

Qualities of a Teacher in the Light of Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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Abstract

The main aim of this research manuscript is to explore the qualities of a teacher because a teacher is the person who transforms the new generation into good human beings. Every nation must whole heartedly focus and invest on the grooming of their next generation if that nation aspires to develop in every field of life by leaps and bounds. This can be done if education is prioritized by the state by investing in the teachers and system of education nurturing their young lot. A teacher must possess outstanding qualities of the head and heart and should also inculcate sublime qualities among their pupils so that their nation would progress tremendously as the Prophet (PBUH) was a great teacher of all times because he had superb qualities as a teacher and is a model of excellence for all human beings in every field of life. Thus, he transformed his followers into global leaders by inculcating outstanding qualities among them. Consequently, they also became great leaders of the future world. So, teachers can learn the excellent qualities of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a teacher in the modern world so that they may not only engage their students in a meaningful way but also make their classroom an interesting, enjoyable and effective place. The next generation is groomed and trained for their future and its challenges.

Keywords: Qualities, Teacher, Development, Teachings, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Introduction

The Quran declares Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a model of excellence for the whole of mankind,

“Verily, in the messenger of Allah, ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much.”¹ The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) as a teacher, in fact, is a model of excellence for all of us to follow. The messenger of Allah (PBUH) had an exemplary character. He was the greatest teacher mankind has ever known. Whenever the Prophet(PBUH) would speak, his words would leave a great impact on his listeners. And everyone would take great pleasure talking to him. A better understanding of Islam would consequently develop when a look will be cast on his qualities as a teacher. He was firm in his beliefs and teachings. A good teacher is recognized when an opportunity to educate students arises, even if it is not in a traditional setting, he avails of it. Other than the Holy Prophet (PBUH), no better example can be cited. His speech had no defect or unnecessary brevity; the words came from his lips one after another like pearls. Whoever heard these words, remembered them easily and got mesmerized from him. The qualities of a good teacher may be enumerated according to the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These qualities will be discussed in greater detail:

1-Dealing students with a smile on face

Teachers should talk to students in a very good manner and meet them while having a smile on face. Their language is to be soft and sweet.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once saw Hz Abu Hurairah (RA) who was suffering from starvation. The Prophet (PBUH) recognized him, smiled and took him with himself and instructed him to bring all students of the Porch (Suffah) in Masjid-e-Nabwi. There was some milk brought to him on that occasion. It was given to Hz Abu Hurairah and others to drink. Then the left over milk was taken by him.²

From this anecdote, it is clear that the hearts of the companions were won over by the Prophet (PBUH). In this way, a very significant lesson is learnt that the hearts of students particularly the poor would be won over and their worries can easily be overcome through a soft attitude. The teachers should understand them just by looking at their faces. If there is anything wrong, they should be consoled and bucked up, their problems should be resolved in a good way.

2-Wisdom in the approach towards students

¹The Holy Quran 33:21

²The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, The chapter on Ar-Riqaq, hadith no: 6452

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The teachers should deal with their students in a very wise and sensible way so that there is no problem faced by their students. The focus should remain on lessons and students so that no disintegration is caused in the institution.

Once milk was presented to the Prophet (PBUH), on his right side, a villager was sitting while on the right side, there were some major companions. Yet, he offered the milk to the villager because this was a tradition to start giving something to the person sitting on the right side.¹

In this way, once milk was presented to him, at that time, a boy named Ibn-e-Abbas (RA) was sitting on the right side while the major companions were sitting on the left side, the Prophet (PBUH) sought permission from this boy to let the major companions drink before him.²

From both these hadiths, it becomes clear that the Prophet (PBUH) did not seek permission from the villager but sought permission from Ibn-e-Abbas (RA). It teaches teachers to be wise and sensible in dealing with their students. All students should not be dealt with in the same way. Some students are to be brought around by talking to them, some are to be reprimanded lonely while some are to be warned in the class. So a teacher is to decide how to deal with each and every student.

3-Let students sit closer

Teachers must make students understand that attendance at the institution is not sufficient for the acquisition of knowledge. To come on time, sit closer to the teacher and attend to the lessons of a teacher silently and attentively are a few conditions for the acquisition of knowledge. The advantage of sitting beside a teacher is that his teacher will keep a special eye on him.

The Prophet (PBUH) once instructed his companions to attend the sessions of the remembrance of Allah and get closer to the leader, the person who is away from a good company, will lag behind in paradise though he would be in the paradise.³

¹ The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, Kitab ul Ashrabah, Chapter on Al aimen fal aimenfi sharbe, hadith no: 5619.

² IBID, Book of Al-ashrabah, chapter on Hal Yastoaun Al rajula men yaminihe, hadith no: 840/2.

³ Sunan-e-Ibn-e Daud, Suleman Bin Ash'ath, Kitab-ul-Salath, chapter on danuminu al Imam Endal Maugizah, hadith no:1108

From this hadith, it becomes evident that students may be asked to get closer to their teacher if they are sitting away so that they would listen to their teachers attentively and understand very well.

4-Three rights of a student

Hz Abdullah Bin Umar (RA) says that once the Prophet (PBUH) lagged behind from his companions but soon arrived at the exact time of the congregational prayer. At that time, they were taking ablution in haste, their feet were left dry, the Prophet (PBUH) observed them and said two or three times,” There is punishment for those heels which get dry.”¹

From the above mentioned hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), three rights of a student can be derived:

- A teacher should not be satisfied in only the transfer of knowledge to students, rather should also focus on looking after their morals.
- Secondly, sometimes, if there is the need of speaking loudly to students, teachers should be louder in speaking to them so that students may benefit as much as they can. Otherwise, there is no benefit in speaking and teaching.
- Lastly, if students are not able to comprehend their teacher, then teachers should make them understand again and again as the Prophet (PBUH) would, sometimes, repeat a point three times, once he delivered a sermon three times on the request of Hz Zimar (RA).²

Therefore, teachers may repeat lessons more than once so that students would not feel difficulty in understanding and clarifying their concepts.

5-To answer students’ questions but to add something useful

Hz Ibn-e-Umar (RA) said that once someone asked the Prophet (PBUH) about what the dress code for a pilgrim is, the Prophet (PBUH) said that he should not wear turban, pyjama, shirt, raincoat, and painted dress, shoes, rather should put on the leather shoes which may be cut like shoes.³ We also learn from this hadith that if a student asks about something which is explained but if it is essential to add more details, then the teacher should

¹ Sunan-e-Ibn-e Daud, Suleman Bin Ash’ath, Kitab-ul-Salath, chapter on danuminu al Imam Endal Maugizah, hadith no:1108

²Sahih-ul-Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijjaj, Kitabul Jumah, chapter on Salath and Khutbah, hadith no: 280/1

³ The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, Kitab –ul-Ilm, Bab-e-amr, Ijabus-sail bi aksar-e-ma sa’la, hadith no: 134

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not hesitate to add. Allah Almighty says in the Quran’ “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.”¹

It is also clear from this verse that a teacher should keep silent if he does not know about anything asked by his students. And there is no shame to say “Laa Adri (I do not know).” It will increase the credibility of this teacher who says so because only Allah is Omni-knowing.

6-To make students understand and memorize

Teachers should try their level best to bring about the understanding of their students and clarify their concepts. In this connection, Hz Abu Hurairah (RA) once asked the Prophet (PBUH), O the Messenger of Allah! I hear many a hadith from you but I forget. The Prophet (PBUH) instructed him to spread a sheet of cloth. He spread it and the Prophet (PBUH) touched it with his both hands and told him to cover his chest with it. He covered his chest with it and then he never forgot anything.

It can easily be learnt from this hadith that a teacher should try to bring about any possible improvement in the understanding and retention of his students.

7-Teaching according to the capabilities of one’s students

Hz Ali (RA) says that once the Prophet (PBUH) told us to speak to the people in the way that they would understand, would you like Allah and His Messenger to be denied and disobeyed? ²

If someone would not understand what is conveyed to him, then he would clarify the concept of others as well. Therefore, it becomes evident that a student must be educated in accordance with his capability not beyond his capacity.

8-Consolation of Students

Dealing with students in a good way is essential if a teacher wants to improve his relation with them. He should encourage them to acquire knowledge with zest.

Hz Umar (RA) says that once the Prophet (PBUH) saw a dream in which he was given a cup of milk and he drank it well. Then he gave me that cup

¹The Holy Quran 17:36

² The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, Kitab-ul- Ilm, Bab-ul-hifz, hadith no: 2021

of milk to me. People asked him its interpretation and he said that the milk meant knowledge.¹

From this hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), it is clear that students who are mature and sensible or of a greater age may, off and on, be invited on a cup of tea or a meal with the permission of the higher authority in an institution. In this way, they will be encouraged. Consequently, they will develop love for their teachers and focus more on their academics. Secondly, the teacher will be blessed with the munificence from the side of Allah as well.

9-Giving vent to indignation if it is useful for students

If a teacher thinks that it useful to be angry with his students, he may be angry in a controlled way so that his students might be transformed positively. Hz Abu Masood (RA) says that once I saw a companion telling the Prophet (PBUH) that I am about to miss my prayers led by so and so companion. The Prophet (PBUH) was so indignant that I had never seen him so angry. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said that the leader of congregational prayer must lead the congregation in such a way that the recitation of the Quran is reduced so that the patient, weak and needy people may not feel the difficulty.²

This is a very interesting hadith from which many lessons may be learnt that any complaint against a teacher may be heeded and investigated into. And the complaint may not be disregarded on the basis that this complaint has lodged by a student, rather, it should be addressed in a positive way. Secondly, indignation may be expressed against a wrong act done by anyone so that a positive change is brought about. But the expression of one's anger should not be the aim, rather, farsightedness may be displayed by reforming students.

Furthermore, this is the responsibility of a good teacher to make the punished students realize that they are not punished for the sake of chastisement but for the sake of their welfare. If students realize that their teacher is sincere and loving even in chastising them, then there will be no reaction from the side of students and they would bear the brunt of their teachers' strictness and punishment.

¹Majma-ul-Zawaid, Nur-ul-Din-al-Haythai, Kitab-ul-Manaqib, Chapter on the status of Abdullah Bin Abbas, Akbar sellers Lahore, March 2018 (translated by Muhammad Mohiyuddin Jahangir), hadith no: 10010

²The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, kitab-ul-Ilm, Chapter on anger during sermon and education, 19/1

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9-Punctuality/regularity

Time in this world is the most valuable resource and treasure which is granted to all the people whether they are poor or rich. Now they need to utilize it in a cautious way. Those who utilize it carefully, are successful and happy in life and those who waste it, it wastes them in return and consequently become unsuccessful in life.

Time is like a piece of ice in a hot season, if it is left unused, it will be wasted. Rather, it can be utilized too cool down a glass of water to quench one's thirst. Teachers and learners should be careful in the utilization of time.

It is like a precious pearl which is priceless in the world. It can be used to gain the consent of Allah and the everlasting boons of this world and the hereafter can be obtained with the help of time. It must be usefully utilized in every good activity.

The life of the Prophet (PBUH) is a beacon of light for the whole of mankind. He is a role of model for everyone. There is not even a single moment he wasted in life. The Prophet (PBUH) says in a hadith that if a person does not fast even for a single day in the month of Ramazan without any plausible reason or disease, if he fasts for the whole of his life after the month of Ramazan, he will never get the reward of this month.¹

A very significant message is also given to the people that every activity is to be performed on time, otherwise, its value will be decreased and its benefit will vanish.

Therefore, a teacher should be cautious in making use of time when he is with his pupils or he is working for them. He should reach for lessons on time and invest his time on them so that their time is not squandered.

10-Justice towards students

A teacher is supposed to deal with his students with justice and equity. The Quran says,

“Verily, Allah commands you to be just and to do favor.”²

¹ Jami-ul-Tirmizi, Muhammad Bin Isa, kitab-us-Salath, chapter on not fasting in the month of Ramazan deliberately, 103/1

² The Holy Quran 16:90

At another place, Allah Almighty says,

“I am commanded to establish justice amongst you.”¹

The Prophet (PBUH) once said that the previous communities were destroyed because they would not deliver justice despite having the laws of justice. By God! If my daughter, Fatimah, would steal, I would cut off her hands.²

In another hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) instructs the believers to fear Allah and establish justice in the affairs of children.³

From these verses of the Quran and hadiths, it becomes evident that a teacher is to be careful in dealing with students in a just way while chiding or punishing them.

A good teacher, undoubtedly, thinks his class as his family. A father treats his children with justice and does not differentiate between them. He establishes equality, mutual love and collaboration among them. The students of his class love one another. They enjoy to work with one another. They help one another in lessons and life and as a result, advance in life. Owing to the teacher's encouragement, a culture of help, guidance and justice develops and students learn a lot and progress in life.

11-Affection for students

A teacher should be kind, soft and affectionate to his students. He should always not be angry with them, rather, deal them in a soft way. He should speak in a respectable way so that they may benefit from him in lessons easily.

The Prophet (PBUH) says that speaking a good word is a charity (sadaqah).⁴

He once told his companions,

“Refrain from the fire even if you have a half date (give it as a charity) and it is not available with you, then speak a good word.”⁵

Therefore, it is very essential for a teacher to treat his pupils in a soft and affectionate way so that the teaching-learning process continues smoothly and effectively.

¹ The Holy Quran 42:15

² Sahih Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijjaj, Kitab-ul-Hudood, chapter on cutting off the hands of a thief, 64/2.

³ IBID, Kitabul Buhath, Bab Karahatu- tafzeel Baghde Awauladihe, 37/2

⁴ The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, Kitabul adab, chapter on speaking a good word, 890/2.

⁵ IBID chapter on good speech, 890/2

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12-Reform wisely through sermon and negotiation not through reprimand

If a student is found involved in a guilt, he should not be humiliated or defamed. Efforts must be made to reform him through sermon and negotiations.

These students are the future of a nation. They should not be converted into defiant and rebellious citizens. Once, Hz Abu Dardah (RA) had to pass through a huge crowd having surrounded a man. The people were beating and abusing him. He asked them about the reason, they replied that he has committed a big sin. Hz Abu Dardah (RA) advised them not to abuse and beat him, rather, make him round by advising him and be indebted to Allah for saving you from this sin.¹

Abusive language and physical punishment should be avoided while grooming and teaching the taught because they learn what their teachers do and say. A responsible use of tongue and sensible behavior must be displayed in tackling the young generation.

The Prophet (PBUH) once said,

“When a man gets up in the morning, all his parts of body speak to the tongue humbly, fear Allah in our affairs (take some pity on us) as we are connected with you, if you do rightly, we will be right and if you are not right, we will not be right.”²

A well-known Arabic verse says that the wounds caused by the spears may heal one day but the wounds caused by a tongue can never be healed.

So care must be taken by teachers when they speak. They should speak responsibly and wisely so that their students would speak with others in a good way.

12-Unique approach in Teaching-Learning process

Teachers should adopt new strategies to teach and groom their pupils so that they would think in an innovative way and learn with great zest. Teachers should not teach in one method/ strategy only. Various strategies should be applied in teaching-learning process like teaching while opening

¹Hikaayat-e-Sahabah (Stories of the lives of the companions), Muhammad Zakariya, Madania Publishers, Lahore, P.209

²Sahih Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijjaj, Kitab-ul-Hudood, chapter on cutting off the hands of a thief, 64/2

a book, sometimes without a book, sometimes using the method of story-telling, sometimes flipped classroom method may be used, sometimes using the whiteboard, sometimes having a useful conversation, sometimes sharing a video clip or using the technique of questioning, sometimes revising lessons, sometimes guiding and motivating them to work and sometimes, listening to their problems and advising them and sometimes, the exemplification method may be applied.¹

In short, only one strategy/technique of teaching should not be applied, rather, various techniques may be used so that they will not feel bored in lessons and would be interested in class and be waiting for their teacher(s) so that they may enjoy their teacher's company and learn more.

The task of a teacher is not an easy one, rather, it is very demanding and sacrificing as this is the profession of prophets. The nature is so difficult that this profession was assigned to them.

13-Calling students by name

A teacher should call students by names so that they may feel encouraged and pay more attention to lessons. They feel a kind of happiness when their teachers know their names. They start liking them and their subjects by creating a special affiliation with each other. It is very important to note that students should not be called by any derogatory names.

The Prophet (PBUH) came to know about the intention of a tribe named Banu-Salmah to bring their residences closer to the mosque. He addressed them in the following way,

“O Banu-Salmah! Adhere to your houses as the steps to the mosques are counted.”²

Once Hz Abu Saeed (RA) was addressed by the Prophet (PBUH) in the following way,

“O Abu Saeed! Paradise is meant for the person who believes Allah as God, Islam as his religion and Muhammad as his messenger.”³

Hz Abu Saeed (RA) was so much happy at this that he requested the Prophet (PBUH) to repeat it and the Prophet (PBUH) did so.

¹Effective Teaching Strategies, Roy Killen, Thomson Social Science Press, South Melbourne, Australia, 2003, Third Edition, P.19

²Sahih Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijajj, Kitabul Masajid, chapter on mosques and places of worship, 230//1

³Sahih Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijajj, Kitabul amarah, chapter on Allah has fixed status for Mujahideen, 130/2

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It is clear from these hadiths that students should be called by names so that they develop intimacy and consolation. It is interesting to note that the Prophet (PBUH) repeated calling Abu Saeed (RA) by his name.

Dr Fazal Ilahi mentions the saying of Hz Imam Ibn-e-Jamrah that uttering pleasing words to the questioner before answering him is the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).¹

14- To appreciate the good traits of students

The appreciation for others always brings benefits in every field of life. If there are some drawbacks in some students, subordinates and children, and they are appreciated for their good qualities, they would overcome their shortcomings gradually. If a student fails in any subject, he should not be discouraged, rather, he should be talked to in the way that he would feel encouraged to target to improve. Telling students such sentences “you can do it” or “you can do wonders” produces a great impact on students. Teachers must be positive and never get disappointed with their students in life. If they are continuously encouraged, they would perform outstandingly in life.

Allah Almighty appreciates Hz Noh (AS) by declaring him,

“Verily, he was a thankful man.”²

At another place, Allah Almighty appreciates Hz Ibrahim,

“No doubt, Ibrahim was very patient, caring and soft hearted.”³

Similarly, Hz Ismail is appreciated by Allah Almighty in the Quran,

“No doubt, he was very true to his word, his messenger and prophet.”⁴

Once the Prophet (PBUH) showered praises on Hz Abu Musa Ashari (RA), the pupil of the Prophet for his beautiful recitation and physical fascination,

¹Nabikareem Bahesiyyat-e- Mualim (The Prophet (PBUH) as a Teacher), Dr Fazal Ilahi, Qudusiya Islamic Press, Lahore, 2013, P-132

² The Holy Quran 17:3

³ The Holy Quran 12:70

⁴ The Holy Quran 19:54

“O Abu Musa! You have been bestowed upon a sweet voice like Daud.”¹

The Prophet (PBUH) praised Hz Ubbe Bin Kaab (RA) in amazing words,

“O Abu Manzar! Congratulations to you on the acquisition of knowledge.”²

From the above mentioned verses and hadiths, it can easily be learnt that teachers should appreciate their students for their good qualities and award them various rewards or at least, they should be given a written note of appreciation with prayers and good wishes.

15-Greeting students and cheering up them

When students visit their teachers for the acquisition of knowledge, they should be greeted and welcome by their teachers so that they may feel comfortable and loving towards them. Supplications may also be made for their success, comfort and happiness as well.

Once a delegation of Abdul Qais came to the Prophet (PBUH) for education and the Prophet said to it,

“Welcome to the delegation! May you be successful and respected.”³

Hz Safwan Bin Assal (RA) says that once he visited the Prophet (PBUH) for the acquisition of knowledge and intimated him about his intention, the Prophet (PBUH) said,

“Welcome to the students”³

Therefore, students should be welcome and wished when they come closer to their teachers.

16-Awarding prizes on excellent performance

Giving away prizes on excellent performance is the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

Hz Anas (RA) narrates that once the Prophet (PBUH) passed by a villager who was busy in a beautiful supplication and the Prophet (PBUH) heard him. The Prophet (PBUH) assigned a man the responsibility to bring this

¹The Book Of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin ismail, kitabFazail-e- Quran,chapter on beauty of voice in the recitation,855/2

²Sahih-ul-Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijjaj, Kitab-ul- Fazail-e- Quran, chapter on advantages of surah kahf and ayat-ul-kursi,271/1

³Majma-ul-Zawaid, Nur-ul-Din-al-Haythai, Kitab-ul-Ilm, chapter on the student of knowledge, Akbar sellers Lahore, March 2018 (translated by Muhammad Mohiyuddin Jahangir),173/1: 550

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villager to me. When that villager was brought to the Prophet (PBUH), he gave him a piece of gold as a gift for making a very beautiful supplication.² So students need to be awarded prizes for their good qualities while their shortcomings must be ignored.

17- Adopting the approach “Forgive and Forget”

Surah Yousaf teaches educators a very important lesson of forgiving and forgetting what mistakes children and students commit.

Hz Yaqoob (AS) did not cut off his relation with his sons after they told him the lie about Hz Yousaf (AS). The father lost his dear son. He kept his relation with these sons. He sent them to Egypt for flour and sent his other son named Bin Yamen with them. He forgave his sons for committing some serious mistakes.

From this story, it is clear that mistakes committed by sons and students must be forgiven and forgotten. Efforts must be made to reform them until the hope of reformation diminishes. The same was done by Hz Yaqoob (AS) and consequently, his sons repented and were reformed.

The same approach is to be adopted by the teachers of today. If their students commit mistakes, they might be ignored and forgiven. Rather, efforts must be made to reform them in a positive way, otherwise, the damage may be dangerous and irreparable.

It should also be remembered that the students having committed the mistakes should not be made feel ashamed by reminding of their mistakes. Their mistakes are to be forgotten and the next step should be taken with a positive mind and the matter must be handed over to Allah for better result because Allah says in the Quran,

“So, Allah is the best guard.”¹

The Prophet (PBUH) also says in a hadith,

“The person who wishes to have high palaces in the paradise should forgive who has wronged him, should gift him who has denied him to give and should not hesitate to meet the person who has disconnected his relation with him.”²

¹The Holy Quran 12:63

²Majma al zawa'id, Nur-ul-Din-al-Haythai, Kitabul Birr wa sillah, chapter on good morals, Akbar sellers Lahore, March 2018 (translated by Muhammad Mohiyuddin Jahangir), 246/8

Therefore, this is an important quality of a good teacher that he does not believe in “Tit for Tat”, rather, believes in the principle “Forgive and Forget”.

A good teacher always responds an evil with a favor, a wrong act with forgiveness, anger with patience, something detestable with patience and vulgarity with ignoring. The consequences will be favorable because the detestable would become adorable and enemy would become an adorer and sacrificing. The hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) will be practiced as he says,

“Meet the person who discontinues his relation with you, forgive who wrongs you and do him the favor who does you an evil.”¹

18-Positive Approach

A good teacher is always positive and distances himself away from negativity as the east is away from the west. Positivity breeds positivity. Muslims are instructed to be positive and should expect good from Allah as there is a Hadis-e-Qudsi which says,

“I am with the expectation of my servant.”²

Negativity and frustration kill one’s capabilities and slacken his performance. Good thinking and prayers are detrimental in the construction and progress of a person. Good thinking gives hope which ultimately saves a person from disappointments.

The Prophet (PBUH) was persecuted by the Quraish but was never disappointed. He always believed in Allah, worked hard and prayed to Him for his success. And in the end, he was triumphant in his noble mission.

Therefore, a good teacher never loses hope, looks at the bright side of the picture. He busies himself in positive activities leading him to the noble cause of grooming and educating his students. He creates opportunities, never gets pessimist in life, supplicates to Allah and succeeds in bringing good days out of bad days.

19-Welcoming attitude to the questions of students

Sir Francis Bacon³ says in his essay “Of Studies”,

“One who questioneth much will learn much.”

Questioning during or after the lesson is very fruitful as it clarifies the concepts of students, brings confidence to them and makes lesson

¹Musnad e Ahmad, Ahmad Bin Hanbal,157/4, hadith no: 16999

² The Book of Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismail, kitab-ul-Tauheed, hadith no:1101/2

³Sir Francis Bacon, former Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, philosopher and statesman (1561- 1626)

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interactive, interesting and inclusive. Students should be encouraged to ask questions. But there are three types of questions; firstly, the question which is asked to clarify one's concept, this is a very good kind of question, secondly, a question is asked to test the knowledge of a teacher, this is the worst kind of question, though this kind of question is bad for students, yet it is very useful for teachers, thirdly, this is the kind of question which is asked to clarify the concept of one's colleagues because they can't ask this question. This is also a good kind of question.

It must be remembered that all questions in the class must be responded intelligently and carefully.

If the question is asked to object and criticize the teacher or the institution, such questions should not be entertained. Imam Nowi (R) says,

“If the questioner wants to make the addressee feel ashamed, then such a person should not be entertained because he does not deserve.”¹

Imam Ghazali says that if someone asks questions due to his jealousy or enmity, he may be answered sensibly and lucidly, yet his envy and enmity would not diminish, so it is better to keep quiet and avoid such a person and he should be left in his own disease.²

Once a companion asked the Prophet (PBUH) a question about the doomsday when it will happen. The Prophet (PBUH) changed the topic and asked that companion another question,

“Have you prepared for it?”

The companion answered that he has not prepared too much for it, yet he loves the Prophet (PBUH), at this the Prophet (PBUH) said that this companion will be in the company of the person whom he loves.³

¹Al-Majmoo, Yahya Ibn Sharaf Nowi, Translated by Edward E. Salisbury, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1866 P.39/1

²Al GHazali's Ayyauha-l-Walad, a dissertation for Ph.d, by George Henry Scherer, The University of Chicago, 1930, p-62

³Sahih-ul-Muslim, Muslim Bin Hijjaj, Kitab-ul-Birr wa-Sillah, chapter on the person who will be in the company of that man whom he loves, 331/2

From this hadith, an excellent lesson is deduced that only the weak area of the questioner should be focused on so that he may improve.

A beautiful saying in Arabic language must be remembered by teachers that keeping silent to an unwise person is the evidence of one being fortunate.

The Quran clearly instructs the believers,

“Avoid the ignorant.”¹

Therefore, teachers should try to answer any query asked by students but intelligently and wisely. Sometimes, the questions if asked mischievously must be ignored and silence should be kept so that any possible damage is avoided.

20-Be a person of an ideal personality

Students are always inspired by the thoughts and actions of their teachers. That is why the Quran declares the Prophet (PBUH) as a role model for the mankind. The Quran says,

“Verily, there is a set pattern in the Prophet of Allah for you.”²

The Prophet (PBUH) sent Hz Amr Bin al Aas (RA) for educating the people of Watheema and instructed him,

“First of all, your yourself practice what you preach.”³

From it, it is clear that teachers are deemed to be the role model for their students, so they must be legends and ideal in their character. They should try to be perfect in approach and conduct.

21-The acquisition of livelihood is not the only purpose

A great teacher works for the grooming and education of the new generation. This is a huge responsibility he is to shoulder. He should not work only for the sake of monetary benefit, though this monetary benefit in the form of salary is also very essential because he is to run the affairs of his house and fulfil the needs of his family. But he should heed to work for the sake of divine consent and the development of his nation.

¹ The Holy Quran 7:199

² The Holy Quran 33:21

³ Al-Asabah-fi-Tameez-e-Sahabah, Hajjar Asqalanai, 537/1 retrieved from <https://www.emaanlibrary.com/book/urdu-al-asabah-fi-tamyeze-al-sahaba-r-jild-2-imam-ibn-hajar-al-asqalani/>

Qualities of a Teacher in the Light of Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

He should have a strong link with his creator and ask Him to help as the Quran says,

“Ask Allah for His munificence.”¹

Therefore, a teacher is to be sincere in his task so that he may contribute to the development of a great nation.

22-Addition of humor in Teaching-Learning process

A teacher’s task is difficult to accomplish because he is to teach and groom his students and is not supposed to be serious all the time. He must have a good sense of humor so that his students would refresh their minds with their teacher’s humor.

Once an old woman visited the Prophet (PBUH) and said: “O the Messenger of Allah! pray to Allah that I will enter Paradise.” He said jokingly, “O Mother of So-and-so, no old women will enter Paradise.” The old woman went away crying, so the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah says:

“We have created (their companions) of special creation, and made them virgin-pure (and undefiled)”²

23- Humility

The Prophet (PBUH) was a very humble man. He was never haughty with anyone. When he would join his companions, he would dislike anyone to stand up for him. He had not specified a place for his sitting in the company of his companions. He would sit with them in such a way that if a stranger would join the company where the Prophet used to sit, he could not recognize the Prophet (PBUH).

It is interesting to note that when the Muslim army was entering the city of Makkah on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah in 8th A.H, the Prophet (PBUH) was commanding it, yet he had bowed down his head so much that his head was touching the saddle on which he was sitting due to his humility.³

¹The Holy Quran 4:28

² The Holy Quran 56:35-36

³Ar-Raheeq-Ul-Makhtoom (Urdu) Safi-ur-Rahman, Al-Maktaba-e-Salfiah, Lahore, 1995, p.548

So humility is a great quality of a good teacher and he can easily inculcate among his students this quality if he himself remains humble.

24-Patience

When the Prophet (PBUH) started to preach Islam, he faced many difficulties, but he remained patient with the help of Allah.

In the following verse, Allah Almighty mentions the patience of the Prophet (PBUH),

“We know that your breast is constricted by what they say.”¹

At another place, Allah Almighty says,

“So be patient in the face of what they say and glorify your Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before it sets.”²

Despite the oppression and maltreatment, he would receive at the hands of his enemies, the Prophet (PBUH) always displayed amazing patience. He was persecuted and strongly opposed by the Quraish. His daughters named Ruqayyay and Umm-e- Kusoom were divorced by the two sons of Abu Lahab named Utbah and Utaibah and was tortured by Umm-e-Jamil, Abu Lahab’s wife by stretching thorny bushes on his way, yet he showed extraordinary patience to bear this persecution. Then it left an outstanding example for his followers to follow him like Hz Khabbab Bi arth, Hz Bilal Bin Rabbah, Hz Yasir, Hz Sumayyah, Hz Ammar Bin Yasir etc.

Conclusion

A teacher is the person who helps students gain knowledge. An impact of a good teacher will leave an everlasting impression on a learner’s life. learner regards his teacher as a role model in his life. A good teacher possessing great qualities such as kindness, flexibility, leadership, personality, a calm demeanor, dedication, a good sense of humor and patience on the top. And Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) possessed all the qualities as a teacher. Muslims are blessed enough to have Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the world’s best teacher to follow in their life.

Teaching is, no doubt, a difficult profession. There are certain personality traits and qualities that every student looks forward to in a teacher. Good

¹ The Holy Quran 15:97

² The Holy Quran 50:39

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teachers inspire others due their outstanding qualities. Let us discuss the qualities of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a teacher:

As a teacher, The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) groomed and transformed his companions in such a way that the entire Arab peninsula was changed over a short span of just twenty-three years. The following are some qualities of a teacher that the Prophet (PBUH) practically had and the teachers of the present time can incorporate in their lives.

Numerous examples about the numerous attributes of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a teacher were so pleasing to learn from. The whole Arab peninsula was transformed due to his teaching in just twenty-three years of his life after his prophet-hood.

May Allah enable us to develop such great qualities that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had as a teacher and enable us to spread the teachings of Islam in an excellent way.