

A Manual for the Teacher of Islamic Studies by Murtala A. Bidmos (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2010), 166 pp. Price \$8.00. ISBN: 978-978-49588-3-7

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INTRODUCTION

Muslim scholars, teachers and educationists will most probably enjoy and profit from this loaded and interesting book probably with a title capable of arresting the attention of even the most absent-minded Muslim scholar: *A manual for the teacher of Islamic Studies*. Murtala A. Bidmos, a professor of Islamic education at the University of Lagos since 2007 and current Chief Imam of the University, through this book, contributes impressively to Islamic scholarship. To this task, Bidmos brings many a qualification. For three decades he has taught Islamic Studies at the University of Lagos, establishing a reputation as a pioneer lecturer in the discipline. A product of traditional Arabic system with no formal secondary education, Bidmos' academic credentials are a *Thanawiyya* certificate from a prestigious *madrassa* in Agege, Lagos, an ordinary certificate in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Ibadan, a Bachelor's degree in Arabic from the University of Kuwait, a Master and doctorate degrees from the University of Ibadan all of which were topped up with a Postgraduate Diploma in Education also from the University of Ibadan. Bidmos' qualifications show that his academic territory is Arabic and not Islamic education. Yet, an Arabic scholar of high caliber that he is, is certainly not an unfamiliar guest in the domain of Islamic Studies in view of the inter-twinned and interrelated nature of the two disciplines.

This is Prof. Bidmos' first book on Islamic education. What would have passed as his first and therefore made this his second major work on the subject, though entitled *Islamic Education in Nigeria* (n.d) is merely a selection of papers by him on various topics that are not necessarily connected directly to Islamic education in Nigeria which is why the contents of the 170 page book are not interlinked. Through the book under review, however, the discipline of Islamic education now benefits from Bidmos' erudition as many students that are keenly interested in the subject will read and reread this magnum opus of his, for a long time to come – and rightly so.

Bidmos feels first that there has not been enough work of scholarship done to distinguish “the methods of teaching Islamic Studies effectively ... from ones adopted in the teaching of ... other subjects,” and secondly that there is a need to review the traditional approach (i.e. memorization method) that has for long dominated the teaching of Islamic Studies in Nigeria (p. xiv) and thirdly that “the teacher-trainees in the area of Islamic Studies in our colleges and faculties of education have always searched for a reading material on Islamic Studies methods, which is a compulsory course” (p. xv). He in fact did not equivocate in stating rather sweepingly that up to the time of writing this book, such a material is not available. Accordingly, the book under review, in the estimation of Bidmos, seeks to satisfy the long-felt need for such a much valued Islamic pedagogical resource.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Chapter one is entitled “the teaching of Islamic Studies in a secular society”. Here the author sets out the basic concept of ideology and discusses such dominant ideologies as secularism and pluralism. He however identifies theocracy as a major ideology in the contemporary world. He describes Nigeria as a pluralistic

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society that is both secular and theocratic (p. 2). He argues that “Nigeria’s posture as a secular society is reflected in her laws that are religion blind, as the government institutions, such as education, commerce, politics, army, police, presidency, etc. are run without reference to God” (p.2). He further argues that “under the pretext of pluralism, secular practices such as establishment of breweries, distribution of alcohol, women nudity in the guise of fundamental human rights, pagan practices like *Egungun* and *Oro* festivals in the name of culture and custom, flagrant abuse of law, institutionalization of corruption, promotion of prostitution, etc. are promoted as norms” (p.2).

Yet, Bidmos insists that Nigeria is also theocratic owing to the fact that one can find in the same country “traces of theocracy, such as the government’s sponsorship of religions pilgrimages to Mecca, Jerusalem and the Vatican, declaration of public holidays to celebrate religious events, such as Mawlid Nabiyy, Easter holiday, Good Friday, Idul Kabir, official inclusion of religious studies in the public school curricula, taking an both of office on the holy scriptures by the political office holders, establishment of Shariah courts in some parts of the country, establishment of Inter-Religions Council in the Presidency, etc.” (p.2).

All these are what make Nigeria a theocratic state in Bidmos, view. Accordingly, one may infer that Nigeria is perceived by the author as belonging to the same league of theocratic states as Iran, Saudi Arabia and even the Vatican. A perception cannot be farther from the truth! Again, no more injurious and absurd myth can be concocted by any writer than Bidmos’ statement that a country can be both secular and theocratic. A statement cannot be more fallacious.

In the same chapter, the author proffers what he tags the way forward for the teaching of Islamic Studies in a secular society. In that connection, he posits that for confident and effective teaching of the subject in a secular setting, “he or she should do further study of the three ideologies mentioned above i.e. secularism, theocracy and pluralism using relevant materials such as lexicons, journals and encyclopedia to be abreast of what the terms stand for” (p.4). The other side of the coin of the way forward preferred by the author is that the teacher of Islamic Studies must be convinced and be able to convince others about the indispensable role of religion in our contemporary society and should be able to make a case for the teaching of the subject in Nigerian schools” (p.4). The rest of the chapter is a total digression from its focus as the author discusses the concepts of capitalism, socialism, communism, welfarism, the credit/mortgage culture, evils of interest alcoholism, bullying and belief in resurrection, none of which is of direct relevance to the central theme of the chapter. This takes more than half of the nine-page chapter. There infact is no real substantive theoretical discussion, of the teaching of Islamic Studies in a secular setting. However, the strength of this chapter lies in the exercises offered by the author, containing six relevant questions on his discussion, so far.

“Teachings: its origin and import”, the second chapter, represents another case of digression from topic. Rather than discuss the origin and import of teaching, the author introduces the chapter by asking: “The teacher of Islamic Studies: who is he? What are his functions? How does he perform them? What are his characteristics and qualities? Does the Qur’an provide him with hints or model techniques on how to discharge his duties? The author thereafter devotes the rest of the chapter to discussion of the function of the teacher of Islamic Studies, copious quotations from the Qur’an and Hadith and a note on “the purpose of teaching Adam, Muhammad, other prophets (SAW) and creatures of Allah” which he maintains, was to make them behave in a special way and to make them react to situations in a particular way” (p.14). The author describes Allah as the first teacher, Adam, the first student and the names of things mentined by Adam, the first curriculum but fails to offer information on the method employed and the instructional materials used, whereas he identifies these two among the questions to be addressed in the chapter: “Did that first teacher use any instructional material? What were the methods used?” (p.12). Some of the instances of teaching in the Qur’an as cited by the author in this chapter are “And we inspired the mother of Moses ...” (Q 23:7), “And shake towards thyself the trunk of palm tree” ... (Q 19:25-26), “And thy Lord taught the bee to build its cells in hills ... (Q16:68-69) and from the Hadith, the prophetic saying, “my lord taught -educated and trained- me and perfected my training” (pp 12-14). However, none of these examples apply to the concept of teaching in the pedagogical sense, which the chapter aims to address. They are rather instances of divine inspiration, heavenly revelation or revealed intuition and should therefore not be mistaken for pedagogical practices as the author seems to have done.

In the closing paragraph of this chapter, the author writes “Again, the question may be raised: the teacher of Islamic Studies who is he? How does he benefit from the teaching experiences of the prophets of God? How does he benefit from hints on teaching contained in the Qur’an? What does he teach? Before anything else, the next chapter examines the ICT dimension in teaching Islamic Studies” (p.17). Again one wonders whether these questions are the appropriate ones for the structuring of a chapter on the origin and import of teaching. More perturbing is the author’s decision to address the ICT dimension of teaching the subject at this stage of the book.

The third chapter offers the most useful information on the subject of the book. The ICT dimension is an area that has not received adequate attention in any book on Islamic Studies in Nigeria. This therefore is a wise and wonderful contribution by the author whose eye-opening approach offers a good analysis that is capable of making anyone who has digested the book look at the discipline again in the same way. In articulating the use of ICT, the author illustrates with the functions of the cattle which he claims are listed in the concluding part of the four verses of the Qur’an quoted above. The author writes, “The first episode is narrated in the Qur’an 16:5-7” (p.19). This undeniably is a citation of and not a quotation from the Qur’an. The author describes a bird’s demonstration to Cain how to inter the remains of his brother, Abel, as a technological connotation of the experience (p.29). In the education parlance, this is all about method and not technology as erroneously perceived by the author. Instructional methods concern the teacher’s creativity and resourcefulness while instructional technology requires the transformation of a material into an instructional tool meant for pedagogical purposes in a classroom setting. What the bird demonstrated before Cain is technically related to the former and far afield from the latter. Again, the author rationalizes that the invitation of a resource person by a classroom teacher to teach a topic that demands an expert delivery in modern time is akin to the use of birds to communicate to Cain the method of burying his slain brother” (pp. 20-21). However, the technical pitfall here lies in the fact that in the academic discipline of Curriculum and Instruction, a resource person may be invited for the purpose of simplifying and demystifying a curriculum content, subject or topic but not to teach instructional strategies or methods. Accordingly, what the bird demonstrated to Cain was a method and is therefore out of place as it cannot be akin to a classroom teacher’s invitation of a resource person to teach a subject or content.

Yet this chapter covers such useful ICT-related areas such as sourcing information, presentation. Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) decoder, interaction with students and also discusses some of the impediments to the use of ICTs in teaching. It is noteworthy that the author’s less than one page discussion on the impediments makes the most meaningful, logical and well articulated part of the chapter. Here, he identifies lack of ICT skills by the teacher, non-provision of the gadgets by the school, electric power failure caused by the government, as impediments to the use of ICT in teaching. Again, the author asks after identifying these impediments, “what is the way out?” and one would have expected him to make an ameliorative proposal, but none does he offer.

Chapter 4, “Islamic Studies curriculum” takes a careful look at the educational blueprint containing learning experiences for the subject. The author is at his best in this chapter as he focuses fully on the topic without digressing as is the case with the other earlier chapters. This chapter traces the origin of the Islamic Studies curriculum that is currently in operation in Nigerian schools and gives specific details of some of the experiences recorded in designing the curriculum. This is a particularly welcome contribution which is of great significance to the field, more so that such pieces of information have not been so meaningfully provided in any book. The author writes that the Islamic Studies curriculum under study was published in 1985 “as a package of learning activities designed to teach some specially selected aspects of Islamic education to Muslim children in schools” (p.29). The technical defect in this definition is however that in Curriculum and Instruction “learning experiences” and not “learning activities” are identified, generated, or selected and not “designed” while “teaching activities” and not “learning activities” are organized and not “designed”. Accordingly, Bidmos should have better written “learning experiences” instead of “learning activities.” Similarly, he should have better written “... of teaching activities organized” instead of “learning activities designed.” In a similar token, he examines in more than a page the obvious distinctions between “the previous syllabi of Islamic Studies and the current unified curriculum” as though it is challenging for A student of education to discern what distinguishes a curriculum from a syllabus. Yet such an explanation as offered by him in this regard is not monotonous altogether.

In the same chapter, the author charges the Nigerian government for a breach of constitutional provision for equal access to religious education among the citizens. He argues that “In spite of this policy Islamic Studies is not offered in many public schools” (p.37). He insists that it is by design and not accidental that the only religious instruction which an average teacher in Nigeria can handle is Bible Knowledge. The author further argues that “Nigerian Colleges which produce the primary school teachers” offer Bible Knowledge as a core subject while Islamic Studies is not given the same prominence as evident in the number of Bible knowledge lecturers employed in the colleges compared to the number of the Islamic lecturers and therefore concludes that “this policy encouraged mass production of Bible knowledge teachers while it led to acute shortage of Islamic teachers” (p.37). This obviously is a case of an invalid conclusion drawn from an untrue premise. That it is by design that Islamic Studies is not given the same prominence given Bible knowledge, is untrue. Similarly is it untrue that this is a policy that culminated in the mass production of Bible Knowledge teachers and the acute shortage of ISS teachers.

The problem is simply a product of the dichotomy between the *madrasa* system where Islamic subjects are taught in vernacular and the formal education setting in Nigeria where a unified curriculum of international standard is in operation and English is the medium of instruction. Graduates of the *madrasa* system have no prospects for further education in Nigeria owing to the fact that they are not exposed to such secular subjects as English, Mathematics and sciences most of which are among the admission criteria stipulated by most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Since the *madrasa* system is like a feeder institution to colleges with regards to students of Islamic Studies, it is normal to have more of students for Bible Knowledge owing to the fact that they are produced in formal school settings that experience no such curricular handicap or marginalization as experienced by students of the *madrasa* system. However, few of such students are fortunate enough to pass entrance examinations through private coaching. Yet such few can only be an insignificant minority among students of Religions Studies. It is simply rational to pay more attention to the needs of the majority. Consequently, it follows in simple that ISS teachers who secure admission as a minority will expectedly graduate as a minority. Hence, the reason for the mass production of Bible Knowledge teachers and acute shortage of ISS teachers. This line of thought on the unfortunate plight of the ISS teachers has been advanced by Ashraf and Bilgrami [1] with regard to Pakistan, Rosnani [2] with regard to Malaysia, Langgulung [3] and Zakaryah [4], with regard to Indonesia. These and other works of similar orientation could have served as source of education to the author, in this connection. In closing the chapter, the author observes that “the Islamic Studies curriculum in question is due for review” and therefore enjoins the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERDC) to “assemble the former designers of the curriculum for the review exercise” (p. 39). This reviewer however ventures to call attention to the need to invite for such an exercise only Islamic scholars who are core education specialists and are well grounded in curriculum design principles as most of the earlier participants are merely *‘ulama* and Arabic school teachers.

Chapter 5 is a logical sequel to the previous chapter. It marks the first sequential transition from a chapter to another in this highly significant book. The chapter addresses the topic “the teacher of Islamic Studies” which is an appropriate follow-up to the chapter on Islamic Studies curriculum. The present chapter contains yet another strength for which the author must take credit. This concerns his analysis of the issues involved in the introduction of moral instruction as a school subject, different from religious education. The author observes that “the first problem that faced the introduction of moral instruction – and perhaps the one that eventually killed it – was lack of suitable teachers it” (p. 42). He adds that the subject was not intended to be the business of the Bible Knowledge or ISS teachers which was why “special teachers were hurriedly assembled” for it whose “main credential was advanced age” (p. 42). Accordingly teachers of various subjects who were in their late forties and early fifties were involved in teaching the subject. Consequently, those teachers found themselves relying on the Quran, the Bible and the sayings and life experiences of the prophets of God with a view to generating materials for the teaching of the new subject.

To the author, the introduction of moral instruction is another dimension to war against religion which, he believes, takes various forms in Nigeria with a view to accelerating the process of its total elimination. The author did an impressive job in connecting his analysis in this regard to the task of the Islamic Studies teacher in such an environment as Nigeria that

is neither “friendly nor sympathetic to religious practices” (p.43) as the teacher is faced with the challenge of explaining convincingly to students “the relevance of Islam in modern times, the age of science and technology” (p. 43). Consequently, the sophisticated analysis done by the author with regard to the moral instruction/religious education debate becomes self-punctured and deflated where he declares that “moral instruction as a distinct subject is neither alive nor dead” (p. 43) in Nigerian schools today. One wonders whether the subject can be dead and, at the same time, alive. Again, one wonders whether the author’s phrase “neither alive” does not suggest that the subject is dead and whether his phrase “nor dead” does not suggest that it is alive. The author has, by this statement, somewhat suggested that the situation is both good and bad, its colour, both white and black, its dramatic personae, both present and absent and its story both long and short. What a fallacy!

In what follows in the chapter, the author identifies the requirements or qualities of a teacher of Islamic Studies as patience, creativity, grasp of content moral probity, versatility, knowledge of Arabic, understanding of the Quran and observance of Islamic rituals. He however fails to establish that while the first five are among the general qualities of a good teacher only the last three are peculiar to the teacher of Islamic Studies. Other requirements of a teacher of Islamic Studies that are missing in the author’s analysis may be itemized as follows:

- Comprehension and internalization of the Islamic value system which based on Tawhidic worldview.
- Understanding of the philosophical and historical development of knowledge and education with the Islamic and Western tradition and the importance of philosophical inquiry in teaching for meaning.
- Understanding the relationship between knowledge, religion and society.
- Possession of psychological and pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach effectively.
- Critical, creative, reflective and sensitive approach to social demands and problems.
- Observance of the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge as an act of worship [5].

Though a more detailed discussion on the qualities of the teacher of Islamic Studies would have been welcome and one would have expected the author to demonstrate that he is capable of adding some stuff to the existing body of scholarship, the primary focus of the chapter receives the best of what the author can offer in this regard. In what amounts to almost a quarter of the chapter which is barely the longest (pp. 41-56) in the book, the author digresses again and discusses the evils of interest in commercial transactions in a bid to emphasize the need for versatility as a quality of a teacher of Islamic Studies. Few lines or a paragraph would have sufficed, but Bidmos keeps circumambulating the issue before adding the evil of alcohol in a disjointed manner that suggests that those pieces must have been lying fallow somewhere for sometime and the author is now desperately desirous of putting them in use, for which this chapter has provided an outlet.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 address methods. In chapter 6 “Qur’anic Approach to methods,” Bidmos declares his intention to “take a trip with the teacher trainee through the pages of the Qur’an to see what methods were used therein while the prophets received their teaching” (p.57). He then quotes verbatim from various parts of the Qur’an to the tune of five full pages (pp. 58-62) without any analysis on the various subjects identified by him such as Human Anatomy/Embryology (Q 76:2; 86:5-7; 23: 12-14), Astronomy/Astrology (Q 25:62; 36:37-40), Mineral Resources (Q 16:14) History (Q 47:10; 34:15-21; 30:2-4), Man and His Environment (Q 16:5-8). Agriculture (Q 67:15); 2:61; 80:24-32), Commerce (2:275; 83:1-5), Law (Q 2:178; 4:58; 4:105), Concept of God (Q 112:1-4; 59:24), Worship (Q 7:85; 51:56), Family Structure (the whole of chapter four of the Qur’an), Inheritance (Q 4:2, 3, 11, 13 and 178).

The author’s failure to make any pedagogical sense of his five-page quotation from the Qur’an makes the excessively lengthy quotation redundant and, in fact, futile. In what follows, he, rather than relate any aspect of his quotation to pedagogy, attempts a discussion on what he calls “Pedagogical Models in the Qur’an” where, in almost eight pages, he identifies six teaching methods. One, he identifies as “individual instruction i.e. a teacher to a student method (p.63) the approach involved in the first revelation received by Prophet Muhammad” (p. 63). However, the author contradicts himself on this when he further describes this method with regard to the first revelation and writes that the teacher “kept

repeating his lesson until Muhammad (SAW) made a favourable response, ... read the passage as dictated to him ... repeated it several times until he committed it to memory' and that 'the method employed here could be called rote learning" (p. 63).

Accordingly, the author ends up calling the pedagogical procedure involved here by two contradictory names, namely individual instruction and rote learning whereas the former may pass as a teaching method, employed by the teacher at least for the purpose of his analysis, the latter cannot be anything but a learning device employed by the student and not the teacher. Two, the author identifies story telling as another method and describes it as the one employed to narrate life stories of personalities of note like prophet Musa (ASW), Pharaoh, Qa'run, etc" (p. 64). This is an incorrect statement in that the story telling method is not necessarily employed to teach history or life stories of personalities. It is rather used to teach any subject matter whatsoever with a story as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and values by the teacher into the student. Three, the author identifies the demonstration method as having been "extensively employed in the Qur'an and exemplifying the saying that examples are better than precepts" (p. 64). The author correctly posits that this was the method used to teach Cain, a practical burial procedure, when he killed Abel (Q 5: 27-31). He also posits that it is the same as experimental method which was used in teaching "a man who doubted the divine might", that life could be "restored to a dead land" (p. 65) as contained in the Qur'an (2:259).

The author then digresses again to discuss the "questioning technique" (p.66) or "the Qur'anic method of questioning (p. 68), devoting no fewer than three pages to this without situating such a lengthy discussion into any pedagogical context. Rather, he assails the reader again with copious quotation in both English and Arabic of twelve different Qur'anic verses containing rhetorical questions as, for instance, in "Is it thou who has done this to our gods, O Abraham?" (Q 21:62-63). One wonders whether this is of any relevance to teaching methods. Yet, he tells a long Qur'anic story on prophet Abraham without making reference to any part of the Qur'an where such a story is contained. Four the author identifies the deduction method and maintains that "questions are invariably asked in the Qur'an to allow for gradual emergence of lessons through deduction" (p. 68). One is constrained to ask what lesson has gradually emerged in a pedagogical sense from such a Qur'anic message as "Did I not tell thee that thou could not bear with me?" (Q18:75)? The author opines that "the lessons so deduced are of lasting impression and that that is the beauty of well executed questioning technique" (p. 68). The author's position here is in fact a case of situational inaccuracy. Yet, he identifies as the fifth Qur'anic method "a combination of questioning and deduction technique," and a combination of "lecture and individual instruction". His uses as an instance of this a situation when "an individual or a group is addressed in a familiar tone e.g. *Ya bunayya*, O' my son, *Ya Ayyuhan-Nas*, O! Mankind" and illustrates that "in chapter 31:13-19, prophet Luqman lectured his son in a breath-taking session" (p. 69). This, in the estimation of Bidmos, is what makes it a combination of lecture and individual instruction. One may well infer from this therefore that once a teacher mentions a student's name or identifies him for a question such as "what is today's date?" or says to him, "my dear student," for any reason whatsoever before the commencement of lecture, the teacher has employed a combination of lecture and individual instruction as teaching methods! What an erroneous view of pedagogy!

Six, the author correctly observes that "instructional materials ... accompany teaching methods for better performance and to enhance effectiveness" (p. 69), but incorrectly states that certain items that have been used as instructional materials in the Qur'an are birds and the corpse of Abel (Q. 5:27-31), the camel and food of the doubting man as well as the man himself (Q.2:259) and "the idols, shrine, deserted village and experience of burning fire to prophet Moses" (p. 69). The author's statement here is both fallacious and self-contradictory. Its self-contradictory nature lies in the fact that the same set of items have earlier been described by him as teaching methods (pp. 63-65) and one wonders how pedagogically valid it is for such items to constitute both a method (which means strategy, procedure, process, means etc.) and a material (which means device, aid, facility, tool, instrument etc.). The fallacious dimension of the author's statement is that such items are merely elements or, better, objects) of learning which constitute the subject matter meant to be transmitted into the potential or prospective recipient of knowledge. The author obviously wanders and meanders in the race course of pedagogical principles and this is uncomplimentary for a teacher trainer. This chapter unfortunately contains no more than

an unsuccessful attempt by the author to associate with the Qur'an conventional teaching methods or instructional strategies to which the Qur'an is neither directly nor indirectly connected. Hence his abysmal failure to offer the Qur'anic approach to methods which is the purpose of the chapter.

Chapter 7 "Method (a)", seems a continuation of 6. Here, the author discusses methods some of which have been discussed in the previous chapter and attempts to identify one or two topics in Islamic Studies that may be taught with the use of each. For instance, he identifies the lecture method as appropriate for the teaching of such topics as "the Jahiliyyah period, the birth and life of prophet Muhammad, his mission in Makkah, his mission in Madina, his external diplomacy, the caliphates after him, etc." (pp. 71-72). For the discussion method he identifies Zakat ul-Fitr, (p. 73), for questioning method, goodness to parents (pp. 74-75), for rote learning, the texts of the Qur'an or Hadith and for the experimental method, "any aspect of Tawhid and Ibadah in general" (p. 79). To the author, the deduction method is appropriate for the teaching of reading of the Qur'an (p.79), role playing, for the teaching of observance of Salat, the project method for the role of the mosque in a Muslim community (p. 83) and lastly the integration method for the teaching of *taharah* (i.e. cleanliness (p. 86).

However, some of the illustrations made by the author in articulating the appropriateness of these methods for the various topics identified by him, are bereft of substance. For instance, he recommends as suitable for the experimental method "such experiments as the sowing of seeds like maize or beans in three containers' where the first container is provided with good soil, regularly watered and kept where the seed could receive fresh air, sunshine and other natural necessities that could enable it germinate and grow normally" while "the second container with a seed therein, though provided with good soil and **regularly watered**, is not exposed to the sunshine and **fresh water**, whereas the third is not provided with good soil, no water and no exposure to the sunshine and fresh air" (pp. 77). The author requires the teacher to instruct the students to "monitor the developmental stages of the seeds in the three containers and to record their observations" (p. 77). One wonders why the author incorrectly thinks with regard to the second container that it is rational for a seed that is **regularly watered** to, at the same time, be denied **fresh water**! This is fallacious.

The author recommends that the containers be brought to the classroom for discussion, after three or four weeks of observation and such questions as the following, asked by the teacher:

- What are the differences between the plants in the containers?
- What are the factors responsible for the differences?
- What lessons can be deduced from the experiments?

As regards the first question, the author volunteers an answer: "While the first ... grew normally, the second one did not grow well and the third one did not grow at all" (p. 77). Concerning the second question, he also offers an answer: "the credit for the normal growth of the plant in the first container could be given to the farmer who catered for the plant" (p. 77). As regards the third question, the author states: "the lesson, ... is that the farmer provides certain services in the process of growing plants, while the provision of the needed facilities like good soil, water and so on are beyond him. It is Allah, then, who is behind the normal growth of the plants ... He is Allah without whom man cannot exist" (p. 78). With this line of pedagogical presentation, the author invariably portrays Allah as unjust, owing that He, as exemplified by the farmer, provides the first plant with good soil, good irrigation, good atmosphere and other natural facilities and provides the second with good soil and good irrigation but denies it exposure to sunshine and fresh water, whereas he deprives the third of access to anything capable of facilitating its growth. Accordingly, it is implied by the author, though unknowingly or unintentionally, that Allah is instrumental to the growth and triumph of some men, the retardation and failure of others and yet the perils and perish of others, without any regard to the principle of justice and fair play. This in fact is a dangerous way of teaching Islamic Studies. And there are several pedagogical dangers of similar nature in the book, for the unwary teacher, student or scholar which is why Bidmos will be too nimble for the fastidious instincts of some.

The author seems to be at his best in chapter eight which is entitled “Method B”. He articulates the focus of the chapter by writing that “three topics, Inheritance, Nigerian Muslim personalities and the contribution of Islam to world civilization are given a separate treatment in this chapter” because some of them are newly introduced into the curriculum and also serve as an evidence that there is no line of demarcation in Islam between the spiritual and the mundane aspects of life of man. He therefore identifies the focus of the chapter as a discussion of the method by which those subjects are better taught. What is expected of the author is to develop a teaching or lesson plan for each of this topic to show in specific terms, various stages, components and steps involved in its teaching. However, what the author offers is not a lesson plan showing any teaching method but a lesson note showing a meaningful content. At times, he seeks to support his analysis on the content with lengthy quotations from the Qur’an some of them running into two full pages (pp. 92-94).

In discussing Nigerian Muslim personalities specifically Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio and Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al-Illori, for instance he introduces a personality, discusses his contributions to Islam and highlights the lessons derived from his life (pp. 97-103). For Inheritance, he raises the question: What makes the Law of Inheritance in Islam distinct from other Systems of Inheritance?, defines three of the terms relating to inheritance namely *hajib*, *furud* and *wasiyyah*, quotes copiously from the Qur’an (4:7-13, 176), discusses the sharing formula and summarizes the topic (pp. 89-107). This is by no means a treatment of teaching method. In methods the concern is how to teach and not what to teach. The author has successfully offered what to teach in the three topics but abysmally failed to offer any good stuff on how to teach which, incidentally, is the purpose of the chapter.

Chapter 9, “Instructional Materials” is the most remarkable as it is partially constructive and partially destructive. The constructive aspect of the chapter contains analysis along the line of statements such as “tape is used in teaching texts of the Qur’an” (p. 109), “Video tape is used in teaching rites of Hajj” (p. 109) and “Teaching Islam in West Africa ... requires the use of maps in tracing the trade routes and settlements which served as the centres of Islamic preaching and learning” (p. 110). All these are accurate statements for which the author should take some credit.

However, the author erroneously thinks that “lesson note is the teacher’s guide in the classroom” (p. 111). As if that is not disastrous enough, he further states, again, incorrectly, that a lesson note “is a detailed account of what the teacher intends to achieve, how he goes about it and how he evaluates his performance at the end of each period” (p. 111). He aggravates his invalid arguments and deflates himself when he adds that “statement of objectives is central in the preparation of lesson note” (p. 111). Again, he states rather incorrectly that “the objectives are those long term goals which are the end result of teaching the subject in the first instance” (p. 111). He adds, “for the purpose of illustration, a model lesson note is given below, showing main characteristic features of the note” (p. 112). Unfortunately, what the author offers as a model lesson note is technically called teaching plan, instructional design or lesson plan and is by no means a lesson note as he incorrectly thinks. Lesson note is rather synonymous with content. Accordingly, statement of objectives is not central to a lesson note as he erroneously believes. Therefore, a lesson note is not “a detailed account of what the teacher intends to achieve, how he goes about it and how he evaluates his performance at the end of each period,” as Bidmos wants his reader to believe. In a similar token, the author goofs in his statement that “objectives are those long term goals which are the end result of teaching the subject in the first instance”. To put the record straight, objectives are specifically meant to be achieved through the instrumentality of classroom instruction, while goals are a subset of the purpose of education whose higher form are the aims. In other words, while aims and goals may be used interchangeably at both state and district levels, objectives are strictly restricted to the classroom. The author’s case in this regard is one of pedagogical inexactitude of the highest order.

The chapter is followed by a five-page pictorial illustration of teaching aids which carry neither tags nor labels excepting the various Qur’anic verses from chapter 56 (pp. 116-120). One of the teaching aids presented by the author is a pictorial demonstration of the Qur’anic verse, “Have you ever considered the water which you drink? Do you bring it down (in rain) from the cloud or do we? (Q. 56:68-69). However Bidmos illustrates this with tap water rather than rain! Other illustrations are of fire (Q.56:71), foetus (Q. 56:57-59), growing plants (Q. 56:63-65) and a map of the Arabian

Peninsular. The author sees that map as appropriate for the teaching of hajj as a topic and all the others as appropriate for teaching the existence of God. However, one wonders why these pages are detached from the chapter of which it is supposed to form a part.

In chapter 10, "Examination Malpractice" which is the shortest (6 pages) and the last, the author discusses reasons for cheating in examinations, techniques of cheating, way out of cheating, as well as the Qur'anic techniques in combating cheating which, according to him are first, admonition (Q. 3:110), secondly, salat (Q. 29:45), thirdly, heart cleansing (Q. 91:9-10) and finally, a comprehensive Islamic pragmatic approach. The author identifies *salat*, *dhikr* and *tilawah* as good ways for heart cleansing which is his third recommendation whereas salat is also the second recommendation made by him and one wonders whether he has offered anything new in this regard, if his recommendations are all about *salat*, *dhikr* and *tilawah*. Must all students be Muslims to observe salat and dhikr, in order to eschew examination malpractices. This chapter is replete with preaching and not grounded in technically sound knowledge. Besides, one is constrained to ask: of what relevance is the topic treated in this chapter to the central theme of the book, *A Manual for the Teacher of Islamic Studies*. Yet such a brief discussion on this topic is not totally devoid of any merit as such Islamic admonition will benefit students with uncritical attitude to religion.

A panoramic look at the book reveals that the structural arrangement of the chapters is not logical and sequential. Ordinarily, the origin and import of teaching, which is covered in chapter two should come in chapter one and followed respectively by Islamic Studies Curriculum and the teacher of Islamic Studies, which are discussed in chapters four and five. The author's chapter one, "The Teaching of Islamic Studies in a Secular Society" then becomes chapter four while his chapters six, seven, eight and nine which address methods and instructional materials, become chapters five, six, seven and eight. His chapter three, "The Information and Communication Technology" will then logically follow as chapter nine. The last chapter, ten, rather than address examination malpractice, which is not of direct relevance to the subject of the book may address emergent issues in the teaching of Islamic Studies, thereby making a good concluding chapter of a potentially useful book.

Unfortunately, Prof. Bidmos does not endeavour to avoid a handful of traps and pitfalls in the book. An instance of this is his abbreviated reference to Islamic Studies as ISS (p. 19) and also as IRS (p. 22) whereas he himself discusses how ISS was adopted as more suitable than both Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRS) and Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) (p. 29). Another instance is his view of Allah's use of birds to teach Cain (the killer) "the method of how to bury the corpse of Abel (the victim)" as a form of instructional technology (p. 20). This reviewer cannot see any technology in this connection and even wonders why the author is so careless to the extent writing "... the method of how to bury the corpse" as if "method" is not all about "how to" do something. Yet other instances of these include his mistransliteration of *ka'bah* as *ka'abah* (p. 24) (p. 25) and *Jum'ah* as *Jumu'ah* (p. 24) and *rak'ah* as *raka'ah* (p. 152), as well as his superfluous expressions such as "he **delivered** his lecture without any interruption during **delivery** (p. 69) and "Tawhid constitutes the very basic cornerstone of Islam" (p. 33) as if a cornerstone can be anything but basic, let alone "very basic."

The bibliography is quite extensive. However, one of Al-Ilori's work *Al-Islam wa tahaddiyatul-qarnil hadi wal 'ishrin*, cited on page 101, is missing. On the other hand, another work by the same author, *Nizamut-Ta'lim*, not cited in the text or footnotes, appears on page 155. Even most of the works that are cited in the text and listed in the bibliography feature some inconsistencies. For instance, Prof. Bidmos cites *Ad-din An-Nasihah* as having been published in 1966 in the text but as 1996 in the bibliography. Similarly, *Tawjih ud-Da'wah* features 1978 in the text but 1979 in the bibliography. Again, *Falsafatun-Nubuwwah* features 1983 in the text but 1993 in the list. The same experience applies to *Nasimus-Sabah* which is cited as 1986 in the text but as 1990 in the bibliography. It is remarkable that all the works cited and listed inconsistently are of Al-Ilori. However, *Al-Islam fi Najiriyah*, by the same author is cited as 1978 in the text and so listed in the bibliography. Yet, also missing in the bibliography are works on teaching methods, curriculum and instruction, teaching, teacher education and teaching methods all of which are closely connected to the subject of Prof. Bidmos' book. Even such various works cited by him in the articles attached by him as appendices are missing in the bibliography. They include

Tyler (1949), Dewey (1916), Fafunwa (1974), Sarwa (1984), Irving (1817), Darwin (1859), Margaret (1950), Fafunwa (1976), Gbadamosi (1978), Abdul (1981) and Clarke (1982), none of which features in the bibliography. Of greater concern is that the author cites books, journal articles and official documents as though all of them are of the same orientation and should be cited the same way (p. 155).

The picture or layout of the front cover of the book features an aesthetic handling of the title of the book which is adorned by a shining crescent, which itself is a symbol socially constructed for Islam. It should have been superimposed on a pictorial portrayal of a teacher of Islamic Studies in a classroom setting or instructional situation, to accurately depict the subject of the book. The back cover features a passport size photograph of the author and his *curriculum vitae* which gives a panoramic view of his academic background.

Typographical errors, grammatical mistakes and misuses of words abound. This reviewer has cited several instances of these in the present review and there is no space to cite more examples which is why two or three may suffice. One, the author writes that the first container grew normally, the second one did not grow well and the third one did not grow at all” (p.77) whereas, it is not the container but the plant contained by it that grows on failed to grow. Two, the author writes that “an average teacher can handle Bible Knowledge, the situation which is not accidental” (p.37) whereas “a situation” is what is appropriate. Three, that Abel was killed by “his senior brother, Cain” (p. 20) instead of “elder brother”, is alas, not English.

The book is a veritable mine of materials containing a wealth of information and knowledge of the author which is both admirable and enviable. This useful contribution to the discipline of Islamic Studies and education will be of much benefit to students, teachers and teacher trainers wishing to acquaint themselves with the author’s scholarship. Prof. Bidmos indeed should take credit for a job well done.

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