



Davronbek TURAYEV^a 

^a*Master of Oriental university*

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVICES AND TEACHINGS IN THE BOOK “TA’LIM AL-MUTA’ALLIM”

Abstract. *This article examines “Ta’lim al-muta’allim,” the celebrated work by the Islamic scholar Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji (12th–13th centuries AD), focusing on the essential manners, advices, and instructions for acquiring knowledge presented therein. The study analyzes how al-Zarnuji substantiates his pedagogical recommendations through reliable primary sources – including Quranic verses, prophetic hadiths, and the counsel of eminent scholars such as Imam A’zam Abu Hanifa. The article demonstrates that this foundational text on the path to knowledge remains highly relevant to contemporary educational discourse, addressing issues such as the education of women, financial support for students, the importance of consultation, and the ethics of intellectual perseverance.*

Keywords: *“Ta’lim al-muta’allim”, hadith, ilmu hal, Abu Hanifa, complete person, wajib, advice, Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji, Islamic pedagogy.*

INTRODUCTION

As long as the history of mankind is studied scientifically, it becomes clear that any society that despises knowledge and scholars is bound to fail. Accordingly, the intellectuals of every era tried to appreciate the value of science and scholars, and focused on each aspect of this endeavor. They even paid attention to the appearance of the intelligentsia, recognizing that the outward conduct of scholars helps to create a positive image of knowledge among the general members of society. For this reason, teachers not only focused on their own image but also instructed their students to conduct themselves with dignity. From these perspectives, it is appropriate to analyze the teachings and advices in the work “Ta’lim al-muta’allim” by Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji.

Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji, an Islamic scholar of the 12th–13th centuries, authored “Ta’lim al-muta’allim tariqat al-ta’allum” as a comprehensive guide for students of

religious knowledge. The work has remained in the hands of students for centuries, serving as a key reference on the proper methodology and ethics of seeking knowledge. The scholar followed a clear logical order in providing evidence to support his views, drawing upon Quranic verses, prophetic hadiths, the counsel of eminent scholars, and practical recommendations.

METHODS

This study is based on a theoretical and analytical approach. The primary methods include textual analysis, comparative analysis, and conceptual synthesis of classical Islamic pedagogical sources. The main primary source is Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji's "Ta'lim al-muta'allim tariqat al-ta'allum" (al-Zarnuji, 2010), supplemented by historical chronicles (Muhammad Ali, 2008), collections of folk wisdom (Mirzaev et al., 2005), and contemporary regulatory documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The analysis focuses on the pedagogical themes of the work: the obligation to seek knowledge, the classification of learners, the ethics of consultation, financial provision for students, and the virtue of perseverance.

RESULTS

Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji began his work with the following hadith of the Prophet (pbuh): "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim!" This proof is of great practical importance, as science plays a central role in the development and progress of all aspects of society. In particular, the education of not only men, but also women and girls is one of the primary factors in this regard. Therefore, this aspect of the problem is given special importance in New Uzbekistan, and several regulatory documents have been adopted to support women – including Decision No. PQ-5020 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further improve the system of supporting women and girls, ensuring their active participation in society" adopted on March 5, 2021 (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021). The "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026" further determines that increasing human dignity and developing a free civil society are the main factors of building a people-loving state (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2022).

Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji also touched on the appearance and conduct of scholars. In particular, he narrated the following advice of Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (699–767 CE) to his students: “Wrap your turbans big and make your sleeves wide!” The scholar interpreted this in the sense that no one should be disrespectful or indifferent to knowledge and its people (al-Zarnuji, 2010:13).

The scholar divided people into three groups in terms of their potential and spiritual world: “A complete person is one who has a mind that finds the truth and, more importantly, consults with intelligent people. A half-person has the right opinion but does not take advice, or takes advice but does not have the right opinion. A person who neither takes admonishment nor has his own personal opinion is nobody” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:16). This classification of learners has enduring relevance. Even Amir Timur, who lived two centuries after the author, echoed this insight: “I have seen in my experience that a determined, enterprising, vigilant, experienced, brave, and courageous person is far better than an indifferent one. Because one experienced person can order thousands of people to work” (Muhammad Ali, 2008).

Regarding the content of education, the scholar held: “It is not obligatory for every Muslim man or woman to learn all knowledge.” As a solution to this problem, he put forward the opinion that “The best knowledge is the ilmu hal, and the best action is to preserve hal” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:7). This demonstrates that the question of what to teach has been a central issue in pedagogy for centuries.

Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji gave the following recommendation for the learner regarding what should be prioritized in knowledge: “A seeker of knowledge should choose the most beautiful of all sciences and the knowledge that is needed in the work of religion. Then he should choose what he will need in the future” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:15). The author also addressed the importance of consultation, citing Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa, and providing evidence from Surah Ali Imran, verse 159 (al-Zarnuji, 2010:16). Ja'far al-Sadiq (699–765 CE) said to Sufyan al-Thawri (716–778 CE): “Make discussion about your affairs with those who fear Allah” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:16). This confirms the practical truth behind the proverb “Advice is worth more than gold” (Mirzaev et al., 2005:314).

On the challenges of seeking knowledge, al-Zarnuji stated: “The demand for knowledge is the highest and most difficult of tasks. Therefore, it is wajib to make

discussion in this regard” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:16). He further advised: “When asked: ‘What is courage?’, the answer was: ‘Courage is a moment of patience!’” The most important thing for a student is to be patient and learn persistently under one teacher, never to leave a book unfinished, not to begin studying another subject before completing the first, and to abstain from unnecessary distraction (al-Zarnuji, 2010:17). The scholar added: “A student endures all kinds of troubles and hardships. Treasure of goals is on the bridge of works!” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:17).

One of the difficulties in science is the financial support of students during their studies. This is an urgent problem even today. It is clear from the author’s statement that attention was paid to this issue not only in his time, but also in previous centuries: “In earlier times, young people learned a trade, then studied science, and did not rely on people’s wealth” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:42). Most of the scholars who achieved great accomplishments had their own profession, as illustrated by the narration: “Abu Hafs al-Kabir al-Bukhari (d. 833 CE) was doing his job and also studying” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:39). Regarding students who have financial obligations, the scholar stated: “If a student has no choice but to work for the sake of his family and others, then he should work and study at the same time and not be lazy at all. There is no excuse for a sane person to abandon gaining knowledge and study of fiqh” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:39).

On the ethics of social conduct, al-Zarnuji stated: “It is not necessary to enter into conflict and enmity with anyone, because it wastes time” (al-Zarnuji, 2010:48). This opinion is also recorded in the primary sources of Islamic religion and in the foundational sources of didactics. The scholar also called people to lifelong learning, citing the statement “The time of education is from the cradle to the grave,” and supporting it with the example of Hasan ibn Ziyad, who began studying fiqh at the age of eighty, did not sleep in a bed for forty years, and then issued fatwas for another forty years (al-Zarnuji, 2010:47).

DISCUSSION

The findings from the analysis of “Ta’lim al-muta’allim” demonstrate that Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji’s pedagogical vision is grounded in a coherent system of values: the moral obligation to seek knowledge, the primacy of practical and religious

learning (ilmu hal), the indispensability of consultation, and the virtue of perseverance. These themes are substantiated not through personal opinion alone, but through a carefully constructed chain of Quranic verses, prophetic traditions, and the counsel of recognized scholarly authorities.

The contemporary relevance of the work is evident in several dimensions. The author's insistence on the education of both men and women aligns with the priorities articulated in modern Uzbek state policy (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021, 2022). His classification of learners into the "complete person," "half-person," and "nobody" resonates with contemporary frameworks of critical thinking and self-directed learning (al-Zarnuji, 2010:16). The issue of financial provision for students, addressed explicitly by the author (al-Zarnuji, 2010:39, 42), remains a pressing concern in higher education globally.

The scholar's emphasis on consultation as a pedagogical and ethical principle is particularly noteworthy. By citing Hazrat Ali, Ja'far al-Sadiq, and Sufyan al-Thawri alongside folk wisdom (Mirzaev et al., 2005:314), al-Zarnuji establishes that sound judgment requires both personal reason and communal deliberation. This integrative approach to knowledge – combining scripture, scholarly tradition, and practical wisdom – distinguishes "Ta'lim al-muta'allim" as a work of enduring pedagogical significance.

CONCLUSION

Burkhaniddin al-Zarnuji's personal views on education and training in "Ta'lim al-muta'allim," presented through the counsel of well-known and experienced representatives of the scholarly tradition, are of great scientific importance in solving practical problems in education. The work's analysis of increasing the value of knowledge in society, supporting women's education, focusing on primary sources in learning, providing material support for students, and regulating social conduct demonstrates that its contemporary relevance remains high.

The text continues to serve as a key reference for students and scholars of Islamic pedagogy, offering a methodologically coherent and ethically grounded framework for the acquisition of knowledge. Future research should focus on comparative analysis of al-Zarnuji's methodology with other classical Islamic pedagogical works, as well as on the reception and application of his principles in contemporary Central Asian educational institutions.

REFERENCES

1. al-Zarnuji, B. (2010). Ta'lim al-muta'allim tariqat al-ta'allum [Teaching the student the method of learning]. Maktaba al-Bushro.
2. Hairi, A. (n.d.). Al-Imom al-Kevsteriy [Imam al-Kawthari]. [Publisher unknown].
3. Mirzaev, T., Musokulov, A., & Sarimsokov, B. (2005). O'zbek xalq maqollari [Uzbek folk proverbs]. Sharq.
4. Muhammad Ali. (2008). Amir Temur tarixi [Chronicle of Amir Temur]. O'zbekiston Milliy kutubxonasi nashriyoti.
5. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2021, March 5). Decision No. PQ-5020: On measures to further improve the system of supporting women and girls, ensuring their active participation in society. Adolat National Legal Information Center. <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/-5320582>
6. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2022). Development strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026. Official website of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://president.uz/oz/pages/view/strategy>.