

# REVITALIZATION OF MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL OF THE SHOLAHUDDIN AL-AYYUBI ERA

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## Abstraks

Penelitian ini mengkaji kerangka pendidikan dan dinamika institusional yang berkembang pesat selama pemerintahan Salahuddin al-Ayyubi (Saladin), tokoh kunci dalam sejarah Islam abad pertengahan yang tidak hanya dikenal karena kepemimpinan militernya, tetapi juga karena kontribusinya yang mendalam dalam revitalisasi intelektual dan moral dunia Islam. Berfokus pada akhir abad ke-12, makalah ini menganalisis bagaimana Salahuddin secara strategis mempromosikan pendidikan sebagai sarana untuk mempersatukan umat Islam, mengatasi perpecahan sektarian, dan menahan ancaman eksternal seperti Perang Salib. Melalui analisis teks sejarah, wakaf madrasah (catatan wakaf), dan biografi cendekiawan dari periode Ayyubid, penelitian ini menyoroti integrasi etika, teologi, fiqh, dan ilmu pengetahuan dalam kurikulum pendidikan. Penelitian ini menekankan peran madrasah yang didukung negara—seperti Madrasa al-Sahiriya—dalam mengembangkan model pembelajaran holistik yang berakar pada pengembangan spiritual dan penyelidikan rasional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa reformasi pendidikan Salahuddin berperan penting dalam memulihkan ortodoksi Sunni, memperkuat identitas komunal, dan melahirkan cendekiawan yang tidak hanya berpengetahuan luas tetapi juga aktif secara sosial dan politik. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa prinsip-prinsip pedagogis era tersebut menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi pendidikan Islam kontemporer, terutama dalam menangani isu-isu ekstremisme, fragmentasi, dan ketidakharmonisan antara iman dan akal. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini mengusulkan bahwa model pendidikan pada masa Salahuddin al-Ayyubi dapat menjadi paradigma yang kuat untuk revitalisasi modern pembelajaran Islam, dengan menekankan pentingnya kembali ke pendidikan yang terintegrasi dan berorientasi pada tujuan, yang didasarkan pada integritas etis dan ketelitian intelektual.

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Islam, Dinasti Ayyubiyah, Model pendidikan, Islam Abad Pertengahan

## Abstract

*This study explores the educational framework and institutional dynamics that flourished during the reign of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi (Saladin), a pivotal figure in medieval Islamic history known not only for his military leadership but also for his profound contributions to the intellectual and moral revitalization of the Muslim world. Focusing on the late 12th century, this paper examines how Salahuddin strategically promoted education as a means to unify the ummah, counter sectarian divisions, and resist external threats such as the Crusades. Through an analysis of historical texts, madrasa endowments (waqf records), and scholarly biographies from the Ayyubid period, the research highlights the integration of ethics, theology, jurisprudence, and science within the educational curriculum. It emphasizes the role of state-sponsored madrasas—such as the Madrasa al-Sahiriya—in fostering a holistic model of learning grounded in both spiritual development and rational inquiry. The findings reveal that Salahuddin's educational reforms were instrumental in re-establishing Sunni orthodoxy, reinforcing communal identity, and producing scholars who were not only learned but also socially and politically engaged. This paper argues that the pedagogical principles of his era offer valuable insights for contemporary Islamic education, particularly in addressing issues of extremism, fragmentation, and the disconnection between faith and reason. In conclusion, the study proposes that the educational model of the Salahuddin al-Ayyubi era serves as a compelling paradigm for the modern revitalization of Islamic learning, advocating for a return to integrated, purpose-driven education rooted in ethical integrity and intellectual rigor.*

**Keyword:** Islamic Education, Ayyubid Dynasty, Educational Model, Medieval Islam

## A. Introduction

The Islamic world during the medieval period was marked by an extraordinary flourishing of knowledge, scholarship, and educational innovation.



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Among the most significant contributors to this golden age were the rulers who not only protected the faith but also invested heavily in education.

Salahuddin al-Ayyubi (1137-1193 CE), founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and celebrated for his chivalry and military acumen, played a pivotal role in revitalizing Islamic education through institutional reform and ideological renewal.<sup>1</sup> He not only for his military prowess in reclaiming Jerusalem during the Crusades but also for his commitment to Islamic learning and intellectual revival. His era (12th century CE) represents a significant chapter in the history of Islamic education, where the integration of religious, philosophical, and scientific studies shaped a robust model of learning and ethical development.

Sholahuddin al-Ayyubi's educational policies were informed by his vision of a unified Islamic society, grounded in moral values and intellectual strength. He was deeply influenced by the legacy of earlier Islamic scholars and institutions, particularly those of the Seljuk era, and he actively supported the establishment of madrasas, libraries, and endowments (waqf) to promote education.<sup>2</sup> These institutions were not only centers for religious instruction but also hubs for the study of logic, language, medicine, mathematics, and law. His model of education emphasized character formation (tazkiyah), community service, and the defense of Islamic civilization through knowledge and ethics.<sup>3</sup>

In the broader historical context, Sholahuddin's educational reforms coincided with a growing need to consolidate Muslim identity and intellectual resistance against Western encroachment during the Crusades. Education served as a strategic tool in his wider socio-political agenda, fostering a generation of scholars, jurists, and administrators committed to the revival of Islamic values and the preservation of cultural heritage.<sup>4</sup>

The relevance of studying Sholahuddin's educational model today lies in its potential to inspire modern efforts to revitalize Islamic education. In an age of globalization and secular influence, Muslim societies are increasingly seeking frameworks that balance religious tradition with contemporary challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Khozin Khozin and Moh Nurhakim, "Revolutionizing Islamic Religious Education: Transforming Paradigms from Al-Azhar in Anticipation of the Future," *Naturalistic: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 9, no. 1 (2024): 529-40.

<sup>2</sup> Hatim Mahamid, "Muslim Institutions of Learning (Madrasa) in Ayyubid and Mamluk Syria", *Research Aspects in Arts and Social Studies* 8 (2023): 50-69.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Iqbal Ibnu, "The Role of Nur Ad-Din Zanki in Establishing the Sunni School in Aleppo and Damascus in 1146-1174 AD," *El Tarikh: Journal of History, Culture and Islamic Civilization* 3, no. 1 (2022): 56-67.

<sup>4</sup> Anjum Awan, "REVISITING ISLAM," 2018.

Sholahuddin's approach offers a paradigm that integrates spirituality, knowledge, and civic responsibility—an ideal that resonates with current educational reform efforts in the Muslim world.

This article examines the educational philosophy, institutional structure, and societal impact of the education model during the era of Sholahuddin al-Ayyubi. By analyzing primary historical sources and secondary scholarly interpretations, the study aims to draw meaningful lessons for the revitalization of Islamic education in the 21st century. Understanding how medieval Islamic pedagogy harmonized intellectual rigor with moral development provides critical insights into the reconstruction of a holistic, value-based educational system today.

## B. Methods

This study adopts a **qualitative historical approach** using **library research methods** to reconstruct and analyze the educational model developed during the era of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi. The aim of this method is to explore the philosophical foundations, institutional structures, and pedagogical principles that characterized Islamic education in the late 12th century.

The data were collected from two main types of sources: (1) **Primary sources**, including classical historical texts authored by prominent medieval scholars and historians such as *Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat* by Salahuddin al-Safadi, *Wafayat al-A'yan* by Ibn Khallikan, and various waqf (endowment) records of Ayyubid madrasas. (2) **Secondary sources**, comprising modern scholarly interpretations and academic analyses, notably works by Jonathan Berkey<sup>5</sup>, Bayard Dodge<sup>6</sup>, and Majid al-Kilani, which contextualize the historical data and provide critical insights into the intellectual and institutional development of Islamic education during the Ayyubid era.<sup>7</sup>

The data analysis technique employed is **content analysis**, which involves; (1) **Data reduction**, through the selection and extraction of relevant and meaningful historical information; (2) **Data presentation**, organized thematically around key concepts such as educational institutions, funding mechanisms, curricula, and pedagogical practices; (3) **Conclusion drawing**, involving the interpretation of

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Porter Berkey, "The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education," 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Bayard Dodge, "Muslim Education in Medieval Times," 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Khallikan, "Abu Al-'Abbas Shams Al-Din Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Abi Bakr," *Wafayat Al-A'yan Wa Anba' Abna' al-Zaman*, Edited by Ihsan'Abbas, 1st Ed., Dar Sader, Beirut, n.d.

historical meanings and the relevance of the findings for the development of contemporary Islamic education.

This methodology allows the study to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the educational legacy of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi and its potential contribution to modern Islamic educational reform-particularly in areas of ethical education, institutional independence, and the integration of rational and religious sciences.

## C. Result and Discuss

### 1. Historical Context

Nur al-Din Zengi (1118-1174) stands as a pivotal figure in the political and religious landscape of the 12th-century Muslim world, particularly in the Levant (Syam), where he played a crucial role in shaping the environment that allowed Saladin al-Ayyubi (1137-1193) to rise to prominence.<sup>8</sup>

Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki had a special relationship with scholars, among them al-Hafidz Ibn Asakir. Nuruddin Zanki also founded a hadith school for Ibn Asakir, called Darul Hadith an-Nuriyah. This school was the first darul hadith school established in the Islamic world.<sup>9</sup>

Not only in madrasas, but also in mosques, traditions related to knowledge are preserved. Sheikh al-Barqani, Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki, entrusted a mosque in Mosul to teach Islamic jurisprudence. Al-Barqani himself was a student of Muhammad ibn Yahya, who was a student of Imam al-Ghazali.<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Asakir also wrote works about jihad and the virtues of Baitul Maqdis, as support for the jihad movement.<sup>11</sup> Al-Hafidz Ibnu Asakir wrote Tarikh Dimasyq also at the encouragement of Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki, as he wrote in the muqaddimah of the book.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from Ibn Asakir there was also Qutbuddin an-Naisaburi who was also a student of Imam al-Ghazali's students. Qutbuddin an-Naisaburi was a scholar who was also respected by Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki. In fact, he built for Qutbuddin a madrasa which was then called the al-Adiliyah al-Kubra madrasa.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Abuzar Al Ghifari, *Dinamika Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Klasik: Menyoroti Kuttab, Madrasah Nizhamiyah, Hingga Al Azhar* (wawasan Ilmu, 2022). 74

<sup>9</sup> An Nuaimy Ad Dimasyqi and Abdul Qadir, "Ad Daris Fi Tarikh Al Madaris" (Damaskus: Al Haiah Al Amma As Suriyah lil Kitab, 2014). 788

<sup>10</sup> George Makdisi, "Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam" (JSTOR, 1973). 88

<sup>11</sup> Kmar Bendana, "M'hamed Belkhûja (Tunis, 1869-1943)," *Revue d'Histoire Des Sciences Humaines* 24, no. 1 (2011): 17-34.

<sup>12</sup> Ibnu, "The Role of Nur Ad-Din Zanki in Establishing the Sunni School in Aleppo and Damascus in 1146-1174 AD."

<sup>13</sup> Dimasyqi and Qadir, "Ad Daris Fi Tarikh Al Madaris."

The relationship between Ṣalāḥuddīn al-Ayyūbī (Saladin) and Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Zengī (Nuruddin Zanki) was one of mentorship and succession, particularly in their shared vision of religious and educational reform in service of Islamic unity and resistance against the Crusaders.<sup>14</sup>

Nur al-Din's mentorship and overlordship were instrumental in the early career of Saladin. Saladin began as a military commander under Nur al-Din's service, operating alongside his uncle, Asad al-Din Shirkuh, who was a trusted general. Shirkuh led military campaigns in Egypt on Nur al-Din's behalf, with Saladin acting as his lieutenant. Following Shirkuh's death in 1169, Saladin succeeded him as vizier of Egypt and gradually consolidated power, eventually abolishing the Fatimid Caliphate in 1171 and restoring the Abbasid Caliphate's suzerainty, a move aligned with Nur al-Din's vision of Islamic unity.<sup>15</sup>

The relationship between Nur al-Din and Saladin was complex; while Saladin nominally acknowledged Nur al-Din's authority until the latter's death in 1174, tensions arose due to Saladin's cautious approach to fully subordinating Egypt's interests to Nur al-Din's ambitions. Nur al-Din's insistence on abolishing the Shia Fatimid Caliphate and unifying the Muslim front against the Crusaders was a significant factor in their interactions. Nur al-Din's death created a power vacuum that Saladin adeptly filled, allowing him to extend his influence over Syria and Egypt and eventually lead the Muslim forces to recapture Jerusalem in 1187.<sup>16</sup>

The scholars from Nidzamiyah had a significant influence on the educational (tarbiyah) movement of the Muslim community across various regions, including the Levant (Syam). At that time, Syam was under the rule of the Zankiyah dynasty. Marwan bin Ali ath-Thanzi, a student of Imam al-Ghazali, had already established connections with Imaduddin Zanki, who was then the ruler of Mosul, and was eventually appointed as his vizier. Subsequently, Syam became part of the Zankiyah dominion.<sup>17</sup>

After Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki succeeded his father in governing Syam, the tarbiyah movement intensified considerably. The Nidzamiyah scholars played a crucial role in strengthening this movement. One of Nuruddin Zanki's first initiatives was the establishment of madrasahs. Imam Abu Syamah stated,

<sup>14</sup> Didik Sapto Anggoro, "Kebijakan Politik Nuruddin Zanki Di Syria Pada Masa Perang Salib Ii (1146-1174 M)," 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Ibnu, "The Role of Nur Ad-Din Zanki in Establishing the Sunni School in Aleppo and Damascus in 1146-1174 AD."

<sup>16</sup> Mohamad Fikri Mohd Bakri, "Nur Al-Din Mahmud Zanki's (1146-1174 CE) Perspective On Bayt Al-Maqdis: A Historical Overview," *Al-Muqaddimah: Online Journal of Islamic History and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (2024): 82-93.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

“Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki built madrasahs in Aleppo, Hama, Damascus, and other cities. These institutions catered to followers of both the Shafi’i and Hanafi madhabs.”<sup>18</sup>

Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki’s efforts were not limited to intellectual development alone; spiritual matters were also given due attention. Therefore, he also founded khanqahs and zawiyahs to support Sufi practices. Ibn al-Athir remarked, “Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki constructed ribats and khanqahs throughout the region for adherents of Sufism. He endowed substantial waqf properties and provided adequate funding for these institutions.”<sup>19</sup>

Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki’s contributions brought about significant advancements in scholarly development. Shaqr al-Mu’addal noted, “Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki’s vision was to manifest the symbols of Islam and establish a firm foundation by building ribats, madrasahs, and mosques.” Previously, Syam was not renowned for its scholarship or scholars; however, during his reign, Syam emerged as a center for ulama, fuqaha, and Sufis.<sup>20</sup>

Education under Nur ad-Din was not merely an academic activity aimed at providing employees and professionals, but was primarily an ideological activity aimed at reshaping the Muslim masses in accordance with the goals of Islam and existing needs<sup>21</sup>

Nur ad-Din Zangi’s policies formed the foundation upon which Saladin established his educational and ideological project. Saladin inherited the system of scholarly institutions established by Nur al-Din, benefiting from the intellectual and social structure established by his teacher.

Nuruddin Zanki also spent a great deal of his wealth on the welfare of the Sufi and Fuqaha, until one day he was asked to reduce his spending. Nuruddin replied, “By Allah, I do not hope for victory except through their prayers. Indeed, you gain victory through your weak people. How can I stop giving alms to a people who fight for me while I sleep on a bed, where they use arrows that never miss?”<sup>22</sup>

Ibn Khallikan said, “And when the Sultan (Shalahuddin al-Ayyubi) took control of Egypt, he did not have a single madrasah. In fact, the Egyptian state

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<sup>18</sup> Abu Sama al-Maqdisi, *Ar-Raudhatain fi Ahbari ad-Dzaulatain an-Nuriyah wa Sholahiyah*, Muassah al-Risalah, Beirut, 1/104.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 1/106.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 1/117, 118.

<sup>21</sup> Majid al-Kilani, *Hakadza Dzaharoh Jil Sholahuddin*, p. 257

<sup>22</sup> Ibnu Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A’yan*, Daru Shodar, Beirut, 5/188.

at that time had an Imamiyah school of thought, where at that time they did not discuss this issue at all. So he built at al-Qarrafah ash-Shughra a madrasah which is next to the grave of Imam Shafi'i, radhiyallahu `anhu."<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Saladin is the Fruit and Continuation of the Nizamiyya project

Salah al-Din Ayyubi grew up and was educated in an environment heavily influenced by these Nizamiyya schools. He studied under scholars influenced by Nizamiyya thought in the Levant and Egypt. The two leaders converged on the goal of reforming the nation from within by building a conscious Muslim individual, proud of his correct faith and able to contribute to society.

Saladin's educational reforms were a continuation—and expansion—of Nuruddin's policies, shaped by a shared Sunni ideology and the strategic use of religious institutions to promote unity and resistance.

Saladin was a product of the Sunni revival initiated by the Nizamiyya madrasas. His education, values, and political vision were shaped by the intellectual environment they helped create.

Historians argue that Saladin's rise cannot be understood without recognizing the groundwork laid by Nizam al-Mulk and the Nizamiyya system. The ideals of religious unity, administrative reform, and the defense of Sunni Islam that Saladin championed were direct continuations of the Nizamiyya project.

The relationship between Saladin and the Nizamiyya school is close in terms of influence and application. Saladin not just as a military leader but as a product of a broader intellectual and religious movement initiated by the Nizamiyya madrasas under the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk.

Although Saladin was not the founder of the Nizamiyya schools themselves, he benefited from their model and developed it within the context of his religious and political project. His teachers, such as al-Qadi al-Fadil, Abdullah ibn Najm al-Maqdisi, and Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (who influenced and raised his father), were from or influenced by the Nizamiyya environment.

After his conquest of Egypt and the end of the Shiite Fatimid rule in 1171 AD, Saladin worked to revive the Sunni school and support Sunni educational institutions.

He established several schools in Egypt and the Levant based on the Nizamiyya school model, such as the Salahiyya School in Jerusalem (1187 AD),

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 7/206.

which was considered one of the greatest schools of the era and was based on the Nizamiyya model. When Saladin assumed power in Egypt and the Levant, he faced a society under the influence of Fatimid Shiite thought. He worked to revive the Sunni school of thought, particularly the Shafi'i school<sup>24</sup>, and eliminate the intellectual influence of the Fatimids. To achieve this, he adopted the approach of the Nizamiyya schools, establishing numerous Sunni schools, providing them with resources, attracting scholars, and focusing on standardizing curricula and providing an integrated educational environment for students and teachers.

Saladin's goal behind this educational policy was to consolidate Sunni doctrine and prepare a generation of scholars and leaders capable of confronting intellectual and political challenges, especially in light of the conflict with the Crusaders. He also aimed to reform intellectual and behavioral deviations within society.

The scientific movement carried out by Salahuddin al Ayyubi actually continued what Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki did, namely by building madrasas and khanqahs and donating many assets for the continuity of educational activities in those places. These are some of the madrasas founded by Saladin al-Ayyubi:

a) Madrasah ash-Shalahiyah Egypt The Largest Madrasah of its Time

Salahuddin al-Ayyubi handed over the madrasa waqf known as the Ash Shalahiyyah madrasa to Sheikh Najmuddin al-Khubusyani as nadhir (person in charge of the waqf) and teacher. And al-Hafidz as-Suyuthi said that the Egyptian ash-Shalahiyah madrasa was the largest madrasa at that time, and the ulama who were responsible for the madrasa were the great ulama.<sup>25</sup>

b) Madrasah as-Suyufiyah

Besides the ash-Shalahiyah, the madrasas built by Saladin were the ones next to the al-Husaini school. Saladin also converted the house of the vizier al-Abbas into a madrasah for the Hanafi school of thought, known as as-Suyufiyah, and built a madrasah for the Shafi'i school of thought, known as as-Syarifiyah. He also built a madrasah for the Maliki school of thought, known as al-Qamhiyah.<sup>26</sup>

c) Asy Syarifiyah Madrasah

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<sup>24</sup> Ali Muhammad Al-Salabi , *Madrasah Nidzamiyah fi Ahdi Saljuk wa Astaruha fi Alamil Islam* (The Nizamiyya Schools in the Seljuk Era and Their Impact on the Islamic World). Al Jazeera Net. Archived from the original on 2022-10-11. Retrieved 2024-11-29.

<sup>25</sup> Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, *Husn al-Muhadharah fi Tarikh Al Mishr wa Al Qahirah*, Darul Ihya' Kitabiyah Mesir, 2/257.

<sup>26</sup> Shalahuddin al-Safadi, *Al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, Darl Iya Turats, Beirut, 29/61.



The position of the Asy-Syarifiyah madrasa is near the Amru bin `Ash mosque. Initially, this madrasa was called the An Nashiriyah madrasa, which was named after Malik an-Nashir Saladin al-Ayyubi. Then it became known as the Ibnu Zain at-Tujjar madrasa, namely the name of the Asy Syafi'i madzhab cleric who once taught at this madrasa. Saladin al-Ayyubi donated this madrasa at the beginning of Muharram 566 H, when he was still prime minister of the Fatimid dynasty. And this madrasa was the first madrasa built in Egypt with a gift for followers of the Shafi'i school of thought. When Syarif Syamsuddin Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Husain taught at the madrasa, since then the madrasa has been known as the ash-Syarifiyah madrasa.<sup>27</sup>

d) Al Qamhiyah Madrasah

Al Maqrizi stated that after dedicating the asy-Syarifiyah madrasah to the followers of the Shafi'i school of thought, Saladin al-Ayyubi in mid-Muharram 566 AH dedicating a madrasah to the fuqaha of the Maliki school of thought next to the Amru bin `Ash mosque.<sup>28</sup>

e) Zawiyah Al Ghazaliyah

Apart from waqf building land for madrasas, Saladin Al Ayyubi also donated productive land, where the proceeds from the waqf were used to carry out teaching and learning activities at madrasas. As is the case with the Zawiyah Al Ghazaliyah. Those who taught at Zawiyah al-Ghazaliyah were great scholars, namely Sheikh Nashr Al Maqdisi, Qutbuddin an-Naisaburi, as well as Imam Izuddin bin Abdissalam.<sup>29</sup>

f) Madrasah Al Imadiyah

Madrasah al-Imadiyah in Damascus was built by Sultan Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki, but Sultan Saladin al-Ayyubi donated his wealth for the benefit of this madrasa. The teacher at the madrasa was a cleric who was also Salahuddin al-Ayyubi's scribe, namely Imaduddin Al Katib.<sup>30</sup>

g) Khanqah Ash-An-Nasiriyah

In addition to donating buildings for madrasas, Saladin also donated khanqahs, namely madrasas for Sufis. In Damascus, Saladin donated two

<sup>27</sup>Taqiuddin Al-Maqrizi, *al-Mawa'iz wa al-I'tibar bi Dhikr al-Khuthath wa al-Atsar*, Darl kitab Ilmiah, Beirut, 2/363-364.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 2/364.

<sup>29</sup>Ad Daris fi Tarikh Al Madaris, 1/314.

<sup>30</sup>Ad Daris fi Tarikh Al Madaris., 1/308, 309.

khanqahs: the Khanqah an-Nasiriyah, located behind the Qashariyah ash-Sharf, which was his home during his time as wali of Damascus.<sup>31</sup>

h) Khanqah Sa'id as-Su'ada', Cairo

In Cairo, Saladin also donated the house of Sa'id as-Su'ada, who was prime minister during the Fatimid era, to the Sufis. The khanqah is popularly known as the Khanqah of Sa'id as-Su'ada. The Khanqah of Sa'id as-Su'ada was the first khanqah built in Egypt.<sup>32</sup>

The cleric who leads the Sa'id as-Su'ada` khanqah is called sheikh asy syuyukh. Shadrudin Muhammad bin Hamawaih was the first cleric appointed by the waqf, namely Salahuddin Al Ayyubi as sheikh ash-syuyukh. Badruddin bin Jama'ah was a great scholar who was also a syuyukh sheikh in this khanqah.<sup>33</sup>

i) As-Shalahiyah Al-Quds

Besides Cairo, Saladin also donated a madrasah in al-Quds, also known as the Madrasah ash-Shalahiyah or Khanqah ash-Shalahiyah. It was a madrasah for Sufis, donated by Saladin al-Ayyubi in Ramadan 585 AH.<sup>34</sup>

Saladin al-Ayyubi was very selective in determining who was entitled to teach at the madrasa, where he stipulated that the madrasa teachers were the most knowledgeable scholars in the Arab world in the Asy Syafi'i school of thought.<sup>35</sup>

Saladin al-Ayyubi also appointed qadhi Baha'uddin Saddam, a cleric who was very close to him, as the nadhir of the waqf for the madrasa, as well as its teacher.<sup>36</sup>

j) Zawiyah al-Khantsaniyah

This Zawiyah is located next to the Qibla of the Al Aqsa mosque behind the pulpit which was donated by Saladin Al Ayyubi to a pious and ascetic scholar, Sheikh Saladin Muhammad bin Muhammad ash-Syasyi, who lived in Bait al-Maqdis, and for anyone who follows his teachings. The waqf for the Zawiyah building is dated 18 Rabi`ul Awwal 587 H.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2/139.

<sup>32</sup> Husn Al Muhadharah, 2/260

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad Mudjir al-Din 'Ulaym, al-Uns al-jalīl bi-tārīkh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl , Al-Madbuah Khidiriyah,Irak, 2/99.

<sup>35</sup> Muhibbi, Khulashah al-Atsar Fi A'yan al-Qurun al-'Asyir, Darul Shodr, Beiru, 1/394.

<sup>36</sup> Yusuf bin Ibrahim Al-Nabhani, Mufarrij Al-Kurub wa Mufarrih Al-Qulub, 2/407.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Uns al-Jalil fi Tarikh Al Quds wa Al Khalil, 2/144.

## k) Madrasah an-Nahwiyah

Madrasah An Nahwiyah was built by al-Mu'adzam Isa, the nephew of Saladin al-Ayyubi, in 504 AH. It is located west of the Qibla in the courtyard of the Dome of the Rock. This madrasah is for students who want to study the science of grammar.<sup>38</sup>

## l) Madrasah an-Nashiriyah

Madrasah an-Nashiriyah was named after Shaykh an-Nashr al-Maqdisi, then called al-Ghazaliyah, named after Imam al-Ghazali. Malik Al Mu`adzzam built this madrasa as a zawiyah for memorizing the Qur'an and those who concentrate on learning the science of nahwu. Al-Mu'adzam also donated books to this madrasah, including the book *Ihslah al-Manthiq* by Ibn as-Sukait. Zawiyah waqf was recorded on 9 Dzulhijjah 610 H.<sup>39</sup>

## m) Al-Mu'adzamiyah Madrasah

Malik al-Mu'adzam Isa also donated a madrasah called Al-Mu'adzamiyah, located at the Sharf al-Anbiya gate, also known as the Ad Duaidariyah gate. The waqf was recorded on 27 Jumadi al-Awal. A large amount of rural land was also donated to the madrasah, but most of it has since been taken over and utilized by the local residents.<sup>40</sup>

## n) Al-Afdhaliyah Madrasah

Malik al-Afdhal, son of Saladin al-Ayyubi, also donated the al-Afdhaliyah Madrasah for the Maliki jurists in Jerusalem al-Sharif, as well as the Magharibah village for pilgrims from the Maghreb. This was done when Al-Afdhal ruled Damascus, and Jerusalem was part of his territory. At the time, he did not find that these two locations were donated, until he finally decided to donate them.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn Kathir said, "And Saladin imposed on the shufis, qura` and fuqaha a salary for those who busy themselves with knowledge. He provided a full mushaf or a quarter of the mushaf in every corner of the al-Aqsa Mosque for those who want to read it or see it from those who live or pilgrims. And the descendants of Ayyub in good deeds in al-Quds ash-Sharif, for those who come, the travelers, and those who settled."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 2/76.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidl, 2/76.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 2/89, 90.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Uns al-Jalil, 2/97.

<sup>42</sup> Ad-Daris fi Tarikh al- Madaris, 1/251.

o) Two Famous Dar al-Hadith

Because of the love of the Ayyub Bani for knowledge and experts, madrasas continued to emerge, including well-known madrasas, such as Dar al-Hadith al-Kamiliyah in Egypt which was built by al-Malik al-Kamil, which was the first hadith madrasa in that country, taught by famous hadith scholars, such as al-Hafidz Al Mundziri, al-Hafidz Ibn Daqiq al-Ied, al-Hafidz al-Iraqi and al-Hafidz Ibn al-Mullaqqin.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from Al Kamiliyah, Darul Al Hadits Al Asyrafiah also appeared in Damascus which was built by Al Malik Al Asyraf, whose teachers were famous huffadz such as Al Hafidz Ibnu Ash Shalah, Al Hafidz Abu Syamah Al Maqdisi, Al Hafidz Al Imam An Nawawi, Al Hafidz Al Mizzi, Al Hafidz Syeikh Al Islam Taqiyuddin As Subki, Al Hafidz Ibnu Katsir, Imam Taj As Subki and others.<sup>44</sup>

The list of great names of the teachers of the two Darul Al Hadith has made a very big contribution to the development of the science of hadith, and the results of their works have had an influence on this discipline until the times that followed.

### 3. Institutional Framework of Education

a) Madrasas: Centers of Integrated Learning

Under Salahuddin's patronage, madrasas evolved from mere centers of religious instruction to comprehensive institutions offering a broad curriculum. Key examples include madrasat al-Kamiliyya in Damascus and Madrasat al-Salahiyya in Jerusalem.

In Egypt, Salah ad-Din founded five colleges in Cairo, followed by over twenty six other such Madrasas that were established by both his followers and later Mamluk sultans.<sup>45</sup>

These institutions were designed not only to teach Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Quranic exegesis (tafsir), and Hadith studies, but also to include astronomy, medicine, mathematics, logic, and philosophy. This interdisciplinary approach aimed at producing scholars capable of engaging with both spiritual and worldly matters.

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<sup>43</sup> Husn Al Muhadharah .., 2/262.

<sup>44</sup> Ad Daris fi Tarikh Al Madaris, 1/15-30

<sup>45</sup> Bayard Dodge, Muslim Education in Medieval Times; Washington D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1962, p. 22

The inclusion of diverse subjects like logic and philosophy alongside core religious studies was a distinctive feature that underscored the madrasa's role as centers of interdisciplinary learning. This approach not only preserved Islamic doctrines but also fostered advances in the natural and social sciences, contributing widely to medieval Islamic civilization's intellectual richness

Learning institutions in Muslims lands came in a variety of shapes and sizes and ranged from Madrasas, khans, Mosques, and academies of diverse sorts. These institutions, as Scott notes, 'Composed voluminous treatises on surgery and medicine. They bestowed upon the stars the Arabic names which still cover the map of the heavens. Above the lofty station of the muezzin, as he called the devout to prayer, were projected against the sky the implements of science to whose uses religion did not refuse the shelter of her temples,—the gnomon, the astrolabe, the pendulum clock, and the armillary sphere.'<sup>46</sup>

Thus, madrasas under Salahuddin's reign represented a sophisticated model of integrated education that balanced spiritual and temporal knowledge, laying the groundwork for scholars to engage effectively across multiple domains.

#### b) Endowments (Waqf) and Funding Mechanisms

A critical factor in the sustainability of these institutions was the waqf system. Salahuddin encouraged the establishment of endowments to finance madrasas, ensuring their independence from political fluctuations and providing long-term support for faculty salaries, student stipends, and infrastructure maintenance.

Salahuddin encouraging endowments (waqf) to finance madrasas means that he promoted the use of a traditional Islamic charitable mechanism whereby the income from donated assets (like land or property) is permanently dedicated to support educational institutions.

The madrasa waqf movement by Saladin al-Ayyubi was followed by the umara and his family, where Al Maqrizi said, "Then he followed Shalahuddin al-Ayyubi in building madrasas, both in Cairo and Egypt, as well as outside both areas controlled by Egypt, Syria, Al Jazirah, both from his children and

<sup>46</sup> S. P. Scott: History of the Moorish Empire in Europe; Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904, vol. 3; p. 468.

his umara`. Then following in their footsteps, the rulers of Egypt after them from the Turkish rulers and their umara` and their followers, arrived at our time.”<sup>47</sup>

Not only the men of the Banu Ayyub and the umara (the descendants) donated madrasas; their women also played a role in establishing them at that time. Among them was Rabi'ah Khatun, the sister of Sultan Saladin Al Ayyubi. Rabi'ah Khatun donated a madrasah for the followers of the Al Hanbali school, called the Ash-Shahibiyah madrasah at the foot of Mount Qasiyun near Damascus.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, the Al Farakhasyahiyah madrasah was a waqf from Khatun Bint Ibrahim, who was none other than the wife of Shahansyah bin Ayyub, the brother of Saladin Al Ayyubi.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, Madrasah Al Khatuniyyah Al Jawaniyyah was donated by Khatun bint Mu`in Ad Dien, who was the wife of Sultan Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki, who was later married by Sultan Saladin Al Ayyubi after the death of Sultan Nuruddin.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from those mentioned above, there is also the Al Adiliyyah Ash Shughra madrasah which was founded by Zahrah Khatun, the daughter of Malik Al Adil Al Ayyubi, the brother of Saladin Al Ayyubi.<sup>51</sup>

Sitt Ash-Sham Khatun, the sister of Sultan Saladin Al-Ayyubi, also founded a madrasah called Madrasah Ash-Shamiyah Al-Baraniyah. This madrasah was the most magnificent among the madrasahs in and around Damascus, and had the most jurists and the largest waqf available for its continuation. In addition to donating this madrasah, Sitt Ash-Sham also donated Madrasah Ash-Shamiyah Al-Jawaniyyah.<sup>52</sup>

Among the Bani Ayyub there was also Sitt Adzra`, the daughter of Shahansyah bin Ayyub, the brother of Sultan Salahuddin Al Ayyubi who donated the Al Adzra`iyyah madrasah for followers of the Al Hanafi and Asy Syafi`i schools in Damascus.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Khithath, 2/363.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 2/62.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 1/431.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 1/388.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1/278.

<sup>52</sup> Ad Daris fi Tarikh Al Madaris, 1/208, 232

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 1/283

Madrasas during Saladin's reign did not charge fees to students. Instead, students and teachers were provided with waqf (endowments) for their needs. Saladin provided teachers at the Ash-Salahiyah Madrasa with a monthly salary of 40 dinars, a 10 dinar nadhir (nadhir), and 60 Egyptian rithl of bread daily. To meet the needs of students and teachers, he also donated hammams, bakeries, and land in the middle of the Nile River, known as the Fil Peninsula.<sup>54</sup>

Saladin also donated to the jurists and students of the al-Qamhiyah madrasah a qaishariyah (a building consisting of many shops) al-Warraqin, as well as land in al-Fayyum. Each month, they received a monthly ration of wheat (qamh) from the land in al-Fayyum, which is why the madrasah became known as the Al-Qamhiyah madrasah.<sup>55</sup>

In 572 AH, in the month of Safar, Saladin al-Ayyubi donated the village of Al Hazm, where the proceeds from the land were for the needs of the al-Ghazaliyah zawiyah, and for anyone who studied in the zawiyah the Islamic sciences, as well as for the needs of the jurists in the zawiyah. Sultan Saladin also made Quthbuddin an-Naisaburi nadhir waqf, also as a teacher in the zawiyah.<sup>56</sup>

Regarding the results of Saladin al-Ayyubi's scientific movement, al-Jabrati also said, "And Saladin al-Ayyubi revealed the law of the Prophet Muhammad and cleansed the region of Egypt from heresies, Shia teachings and corrupt beliefs and emphasized the beliefs of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah."<sup>57</sup>

Berkey discusses how madrasas were supported by waqf endowments, particularly under Ayyubid and Mamluk rule, and notes that these institutions were meant to provide stability beyond regime changes.<sup>58</sup> Salahuddin and his successors institutionalized the use of waqf to support Sunni orthodoxy and educational structures.

This approach ensured several important benefits: (1) Financial independence and sustainability: The madrasas could rely on the ongoing

<sup>54</sup> Al Khuthath, 2/400

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 2/364.

<sup>56</sup> Ibnu Katsir, Al Bidayah wa An Nihayah, Madbu'ah Sa'adah, Kairo, Mesir, 12/363.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Aja'ib al-Atsar, 1/10.

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Berkey - The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo (1992):

revenue generated by these endowments rather than depending on unstable political funding or rulers' favors. This insulated the schools from political changes or conflicts that might disrupt state financing. (2) Long-term support: Waqf assets were held in perpetuity, meaning their principal could not be sold or wasted, and only the income was spent. This provided continuous funding over many years, covering salaries for teachers, stipends for students, and upkeep of the buildings and infrastructure. (3) Institutional stability: By securing funding through waqf, madrasas could maintain quality staff and educational materials without interruption, fulfilling their mission reliably regardless of external fluctuations.

Islamic law required the waqf to be irrevocable and dedicated to specific beneficiaries, and donors often specified details in waqf deeds describing the educational institution, the types of scholars supported, the curriculum, and administrative regulations.

Thus, Salahuddin's encouragement of waqf ensured madrasas had a robust, legally grounded financial mechanism that fostered their independence, longevity, and operational stability amidst the political ups and downs of his time.

In summary, waqf as a funding mechanism under Salahuddin helped madrasas thrive by providing a secure, perpetual source of income, shielding educational institutions from political instability, and enabling them to sustain their faculties, students, and facilities effectively over the long term.

#### **4. Pedagogical Principles and Practices**

##### **a) *Moral and Ethical Education***

One of the defining features of Salahuddin's educational vision was the emphasis on moral cultivation. Students were required not only to master academic content but also to embody virtues such as honesty, humility, patience, and service to the community. Teachers were selected not just for their erudition, but also for their character.

Where the teaching approach (pedagogy) emphasizes not just academic learning but also the development of moral and ethical virtues in students. This means students are expected to learn and embody qualities like honesty, humility, patience, and community service alongside their academic studies. Moreover, teachers are chosen based not only on their



knowledge but also on their good character, ensuring that they serve as moral examples to the students.

Pedagogical principles refer to the methods and values guiding teaching and learning. Salahuddin's approach includes moral and ethical education as a core part of this, aiming to cultivate virtuous character traits in students. Teachers are selected for both expertise and ethical character, highlighting the importance of role models in education.

This reflects a holistic educational philosophy where moral development and academic knowledge go hand in hand to shape good individuals and responsible members of the community

**b) *Mentorship and Oral Transmission***

Education was deeply personal and relational. Learning wasn't just about memorizing information from books. It involved close, face-to-face interaction between the student and teacher. The teacher knew the student personally and guided their intellectual and moral development.

The traditional method of oral transmission (*sama'*). This refers to the traditional practice where students listened to their teacher read or explain texts out loud, and they would memorize or write it down. "*Sama'*" means "hearing" or "listening," emphasizing that knowledge was passed down by word of mouth.

One-on-one mentorship ensured that students developed a deep understanding of material through dialogue and lived example. Students often learned directly from a teacher, sometimes even living with or spending extended time under their guidance. This allowed for tailored instruction and character development. Students didn't just learn information; they engaged in conversations with their teachers and observed how they lived, learning by example how to embody what they studied.

This method fostered a sense of accountability between teacher and student. Because of this close relationship, students felt responsible to their teachers. There was mutual respect and a kind of moral and intellectual responsibility to be sincere, hardworking, and honest.

**c) *Critical Thinking and Debate***

Contrary to the misconception that medieval Islamic education discouraged inquiry, Salahuddin's era promoted rigorous debate (*jadal*) and

encouraged students to question, analyze, and synthesize knowledge from diverse sources, including Greek philosophy and Persian scientific traditions.

Critical thinking and debate were important aspects of education during Salahuddin al-Ayyubi's era. Despite the misconception that medieval Islamic education was rigid or discouraged questioning, the reality was quite the opposite—students were actually encouraged to engage in rigorous debate (called *jadal* in Arabic), which involved structured argumentation and reasoning. Ask questions, challenge ideas, and not accept knowledge passively. Analyze what they learned critically.

*Jadal* refers to a structured form of debate or dialectic in medieval Islamic education that aimed not at winning arguments for prestige but at seeking truth and deep understanding through reasoned discussion.

Islamic scholars integrated and adapted Greek dialectical methods but with modifications tailored for religious and epistemological goals, emphasizing certainty in knowledge rather than merely defeating opponents.

Muslim education included both religious and secular knowledge, and learning encouraged critical thinking, questioning, and systematic reasoning rather than rote memorization alone.

Salahuddin's era was part of this larger medieval Islamic tradition of valuing debate to intellectually engage with various knowledge systems and improve understanding across fields, from theology to natural sciences.

The students were encouraged to critically question, analyze, and synthesize knowledge. This educational approach drew on diverse intellectual traditions, including Greek philosophy and Persian scientific knowledge, reflecting openness to different sources rather than dogmatic acceptance of ideas.

Synthesize information from various sources, including Greek philosophy and Persian scientific traditions—showing an openness to knowledge beyond just Islamic texts.

In short, it highlights that education at that time was intellectually vibrant, open to diverse knowledge systems, and aimed to develop deep thinkers, not just memorization-based learners.

#### **d) Curriculum and Scholarly Output**

Abdul Qadir Badran said, "Shalahuddin called the public to the faith of Sheikh Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari, including at the ash-Shalahiyah, al-Qamhiyah and Said as-Suada' madrasas in Cairo. And this condition continues in Egypt, the Hijaz and Yemen."<sup>59</sup>

Ash-Shafdi said, "Shalahuddin al-Ayyubi belonged to the Shafi'i madzhab. However, he was a follower of Abu Hasan al-Asyari in his creed, and he taught that creed to his children and made it a habit for them to learn from that creed."<sup>60</sup>

Qutbuddin an-Naisaburi was a great scholar who compiled the book of faith for Saladin al-Ayyubi. Saladin al-Ayyubi also memorized the book and taught it to his children. Ibn Syaddad said, "I witnessed Saladin teaching it to his children. While his children conveyed their memorization to him."<sup>61</sup>

It was not only Qutbuddin an-Naisaburi who wrote the creed for Saladin al-Ayyubi. There is a scholar named Muhammad Hibatullah al-Makki al-Hamawi who also wrote a book entitled Hadaiq al-Fushul. The book contains Aqidah material written in nadzam form.<sup>62</sup>

The book taught at the ash-Shalahiyah Baitul Maqdis madrasah is al-Aqidah al-Mursyidah by Ibn Tumart, which was taught by Fakhruddin Ibn Asakir.<sup>63</sup>

The teaching of faith was not limited to madrasas. Imam as-Suyuthi said, "When Saladin ibn Ayyub came to power, he ordered the muezzins to recite the Ash'ariyah faith during the tasbih. The muezzins then made it a habit to do this at night, even to the present day."<sup>64</sup>

The curriculum of Ayyubid-era madrasas was structured around two main pillars: (1) Religious Sciences : Including tafsir, Hadith, fiqh (primarily Shafi'i), theology (kalam), and Arabic grammar. (2) Rational Sciences : Comprising astronomy, mathematics, medicine, logic, and philosophy.

Prominent scholars of the time, such as Ibn Maymun (Maimonides) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), though not directly affiliated with Salahuddin's court, operated within the broader intellectual climate that his policies helped sustain.

<sup>59</sup> Abd Alqader Badran Manadimah al-Athlal wa Musamaratuh Khoyal, Maktabah Islamiyah, Beirut, p. 75.

<sup>60</sup> Salahuddin Khalil ibn Aybak al-Safad, Al-Wafi bi al-Wafafyat, Dar Ihya Turats, Beirut, 29/48.

<sup>61</sup> Syekh Syihabuddin al-Qalyubi, An-Nawadhir as-Sulthaniyah, Maktabag Khonazi, Kairo, hal. 34.

<sup>62</sup> Tajuddin as-Subki, Thabaqat asy-Syafi'iyah al-Kubra, Hajara lithhobaati wa nashr wa Tauzih, 7/23.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 8/185.

<sup>64</sup> As-Suyuthi, Al-Wasa'il ila Musamarah al-Awail, Maktabah Zaura, p.15.

#### D. Kesimpulan

The educational legacy of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi represents a high point in Islamic history where learning was not merely an academic pursuit but a transformative force for society. Reviving the core values of his educational model—intellectual rigor, ethical grounding, and institutional resilience—can provide a blueprint for reforming contemporary Islamic education. As global societies grapple with questions of identity, knowledge production, and moral formation, the lessons from the Ayyubid era remain profoundly relevant.

The Sholahuddin al-Ayyubi era provides a compelling model for the revitalization of Islamic education, characterized by institutional innovation, the integration of religious and secular knowledge, and a pedagogical focus on character and leadership. Its legacy offers valuable insights for contemporary efforts to reform and renew Islamic education, ensuring its continued relevance and vitality in the face of modern challenges

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