

THE TEACHING METHOD AND TECHNIQUES OF THE PROPHET (S.A.W)



Teaching Methods of Nabi (s.a.w)

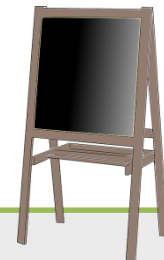


Allah has chosen His noble Messenger SAW and made him perfect in every respect. The perfection can be seen in SAW as a teacher. He SAW said: “Verily, I have been sent as a teacher” (*Ibn Majah*)

Allah bestowed the full measure of His favour and grace upon the Prophet SAW and confirmed this in the Quran:

And HE has taught you that which you did not know. And ever has the favour of Allah upon you been great (*Surat Al Nisa*) 4:113

The Prophet SAW used to select the best and most effective methods of teaching, thus helping the listener to clearly understand and remember the knowledge he taught: you will also notice from the ahadith presented here that there is a variety in his teaching methods and styles. It was indeed Allah who had taught him that which he did not know.

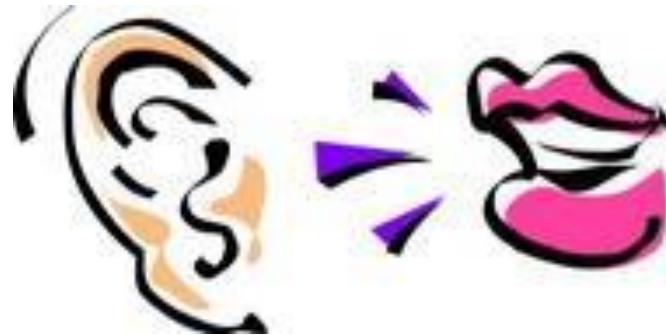


Combining Verbal instructions with practical teaching:

This was Prophet's SAW most important teaching method. Prophet SAW used to first practise what he preached, and then people would follow his example.

In this hadith the response was a practical demonstration which would make things clearer to inquire than his words alone by doing the benefit was for the inquirer as well as for others.

“It is related from Abdullah inb Amr ibn Al As that a man came to the Prophet SAW and asked “O Messenger of Allah, how to perform Tuhur (ie; purification)? The Prophet SAW asked for water in a vessel and he performed ablution and said if anyone does more or less than this, he has done wrong and transgressed or done wrong. *(Abu Dawud)*



Gradual Teaching:

Gradual teaching was the Sunnah of the Prophet SAW, he observed the order of importance, giving precedence to what was more important. This made learning process easier and more effective.

Muadh RA said: the messenger of Allah sent me to Yemen saying: You will find yourself among a community of people of the book, so first call them to testify that there is no deity of worship besides Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept this, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers during the day and the night. If they accept this tell them that Allah has made paying Sadaqah obligatory for them. *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

The above Hadith points out the importance of prioritizing in the fields of da'wah and education. Asking people to perform many religious duties all at once will repulse and chase them away from Islam. Likewise overloading students will lead to failure.



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Summing up then giving the details:

The technique attracted to the listener attention to what he (SAW) would say, and raised questions and anticipation in the listener's mind- thus leading to better understanding and learning.

Abu Bakrah Nafi ibn Harith RA said: Prophet SAW said: Shall I inform you about the greatest of the great sins? He repeated it three times. We said: Yes O Messenger of Allah. He said "Associating partners with Allah and being ungrateful to ones parents. He then sat up after reclining and said uttering falsehood and giving false testimony. *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

The Prophet SAW used to sum up countable things, then list them: It is reported from ibn Abbas RA that the Prophet SAW said:

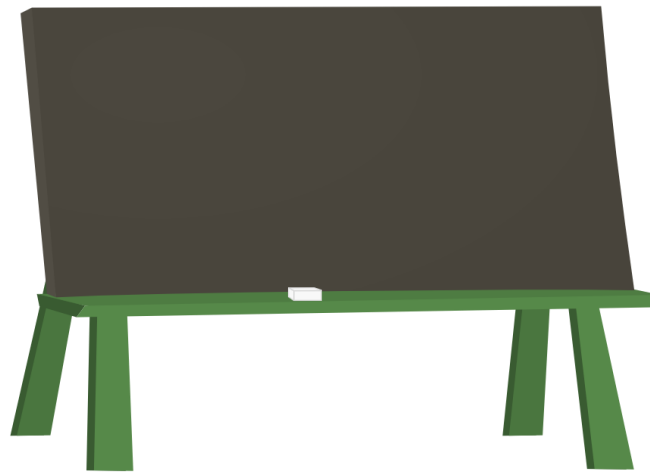
"Take advantage of five before five" your youth before your senility; your health before your sickness; your wealth before your poverty; your leisure before your occupation; and your life before your death: *(Al Hakim)*



Moderation in Teaching:

Abu Wa'il Shafiq ibn Salamah said: Ibn Mas'ud RA used to remind people; ie; give a religious talk every Thursday.

Once a man said to (Ibn Mas'ud) I wish you would remind us every day, Abu Abd Al Rahman. He said What prevents me from doing that is that I do not want to bore you. I follow a method of preaching similar to that of the Prophet SAW who took care not to make us feel bored” *(Bukhari and Muslim)*



Using a variety of teaching methods:

To clarify things the Prophet SAW used hand gestures, drawings, Parables, examples, metaphors and true stories of former people. The Prophet SAW sometimes held the hand or the shoulders of the listeners. Prophet SAW also ordered his companions to learn foreign languages to write things down.

Sahl ibn Sa'd Al Sa'idi RA said: the Prophet SAW said: I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be together in Jannah like those, putting his index and middle fingers together leaving only little space between them. (*Bukhari*)

It is related from Zainub bint Jahsh mother of the Believers RA that once the Prophet SAW came to her while he was upset and said: there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah. Woe to the Arabs from an imminent evil. An opening has been made today in the wall of Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog) like this and he made a circle with his thumb and forefinger. Zainub bint Jahsh said: I said O messenger of Allah, will we perish when the righteous are among us: The Prophet SAW said: Yes when wickedness and immorality are rampant.” (*Bukhari and Muslim*)



The Prophet SAW used Smiles and metaphors in teaching:

Jabir RA reported that Prophet SAW said: “The metaphor of the five daily prayers is that of a flowing river at the door of one of you in which he washes five times a day” *(Muslim)*

It is related from Ibn Umar RA that the Prophet SAW said: “the metaphor of someone who knows the Quran by heart is that of the owner of tied camels. If he attends to them, they stay with him. If he lets them go, they wander away” *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Scholars of literacy appreciation agree that metaphors and parables help a great deal in highlighting details and unveiling hidden meanings. Allah has mentioned plenty of them in His honorable book and the Prophet SAW followed the example of the Quran.

Metaphor

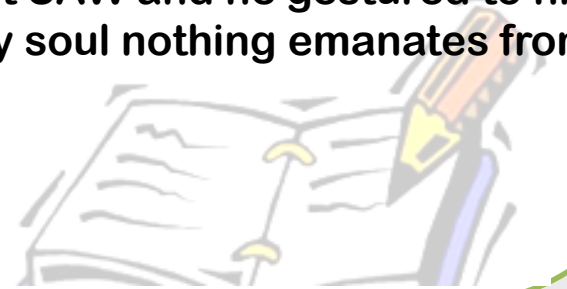


The Prophet SAW also used to writing as a means of education:

The Prophet SAW had more than fifteen scribes. Some of them wrote down the verses of the Quran, some were specialized in writing his letters that he sent to various places and to kings inviting them to Islam and some were specialized in writing other stuff.

The Prophet SAW gave permission to some of his Companions RA to write down some of his hadith and even ordered others to write it down.

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al AS RA said: I used to write everything which I heard from the Prophet SAW. My intention was to preserve it. The people of Quraish then prohibited me from doing so saying, Do you write down everything you hear even though the Messenger of Allah is human, who speaks both while angry and when pleased? So I stopped writing and then mentioned those to the Prophet SAW and he gestured to his mouth and said: write for by the One in whose hand is my soul nothing emanates from my mouth except the truth. *(Abu Dawud)*



The Prophet SAW encouraged some of his Companions to learn foreign languages:

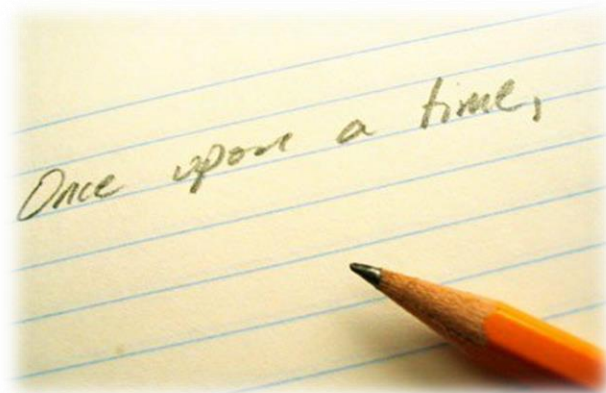
Kharijah ibn Zayd ibn Thabit reported that his father Zayd ibn Thabit said: The Prophet SAW ordered me to learn the Syriac or Aramaic language for him. The Prophet SAW said: By Allah I do not trust the Jews to translate my letter”. Zayd said: so I learnt it for him in just a fortnight. After that I used to write down whatever letters he wanted to send to the Jews and I would read for him the letters they sent him (*Tirmidhi*)



The Prophet SAW used Narratives and true stories of former people as a means of education:

It is related from Abu Hurayrah RA that the Prophet SAW said: “A man set out to visit a brother of his in another town and Allah appointed an angel to wait for him on his way. When he came to him, the angel asked: have you done any favour for him he replied no it is only that I love him for the sake of Allah. The angel said: I am a messenger of Allah sent to you to tell you that Allah loves you as you love this man for His sake *(Muslim)*

The Prophet SAW used stories to teach Muslims. Storytelling has a positive impact in people who listen to stories with attentive hearts and minds. Story telling is also a means of guidance.



Teaching Abstract Concepts through Concrete Examples:

Jariri ibn Abdullah RA said: we were sitting with the Prophet SAW when he looked at the moon on a night of the full moon, He said you will see your Lord as you see this moon – in all clarity and ease (*Bukhari and Muslim*)

In the hadith we can see how the Prophet SAW made use of a momentary occurrence ie; the Companions looking at the full moon, in order to explain to them that for believers who enter Jannah in the Hereafter seeing Allah will be clear and trouble free.

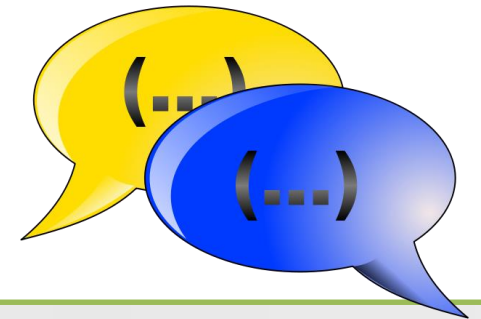


Teaching by means of Dialogue and Logical Arguments:

In teaching his honorable Companions RA the Prophet SAW sometimes used the approach of calculated give and take between speaker and listener to erase a false belief from a person or to install a correct one.

Abu Umamah RA reported that a young man came to the Prophet SAW and said: O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to commit fornication ie; sexual intercourse out of wed lock, the Companions RA scolded him and said: “Hush! Hush! But the Prophet SAW said: come closer So he came closer and sat down near him.

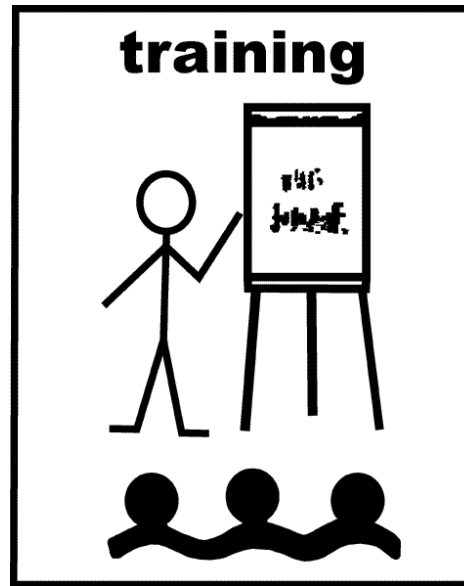
Notice how the Prophet SAW uprooted from the young man’s mind his attachments to fornication by means of a calculated dialogue and logical argument without mentioning TO HIM THE Quran verses that forbid fornication and that threaten adulterers.



Training the Learners to Improve Their Deductive Skills

The Prophet SAW sometimes trained his companions RA using riddles so as to improve their deductive skills. This revealed their level of intelligence and knowledge, stirring their rational thinking and thereby activated and expanded their faculties.

Deductive reasoning should be encouraged. Using metaphors and similes helps people understand things better.



Teaching by Analogy:

The Prophet SAW used this technique when his companions were confused using Islamic rulings.

Ibn Abbas RA reported that a woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Prophet SAW and said: My mother made a vow to go on Hajj, but did not perform Hajj before she died. Shall I perform Hajj on her behalf? “Yes” he replied perform Hajj on her behalf. If your mother owed debt, would you not have paid it? Pay Allah debt for Allah has more right to be paid off.” (*Bukhari and Muslim*)

Through this analogy the Prophet SAW showed them the ruling and made them understand what had never before crossed their minds.

Analogies

