

Landmarks of Gradualism in Islamic Education and Their Impact on Local Autonomy

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Abstract

Education possesses fundamental principles that must be understood and applied by any practitioner. Among these is the principle of gradualism, a methodical approach to modifying the behaviors and mindsets of individuals and societies. This method has a profound impact on the development of local autonomy, and its prominent origins are firmly rooted in Islam from the very beginning of its message.

The Prophet Muhammad and the scholars and educators who followed him during Islam's golden ages—a period of civilization and advancement acknowledged by both allies and adversaries—relied on gentle persuasion and good counsel as a key educational and missionary tool. Gradualism was also a solid principle in Islamic legislation, directly derived from divine revelation. This approach highlights the necessity of considering people's circumstances, intellects, and psychological states to achieve acceptance, conviction, and obedience to the truth. This methodical and gentle process aligns with human nature and lived reality. In other words, Islamic law contributed to empowering individuals and communities to foster local consciousness and decision-making independence, a goal shared with the core essence of education in both its methods and objectives.

Keywords: landmarks; gradualism; education; good counsel; Islamic law; autonomy.

Introduction

The act of education is considered one of the most critical and precise endeavors for building civilizations and advancing societies across all nations and faiths. However, Islamic thought has a unique perspective that distinguishes it from other educational philosophies. It respects human nature and innate inclinations, refining them rather than clashing with them, in accordance with a precise, divine methodology. This approach is not limited to ethical and spiritual aspects; it extends to fostering local autonomy, thereby empowering local communities to achieve independence and self-governance. This, in turn, enhances their capacity for sustainable development and comprehensive societal progress.

A core tenet of this approach is the concept of **gradualism in education**, which Islam adopted from the outset of its mission in various situations. This principle is often overlooked by many educators, missionaries, and reformers, leading to friction with their audience and failure to achieve their goals. Their pedagogical methods are often

characterized by a rush to impose religious duties and virtues without considering people's circumstances.

This leads to the central research problem of this study:

What are the key landmarks of gradualism in education that Islam adopted at various stages and in different situations to develop consciousness and autonomy?

This main problem encompasses several sub-questions that this paper seeks to answer:

1. What is the concept of education?
2. What is the role of good counsel in educational gradualism?
3. How was gradualism applied in Islamic legislation?

Answering these questions is crucial for grounding the principle of gradual and incremental engagement with the human psyche, as embodied in the educational process. This involves exploring key instances where Islam employed this method to correct misguided educational approaches—such as imposing all duties at once without considering people's readiness—which stem from ignorance of the Islamic educational methodology and philosophy. Furthermore, the urgent need for educational gradualism in our current era is underscored by the cultural erosion and detachment from the values and principles of Islamic education afflicting the Muslim world. This study aims to contribute to reviving Islamic civilization and strengthening the cultural identity of Muslim communities, thereby enabling them to build their own capacities. This is achieved through a deep and accurate understanding of correct educational methods derived from divine revelation, embodying the saying: “The last part of this nation will not be rectified except by that which rectified its first part.” This is the path through which people were transformed from a state of backwardness, decline, and ignorance to the pinnacle of progress, development, and leadership.

First: The Concept of Education

The definition of education has varied among scholars in response to different historical, civilizational, and social contexts, as well as their intellectual perspectives and academic specializations. Some of these definitions include:

1. For Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, the term "education" revolves around caring for a person's physical health through nutrition and exercise, their intellectual health by providing them with appropriate knowledge and culture, and their spiritual nourishment by refining and elevating their soul ¹. Al-Ghazali precisely defined education by stating: “The meaning of education is similar to the act of a farmer who removes thorns and foreign plants from among the crops to improve their growth and perfect their yield” ². Therefore, he believed a child must have a teacher to guide and lead them to what is beneficial and what is harmful, saying: “Know that the traveler on the spiritual path needs a guiding teacher to remove bad character traits and replace them with good ones through their education”³.

2. A contemporary scholar defines education as having two meanings:

a. The first meaning is growth and increase. This is the most evident goal of education, which is to develop the specific aspect being addressed. For example, intellectual education aims to develop mental abilities, while spiritual education seeks to develop spiritual strength.

b. The second meaning is gradualism. Education is an effort of accumulation, where each part builds upon the last, and time is a crucial factor in achieving its goals. Nurturing, feeding, and teaching never happen instantly but rather through successive stages. Thus, growth and gradualism represent the two most important laws governing the nature of educational work ⁴.

From these definitions, we can infer that the educational process is inherently stage-based in order to achieve its goals and objectives. It progresses from one level to another, and from one state to another, based on the learner's psychological, sociological, and physiological data. It is not an automated or rigid process that an educator can follow without thoughtful effort and the selection of effective educational methods for each unique teaching situation.

Second: Gradualism Through Good Counsel in Islamic Education

Gradualism is a progressive journey that enables individuals to attain virtues, in contrast to the soul's inertia and reluctance to abandon habits and its difficulty in acquiring diverse knowledge, experiences, and values. This necessitates a gradual approach to overcome obstacles on the path to all forms of educational achievement.

Good counsel is one of the most important landmarks of gradualism in Islamic education. It is an effective tool for influencing the character of a Muslim, whether young or old, on psychological, moral, and social levels. It has the power to inspire compliance and positive response to guidance, remembrance, and advice without force, violence, or coercion. This fosters a voluntary acceptance and a gentle, smooth invitation to follow and submit with love and passion. The Qur'an has called for this educational approach in multiple places, indicating the sophistication of the Quranic educational method. The Sunnah of the Prophet also advocated for this, as will be detailed below.

1. **The Concept of Counsel:** Linguistically,(counsel) means “advising and reminding of consequences.” To counsel someone is to advise and remind them, and they accept the counsel. It is said, "The fortunate person is he who is counseled by others, while the wretched person is he by whom others are counseled" ⁵.

Wisdom is closely related to counsel, which makes it necessary to define it. Wisdom has been defined as “the correct and sound statement that clarifies the truth and removes ambiguity” ⁶. From this, we understand that wisdom and good counsel are a sound message that softens hearts and motivates them to obey God.

Counsel is completely intertwined with wisdom. A counselor who lacks wisdom might misplace their words, choosing an inappropriate time or using unsuitable

language for the person they are addressing, or an improper location ⁷. Based on this, counsel is tied to wisdom. God says: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel" ⁸.

2. **The Importance of Good Counsel:** It is well known that the Qur'an is filled with excellent counsel and guidance, a testament to the supreme importance of good counsel in education. Among these verses is the Almighty's saying: "O mankind, there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord and a healing for what is in the breasts, and guidance and mercy for the believers" ⁹. And He says: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association is great injustice'" ¹⁰. Counsel was the first step in educating people and the starting point for correcting their misguided ideas, refining their morals, and purifying their souls.

The Prophet used counsel at appropriate times, and when he found his audience ready to listen. He avoided using it so frequently that it would lead to boredom, yet he did not abandon it due to its effect on behavioral correction and individual reform. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, may God be pleased with him, who said: "The Prophet would choose certain days to give us counsel, fearing that we might become bored" ¹¹.

Good counsel can also be given directly to a person who has made a mistake to prevent them from repeating it. The Messenger of God used this approach with a young boy who was not familiar with table manners ¹². The Prophet guided him with a gentle and unharsh approach, using a few words that were sufficient and comprehensive to teach him table manners. This was a direct form of counsel, so he said: "O boy, say the name of God, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you" ¹³. This counsel had such an impact on the boy's behavior that he adhered to it for the rest of his life, all without resorting to discipline and punishment, which can sometimes lead to results opposite to the desired educational goals, such as aversion, fanaticism, and oppression.

Hearts can have a remarkable softness, becoming moved by gentle words and painful situations that appeal to emotions and drive them toward goodness. On the other hand, hearts can possess a terrible hardness, some of which are like solid rocks or even harder. Some hard hearts are softened only by the counsel found in the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet ¹⁴. The Almighty said about the effectiveness of the Qur'an on mountains: "Had We sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and split asunder from the fear of Allah" ¹⁵.

For counsel to bear fruit, by God's will, it must avoid unnecessary length and boring repetition. It should be appropriate for the situation and context, sincere, and come from a sincere heart. Its topics should be varied and include elements of encouragement and warning, depending on what softens a person's heart. It must also contain a lesson that stirs the conscience, use parables that clarify and bring the

meaning closer, and include illustrative stories that attract hearts and minds, sharpening resolve to cling to the truth even if the soul finds it difficult.

3.Fruits of Gradualism Through Good Counsel in Fostering Self-Awareness and Building Local Autonomy:

a. **Guiding Behavior Gently:** Good counsel is based on gentleness and compassion in guidance, which makes the recipient more receptive and willing to change. This approach reduces the resistance and rejection that can result from scolding and punishment.

b. **Strengthening Ethical Values:** Through good counsel, parents and teachers can instill ethical and religious values in a smooth and effective manner. Examples and advice given with a good spirit can leave a lasting impact on an individual's behavior.

c. **Building Trust and Respect:** Using good counsel strengthens mutual trust between the guide and the recipient. When people feel that the advice they receive comes from genuine love and concern, their feelings of respect and trust for the guide increase.

d. **Encouraging Learning and Self-Development:** Providing guidance and advice in an encouraging and motivating way helps individuals understand the importance of self-learning and continuous development. Praising improvements, progress, and efforts enhances their desire to continue and move forward.

e. **Achieving Sustainable Change:** Education through good counsel achieves sustainable change in behavior because it relies on internal conviction and personal belief, rather than temporary change resulting from the fear of punishment.

f. **Strengthening Emotional Bonds and Self-Confidence:** The use of good counsel in education strengthens and solidifies emotional bonds between individuals, whether they are students and teachers or children and parents. This fosters effective communication and creates a supportive and motivating environment for growth. It also boosts self-confidence, increasing an individual's belief in their abilities and potential.

g. **Developing Personal Responsibility:** Good counsel focuses on gentle guidance and encouraging individuals to consciously think about their actions. Through wisdom and advice, individuals are motivated to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. It also promotes self-awareness, which drives individuals to acknowledge and correct their mistakes with consciousness and responsibility. This gradually leads to the development of a more mature and self-governing personality.

From the above, we can conclude that good counsel is an effective tool in behavioral and practical education. The educator begins with it as a first and essential step in the process of correction, reform, and invitation before moving on to other educational

methods. The Quranic and prophetic methodologies called on missionaries and educators to use it, emphasizing its effective role in reforming the individual and society. This is because it achieves a balanced and sustainable education that focuses on building values and morals that represent self-awareness and autonomy through love, respect, continuous encouragement, and a connection to the essence of the human being.

4.Landmarks of Counsel in Islamic Maghreb:

The people of the Maghreb, like all other Muslim lands, did not abandon sessions of counsel and remembrance. However, before the seventh century AH, these sessions were generally voluntary and offered to the public without charge. After that time, they evolved into special positions called "tawriq" chairs (for counsel and remembrance), for which the counselor would receive payment from endowments ¹⁶. Among the paid counselors was Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn `Ufair al-Umawi (d. 620 AH), who entered the Maghreb and held sessions of remembrance and counsel, for which he would charge people ¹⁷.

The method of counsel was also widely used in public lectures. One such counsel is found in a letter from Imam Abd al-Wahhab ¹⁸ to the people of Tripoli ¹⁹. Teachers were not permitted to give counsel until they had completed their studies and taught students at various levels. Once their position was established and their suitability was proven, they were assigned to give counsel, guidance, and direction to people in their public gatherings, mosques, and during special seasons ²⁰. This shows the high and special status that the Ibadis and the people of the Maghreb in general accorded to counsel due to its significant and sensitive role.

Among the many devout and righteous counselors who blended teaching and counsel in education, we mention Ismail ibn Rabah al-Jazari al-Qayrawani (d. 212 AH) ²¹, who was known for his piety, devotion, and sincerity in his religion and his call to God through his eloquent counsel. Among his counsel, he said: "What is wrong with you, as if you doubt death? Where is your father and your mother? Where are your family? Where are your relatives? So, look to your soul and hasten to repent before remorse befalls you when a tear is not pitied, and a stumble is not forgiven. What will you say when you stand before Him and He says to you: 'My servant, do you know the sin of such and such a day? My servant, did I not warn you of My retribution and the severity of My authority? Did I not inform you that I will take revenge on those who disobey Me?' What will your answer be on that day when intellects have scattered and tongues have become silent? May God guide us and help us with the horrors of that day" ²².

Another jurist who used the method of counsel in educating people and teaching them was Muhammad al-Ansari al-Tunisi, who "had followers and fame and would give counsels and speak the truth. He would become deeply absorbed during his counsel and that would of course be due to the intensity of his immersion" ²³.

Counseling developed significantly during the Zayyanid era, especially in the seventh century AH. Prominent among the Tlemcenian scholars in this field was Muhammad al-Tlemceni, known as Ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 614 AH) ²⁴. He would hold counseling sessions on Thursdays and Mondays of every week and authored a work on counsel titled *Hujjat al-Hafizeen wa Hujjat al-Waizeen*. This book was abridged by Abu Zakaria Muhammad into two volumes called *Anwar Majalis al-Adhkar wa Abkar Arais al-Afkar* ²⁵. A person was not required to have a high level of academic training to take on the task of counseling; rather, having a good voice and a good delivery was more important ²⁶, as was the case with Bakr ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Malili, the counselor at al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, who "had a good voice, recited well with melodies, and influenced souls with his pleasant tone" ²⁷.

Third: Gradualism in Islamic Legislation and its Educational Impact on Autonomy

The Prophet was sent to a society filled with customs and traditions, some of which were beneficial and harmless to the nation's existence, while others were harmful and were meant to be eradicated by the Lawgiver. His wisdom required him to guide them gradually in order to explain religious rulings and convey his divine message ²⁸. Gradualism in Islamic law is considered one of its most prominent features. The divine rulings were revealed in stages, taking into account the readiness of individuals and societies and their capacity to comply. Instead of imposing commands and prohibitions all at once, Islam adopted a gradual approach to prohibition and obligation. This was based on a deep educational wisdom aimed at rooting values in souls without shock or aversion.

The impact of this legislative approach is not limited to the legal aspect. It extends to playing a prominent educational role by developing the Muslim's consciousness, strengthening their will, and training them to control themselves and take on their responsibilities step by step. Consequently, gradualism contributes to building individual autonomy, making a person more capable of making decisions with awareness and independence, and making society more mature in its interaction with the principles and applications of Islamic law.

1. **The Legitimacy of Gradualism in Legislation:** Gradualism in Islamic legislation is a fundamental principle that is manifested in the incremental revelation of rulings, allowing people to adapt to changes and internalize the new laws. This was embodied in the legislations of the Qur'an and the noble Sunnah.

- a. **The Legitimacy of Gradualism from the Qur'an:** Anyone who reflects on the verses of the Qur'an will not find explicit verses directly commanding gradualism in legislation, yet the general Quranic methodology, both in its revelation and its rulings, establishes the principle of a gradual approach. The researcher Muhammad Mustafa al-Zuhaili pointed out that "many of the noble verses indicate or allude to the principle of gradualism in actions in general, as well as gradualism in faith from changing what is in the soul to changing what is in society and the nation, gradualism in the increase of faith, gradualism in duties, gradualism in education, gradualism in learning, and gradualism in building the individual, then the family, then society, and then the nation and the state" ²⁹.

He listed a number of noble verses that indicate gradualism in legislation:

- ✓ The Almighty says: "So fear Allah as much as you are able and listen and obey"³⁰.
- ✓ Allah the Almighty says: "Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. 'Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us'"³¹.
- ✓ Allah the Almighty says: "Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship"³².
- ✓ His saying: "And has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty"³³.

Al-Zuhaili concluded from these verses that "the obligation of legal rulings is based on one's capacity and ability, and that God has removed the hardship and burden that were on previous nations and does not burden Muslims with duties and heavy rulings they cannot bear... The duty is to work to apply the Sharia with effort, sincerity, and diligence, but according to one's ability and capacity, and to implement what can be implemented... The verses that deal with these meanings are numerous and suggest the necessity of adopting a gradual approach and adhering to the Quranic method in that to explain the rulings that were revealed bit by bit"³⁴.

b. The Legitimacy of Gradualism from the Sunnah: The noble Sunnah was among the Islamic sources that explicitly commanded gradualism in legislation, especially through the Prophet's actions. Many hadiths and situations in the books of Sunnah indicate this, including:

The hadith of Ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with them both, in *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, that the Messenger of God said to Mu'adh ibn Jabal when he sent him to Yemen: "You will come to a people who are People of the Book. So when you come to them, invite them to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. If they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has obligated upon them five prayers every day and night. If they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has obligated upon them a charity to be taken from their wealthy and given to their poor. If they obey you in that, then beware of their valuable property. And fear the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah"³⁵.

This noble hadith is the best proof of the method of gradualism in Islamic legislation. The Messenger of God commanded Mu'adh not to invite people to the Islamic laws all at once, but to consider their psychological readiness to accept them by not moving from one ruling to another until they had digested the one before it and their souls had become accustomed to it. He began with the most important and then the next most

important. This is the greatest evidence that this law is from God, who created souls and knows best what is suitable for them to align with the laws of nature and the hidden depths of the human psyche.

The prophetic hadiths that mandate gradualism in legislation and in calling to God are numerous. Through them, the Prophet urged everyone who takes on the task of education to adopt the principle of gradualism in the educational process without distinction between young or old, as it is a requirement of human nature in general.

2. **The Revelation of the Qur'an in Stages:** The Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic law. It was not revealed all at once but in stages, in parts and sections—a verse or two, or three, over a period of twenty-three years. This is the greatest proof of gradualism in the call to Islam, in commands, and in prohibitions. The duties were revealed gradually ³⁶, as God says: "And [it is] a Qur'an which We have separated [into parts] that you may recite it to the people over a prolonged period. And We have sent it down progressively" ³⁷.

Ibn Kathir said: "It was revealed in parts, in stages, in accordance with the events that occurred for the Messenger of God over twenty-three years" ³⁸. The revelation of the Qur'an and its verses according to the events and incidents that happened to people had a special impact on their psychology and readiness to accept those verses and rulings. This approach aligned with their psychological and social circumstances, elevating them little by little to the ideal that God intended for us to strive for—even if we do not reach it—which is submission to all of God's commands and embodying the noble character traits of the Prophet .

The wisdom behind the gradual revelation of the Qur'an's legal rulings (commands and prohibitions) is that people's souls, minds, and mentalities had become accustomed to a set of inherited traditions that clashed with Islamic law. "Islam came with a new social order, abolishing some customs that people were familiar with, retaining those that were consistent with the new religion's philosophy, and introducing new rulings that the Arabs had no previous experience with. It was therefore logical and in line with the nature of things for rulings to progress from mere approval to encouragement to recommendation to command, and from mere disapproval to warning to disliking to prohibition, and so on. We find a good example of the first case in the rulings regarding charity, and a good example of the second case in the rulings prohibiting the drinking of alcohol. This gradualism was also necessary to allow time for people to internalize and understand the rulings" ³⁹.

Aisha, may God be pleased with her, confirmed this concept in a hadith where she said: "The first part of the Qur'an to be revealed was a surah from al-Mufasssal that mentioned Paradise and the Fire. Then, when the people had returned to Islam, the lawful and the unlawful were revealed. If the first thing revealed had been: 'Do not drink alcohol,' they would have said: 'We will never give up alcohol.' And if it had

been revealed: 'Do not commit adultery,' they would have said: 'We will never give up adultery'" ⁴⁰.

Among the manifestations of gradualism in the revelation of the Qur'an is the distinction between Meccan and Medinan verses. They are characterized by a set of thematic features ⁴¹:

a. Thematic Features of Meccan Verses:

- ✓ The call to monotheism, the worship of God alone, and the establishment of prophethood, resurrection, and the Day of Judgment.
- ✓ Arguing with the polytheists using cosmic verses and rational proofs.
- ✓ Laying the general foundations of legislation and ethics.
- ✓ Exposing the crimes and bad habits of the polytheists.

b. Thematic Features of Medinan Verses:

- ✓ Explaining acts of worship, transactions, and legal punishments.
- ✓ Detailing the family system, inheritance, and the virtue of *jihad*.
- ✓ Discussing social connections and relations between nations and peoples.
- ✓ Inviting the People of the Book to Islam and explaining their distortion of God's books.
- ✓ Uncovering the behavior of the hypocrites, analyzing their psyches, and exposing their secrets and plots.

These characteristics serve as clear evidence of the Qur'an's gradual approach to educating and accustoming people to the various Islamic laws and rulings. This is exemplified by the progression from Meccan to Medinan revelations. The process moves from the fundamental to the subsequent, from the general to the specific, and from a foundational stage to the next.

Initially, the focus was on inviting people to monotheism, urging them to abandon polytheism and the worship of others besides God. This was achieved through undeniable rational and tangible proofs that are easily accepted by the human intellect, all of which point to the existence, power, and wise management of the Creator. This phase also established the general principles of Islamic law, promoted virtuous morals, condemned the despicable customs and actions of polytheists, and called on people to return to their pure, innate nature with which they were created.

In the subsequent Medinan stage, the divine legislator transitioned to urging people to adopt various legal obligations related to life's system, which are rooted in the creed established in the previous stage. These obligations—including acts of worship, transactions, legal punishments (Hudud), and other duties and requirements—are derived from and centered on Islamic creed, which is considered the powerful and dynamic motivation for fulfilling the various laws and obligations of Islam, all in pursuit of God's pleasure.

The Qur'an's methodology—beginning with the establishment of Islamic creed in the Meccan verses and then progressing to different legal obligations in the Medinan verses—is an exemplary approach to the gradual education of individuals and societies. It is derived from divine revelation, which comprehends the reality of the human soul, what benefits and corrupts it, and what is most effective and conducive to compliance.

3.The Educational Effects of Gradualism in Islamic Legislation on Building Local Self-Governance

- **Reinforcing Values and Ethics:** Gradualism aids in steadily instilling Islamic values in individuals, which promotes self-awareness.
- **Mitigating Psychological Shock:** The gradual approach reduces the severity of change, helping individuals adapt better and enhancing their self-control.
- **Promoting Personal Responsibility:** Through gradual adaptation to rulings, individuals become more capable of understanding and adhering to them. This process builds self-awareness and motivates individuals to progressively take on responsibility, as each stage enhances their ability to regulate their behavior.
- **Developing Will and Awareness:** Gradualism helps individuals develop their will and awareness of the importance of values and rulings, leading to more independent decision-making.
- **Deepening Religious Commitment:** Over time, adherence to rulings becomes more firmly established, which enhances an individual's ability to self-regulate their behavior.

Conclusion

This paper, which has examined the concept of gradualism in education from an Islamic perspective and its practical applications, leads to several key conclusions:

1. Gradualism and a phased approach are essential requirements for the concept of education, as they are intrinsically linked to the human creation, developmental stages, and the innate nature with which the Creator endowed humanity, both physically and psychologically. This makes gradualism a fundamental condition for the educational process to achieve its goals in a smooth and ideal manner that reflects the characteristics and identity of a Muslim society.
2. The educational process requires a leader who possesses a specific set of qualities that make them a good role model. This ensures they are accepted and followed by people, which in turn promotes the development of self-awareness and self-governance.
3. Among the most significant practical applications of gradualism in education advocated by Islam and adopted by Muslims in various Islamic countries, particularly in the Maghreb, is gentle admonition. This is due to its profound effect on the soul and its ability to soften hearts through encouragement and discouragement, without relying on punishment. Punishment is reserved as a last resort if gentle admonition proves ineffective.

4. The gradual nature of Islamic legislation, especially the piecemeal revelation of the Qur'an through its Meccan and Medinan phases—where the thematic characteristics of the verses differed based on the psychological and social conditions of the people at different times—is the best evidence for the necessity of a gradual approach. This method is crucial for inviting people to the truth and elevating their conduct and morals, which are at the core of the educational process, given that the Qur'an was revealed to achieve these very purposes.
5. The revelation of the initial Meccan verses focused on establishing Islamic creed, calling for the abandonment of polytheism and the negative customs that people practiced before Islam, and for the worship of one God as a first stage. Subsequently, the Medinan verses were revealed to introduce various legal obligations as a second stage. There is great wisdom in this, as it links acts of worship, duties, and legal punishments to God, ensuring sincere devotion to Him alone out of genuine love, with the hope of His blessings and fear of His punishment. This represents one of the greatest fruits of the gradual approach to inviting and educating people in a sound manner derived from the divine revelation.

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- ¹⁹ Salah ad-Din Sha'bani, at-Tarbiyah wa-at-Ta'lim 'inda al-Ibadiyyah bi-al-Maghrib al-Islami bayna al-Qarnayn ath-Thalith wa-al-Khamis al-Hijriyin (9-11M) (Education and Teaching among the Ibadiyyah in the Islamic Maghreb...), Master's Thesis, College of History, University of Algiers, 2003-2004, p. 78.
- ²⁰ ibid, p. 74.
- ²¹ He had his prayers answered, greatly honored the command of God Almighty, hardly saw a reprehensible act without changing it, and did not fear anyone in that regard, known for much good deed. His origin was from Jazirat Sharik, then he resided in Qayrawan. Since his childhood, he attended al-Kuttab (elementary school). When he had memorized what was on his tablet, he would wash off the Qur'an and drink the water. This was his habit until he completed the Holy Qur'an. He died by drowning after performing the Hajj pilgrimage, having embarked on a sea journey, where the wind became agitated against them. They said to him: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, pray for us." He said: "You have completed your Hajj, so what else do you want?" Then he took his copy of the Qur'an, placed it around his neck, covered his head with his garment, and their ship sank. Al-Maliki Abu Bakr 'Abd Allah bin 'Abd Allah, Riyad an-Nufus fi Tabaqat 'Ulama' al-Qayrawan wa Ifriqiyah (Gardens of the Souls in the Classes of the Scholars of Qayrawan and Ifriqiyah), edited by Bashir al-Baklush, revised by Muhammad al-'Arusi al-Matwi, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1994, vol. 1, p. 334.
- ²² Al-Maliki, op. cit, vol. 1, p. 343.
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³⁰ Surat at-Taghabun (Mutual Disillusion), verse 16.

³¹ Surat al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse 286.

³² Surat al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse 185.

³³ Surat al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage), verse 78.

³⁴ Muhammad Mustafa al-Zuhayli, op. cit, pp. 38/41.

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