

# MCE

Madrasah Centre of Excellence

# TARBIYAH

تربیه

# CURRICULUM



THE WORLD  
FEDERATION  
OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHARI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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THE WORLD  
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# Introduction

Islam is founded on the principles of belief as well as practice. This connection between belief and practice lies at the very heart of an Islamic lifestyle. However, there appears to be a disconnect between knowledge and belief on the one hand, and practice on the other. This disconnect undermines the very fabric of a sound Islamic lifestyle that we aim to promote in our children.

Although we have a strong and well organised madrasah network within the community, recent surveys of key madrasah stakeholders have shown that there appears to be a lack of strong character and spiritual development in our children. The existing system is focused primarily on 'conveying information' about Islam, placing the students under immense pressure to learn and memorise information (*ta'lim*), without addressing the real needs of the learner or an emphasis on character and spiritual development (*tarbiyah*).

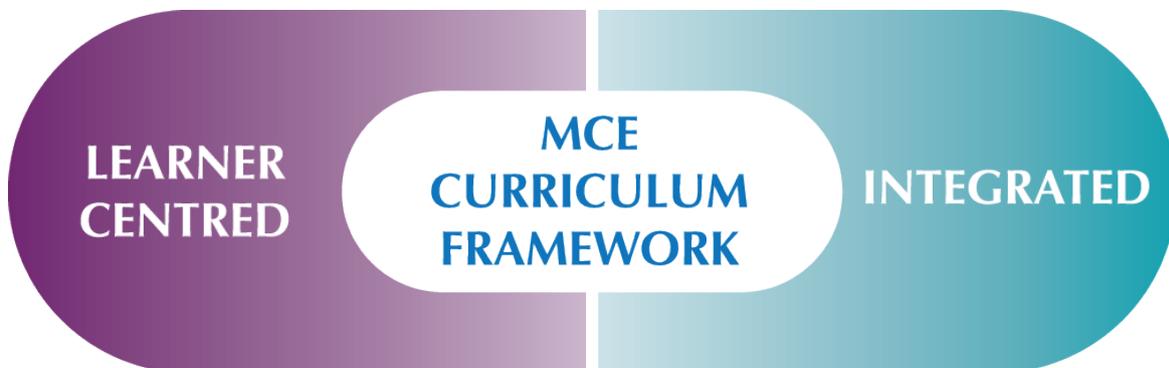
Our aim is to provide an effective learning platform that always keeps the learner's needs at the forefront, and inspires our children to adopt and adhere to an Islamic lifestyle. Our madrasah education should capture the hearts and minds of our children through a unique and renewed approach. The focus should therefore be on beliefs, values, behaviour, feelings and attitudes

to help develop a sound moral and ethical compass for our students to operate on in their daily lives.

Many of our madaris worldwide have identified this challenge and are trying in their own ways to improve the education within their own establishments. In trying to find solutions to the challenges they face, madaris have to a great extent addressed the question of how to teach. However, the equally important element of what to teach remains largely un-examined.

When adopting the Tarbiyah curriculum for your madrasah, it is these questions of *what* to teach AND *how* to teach that must be at the forefront, as it is necessary to re-examine the existing traditional paradigms within madrasah syllabi to ensure that the Tarbiyah curriculum helps 'nurture piety' in our students and remains 'learner-centred' in its approach.

This training program will provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Tarbiyah curriculum's pedagogy and approach to madrasah education. It will explore the concepts of *ta'lim* and *tarbiyah*, and will equip you with the necessary skills to teach learner centred lessons. The madrasah teacher's role in nurturing piety in their students will also be explored with a view to finding workable strategies to achieve this vision.



# The Madrasah Centre of Excellence (MCE)

**Vision:** Nurturing Piety

**Mission:** Enabling a learning environment that instils the values of Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (a)

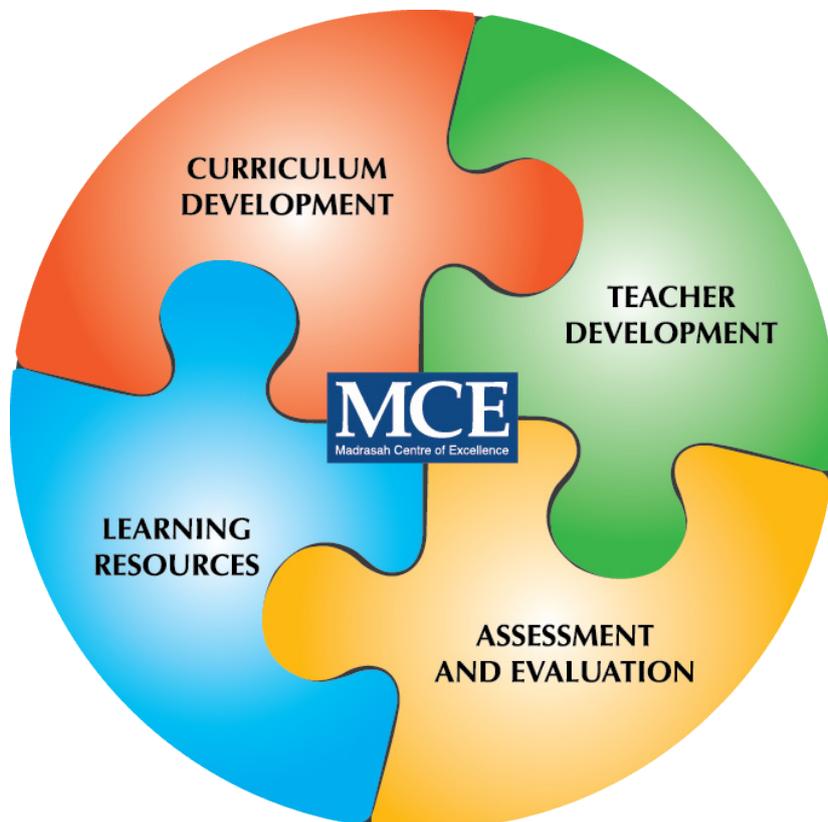
The Madrasah Centre of Excellence (MCE) is the vehicle that delivers the madrasah agenda and maintains the strategies for the community's madrasah program. Its primary focus is to realise the vision by coordinating the work of the four work streams – Curriculum Development, Teacher Development, Learning Resources and Assessment & Evaluation.

**The Curriculum Development** work stream creates an evolving global curriculum that can be tailored to individual madrasah needs. Constant evolution of the curriculum would make it relevant for present and future generations.

**The Teacher Development** work stream facilitates the provision of training and development programs to meet the training needs of the madrasah teachers.

**The Learning Resources** work stream creates learning resources to support the curriculum and provides a comprehensive resource library for teachers, parents and students.

**The Assessment & Evaluation** work stream aims to create a learning environment for all where the students, teachers and institutions are examined and evaluated with a view to continually improve. This allows the madaris not only to compare and be compared so as to enable learning from each other but also to focus on specific areas of improvement.



# The Tarbiyah Curriculum - Journey So Far

## Our goal

The development of a robust and evolving global curriculum that encapsulates regional variation, modern methodologies, support material for students, teachers and parents whilst retaining core knowledge and spiritual ethos.

## The journey so far...

- A madrasah retreat was hosted in Dubai in February 2011 by the World Federation to discuss the needs of our madaris worldwide.
- One of the key outcomes of this retreat was for a curriculum development work-stream to look into updating the madrasah curriculum.
- A Curriculum Assessment Questionnaire was designed in 2012 by the work stream members with feedback from retreat participants to gather preliminary data which would give direction to curriculum development within the MCE.
- The questionnaire was sent to all KSI madaris.

- Responses were submitted by 30 madaris globally

74% said we need a global curriculum with regional variation.

Only 48% felt that Aqidah was adequately covered

Only 38% agreed that spiritual development was adequately covered

The following areas were highlighted as seriously lacking both in content and substance:

- i. Comparative Religion
- ii. Contemporary issues – Islam and terrorism, ethics, biomedical issues etc.
- iii. Interfaith understanding
- iv. Youth related issues - media, internet, social networking, gender interaction etc.
- v. Spirituality

**55%**

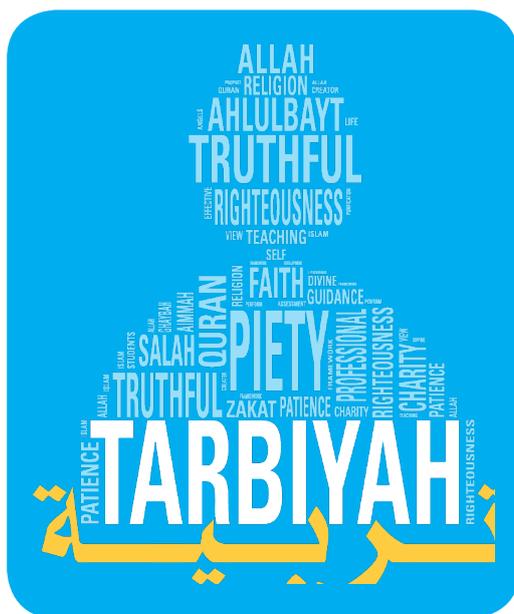
Agreed Existing curriculum meets the needs of 14+

**32%**

Agreed Existing curriculum meets the needs of 16+

**51%**

Agreed Current teaching resources meet modern standards



**47%**

Agreed Current teaching resources meet modern standards

**97%**

Agreed Need for new teaching guides and students manuals

**87%**

Agreed education experts and religious scholars should be involved in developing new curriculum

Based on these results, the curriculum development team of the MCE started the task of creating a global madrasah curriculum that should meet the needs and aspirations of the community.

## The Harben Retreat

Following the in depth review of all major curricula, the results were presented to a panel of experts at a Curriculum Development retreat in Harben, Milton Keynes.

### Objectives of the Harben Retreat:

1. To chart out a clear methodology and approach to madrasah education
2. To put processes in place for the development of a global madrasah framework, curriculum and syllabus

At this retreat, the education experts and 'ulema had in-depth discussions on:

- Models for Islamic education at madrasah level
- Guiding principles for the creation of a global madrasah curriculum
- Weaving spirituality into the madrasah curriculum

- The role of madrasah: Ta'lim or Tarbiyah?
- Dealing with sensitive issues – Crises of conscience
- Approaches to Islamic education in the secular world

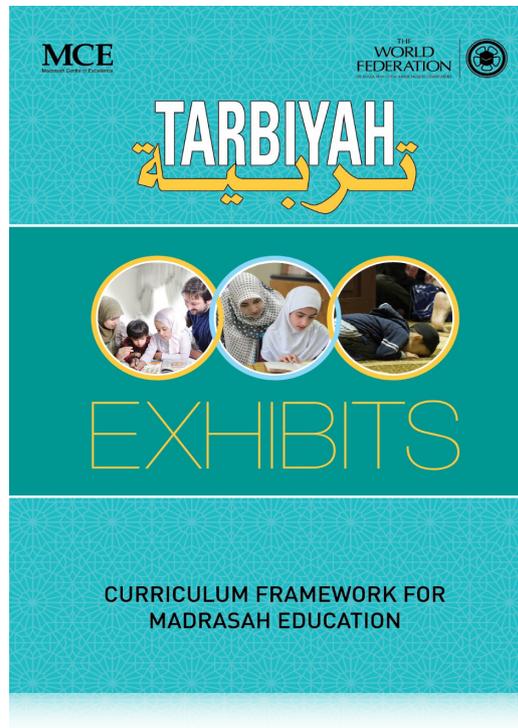
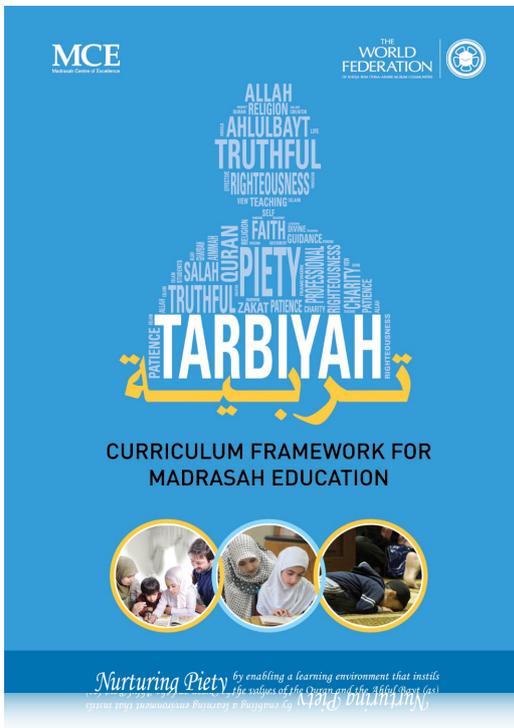
Papers presented at the Harben Retreat can be found in the Exhibits manual

### Key outcomes of the Harben Retreat:

It was agreed that an integrated approach to Islamic education would be best suited for our madaris, although some degree of subject specialisation may be necessary for senior students.

Secondly, madrasah education must be learner-centred to ensure it is relevant and meets the emerging needs of the learner.

The MCE Curriculum Development team was now ready to start creating a global curriculum framework for madrasah education.



# The Conceptual Framework of the Tarbiyah Curriculum

The Tarbiyah Curriculum Framework consists of an overarching conceptual framework based on the comprehensive verse of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177, from which eight learning modules have been developed. The vision of the MCE is to nurture piety in our students. Piety, or taqwa, is based on a Muslim's relationship with his Lord. Based on this understanding, it is necessary to fully comprehend the nature of the relationship with our Creator. The key questions one must ask include: Who am I? Where do I come from? What is my purpose in life? And Where am I headed?

Verse 2:177 beautifully encapsulates the true meaning of piety (al-Birr), which forms the overarching statement for this curriculum.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ  
وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ  
وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ  
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

Piety is not to turn your faces to the east or the west; rather, piety is [personified by] those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and who give their wealth, for the love of Him, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller and the beggar, and for [the freeing of] slaves, and maintain the prayer and give the zakat, and those who fulfil their covenants, when they pledge themselves, and those who are patient in stress and distress, and in times of conflict. They are the ones who are true [to their covenant], and it is they who are the God-conscious. (2:177)

This verse encapsulates the fundamental vision of what it means to be a true Muslim. It starts with the rejection of the notion that just outward expression of worship is the criterion of a good Muslim. "It is not righteousness to turn your faces towards the east or the west..." A good Muslim bases his life on a sound belief system, submits to the Divine guidance, and lives an ethical life. This is summarized in one word "al-birr, righteousness".

In defining righteousness, the next sentence presents the foundation of a sound belief system: the beginning and the end: "...but righteousness is [reflected in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day..." The origin of everything is Allah as the Creator of the universe, in particular the human beings as exemplified in the form of Adam and Eve. It also talks about the return of the humans to their Creator for judgement and its consequences.

However, judgement and its consequences are meaningless without a roadmap or a system of guidance that humans will have to follow. And so, indeed, the Almighty Allah did provide a system of guidance in this world: “...the Angels, the Book and the Messengers; ...” The angels were created by Allah not only to manage the universe but also to help in conveying the Divine guidance to Allah’s vicegerents (khulafa) in the form of prophets, messengers, and Divinely appointed Imams on this earth. The angels played an important role in bringing the Divine Books and revelations to the prophets and the messengers.

The Divine guidance came in the form of prophets and messengers, some with and others without revealed books, starting with Nabi Adam (a) and ending with Rasulullah (s). Thereafter, the Divine guidance continued in the form of Imamah, divinely appointed successors of the Prophet of Islam, starting with Imam ‘Ali (a) and ending with Imam al-Mahdi (a). The fundamental role of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (a) is to convey the true meaning of the Qur’an and the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet, and to provide the best role-models for living as true Muslims. The Qur’an has indeed presented the Ahlul Bayt (a) as the example of par excellence of al-abrar, the righteous ones. (See 76:5)

Commitment to such a sound belief should manifest itself in actions. An important proof of true faith is the willingness to give away a portion of our wealth for the sake of pleasing Almighty Allah: “...and one who gives the wealth, for His love, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the [stranded] traveller, the beggars, and to those who are in bondage...” This refers to the voluntary charity, hence the phrase “for His love.”

Then comes the issue of commitment to the rituals that have been introduced by Islam:

“And one who maintains the prayer and gives the zakat...” Interestingly, the verse only mentions two pillars (arkan) of the faith: salat and zakat. Both emphasize the dual level of commitment necessary for salvation in the Hereafter: Islam does not only emphasize the human-God relationship (on the vertical plane), it also gives importance to human-human relationships (on the horizontal plane). Salat symbolizes the human-God relationship; and zakat symbolizes the human-to-human relationship.

With a sound belief system and practical proof of a person’s commitment to the faith, the verse now reminds us of the moral and ethical disposition of a Muslim on a personal level:

“...And those who fulfil the pledge when they promise; and they are patient in [financial] stress, [physical] distress and in heat of battle....” Akhlaq is the inner disposition and character of a person. Two important ethical values have been highlighted in this verse: wafa’u ‘l-‘ahd and sabr. ‘Fulfilment of a pledge’ is a dimension of truthfulness that is the basis of faith.

Patience is the most important quality in facing the challenges of life and maintaining the faith under pressure.

The verse ends with an important conclusion: “These are those who have been true, and these are the God-conscious.” Truthfulness cannot exist without chastity, courage, wisdom, justice and other related virtues; truthfulness is the basis for faith and action. Combination of a sound belief system, a true commitment in practice and a noble character together are hallmarks of the true Muslims and the true muttaqin.

Wal-‘aqibatu lil muttaqin – the final success will be for the pious ones! (7:128)

# The Eight Modules of the Curriculum

Verse 2:177 can be divided into three main sections: The origin, The path, and The return.

## (a) The Origin

Module 1. The Creator and His Creation

## (b) The Path

Module 2. Divine Guidance

Module 3. Rasulullah (s) – Communicating the Message

Module 4. The A'imma (a) – Safeguarding the Message

Module 5. Upholding the Message during Ghaybah

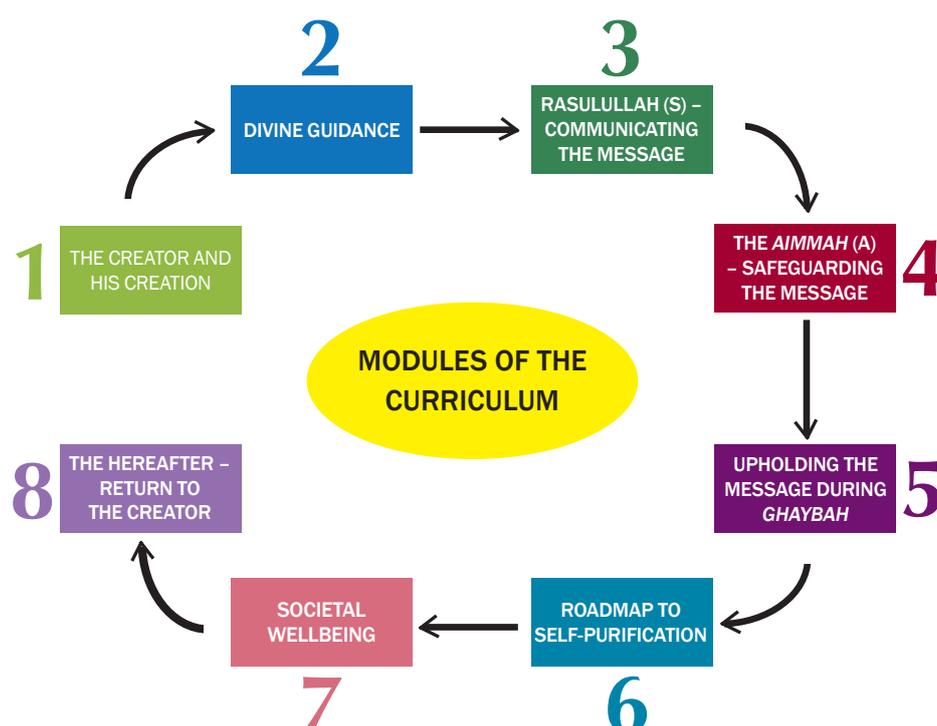
Module 6. Roadmap to Self-Purification

Module 7. Societal Wellbeing

## (c) The Return

Module 8. The Hereafter - Return to the Creator

Each module consists of a set of main themes and these, along with the inter-relationships among them, are described briefly below. The main themes are further divided into sub-themes, which form the actual lessons. The sub-themes are grouped into six two-year age bands. Some sub-themes run through several age bands as they develop in complexity, whereas others are only covered at the appropriate age band.



# An Overview of the 8 Modules

## MODULE 1: THE CREATOR AND HIS CREATION

This module is dedicated to Allah and to man's relationship with his Creator. It covers Tawheed (monotheism) in great depth, discussing the existence of Allah, His unity and His various attributes. It also covers the creation of the universe and His Signs in it as well the creation of the angels, the jinn, and man. It explores the purpose of creation and the need for religious guides, and looks at the history of the first prophet, Nabi Adam and his children. As the basis of our relationship and communication with Allah, key concepts of tawba and istighfar, du'a and munajat are introduced and the daily prayer as the most sublime form of submission (tasleem) to Allah is covered in detail.

## MODULE 2: DIVINE GUIDANCE

Having created us, Allah continues to nurture and guide us. This module covers the lutf and adalah of Allah, and explores the understanding of the various schools of Islamic theology, especially in relation to the adalah of Allah. It also discusses Divine guidance in the form of nubuwwah. Starting with creation of human beings on this earth, it focuses on the ancient nations and the early prophets, especially the ulul 'azm prophets, and the challenges that they faced, lessons that we can learn from their history, and universal values that we derive from their teachings. The Divine Books that were revealed to chosen prophets are also covered, most especially, the final revelation, the Qur'an.

## MODULE 3: RASULULLAH (S) – COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

This module is a continuation of the concept of Divine Guidance but focuses on the process that the Prophet of Islam used to communicate his Message and to live it. It includes a discussion of his life, his seerah and Sunnah, his family, including the immaculate ladies Khadija (a) and Fatimah (a), and his companions. It covers how the Prophet successfully met the enormous challenges that he faced and how he laid the foundation for the spread of Islam within and beyond Arabia. The module also discusses a series of steps that he took to designate his successor so as to ensure the continuation of his Message and assesses his remarkable legacy for all of mankind.

## MODULE 4: THE AIMMAH (A) – SAFEGUARDING THE MESSAGE

This module is a further continuation of the concept of Divine Guidance but focuses on the divinely appointed successors of Rasulullah (s) whose primary responsibility was to safeguard the Message from distortions and misinterpretations. This module covers the issues related to Imamah and Khilafah, the concept of divine appointment, the qualities of such Imams, the emergence of sects within the Shias and azadari as the cornerstone of Shia belief.

It also covers the lives of the Aimmah of Ahlul Bayt (a) from the first to the eleventh Imam, and explores key concepts relating to Imamah and wilayah.

## MODULE 5: UPHOLDING THE MESSAGE DURING GHAYBAH

This module is dedicated to the Imam of our time, Imam al-Mahdi (a). It covers the concept of ghaybah, its minor and major phases, the long life of the Imam, the responsibilities of believers in upholding the Message during the ghaybah, and the circumstances under which the Imam will reappear and restore justice and equity. It discusses the necessity of ijthad and taqlid and disbursement of Islamic taxes during the ghaybah, and explores the lives of some prominent ulema. The module also traces the rise of certain movements within Islam that have had wide-ranging implications.

## MODULE 6: ROADMAP TO SELF-PURIFICATION

This module examines the distinction between the body and the soul and discusses the roadmap (shari'ah) sent down by Allah for self-purification in order to attain the company of al-abrar, the righteous ones, in the hereafter. The centrality of niyyah is stressed in all the religious observances. These acts engender taqwa (piety) which involves avoidance of major and minor sins that corrupt the body and the soul, development of moral and ethical traits that identify us as Muslims, and observance of two most important obligations that bring us closer to Allah, namely, sawm and hajj.

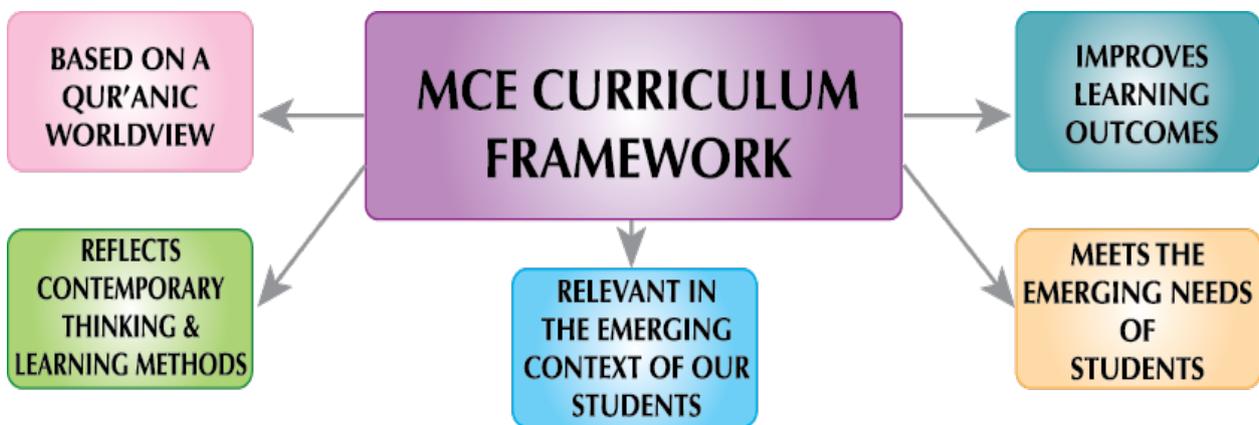
## MODULE 7: SOCIETAL WELLBEING

This module is a continuation of the roadmap to self-purification but at the societal instead of the individual level. Islam is not just a religion of individuals but also of a community and a global ummah. The social interactions and the attendant responsibilities and rights that Islam mandates can be visualized as a series of concentric circles. The circles begin with the self, and the immediate and extended families, widens to include neighbours and friends and the local community, and embraces the wider community along with the physical environment. al-amr bil ma'ruf and an-nahi 'anil munkar symbolize the social aspect of the community; believers have to promote goodness in society and prevent social evils.

## MODULE 8: THE HEREAFTER – RETURN TO THE CREATOR

This module completes the cycle that began with the creation of Allah and ends with the return to Him. It covers the process of death, the purgatory of barzakh, resurrection at the end of time, accountability on the day of judgement and the outcome of man's actions with the reward of heaven or the punishment of hell.

# How does the Tarbiyah Curriculum compare to most existing conventional approaches to Madrasah Education?



	Conventional Approach	MCE's Integrated Approach
Structure	Vague and incoherent structure, or structured by separate academic disciplines with no unifying structure	A Qur'anic worldview that can inspire and transform; modules based on the building blocks of character & personality; cross-curricular and Trans-disciplinary
Content	Traditional subjects; information-driven; not always relevant to student's life; the textbook/manual is the curriculum	Character-based and Transformation-driven education. 'Real-life' connections are made
Process	Didactic (words & lecture); teacher as 'sage on the stage'; factory model: one size fits all; Uninteresting and uninspiring	Discovery learning: Student-centred, differentiated instruction; multiple learning styles; teacher as 'guide on the side'; modelling & mentoring; integrated model

# Key Features of the Student Textbooks

The Tarbiyah curriculum draws much of its content from major existing curricula and syllabi. It is designed around eight carefully selected modules based on a Qur'anic worldview on birr and taqwa.

The Tarbiyah Curriculum Framework aims to promote a madrasah education that focuses primarily on the students' personal growth and development. Therefore, when creating content for the lessons, great emphasis has been placed on Islamic values, identity, self-esteem, a sense of belonging and developing a strong bond with the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (a). The lesson content is centred around developing a strong Muslim personality capable of fulfilling one's responsibility of stewardship, or khilafah, in society. It is structured to meet the overall goal of our life on earth - service to Allah, ubudiyah, - and responsible and effective citizenship in society.

## The lessons include the following key components:

- 1. Beliefs:** Key concepts are defined and explained in simple language. The focus is mainly practical rather than philosophical: 'What are the implications of these beliefs on my life?'
- 2. Rights, duties and responsibilities:** The rights that others have over us, and our obligations to Allah, ourselves as well as others. Our civic and social responsibilities are also highlighted where relevant.
- 3. Virtues:** Stories, ahadith and verses from the Qur'an have been used to highlight virtuous conduct and character development.
- 4. Islamic etiquette:** This is an essential component of lessons as it promotes an Islamic lifestyle and bridges the gap between knowledge and practice. The Faith in Action feature in lessons is one strategy that helps achieve this objective
- 5. Feelings:** It is necessary that students get a chance to talk openly about their feelings and attitudes towards the topic at hand. This ensures continued engagement from the students. Genuine and wholesome moral development only occurs in an atmosphere of support and acceptance of the values being promoted. Thought provoking questions during lesson delivery will allow students to express their feelings, and in the process learn how to deal constructively with their many feelings and emotions in a way that best serves them individually and collectively as Muslims living in secular societies.
- 6. Skills and practice:** Where relevant, highlight the skills and practices that students must learn to ensure that they are equipped to face and solve the moral and ethical challenges they will face in society.

# The Integrated Approach



## What are some advantages of teaching Islam using an integrated approach?

The MCE Curriculum uses an integrated learning model based on the Qur'anic worldview of Birr

### What are the benefits of using an integrated Approach?

- Allah's Din is the same – The MESSAGE does not change even though the MESSENGERS and MEDIA may change according to time and place.
- The purpose of madrasah remains unchanged but the method of teaching changes depending on time and place
- The Tarbiyah curriculum seeks to nurture wholesome Muslim personality among the students by using the integrated method of education
- The integrated method seeks to weave the values of various subjects in order to promote a more holistic character among the students and connect relevant values to one another
- We don't think in boxes and we don't learn in boxes either!
- Integrated learning leads to integrated thinking and integrated action

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*Although this framework takes an integrated approach, provisions will be made for subject specialisation in areas where discipline-based study adds greater value to a student's understanding of the subject matter.*

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# Teaching Guides (TGs) and Learning Resources

The Tarbiyah curriculum is a complete package for Islamic education for madrasah students. Each lesson comes with an accompanying Teaching Guide (TG), learning resources and guidance for parents.

Islam has laid great emphasis on the importance of attaining knowledge and teaching it. Its rewards become manifold when it is retained and acted upon as we can see from the following hadith:

Rasulullah (s) once said:

A person shall arrive on the Day of Judgment and shall be in possession of good deeds in the measure of vastly accumulated clouds or towering mountains. (Witnessing them) he shall ask: O' My Lord! How can these be for me when I have not performed them? God shall reply: This is your knowledge that you had taught and conveyed to the people, and which was acted upon after you had died.

(Basair al-Darajat, vol. 5, pg. 16; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, pg. 18)

Secular education has changed drastically over the last couple of decades and a teacher centred class is not only obsolete but something this new generation of learners find tedious to attend and boring.

A'bd al-Salam Ibn Saleh al-Hirawi states:

I heard Imam ar-Rida (a) say, 'May God have mercy on one who revives our mission!'

I said to him, 'How can one revive your mission?'

He said, 'He should learn our teachings and impart them to the people, for if the people become aware of the beauty of our words and teachings, they will surely follow us.'

(Ma'ani al-Akhbar, pg. 180; U'yun Akbar al-Reza, vol, 1, pg. 307)

## Authentic Teaching and Learning

Educational research suggests that certain standards must be in place for authentic and meaningful teaching and learning to occur, and that student achievement increases when these standards are implemented. (Ref: *F. Newman et al: A Guide to Authentic Instruction and Assessment: Vision, Standards and Scoring.*)

**Higher-Order Thinking:** Lessons should help students arrive at conclusions that produce new meaning and understanding.

**Deep Knowledge:** Lessons should address the topic with enough thoroughness and explore sufficient connections to produce a complex understanding.

**Substantive Conversations:** Lessons should encourage dialogue and discussion with the teacher, the parents as well as between students in order to build a shared understanding.

**Real World Connections:** Lessons should make connections between knowledge imparted and the larger issues facing the students and their communities.

These standards are reflected in the Tarbiyah Teaching Guides (TGs)

<p>What can I do as a teacher to ensure I succeed in my mission?</p>	<p>Our role as teachers is to make these new age learners feel excited about the words and teachings of Allah. Link them to their world and help them relate and connect to those concepts. The beautiful treasures handed down by our pure Anbiya and Aimmah need to be handed down with passion and the kind of methodology that no child gets left behind.</p>
<p>What is EFF?</p>	<p>It is inspired by the Early Foundation Stage Framework. It is a framework developed after studying child development, both the biological and cultural aspects, and its impact on how learning may best be supported. It entails lesson planning criteria which ensures a relevant, motivating, flexible and interesting environment in a class and truly enables successful learning by all children.</p>
<p>How is it beneficial for students?</p>	<p>It encourages children to be creative, imaginative and makes learning more enjoyable and more effective. Children should be given opportunities to use Islam as a means to explore the world around them and understand how things work by taking part in practical activities relevant to their developmental stage. They should be challenged through practical activities and develop their thinking with open-ended questions. Children should be encouraged to explore concepts and share ideas for solving problems.</p>
<p>How is it relevant to madrasah?</p>	<p>The activities in our Teaching Guides (TGs) designed in such a way that children initiate learning rather than only focusing on what they do when prompted. It helps support lifelong learning which is a very essential life skill. They are given rich opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. This helps increase a child's confidence and ownership of the specific knowledge, skill or concept being given to them.</p>
<p>What are the 3 key characteristics of this type of learning?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Playing and exploring – engagement</b> Providing hands-on experiences which help students use play to bring together their current understanding, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways.</li> <li>1. <b>Active learning - motivation</b> Students are actively involved in their learning through activities which motivate and inspire them to explore the topics further, and achieve their own learning goals.</li> <li>1. <b>Creating and thinking critically - thinking</b> The activities encourage critical thinking and creativity - generating new ideas and approaches. Being inventive allows children to address new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these. Using what they already know about religion, children develop and link concepts, find meaning in faith and practice. This can be achieved through goal-directed activity involving making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategy when necessary.</li> </ol>



# Lesson Planning Guidelines

1. The lessons must focus on **character development** and not simply transfer of facts and rote information to children.

**Remember:** Knowledge (*ta'lim*) is simply a means or a tool to the real goal of education, which is human development and transformation (*tarbiyah*).

2. The lessons must be directly relevant to the real lives of the students themselves - their needs, concerns, challenges and aspirations. Students should feel that the content they are studying is worth learning because it is **meaningful and relevant** to their lives. They must see the usefulness and potential application of this knowledge in their everyday lives.
3. The lesson layout must be **centred on learning** rather than teaching.
4. The lessons must prepare students with the **real-life skills** needed to function successfully in today's society.
5. The main focus should be **'about being a Muslim'** rather than 'about Islam'. This is based on the principle that we want to move away from 'transferring information about Islam' to our students. Instead, we want to teach them 'what it really means to be a Muslim'.
6. The lessons must aim to **inspire** and **transform** students.
7. The lessons must be **integrative**, incorporating aspects from the Qur'an, tarikh, akhlaq, aqaid, fiqh as well as contemporary secular studies where relevant. However, it is not necessary that every lesson should incorporate all these learning areas.
8. The lessons should aim to engage **the whole child** (intellectually, morally, spiritually, socially as well as physically). This approach will also ensure that different types of learners remain engaged throughout the lesson.
9. The lessons must be **adequately challenging** to allow students to thoughtfully examine what they are studying and participate assertively in group discussions. This will help foster the skills needed to present and defend Islamic belief and principles effectively.
10. To help teachers remain actively and genuinely engaged in the teaching process, lessons should include various ideas for **activities** (both 'hands-on' as well as 'minds-on'), **stories** and **examples** from everyday life that students can directly relate to. The teacher can then plan, make active choices as well as adjust the lesson as needed rather than mechanically follow the manual.





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