

*Review*

# Scholars and educational positions under criticism and praise in the Medieval Islamic Era

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**This research focuses on criticism and praise in Arabic literature, history and poetry towards those in charge of the scientific movement in the Medieval Era. The research method was theoretical and qualitative. Many poets and scholars praised the rulers and sultans who established mosques and other educational institutions (madrasa-s) based on endowments, which had a role in sciences, intellectual and religious renaissance. They were subject to criticism or praise for their work or the educational role they followed. The topics of praise to the ulama centered on, their diligence and dissemination of science, as well as of their behavior and moral manners. On the other hand, the criticism of poetry centered on the mistakes of some scholars, their scientific stances in religious matters and criticizing scholars of the sultans for their attitudes in serving the rulers. Poets were also interested in criticizing scholars (ulama) who moved away from the path of morality, virtue, and shari'a, and who lead the teaching without qualification or mismanagement of the educational process; and therefore do not preserve the rules of morality in lessons, education or discussions, and their lack of good morals towards students.**

**Key words:** Arabic literature, criticism and praise, science and scholars, rulers and sultans, Medieval Era.

## INTRODUCTION

Scholars (ulama) had the main position in the educational and religious life in medieval Islamic history. Students' sessions were organized according to topics and specialties, besides they were known by scholars' names or by their educational topic. So, students were not affiliated to the educational institutions but rather to their scholars, known by their fame. In consequence, scholars were considered the first reference in the educational activities of the medieval ages. After the spread of madrasas and other educational institutions which

became reliant on funding from endowments of rulers, Sultans and wealthy benefactors, scholars were connected with the endowments and their owners. So, it was usual to see that scholars were divided between the loyalists of the authority (Scholars of the Sultans) and being independent scholars in work and opinions. Thus, scholars had increased their strength and leadership position not only in their performance as teachers, but also in the management and educational activities of madrasas.

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Unfortunately, with the political, economic and social changes and developments, corruption started to spread in the educational institutions, especially in the late Mamluk era (since the late fourteenth century) in Egypt and the Levant.

Both rulers and scholars needed to support and help each other; the rulers needed to legitimize their authority with the support of scholars, while scholars were competing for religious, educational and administrative posts under the rulers.

This was one of the most important and notable factor that led to the extent of corruption phenomenon and to taking over the endowments-funds for personal interests, which was known by several labels in that period, such as: "*al-badhī*", "*al-barṭīl*, *al-sa'ī*" (bribery) and the pursuit of rulers and sultans to obtain important posts in *madrāsas* and other educational and religious institutions, and even in judicial posts as well. Anyone who wanted a post in *madrāsa* or the judiciary, paid money depending on the importance and status of the posts (Ahmad, 1979; Mahamid, 2013: 113-129).

As a result, the scholars of authority (*'ulama' al-sulta*) and those close to them dominated the scientific movement in schools and *waqf* institutions, and those scholars were exposed to criticism by other scholars, such as Sheikh 'Izz al-Din ibn 'Abd al-Salam (d. 660 AH/1262 AD) and Ibn Taymiya (d. 728 AH/1328 AD), who were not close to rulers and wielded no political influence. Scholars, writers and poets also wrote a lot to describe the educational activities at this point, either praising or criticizing to reform things, or as a way to deter the corrupt people in this field, by criticizing or mocking them and exposing their actions contrary to religion and law. The majority of scholars were proficient in poetry and Arabic language with its branches, in addition to their involvement in religious subjects. Thus, this research mainly focuses on the subject of criticism and praise, the aspects associated with the educational activities, such as scholars, endowments and even contributors for constructing religious and scientific institutions.

## **OWNERS OF MADRASAS AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS BETWEEN CRITICISM AND PRAISE**

Many poets and scholars praised the rulers who contributed in establishing *madrāsas* and specified endowments for funding and maintaining them. In their historical writings, Muslim historians described these educational and religious institutions, their importance, impact on the spread of religious sciences, the fight against "*bid'a*" and all that contravene the instructions of the Qur'an and the Sunna. So, the laudation and praise for those contributors of charity appeared in poetry, prose, and their biographies. For example, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani was a teacher in Damascus and an advisor to Sultan Nur al-Din Maḥmūd bin Zengi (d. 569 AH/1174

AD), and then to Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (d. 589 AH/1193 AD). Isfahani praised Sultan Maḥmūd bin Zengi and Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi for their policy that benefited the Islamic religion, building schools in order to spread religion and revive the Sunna, and fighting "*bid'a*" and "*Shi'a*" in Syria and Egypt (al-Maqdisi, 1991, 1:288).

When Sultan Najm al-Din Ayyub (d. 647 AH/1249 AD) ruled Egypt and Syria in the late Ayyubid era, he built a school in Cairo known as "*al-Salihiyya*", and arranged lessons for jurists of the four doctrines in 641 AH/1243 AD. Al-Siraj al-warraq praised and bragged of its status as the superiority of "*al-Nizamiyya*" *madrāsa* in Baghdad (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1: 272-273; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:263). In the Mamluk era, building *madrāsas* and their endowments were increasing and the educational movement that established on Sunni doctrinal grounds spread out, as well as competition in this field increased. Shams al-Din ibn al-Sayigh praised the Mamluk Amir Sarghatmush when he established a *madrāsa* in Cairo in 757 AH/1356 AD, for its status and importance (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:555; al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:268; al-Maqrizi, 1997, 4:228).

Moreover, al-Shihab ibn abi Hijla praised the Mamluk leader Shikhu for building the Sufi "*khanqah*" and a mosque in Cairo in 757 AH/1356 AD, and Shikhu was one of the most dignified princes and actually the most well-known for his good deeds and love for scholars, righteous and Sufis. He contributed in many abundant endowments for knowledge sessions and scholars of the four doctrines (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:557-558; al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:266; al-Maqrizi, 1997, 4:220). In addition, Sultan Hasan (d. 762 AH/1361 AD) was praised and congratulated by the writer Ibn Nubata, when he built his *madrāsa* in Cairo to serve the four Sunni doctrines with its mosque, and he became one of the masterpieces of what were built in the Mamluk state (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:559-561). The Egyptian writer Ahmad Ibn al-'Attar also praised the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Barquq (d. 801 AH/1399 AD) when he finished building his *madrāsa* "*al-Zahiriyya*" and its facilities in 788 AH/1386 AD, which included several institutions and architectural building in Cairo, including the *madrāsa* itself, the mosque, the *khanqah* and the dome (al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:271; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:351-373).

On the other hand, some contributors in such institutions faced some kind of criticism for what had been shown as corruption or dysfunction in their charitable work. For example, the Mamluk Sultan Al-Mu'ayyad Shikh (d. 824 AH/1421 AD) was exposed to criticism and ridicule for his controlling of some buildings and facilities in Cairo in order to build his mosque in 818 AH/1415 AD, including the doors of Sultan Hasan's *madrāsa* and others. Later on, one of the mosque's minarets fell down, which make people mocking him for his approach in obtaining funds for building the mosque illegally (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 2:20-21, 31, 35-36; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1970, 14:43-44, 75-76; Ibn al-'Imad, 9, 1992: 212; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:272-273).

## SCHOLARS BETWEEN PRAISE AND CRITICISM

Scholars (*ulama*) formed the link between the common people on one hand, and the upper class of rulers, Sultans and other people of power on the other. Some scholars who were heads of religious posts in the *ifta'*, the judiciary, teaching and preaching, and some also had administrative and *hisba* (market) posts. Therefore, *ulama* were the focus of everyone's attention, for their manners, habits, knowledge and performance in these public and private posts. It is natural that they were exposed to either criticism and censorship or praise by everyone. After the increase of scholars of Islamic doctrines for reviving the Sunna and the religious sciences because of intellectual and doctrinal conflicts up until the end of the first Abbasid era, rivalries between the Sunnis themselves remained with the emergence of Sufi movements, and conflicts over posts with the spread of the *madrasa*, religious and educational institutions and endowments. A lot of examples of those scholars and their criticism or praise can be shown, especially in the late medieval ages.

For example, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH/1111 AD) reached a high status in religious sciences and education, but this did not prevent him from being exposed to many different situations from scholars between supporters and opponents, and between criticism and praise for his ideas and religious views. Actually, al-Ghazali was criticized for his rational views of the *Ash'ariyya* thought, asceticism and Sufism. On the other hand, he was praised for some of his religious writings, such as his book "*Ihya' Ulum al-Din*". Also, he wrote many books attacking philosophers and Shi'ites such as: "*Maqasid al-falasifa*" and "*Ijām al-'Awām 'an 'Ilm al-Kalām*". In his book "*Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*", he refuted the Greek Philosophy and their ideas, and he attacked Shi'ites and their ideas and beliefs in the book of "*Fada'ih al-Batiniyya*" (Al-Ghazali, 2020: 16-30).

Sheikh al-'Izz Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (d. 660 AH/1262 AD) was one of the greatest scholars called as *Sheikh al-Islam* and *Sultan al-'Ulama*. Many historians had praised him by writing his biography, such as Ibn Iyas for example, which says: "he is famous in teaching knowledge, promotion of virtue, prevention of vice and he is harsh with Sultans and rulers. He actually learnt from Sheikh Fakhr al-Din Ibn 'Asaker, he had miraculous dignity and he learnt to be Sufi from Shahab al-Din al-Suhrawardi..." (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:317-318; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 2:137-140; al-Isnawi, 1987, 2:84-85; al-Maqdisi, 2002: 330; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1999, 7; Al-Dhahabi, 1999). Also, Sheikh Muhyi al-Din al-Nawawi (676 AH/1277 AD) was one of the most famous of the Shafi'i *ulama* in Damascus, he died at the age of forty-five years, and had reached a high status in his religious life and sciences. He was one of the diligent and leading imams; some scholars praised him for his diligence in the judiciary, *fiqh*, teaching and writing books (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:364; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 2:194-200; Al-Isnawi,

1987). Sheikh Zayn al-Din Ibn al-Wardi mentioned the descriptions and titles of al-Nawawi, which referred to his status saying: "*Sheikh al-Islam, al-'alim, al-zahid, al-rabbani*, he had an exclusive biography about his personal sciences, writings, belief, certainty, piety, asceticism and conviction" (Ibn al-Wardi, 1996, 2:219).

Sheikh Taqiy al-Din Ibn Daqiq al-'Id (d. 702 AH/1302 AD) was a prominent scholar in his time, and his death in Egypt was heartbreaking for scholars, as he was described by al-Subki: "Sheikh al-Islam who is *al-hāfiz, al-zahid, al-wari', al-nnasik, al-mujtahid and al-muṭlaq*, he was fully experienced in religious sciences, he also combined between science and religion..." (al-Subki, 1968, 9:207-249; al-Isnawi, I, 1987: 317-320; al-Isnawi, 2, 1987: 102-106; Ibn al-Wardi, 1996, 2:244; al-Shukani, 2, 1998: 229-232; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:411-412; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 2:299-302). He was praised by Al-Suyuti, the Tunisian Imam al-Maliki Ibn al-qawba' and Sheikh Sharaf al-Din Muhammad al-Qusi for his high degree in diligence, his reaching to the top level of science in his time, his writings, moral advantages and religious and scientific status (al-Suyuti, 1968, 1:317-320; al-Isnawi, 1987, 2:103; al-Subki, 1968, 9:210).

As for the scholar Taqiy al-Din Ibn Taymiya (d. 728 AH/1328 AD), a lot of controversy was raised around him in his life as well as after his death, between supporters and opponents for his dealing in some situations and for some of his *fatwas*, which are due to his tough and controversial views among many scholars (Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 1993, 1:144-160; Al-Nu'aymi, 1988, 1: 32, = 33, 211, 2:214-215; Al-Shukani, 1998, 1:64-65). Despite that, when he died, his funeral was massive, and it was estimated by two hundred thousand funeral-goers, that showed his distinguished status in his time. Besides, he was given an elegy and praised by groups of scholars and writers, including Ibn al-Wardi, al-Shukani, al-Dhahabi and others, who described him to be distinguished and that he had high scientific ability and status (Ibn al-Wardi, 1996, 2:275-279; Al-Nu'aymi, 1988, 1:75-77; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 8:142-150; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 9, 1970: 271-272; Ibn Kathir, 14, 1988: 135-140; Al-Shukani, 1998, 1:63-72). Ibn Taymiya was also praised by the historian and scholar Ibn Kathir, who had a good relationship with him since childhood. Ibn Kathir respected, appreciated, praised him in his biography, and also cited praise for him from the poetry of Sheikh Ibn al-Zamalkani (Ibn Kathir, 1988, 14:137, 139; Ibn al-Wardi, 1996, 2:278).

The Andalusian Imam and scholar Athir al-Din Muhammad al-Ghirnaṭi (d. 745 AH/1344 AD) was well known for his stay in Egypt, where he learnt from senior scholars until he surpassed them in his time. He was proficient in science, grammar and poetry, and he wrote venerable books. Besides, he was a great poet as usual for the emigrated Andalusian scholars to the Levant. He received much praise and elegy after his death for his scientific and literary status from many historians and scholars, such as Salah al-Din al-Ṣafadi, Ibn Iyas and

others (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:501-502). The historian Shams al-Din Muhammad Ibn 'Abd-Allah al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH/1348 AD) was considered as critic by many previous scholars, where he actually was not fair in their biographies, and he mentioned this in his writing whether it was praise or criticism, for their scientific and religious positions. Taj al-Din al-Subki mentioned in his biography of al-Dhahabi that he was the top of *hadith*'s scholars and one of the four protectors of *hadith* in that era. Al-Subki said in his book "*Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya*" that al-Dhahabi has no counterpart, and he was the gold of the era literally and actually, as if the nation was gathered and he saw it, then began to write about it (al-Subki, 9, 1968: 101). Al-Dhahabi learnt *hadith* at a young age from senior scholars of *hadith* in several places in the Syria, Egypt and Mecca. He also left a rich legacy of historical writings and classifications, biographies, *hadith* and other sciences; the most notable of his book was "The History of Islam". When he died, al-Dhahabi received praise and eulogy from many of his students such as Taj al-Din al-Subki and others (al-Subki, 1968, 9:100-123; Ibn Kathir, 1988, 14:225; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 3, 1993: 336-338; Al-Nu'aymi, 1, 1988: 78-79; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 8:264-268; al-Isnawi, 1987, 1:273-274; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 10, 1970: 182-183).

As for the Shafi'i scholar Taj al-Din al-Subki (d. 756 AH/1355 AD), he was a descendant of senior scholars who had many religious posts in judiciary and teaching in Egypt and the Levant. When he died, he received praise, honor, and eulogy from the writer Sheikh Jamal al-Din Ibn Nubata (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:556-557). Also the famous historian and scientist Salah al-Din bin Aybak al-Safadi (d. 764 AH/ 1363 AD), received praise and eulogy from many scholars when he died, such as Ibn Nubata al-Masri who mentioned al-Safadi's knowledge, virtues and writings, including the historical books "*al-Wafi bil-Wafaya*", "*A'yan al-'Asr wa-A'wan al-Nasr*" and other writings (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:7; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 3:119-121).

The family of Ibn Jama'a was famous for its high status in religious matters and posts in the judiciary and teaching in the Levant and Egypt, among them are 'Izz al-Din 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Badr al-Din Ibn Jama'a (d. 767 AH/1366 AD) (Salibi, 1958:97-109). He was a religious scholar, strict in Shari'a matters, virtuous from bribery and took nothing from Sultans and rulers; he even left his post in the judiciary to avoid suspicions of bribes. Some writers praised him for his posts and lack of closeness to the rulers. 'Izz al-Din Ibn Jama'a was a virtuous scholar, and he taught *hadith*, *fiqh*, *ifta'*, speechify and took over the judiciary in Egypt. He followed the approach of his father, Badr al-Din Ibn Jama'a (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:32; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 1:359; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 8:358-359; Al-Shukani, 1998, 1:359-360; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 3:135-138).

Additionally, the descendants of Ibn Jama'a were distinguished by chastity and virtues, who emerged from

Burhan al-Din Ibrahim Ibn Jama'a (790 AH/1388 AD). He voluntarily removed himself from the post of the judiciary several times to get away from authority, and then he returned after the Sultan appeased him. He had religious and educational posts in Jerusalem, Egypt and Damascus, ended up to be the leader of scholars and he was well-loved by people. He was a good public speaker, teacher, judge, and then became sheikh al-sheikhs of Sufism in Damascus, as mentioned by Mujir al-Din al-'Ulaymi al-Hanbali (Al-'Ulaymi, 2, 1999: 186-187; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 1, 1993: 38-39; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:142; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 2:161; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1970, 11:314-315; Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 1979, 3:188-190; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 8:533-534; Salibi, 1958).

The nicknames mentioned by historians about the description of some scholars were a sign of their status, elevation for their posts, respect for them as an expression of praise and thanks for their status, and a tribute by poets, writers and historians. Ibn Iyas described the scholar Akmal al-Din Muhammad al-Babarti al-Rumi al-Hanafi in his biography (d. 786 AH/1384 AD), for example, he praised him for his virtue and advantages in science and his high status, where they offered him posts of the judiciary and he refused them. Ibn Iyas referred to him by several names, such as "unique of his time, *shaykh al-shuyukh*, he was an Imam, a virtuous scholar, proficient in science, a good ascetic, a religious scholar, refusing to get senior posts " (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:351-353; Al-suyuti, 1968, 1:471). Abu Hafis Siraj al-Din 'Umar Ibn Raslan al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i (d. 805 AH/1402 AD) received similar descriptions and nicknames such as: *ri'asat al-'ilm*, *baḥr al-'ulum*, *farid 'asrihi wa-wahid dahrihi*. The scholar Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani recited a lengthy poem highlighting his religious, scientific, and moral ethics (Al-Suyuti, 1968, 1:329-335; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:674-675; Al-Sakhawi, 1992, 6:85-90).

As for Zayn al-Din 'Abd al-Rahim al-'Iraqi (d. 806 AH/1403 AD), when he died, he received praise and eulogy from his pupil Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in a poem to honor him and maximize his scientific and educational status. Al-'Iraqi had been described by historians and people of his time with several qualities that indicated his status in the science of *hadith*, classification and preservation (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/2:692; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 1:360-362). Besides, when Shihab al-Din Ahmad Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 AH/1449 AD) died, he received praise and eulogy, where great sadness prevailed among his peers from scholars, writers and poets. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani was knowledgeable in many fields of literature, poetry and religious sciences, and excelled in *hadith*'s sciences. He wrote many books, including: "*Sharḥ al-Bukhari*", "*al-Iṣaba fi Tamyiz al-Ṣahaba*", "*al-Durar al-Kāmina*" and others. Historians and biographic, including Ibn Taghri Birdi, Ibn Iyas and others, had concurred in the descriptions and nicknames of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, which he obtained through his numerous posts and scientific and religious status (Ibn Taghri Birdi, 15, 1970:

532-534; Ibn Iyas, 2, 1983: 268-271; Al-Suyuti, 1968, 1:363-364; Al-Sakhawi, 1992, 2:36-40; Ibn al-'Imad, 9, 1992: 395-399; Al-Shukani, 1998, 1:87-92).

### CRITICISM OF SCHOLARS ABOUT THEIR CLOSENESS TO RULERS AND AUTHORITY

There were some scholars who came close to rulers in order to get religious and scientific posts, which made them subject to criticism by many other scholars who saw them as "Scholars of Sultans" (*'ulama' al-salatīn*). For example, Ibn 'Abd al-Birr mentioned many *hadiths*, narrations and poems about scholars' getting close and coming to Sultans and rulers, for example the Hadith: "two types from my nation if they be good, then all people will be good: princes and jurists", and also from the sayings: "the worst princes are the farthest from scholars and the worst scholars are the closer to the princes" (Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, 2008, 1:331-354; Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, 1994, 1:631-647).

In addition, many scholars had written about getting away from authority because of its negative effects and faring away from *shari'a*. For example, al-Suyuti classified a book in this field, titled: "*ma rawahu al-asaṭīn fi 'adam al-majī' ila al-'umara' wal-salaṭīn*" (what the legends narrated badly about coming to the princes and sultans), in which he listed many prophetic *hadiths* and relics about good predecessor in this field of entering into the palaces of princes and sultans, because that might make scholars to be silent about the vices and impoliteness of the rulers, besides trying to satisfy those rulers over the right of *shari'a* matters and manners. He also warned about the phenomenon of coming close to princes and sultans (Al-Suyuti, 1991:67-70).

In the second era of the Mamluk state, corruption spread due to the political, military and economic conditions, so the phenomenon of "scholars of authority" began to increase among rulers and sultans, some of manifestations of corruption were: bribery, taking over the endowments and funds and increasing in their collection arbitrarily by judges and princes, who used their posts in the administration of State Affairs, judiciary, endowments and schools singly. For example, the judge al-Harawi assigned for himself more governorship deputies than his predecessor al-Bulqini judge in order to take over all matters; they numbered about twenty deputies. In this way, he contradicts with the previous judge. Moreover, he followed a certain type of clothing and riding in processions, which was contrary to the custom in the conduct of judges followed in Egypt (Al-Maqrizi, 6, 1997: 432, 463, 468, 483; 7, 269). Thus, al-Harawi continued this course, taking advantage of the Sultan's respect and appreciation for him, until many people began to see this as derogation and a violation of customary morals, which was unworthy of the judges. So, people often filed complaints and submitted grievances to the Sultan, until

the Sultan changed his view of al-Harawi, then he was deposed in 822 AH/1419 AD (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 2:44-45; Al-Suyuti, 1991, 2:173-174; Al-Maqrizi, 1997, 6:471-472).

### CRITICISM AND PRAISE FOR EDUCATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

Scholars and poets did not hesitate to criticize or satirize whatever they saw as deflecting from virtue of morals and *shari'a*. The Andalusian writer and poet Shihab al-Din Ibn Abi Hijla (d. 776 AH/1375 AD) had written "*Diwan al-Ṣababa fi Akhbar al-'Ushshaq*" and other poetic and literary works; he always criticized many scholars (Ibn Iyas, 1983, ½,:146; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 1993, 1:329-331). Criticism and mockery were also directed to those who got high posts without having the required qualifications and those who were known for their lying and not applying religion and its manners, for example Najib al-Din Ibn al-Shuqayshiqa (d. 656 AH/ 1258 AD), who was famous for lying and weakness of his religion (Al-Nu'aymi, 2, 1988: 80-81; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 7:492; al-Maqrizi, 2002: 307).

Criticism and ridicule were also directed to the scholar 'Alam al-Din al-Isnwi (d. 777 AH/1376 AD), who came to power in Egypt without having sufficient knowledge and qualification (Al-Maqrizi, 4, 1997: 394). There were inordinate competition for getting high posts among the educational and religious leaders in Egypt and the Levant. For example, Ibrahim Ibn al-Mi'mar satirized the judge Taqiy al-Din al-Subki (d. 756 AH/1355 AD), who moved from Egypt to Syria, and took up the Shafi'i jurisdiction in Damascus, and there was a sharp disagreement between them about taking over educational and religious posts (Ibn Iyas, 1983, 1/1:556).

As for the judge, Kamal al-Din 'Umar Ibn al-'Adim al-Hanafi (d. 811 AH/1408 AD), he was prominent example in this context, where he was a senior judge and engaged in *fatwa* and teaching. Despite his scientific status and high posts, they did not prevent his rivals and critics from criticizing him, highlighting the disadvantages about his way of dealing in the *waqf* sale and controlling their funds (Ibn Taghri Birdi, 8, 1999: 262-264; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 2:791-792; Ibn al-'Imad, 1992, 9:137-138). Ibn al-'Adim held the post as a judge in Aleppo and dealt with the exploitation of endowments and caused sale and corruption of many of them. Then, he paid money and bribed to occupy the post of the chief justice in Egypt in 805 AH/1402 AD and settled there. He continued on this approach to exploit his post in order to control the endowments and their resources in Egypt as well. Al-Maqrizi described Ibn al-'Adim by saying: "he was a bad judge." In another place, al-Maqrizi stated in this context: "anyone who wanted to sell or buy *waqf*, went to Ibn al-'Adim with money or high standing, and then he gave them whatever they want...". The phenomenon of selling *waqf*, dealing in bribery and

buying posts in exchange for money in the Mamluk state were widespread during the time of Ibn al-'Adim (Al-Maqrizi, 1998, 3:268; Al-Maqrizi, 1997, 6:220; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1999, 8:264; Al-Sakhawi, 1992, 6:65-66; Ibn Iyas, 1983, 12:667).

There were differences in teaching methods in the medieval ages between religious sciences (*al-'ulum al-naqliyya*) and philosophical sciences/ rational sciences (*al-'ulum al-'aqliyya*). While the study of religious sciences was mostly based on hearing, memorization, writing, explanation and interpretation; mental sciences were mainly based on research and scrutiny, interview, investigation, debate and discussion. Scholars' teaching methods in the late Mamluk period in Egypt and the Levant seemed to have confused and mixed between the various sciences, both transmitted and mental. This method of teaching led the Egyptian scholar Kamal al-Din al-'Idfuwi (d. 748 AH/1347 AD) to criticize these methods in religious sciences, and he also criticized teachers for their scientific level and teaching methods (Ibn Qadi Shuhba, 2, 1994: 519; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 1993, 1:535-536). Moreover, historians and poets mentioned the criticism of scholars who got in teaching posts without qualification or good management of the educational process, which negatively affects education and its staff, both scholars and students. Both Ibn Jama'a and al-'Almawi mentioned much criticism for teachers who did not have the competence in the profession and the ability to manage the educational process (Ibn Jama'a, 2012: 71; Al-'Almawi, 2004: 44).

In a poem by the historian Abu Shama al-Maqdisi (d. 665 AH/1267 AD), the sharpness of criticism for the conditions of education and schools in his reign appeared significantly. Abu Shama criticized teachers, students, those involved in the educational process and the way students rely on *Waqf* funds as scholarships. He also made sharp criticism for some scholars who control over the endowments of *madrasas* and their managements, teaching by cheating, getting closer to the rulers and the holders of authority, scholars' incompetence to educational posts, their lack of interest in science and their interest only in external manifestations (al-Maqdisi, 1, 1991: 91-102).

In light of this, majority of poets and scholars stressed on the importance of learners' good manners and ethics, as mentioned by the scholar Badr al-Din Ibn Jama'a in his famous book "*Tadhkirat al-Sami' wal-Mutakallim fi Adab al-'Alim wal-Muta'allim*". Many of these poets and scholars stated such ethics either in prose or poetry (Ibn Jama'a, 2012: 85-147; Al-Zurnuji, 1981: 76, 78-98; Al-'Almawi, 2004: 58-79; Al-Sam'ani, 1993: 183-381, 517). That's due to the fact that some scholars did not maintain the rules of ethics in lessons, education or discussions, and show their anger when discussing and arguing in lessons, as the scholar Abd al-'Aziz bin 'Ali al-Qudsi al-Hanbali (d. 846 AH/1442 AD) did with one of his students from Morocco (Al-Sakhawi, 1992, 4:224; Al-Najdi, 1996,

1:548).

## CONCLUSIONS

Mosques, *madrasas* and other religious and educational institutions had so much influence in the scientific renaissance and the flourishing of culture where the rulers and sultans in the medieval ages cared about the educational institutions. This renaissance gave the *ulama* strength and leadership posts in the management of institutions and scientific movement, which increased competition for these posts, and made *ulama*, writers and poets write about the description of the scientific movement and its leaders at this stage, whether it was praise, criticism, advice, recommendation to fix things, get closeness or flattery. Many poets and scholars had praised the rulers and sultans who established *madrasas* and other educational and religious institutions, allocated *waqfs* for their maintenance and disbursement, at the same time they vilified and criticized rulers, sultans and position owners who seized the funds of the endowments allocated to them and collected illegal funds. Poets not only criticized and praised rulers and sultans, but also wrote poems of criticism and praise for scholars. The praise poems for scholars were first to show gratitude them for their hard work, efforts and diligence in teaching knowledge and education spread, besides their leading, significant, religious and educational posts, and also for their interest in promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, this, in addition to praise scholar's behavioral and moral ethics. Critical poems had emerged and centered on the errors of some scholars, their negative scientific attitudes, religious posts, and their religious *fatwas* that left a sharp controversy among scholars. Criticism also extended to the appearance and the external view of scholars from dress or habits, which were distracting from the familiar and customary manners. A model of criticism appeared, which was concerned with the scholars who dealt with corruption and bribery, their interest in getting closer to the Sultans and rulers. Those scholars were known as the scholars of the Sultans or "worldly life scholars". The poets did not hesitate to direct criticism or vilification to what they see as deviation from morality, virtue and *shari'a*, also to those who obtain high posts without getting the knowledge that qualifies them. Some scholars, writers and historians had been critical of the scholars who got to teach without qualification or good management of the educational process and the deterioration of the conditions of education and schools. Besides, they criticized some scholars who took over the endowments of schools and their management and teaching by cheating. Unfortunately, this had a negative impact on education and its staff, scholars and students alike. They also criticized some scholars who did not have the rules of ethics in lessons, education or discussions a sense of virtuous and benign morals

towards the learners.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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