

## HOLY PROPHET HAZRAT MUHAMMAD'S ﷺ METHODS OF TEACHING AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*In Islam, teaching is declared as a sacred duty and teacher is a person who possesses knowledge. Teaching profession is the profession of Prophets. Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ is a great Prophet and teacher. Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ is the last prophet and has come to bring change in every field of life (Shah, 2010). He ﷺ employed different methodologies to paraphrase and convey "the message of ALLAH" to the masses. The purpose of inventing teaching methods was to convey message. These methods of teaching are authentic even today. This study was based on the literature, published articles and books related to the concept of teaching methodologies in Islamic historical perspective. This study provide a better understanding of teaching methodologies used by Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and its relevancy with present time period. Effective teaching always depends on the proper communication between teacher and student. The success of a teacher depends how strongly the teacher has grasp the teaching methods. Therefore, it is important that teachers must equip with knowledge of multiple teaching methodologies in order to fulfill the learning needs of students within the classroom environment. For this purpose, the personality of Holy prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ is ideal and a light of guidance in all aspects of human life.*

### Introduction

The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ is a confirmed teacher to mankind by the authority of ALMIGHTY in the widest and true sense of the words. According to the very first verses of the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was chosen by Allah as a Prophet and a teacher to teach true rules to humankind and guide them to the right path. The Quran Proclaims that Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is an excellent exemplar who possesses an exalted standards of character and is the last and final messenger to humankind.

Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ actions and words distinguish him as a teacher. There are many occasions where Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has explicitly stated teacher related terms in Hadith such as "I am here to answer your question", "Preaching", "Praying for knowledge", "Convey the knowledge", "Select a suitable time for teaching", "to memorize", "Recognize and remember", "Repeating", "Write" and "Teach" etc which identify and verify Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a teacher (Shah, 2010). Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ successfully taught and conveyed the Message of ALLAH to the people of Arab and thereby transformed the people who belongs to different religions into strong believers of ALLAH

within twenty-three years. The outcome of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ teaching was the emergence of the new world order and civilization that changed the course of history. (Zafer).

**“Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy” .**

(The Quran 14: 1)

All the roles referred above are essentially teaching which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ played throughout his life. These verses prove the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a teacher and was assigned to deliver the message of Allah. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself has also emphasized that his primary duty as a Prophet ﷺ is to teach by saying,

Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also used to pray from Allah to increase his knowledge.

**"My Lord, increase me in my knowledge".**

(The Quran 20: 114)

There are no limits of age or time in getting knowledge in Islam so everyone especially teachers should try to continuously upgrade their knowledge. Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ being the last prophet has delivered the message of ALLAH. He ﷺ has fulfilled his duties as last prophet. One of the beautiful aspects of Prophet ﷺ life is as a teacher who helps us to differentiate between right and wrong to the mankind (Naeem, 1995). A successful teacher changes his teaching methodology according to the students' requirement. The term teaching method define as a general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction. The teachers choose the teaching methods, which is most suitable for him.

Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ advice his companions that they should communicate others whatever they learn from him to spread the message of Allah ﷻ and knowledge. It was narrated by Hazrat Maaz bin Ans that Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ said

**“Who spread the knowledge, he gain the virtue until a single person follow the knowledge of that person”**

As narrated by Hazrat Abu Baker (RA) that Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said at place of Mina during the last Khutbah Hajjatul Wida.

It was narrated that Abu Bakrah said: **“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ delivered a religious speech on the Day of Sacrifice and said: ‘Let those who are present convey to those who are absent. For perhaps the one to whom it is conveyed will understand it better than the one who (first) hears it.’” (Sahih)**

(Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol 1, Hadith No, 233)

The purpose of inventing teaching methods was to convey message. As Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ mentioned in above Hadith to convey the message of that person who were not here or present somewhere else at that time were not able to hear the Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ word first hand. So the Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ employed different teaching methodologies to convey "the message of ALLAH" to the masses (Shireenzada, 2010).

Having realized the necessity to develop a knowledge-based society in an illiterate region, the Prophet initiated steps to develop the basic skills of learning among Arabs. The very first verses of the Qur'an probably would have highly motivated the Prophet.

**“Recite in the name of your Lord who created- Created man from a clinging substance- Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous- Who taught by the pen - Taught man that which he knew not” (The Quran 90: 1-5)**

These verses refer to the reading, writing, reciting, teaching, and understanding of the Qur'an as the basic necessary literacy skills in the teaching learning process. He ﷺ encouraged learning by memory, as there were only a few people in Makkah who could read and write. The Prophet ﷺ then made arrangements to teach reading and writing to his poor Companions in his mosque. Probably these initial steps to develop the basic skills among Arabs may be regarded as the first adult education program in the world. The basic methods of teaching are Memorization, reading, writing and speaking.

**Method of Memorization:** Prophet ﷺ introduced the method of memorization and memories the verses that were revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, which he ﷺ used to recite to his Companions. To preserve the verses, the Prophet ﷺ had to resort to the only natural human learning skill available at that time, namely, "to commit to memory". Now, this practice of committing the whole Quran to memory has become a religious duty, which led to the establishment of numerous educational institutions in various parts of the Islamic world for this purpose.

**Method of Writing:** The Qur'an refers that the Allah ﷻ as the One Who taught the use of the pen, taught man what he knew not. The Prophet ﷺ was highly committed to spreading the message of God, but in those days, there were very few people who knew reading and writing. Person well versed in the skill of writing were rarer to find than those who could read. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ made arrangements to write down whatever was revealed to him. In Madinah, after the establishment of a state, quite a large number of scribes were charged with performing specific duties. While some of them were responsible for writing down the revelations of the Prophet, others used to prepare drafts of official letters to be submitted for the approval of the Prophet. The Prophet introduced the system of affixing his official seal in the letters he sent, a system that was not known to Arabs, and more than 200 letters of the Prophet have survived and many more must have been lost.

**Method of Reading:** The prophet also introduces the method of reading by asking people to read the Holy Book.

**“Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that the highest form of prayer for his people was reading the Holy Book.”**

At another occasion Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said

**“He also said that more virtues among the believers of those who learn the Quran and taught it to others.”**

This method of the prophet ﷺ gave rise to a class of readers who later on followed in several specialist schools of reading. The style of expression and pronouncing of words was deeply influenced by “**Tarteel**” a method developed by the prophet. The recitation according to this method was neither quick. He used to pronounce one letter after another separately and distinctly and introduce pauses after every verse. The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also

emphasized on the sweet recitation of the Holy Book and such a person who recited Quran beautifully was known as Qari. At present, there are seven styles of reading the Holy Quran, taught in the traditional religious schools (Shah, 2010).

**Speaking Method/ Lecture Method:** The Prophet's ﷺ command over the language was extraordinary as He ﷺ was brought up by the tribe of Bani Sa'd bin Bakr known for the purity of their language. The tribes of the city of Makkah were known for the use of language to be simple, direct and forceful. The history of lecture has goes back to the time of creation of human when ALLAH addressed the angels with this method. Every Prophet was the teacher of his nation and almost all Prophets that come before Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ used this method to instruct their nations. Hazrat Shuaieb (AS) is known as “**Khateeb-ul-Ambia**”. This method was famous in time period of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ has too much skill in his lectures that he ﷺ is known as “**Fassih-ul-Arab**”. The whole Islam reached to Sahaba (R.A) with the help of this method. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ makes some changes in this method and makes it more simpler.

The positive points of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ during lecture were

- The tone of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ was too much clear
- The voice was so sweet and attractive with proper pitch
- Appropriate use of gestures with teaching
- He ﷺ spoke concisely with fewer words with more meaning.
- Explain the things slowly and with detail description that the listener were easily comprehend the points
  - His instructions used to be neither very short nor fast but clear so that any person sitting by his side could remember what he said.

Narrated Anas (R.A): “**Whenever the Prophet ﷺ spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greeting.**”

(Sahih Al Bukhari, Vol 1, Hadith No. 95)

His ﷺ final sermon during his *Hall* (pilgrimage) is a supreme example of an inspired speech on individual rights. His ﷺ carefully planned pauses and short intervals, his voice modulation to reach the climax, his ﷺ dramatic repetition of certain words and phrases present him like a highly professional speaker. Sitting on a red-colored camel, he grabbed the attention of the audience by the following opening remark. There were no books in the time period of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ. So this method was too much famous among teachers of that time period. Today this method is also well-known in higher classes, religious maddrasah and in other ceremonies. This method is useful for large classes and helpful for instructor to provoke student's interest in subject (Shireenzada, 2010)..

**Group Teaching:** In group teaching teachers provide opportunity to students to learn from each other. In the time period of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ the more examples are found of group teaching. Later on, when mosques were built then this method was considered

most appropriate one. Teachers sit at specific place in mosque and every student try to sit near the teacher. In the start of Islam there was no specific method to sit in gathering. Then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ makes a special group. There was no sitting arrangement in start of Islam. Sahaba (R.A) sits in the small groups. Then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ said why all of you sit separately and then advice to sit together.

Muhammad .ﷺ Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ also told the manners of group sitting. One time Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ strictly prohibited the people to disturb the discipline of group and ask sit where you get place in group without disturbing any other. Sometime the strength of Sahaba in group exceed from 60 but they continue the discussion in groups and revise the saying of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ . It was the benefit this group discussion which enable them to remember fully the saying of prophet Muhammad ﷺ before they left the group (Shireenzada, 2010).

**Question Answer Method:** In teaching learning process, the questions have specific importance. Such teaching method in which the teachers themselves do not ask questions from students and also do not allow students to ask any question from them then such teaching learning process cannot run successfully. Students take less interest in such type of lessons. This is why the question answer method is most useful technique. It helps to satisfy the curiosity of learners and it is considered as the biggest quality of teacher. Sometime teacher ask question to increase interest and attentiveness among his students. In Quran, Allah ﷻ has also uses this method and creates curiosity among humans to learn.

When we go back in history then we see this method first time used by Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ in right way during lecture . When Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ want to discuss the important points then order to grasp the attention of Sahaba (R.A) he used ask questions. If Sahaba (R.A) knows the question then they reply otherwise Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ explain them.

Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ motivate the Sahaba (R.A) for asking question by saying these

**“Knowledge is like a treasure box and its key is question”**

On another place Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ said

**“Question is the solution of uninformed person”**

Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ use a variety of ways of asking questions and most of them are still in use in current time. The purpose of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ of asking question was to develop critical thinking abilities in Sahaba (R.A). After full discussion when Sahaba (R.A) became curious with full attention then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave them the real message. Sometime Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ say something in this style which excite Sahaba to ask question about it. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ always replied with humble and modesty. So to answer the question is also required a skill.

Another dimension of his style was that he would never get upset or angry even if someone put awkward questions. Instead, he used to correct them by asking thought-



provoking questions. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ prohibits the Sahaba (R.A) for asking unnecessary questions. The style of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ was first to complete answer of one question then replied another question if someone interpret between. Through this method, the Prophet used to explain the importance of certain unknown things by reminding the people the importance they attach to certain known things. Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did this to create the curiosity of among his audience before starting the khutab and grasp their attention. Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ always asked questions which were always related to the lesson and appropriate for the students. So the Muslim teachers should also keep in his mind this method before starting their teaching.

Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also allow and encourage students to ask question and never show unwillingness to respond the question.

According to Hadith

Narrated ‘Abdullah (R.A): **I asked the Prophet ﷺ “which deed is the dearest to Allah?” He replied, “To perform the (daily compulsory) salat (prayers) at their (early stated fixed times.” I asked, “What is the next (in goodness)?” He replied, “To be good and dutiful to your parents.” I again asked. “What is the next (in goodness)?” He replied, “To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah’s Cause.”**

‘Abdullah added, **“These were told by the Allah’s Messenger ﷺ and if I had asked more, the prophet ﷺ would have told me more.”**

(Sahih Al buhari, Vol 1, Hadith No, 527)

Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ introduce the best way to enhance the learning among students by pleasing the students before giving the answer. (Shireenzada, 2010; Shah, 2010).

**Evaluation Method:** The concept of evaluation exists right from the beginning of Islam. As ALLAH said in Quran that ALLAH evaluate and test the virtue of pure Muslims. So Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ also ask some question from Sahaba (RA) to assess their understanding and praised them on giving right question and prayed for them. One time Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ ask from Hazrat Abu Manzer (RA) which verse of Quran is greater for you. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ always gives respect to intelligent students and encourage them.

One time Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sending a group to one place. Before sending them, the holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ listen the Quran from each person. One young person memorizes the sura Al-Baqrah and other lot of sura’s. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ give preference to this young person and appoint him leader over others. Which shows Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ was giving preference to the knowledgeable person. It was narrated by Ibn Umer

Narrated Ibn Umar (R.A) the prophet ﷺ said, **“Amongst the trees, there is a tree, the leaves of which do not fall and is like a Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree.” Everybody started thinking about of the date-palm tree. The other then asked, “Please**

inform us what is that tree, O Allah's Messenger is?" He ﷺ replied, "It is the date-palm tree."

(Sahih Al buhari, Vol 1, Hadith No, 62)

Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ on and off assess the Sahaba's (R.A) understanding regarding their instructions and if they were not respond to question properly then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ clarify it (Khalid, 1997).

**Discussion Method:** Discussion method is one of the oldest method. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ also solves the problems after discussion. The example of this was seen at the time Gazwah-e-Akhzab. After a detail discussion Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ agreed on the opinion of Hazrat Sulman Farsi(RA) to dig the Khandak around Madina for its safety.

This method is most appropriate to avoid later conflicts because Islam is also the religion of Peace. ALLAH also prefer this method to avoid conflict among people and also advice Hazrat Muhammad (SAW)

**And consult them in the matter.**

(The Quran 3: 159)

In another place in Quran:

**And whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves.**

(The Quran 42: 38)

**Demonstration Method:** This is also one of the best method follow by Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The prestigious characteristic of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ was that he ﷺ always practically follow those instructions which he ﷺ gave to others. Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also advice that the Muslims must follow it first by themselves which they said to others. The people of Arab didn't like the daughters, Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ carry the daughter of Hazrat Zainb during offering prayers which shows the practical example of love with daughters in front of Arab people.

One person ask from Hazrat Ayesha (RA) that What was the courtesy of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ?

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) replied: Are you not reading the Quran? The Quran teaching in form of words but Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ practically apply it.

If Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ give orders to help poor people then he ﷺ firstly obey it by himself. Then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ advice to forgive enemy then himself ﷺ was the first to forgive his enemy. Even Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ need a cloths but if someone ask you ﷺ then Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ give own shawl to him.

There are the lot of examples related to Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and some are as under. These are such characteristic which knowledge not only provided by Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ but also explain it with their own practical demonstration.

Sometimes he used to answer questions followed by a practical demonstration. Once when somebody asked him about the method of doing ablution, he called for water and

practically showed him the way of doing ablution. So the sum up of this whole discussion is the quality of successful teacher is to follow the instruction which they give to their students. This is not only ethical but also develops a good impression in front of their students (Naeem, 1995; Khalid, 1997)

In Quran strictly prohibited the Muslim to not instruct others such things which you don't apply on yourself.

**O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?**

(The Quran 61: 2)

**Method of Observation and Correction:** The Prophet used to pay attention to the actions of people around him so that he could teach them. A man entered the mosque and prayed, while the Prophet was watching him without the knowledge of others. When he finished he turned and greeted the Prophet and the Prophet told him to go and pray again as he did not pray correctly. When this happened for the second time the man asked the Prophet to teach him the correct way of praying, which the Prophet did in detail. Similarly, the Prophet pointed out to a person that he did not wash his feet properly while doing ablution for prayer and instructed him to repeat the act of washing the feet (Shah, 2010)

Narrated Abdullah bin Amr (R.A): **Once Allah Messenger ﷺ remained behind us in a journey. He joined us while we were performing ablution for the Asr prayer which was overdue. We were just passing wet hands over our feet (not washing them properly) so the Prophet ﷺ addressed us in a loud voice and said twice or thrice, :save your heels from the fire."**

(Sahih Al buhari, Vol 1, Hadith No, 96)

## Discussion

This study focused on the effectiveness of the Prophet's methods of teaching which he had initiated roughly 1400 years ago and to find out how much they are relevant to-day. Since the Prophet's period, his teaching legacy has become part of any literacy programme in the Muslim world and even beyond (Sadique, 1998). Under the "Reading" programme, emphasis was given to reading the Qur'an. Besides Arab Muslims, the converts too learned Arabic in order to read the Qur'an, and, as Islam spread, Arabic became the medium of communication in many parts of the Islamic world. In the field of "Writing" the art of Calligraphy initiated by the Prophet which began with the art of writing the verses of the Qur'an beautifully well developed into a full-fledged art and design work not only in the Arabic language writing but in other languages too. The art of memorization had a tremendous effect in the world of Islam. Memorizing the whole is the process initiated by the Prophet has made it possible to keep the Quran intact and complete safe. Hence, one can find a number of Islamic institutions established exclusively for this purpose and providing free board and lodging to the students. Memorization is also a part of the', modern educational system where in the students are tested with questions like:"Quote from memory": The memorization of the multiplication tables by the elementary school pupils has become an added advantage to them in mathematical calculations. Practical demonstration by the teacher is used all over the world. Explanation of any idea by discussion or question answer is an accepted norm in the academic world for easy understanding of any subject (Elahi, 2004).



## Conclusion

Many of the methods of the Prophet ﷺ that entailed are the part of modern teaching practices. Selecting a most suitable method for learning is an important factor in the successful teaching-learning process, which is being followed normally by the teachers in all educational institutions (Shah, 2010). Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ shared a passion for teaching and his contribution to education is in no way less than his contribution to any other field of human activity. Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ communication abilities, teaching skills and behavior made him an effective instructor in the field of education in all over the World. Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ consciously make efforts to change the educational, social and ethical setups of Arabia. The prime theme of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ teaching revolved around Faith in one ALLAH and The Day of Judgment. Having these great themes in mind, Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ started setting his goals of education, starting school in Madinah, appointing teachers, arranging supervisor and inventing strategies to promote literacy which indicates a systematic approach of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The strategies which introduce by Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ were unique in nature that worked wonders not only in the spiritual field but also in the field of acquiring knowledge.

These educational endeavors of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ revolutionized the life and attitude of the Arabs and they become the torchbearer of a new civilization and develop the skills to lead others. The companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ became great teachers and the sayings of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ kindled the thirst for knowledge. Within a hundred years after the passing of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his message had touched the hearts and lights of millions of people in the world. The world of Islam became the house of education for the whole world. This was all done because of the whole effort of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. By following the teaching of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ a new room of evolution dawned among the early Muslims and they mastered various arts and became pioneers in many branches of learning.

It's a result of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ efforts that the knowledge spread as soon as possible in all Muslim states and Muslims also learn the other knowledge. Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the teacher of all mankind. So the person who wants to learn the skills of teaching, methods of teaching, sources of education and manner of giving education, they must develop a strong connection with the prestigious personality of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ and get benefited with the teaching of him ﷺ. In Pakistan, the traditional method mostly follows in institutes. Being a Muslim teachers we must take guidance from the teaching patterns of Holy prophet Muhammad ﷺ. And adopt such teaching strategies that are useful in providing valuable knowledge to learners with great understanding.

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