

of siege, repression, harassment, demolition and arrest; For freedom, the establishment of the state and self-determination. This is the Palestinian people who displayed the most beautiful pictures of belonging and steadfastness and gave birth to heroes armed with faith, knowledge and patriotism.

Arabic Language (Vol. 1), Grade 5, 2018, p. 27.

These “meanings of life” should be replaced with the positive values of sincerity, charity, morality, compassion, justice, equality, generosity and respect for the Other, and inspired by alternative positive social heroes such as those mentioned. Palestinian textbooks should celebrate these positive role models, offering a more multifaceted and optimistic way of life for Palestinian society. For example, educator Khalil al-Sakakini opposed Zionism, but still accepted Jewish students to his schools and gave them private lessons.

The liberation of all of Palestine is described in a highly emotional poem aimed at elementary school children. It calls for “sacrificing blood” to remove the enemy from the land by “eliminating the usurper” and to “annihilate the remnants of the foreigners”—all as a platform to teach the language. Such poems encourage young children to fantasize about dying and sacrificing themselves rather than living to bring peace and prosperity to their homeland.

We sing and remember:

The Land of the Generous

I vow **I shall sacrifice my blood, to saturate the land of the generous, and will eliminate the usurper from my country and annihilate the remnants of the foreigners.** Oh the land of Al-Aqsa and the Haram, oh cradle of chivalry and generosity. Patient, be patient, as victory is ours, dawn is emerging from the oppression.

Our Beautiful Language (Vol. 2), Grade 3, 2018, p. 64.



There are many uplifting poems in Palestinian literature with beauty and imagination reflecting cultural significance, which could easily replace such poems, such as “Song to the Land” [اغنية للارض], by the same poet, Haider Mahmoud, describing the beauty of the trees and flowers in Palestine.

Degradation of Women

A lesson teaches that sexually “enjoying wives” is the religiously allowed purpose of marriage. It claims that men in the pre-Islamic period used to own slave girls for sexual pleasure “when slavery was spread in the world,” and states that should the practice return, female slavery would be practiced again. This is a misinterpretation of the Qur’anic verses given in this chapter (23: 1–11); it stands in contradiction with Qur’anic verses which call for gender equality and treating women with respect.

فالحلال لهم هو الاستمتاع بالزَّوجات، والجاريات من مُلكِ اليمين، وكلّ من فعل غير ذلك فهو من المتعدّين لحدود الله، المتعرّضين لغضبه.

ملك اليمين: أي الرقيق من النساء. وحكم استمتاع المسلم بما يملك من جوارٍ جائز، هذا عندما كان الرّقّ منتشرًا في العالم كله. أما اليوم فلا يوجد رقيق (ملك يمين) أصلًا، والإسلام مع تحرير الإنسان من الرّقّ. فالحكم الموجود في الآية الكريمة هو حكم تاريخي، انتهى بانتهاء الرّقّ، ويعود إذا عاد الرّقّ لسبب ما.



It is permissible for them to enjoy wives and slave girls, which they own as bondmaids, and anyone who does otherwise is among the transgressors to the limits ordained by Allah, and are exposed to His wrath.

Clarification: Bondswomen: namely, slaves from among the women. The rule is that a Muslim is allowed to enjoy the slave girls that he owns; this is when slavery was widespread throughout the world. But today there are no slaves (bondswomen) at all, and Islam is for the liberation of man from bondage. The ruling in verse is a historical judgment, which ended with the end of slavery and will return if slavery returns for some reason.

Islamic Education (Vol. 1), Grade 8, 2017, pp. 20–21.

The same Qur’anic verses could be used to teach the importance of gender equality in Islam. This teaching should include Qur’anic verses and Hadith, such as: ***“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another”*** (9:71); and the saying of the Prophet: ***“A good man treats women with honor.”***

Conclusion

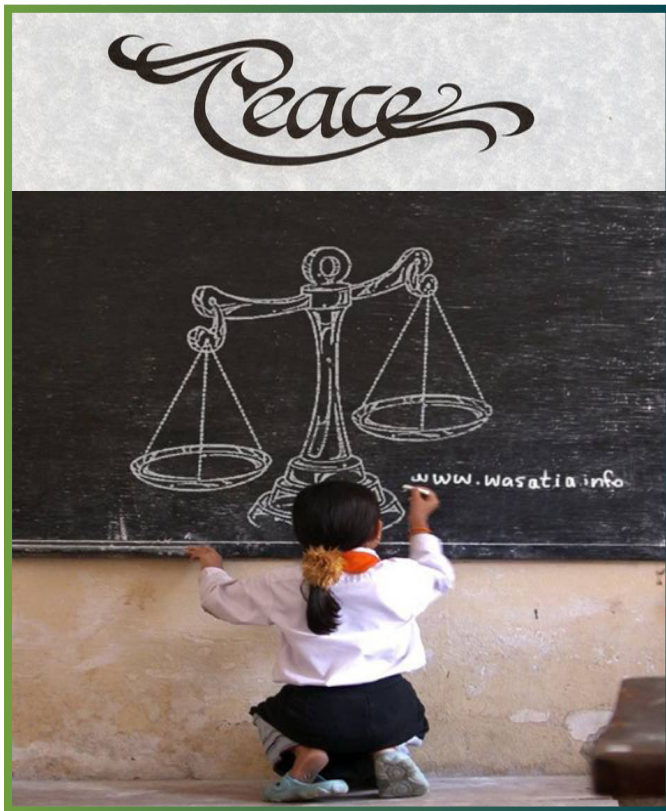
TOWARD A FUTURE OF COEXISTENCE, MODERATION, AND PROSPERITY

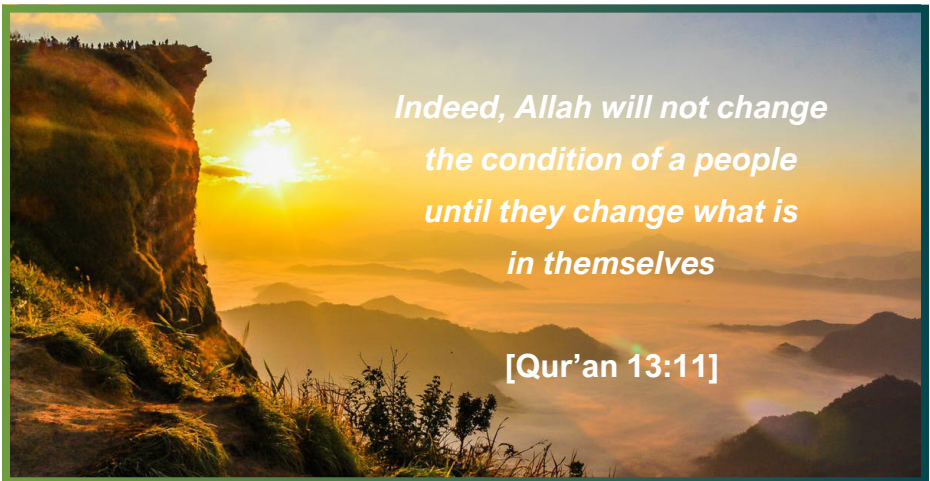
Education is a valuable tool to empower youth within a community. Wasatia Education can help guide students to become inspiring future leaders of their communities. For peace to take place between Palestinians and Israelis it is essential that the new generation is taught the values of moderation, reconciliation, mediation, conflict resolution, peace, empathy, tolerance, common ethical values, and democracy, and to instill in them the spirit of applying these values in their daily lives.

Moderation education needs to emphasize the destructive nature of violence, while helping students envision how their lives could be much improved by adopting moderate and nonviolent responses to resolving problems. Education must focus on the knowledge and skills related to developing peaceful perspectives and peaceful behavior. Training principals and teachers to become peace educators would inspire students to have moral courage to break taboos and speak out for moderation.

It is strongly recommended that the Palestinian Authority revise its curriculum from conflict education to Wasatia Education, by adopting international standards formulated by UNESCO, the **WASATIA Academic Institute** and **IMPACT-se**. The current incitement and hatred education could be reformed to address issues of violence, conflict, and terrorism. The Palestinian curriculum could incorporate subjects to educate for peace, such as moderation and reconciliation education, cultural diversity and multicultural education, and human rights and democracy education across all levels of study.

A Palestinian Wasatia Education curriculum would create a ripple effect, spreading not only to broader sectors of the Palestinian community, but to neighboring Arab and Muslim countries as well. In educating for peaceful coexistence, the prospects for reconciliation, conflict resolution and prosperity would be much advanced and ultimately achievable.





*Indeed, Allah will not change
the condition of a people
until they change what is
in themselves*

[Qur'an 13:11]

