

THE PROPHETIC WAY OF CREATING FUTURE LEADERS THROUGH EDUCATION

Dr. Muhammad Zaid Malik

King Saud University, Riyadh

ABSTRACT

Education is not just passing on the information. It's a complete process of formation. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, prepared leaders out of Bedouins through education. How did he evolve an illiterate nation into the leaders of the world? This article will try to shed some light on these aspects of the comprehensive life of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. In this paper inductive and analytical methods are used. It is suggested that by using the Prophetic methodology, our education system could be reformed and start producing leaders.

Keywords: education, leadership, Prophet's methodology

INTRODUCTION

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said "I have been sent as a teacher". While Allah the Almighty told us about the holy Prophet:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

"Indeed, Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His verses (the Qur'an) purifying them, and instructing them in the Book (the Qur'an) and Wisdom (the Sunnah), while before that they had been in manifest error."

The word "purifying them" is of importance here. It means to clean the heart from bad qualities and fill it with good qualities. It is mentioned as one of the duties of the holy Prophet. This cleansing of the heart was highly important in the eyes of the Prophet. He said:

أَلَا إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مَضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

"Verily, there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is healthy, the whole body is healthy, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart."

So this duty contained both the teaching and cleansing. The Prophet himself was taught by his Lord Allah the Almighty as he told us in one of his sayings:

"My Lord taught me, and He excelled in teaching me and my Lord educated me the manners and He excelled in educating me". So these two kinds of education i.e. giving knowledge and teaching good manners (purifying the heart), go together, side by side and hand in hand. It is useless if a person has only one of them without the other.

Allah the Almighty has honored the humanity by making them His representatives on earth. This honor was given to humanity because of one quality that they had, i.e. knowledge. Then Allah the Almighty gave them three additional qualities that were never given to any of His creatures; hearing, seeing and thinking. By hearing it is meant to get the knowledge that is acquired by other nations before him, by seeing it is meant to develop this acquired knowledge with research and observations, and by thinking it is meant to filter and cleanse this knowledge from the mistakes that it contained and then come out with results to the humanity. If all these 3 qualities get together, they will produce that kind of knowledge which Allah bestowed upon Adam and through which Adam was considered superior over all other creatures.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to encourage his companions through different examples and parables to pay attention to his teachings and actions so that they may acquire the knowledge in the way mentioned above and learn the Prophetic way of living this life successfully. He once said:

مثل ما بعثني الله به من الهدى والعلم كمثل الغيث الكثير أصاب أرضاً ، فكان منها نقية قبلت الماء فأنبتت الكلأ والعشب الكثير ، وكانت منها أجادب أمسكت الماء ، فنفع الله بها الناس فشربوا وسقوا وزرعوا ، وأصاب منها طائفة أخرى إنما هي قيعان لا تمسك ماءً ولا تتبث الكلأ فذلك مثل من فقه في دين الله ونفعه ما بعثني الله به فعلم وعلم ، ومثل من لم يرفع بذلك رأساً ، ولم يقبل هدى الله الذي أرسلت به .

"The parable of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me (the Prophet) and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)".

He established study circles in his mosque/masjid and taught his companions the matters of religion. Once he was in one of these study circles when 3 men entered the mosque. One found a place among the people and sat with them, the other was a bit

shy so he sat at the end of the circle. The third man left. After the study circle was over, the Prophet talked about these 3 men and said: one of them turned to Allah, so Allah also turned to him with His mercy, the second was shy, so Allah also felt shy from him. The third one turned a cold shoulder, so Allah also deserted him. Usama bin Shareek says that once I went to the holy Prophet while he was sitting with his companions. They were so quiet and motionless as if there were birds sitting on their heads.

One of the great scholars of the early Muslims was Imam Malik bin Anas. He once said:

لن يصلح آخر هذه الأمة إلا بما صلح به أولها

“The last part of this Ummah can never be corrected except with what the first part was corrected”.

So it is the need of the time to know how the first part of this Ummah was corrected. What was the Prophetic method with which the holy Prophet pbuh educated his companions who later became the leaders of the world. How did he address the his companions who were his students also? How did he stop people from doing bad things? How did he encourage or order them to do good things? How did he change the lives of the desert dwellers into the most civilized people on earth? This article is an attempt to know the main features of his educational method.

Equality of students in front of the Teacher

The holy Prophet dealt each and every companion with equality. He made this very clear that no one is better on the basis of race, color, gender or nationality. He started his farewell address by saying:

"يا أيها الناس إن ربكم واحد وإن أباكم واحد، كلكم من آدم وآدم من تراب، ألا لا فضل لعربي على أعجمي ولا لأعجمي على عربي ولا لأحمر على أسود ولا لأسود على أحمر إلا بالتقوى ، أبلغت ؟ قالوا بلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم".

“O people! Your Lord is one and your father is also one. All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (taqwa) and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood.

One syllabus for all Students

The Prophet (pbuh) used only one text book for all his students and that was the holy Qur'an. He sometimes explained the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an through his

sayings or deeds. It shows the importance of unifying the syllabus in all schools, whether they belong to public sector or private sector. In Pakistan we see several educational systems that have their own syllabi which is constantly widening the gap among the various segments of our society.

Teacher as Role Model – Do what you preach

It is highly important that what is taught to the students should be practiced by the teacher also, otherwise it will lose its value and the students will consider it as a piece of information and not an essential part of education. It will be just information, having no part in formation of the students. The Prophet used to apply upon himself first what he taught to his companion. He said:

صلوا كما رأيتموني أصلي

“Pray (the daily prayers) as you see me praying”.

He performed Hajj with his companions and told them repeatedly:

خذوا عني مناسككم

“Take from me the details of the rituals of Hajj”

IbnIshaq, a great historian and scholar of Hadith, narrated a story from one of the battlefields of the holy Prophet. He says that at the battle ofBadr, when the Prophet was straightening the rows of the companions, he had a stick in his hand with which he was pointing towards the companions to get straight in line. There was a companion whose name was Sawad bin GhaziyyahAnsari, he was standing ahead of the line. The Prophet touched his abdomen with the stick and asked him to get back in the line. The man said: O Messenger of Allah, you hurt me with your stick while Allah has sent you with truth and justice. The Prophet immediately handed over the stick to him, took off his shirt and said: you may take your revenge from me.Sawad came forward hugged the Prophet and kissed his abdomen. The Prophet said: O Sawad, why did you do so? He said: You see that the battle is about to start, I wanted that my last meeting with you should be in this way that my skin should touch your skin. Hearing this, the Prophet prayed for his wellbeing. The Prophet while talking about the people of the Hell firesaid:

يجاء بالرجل يوم القيامة فيلقى في النار ، فتندلق أفتابه في النار ، فيدور كما يدورالحمار برحاه ، فيجتمع أهل النار عليه فيقولون : أي فلانا ما شأنك ؟ أليس كنتأمرننا بالمعروف وتنهانا عن المنكر ؟ قال : كنت آمركم بالمعروف ولا آتية ، وأنهاكمعن المنكر وآتية.

“There will be a man who will be thrown in the Hell. His intestines will come out of his belly. He will go in rounds like a donkey goes around its edge wheel. The people of Hell will gather around him and ask him what brought him there. He would reply that I used to enjoin you to do good things but I never acted upon what I asked you. I prohibit you from doing evil but I myself did that evil”.

His soft speech and merciful behavior

Allah the Almighty while praising the soft nature of the holy Prophet said:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

“And by the mercy of Allah you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over their faults and ask Allah’s forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.”

- Mu’awiah bin Hakam al-Sulami says:

بيننا أنا أصلي مع رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - إذ عطس رجل من القوم، فقلت: يرحمك الله، فرماني القوم بأبصارهم، فقلت: واثكل أمياه! ما شأنكم تنظرون إلي؟ فجعلوا يضربون بأيديهم على أفخاذهم، فلما رأيتهم يصمتونني، لكتي سكت، فلما صلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فبأبي هو وأمي، ما رأيت معلماً قبله ولا بعده أحسن تعليماً منه، فوالله ما كهرني ولا ضربني ولا شتمني، قال: إن هذه الصلاة لا يصلح فيها شيء من كلام الناس، إنما هو التسبيح والتكبير، وقراءة القرآن.

“That once while praying behind the holy Prophet in congregation, a man sneezed, so I said: May Allah bless you. The people felt bad and exchanged bad looks with me. What is the matter with you? Why you are looking at me like this? They started hitting their thyres to make me quiet. I stopped talking. When the Prophet finished his prayer he talked to me very softly. May my parents be ransom for him, I never saw a teacher better than him, neither before him nor after him. I swear by Allah, he was never rude to me or called me names. He just said:

“This is the prayer, no human conversation is allowed in it. It just contains glorification of Allah, magnification of Allah and recitation of the Holy Qur’an”

His soft attitude and kind behavior was not only with his companions, rather he was softin speaking and gentle in dealing with the non-Muslims also. Imam ibnQayyim al-Jawziyyah narrates a story in his book Zad al-Ma’ad. It is about a transaction that took place between the Prophet and a Jew. InbQayyim writes:

وباعه يهودي بيعاً إلى أجل، فجاءه قبل الأجل يتقاضاه ثمنه، فقال: لم يحل الأجل، فقال اليهودي: إنكم لمطل يابني عبد المطلب، فهم به أصحابه، فنهاهم، فلم يرده ذلك إلا جلماً، فقال اليهودي: كل شيء منه قد عرفته من علامات النبوة، وبقيت واحدة، وهي أنه لا تزيد شدة الجهل عليه إلا حلماً، فأردت أن أعرفها، فأسلم اليهودي.

“A Jew sold him something on the condition that the price will be paid on a future date, but he came before that date to ask for his money. The Prophet said: the time

has not come yet. The Jew said: You the sons of Abdul Muttalib, like to linger on in paying the debt. The companions of the holy Prophet wanted to teach him a lesson but the Prophet stopped them. This rudeness of the Jew only increased him in softness. Seeing this, the Jew said: I knew all the signs of Prophet hood in this man except one sign that remained; and it is that if he is faced with the excessive rudeness, it only increases him in forbearance and leniency. Today I wanted to know that sign. So that Jew accepted Islam as he was testing the Prophet.

- A Bedouin started urinating in the Masjid of the Prophet. The companions rushed to stop him. The Prophet asked them to let him finish. When he finished urinating, the Prophet called him and said:

"إن هذه المساجد لا تصلح لشيء من هذا البول، ولا الغدر، إنما هي لذكر الله، والصلاة وقراءة القرآن"

"Urinating or littering is inappropriate in the Masjid. Mosques are built for the remembrance of Allah, for the daily prayers and for reciting the Holy Qur'an.

- A man from the tribe of Sa'd bin Bakr whose name was Dhamam bin Tha'laba, came to the holy Prophet and said: I will ask you some difficult questions so do not be angry on me. The Prophet said: ask whatever you want to ask.

Admonition, not Humiliation

The Prophet never mentioned the name of the person in public, who made a mistake, rather he would talk indirectly and say: What is the matter with some people who do this and that. The Prophet appointed a man to collect the Zakat of some tribes. The whole story is narrated by Abu Bakr bin AbiShaiba, who says:

استعمل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رجلاً من الأسد يقال له ابن اللثبية على الصدقة فلما قدم قال هذا لكم وهذا لي أهدي لي قال فقام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على المنبر فحمد الله وأثنى عليه وقال ما بال عامل أبعثه فيقول هذا لكم وهذا أهدي لي أفلا قعد في بيت أبيه أو في بيت أمه حتى ينظر أيهدى إليه أم لا والذي نفس محمد بيده لا ينال أحد منكم منها شيئاً إلا جاء به يوم القيامة يحمله على عنقه بعير له رغاء أو بقرة لها خوار أو شاة تيعر ثم رفع يديه حتى رأينا عفرتي إبطيه ثم قال اللهم هل بلغت مرتين.

"The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him appointed a man from the tribe of BanuAsad, whose name was ibn al-Lutbiyyah, to collect the Zakat. When he came back from his assignment, he said: this is for you and this is for me as these things were gifted to me. The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him rose over his pulpit, and after praising Allah the Almighty and thanking Him, said: what is the matter with my workers? I send one of them to perform a duty and he says: this is for you and this is gifted to me? Why he did not sit in his father's house or in his mother's house and then see if anyone sends him a gift or not? I swear by the one in whose hand is Muhammad's life, if anyone of you takes anything from this he will bring it on the Day of Judgment carry it on his neck; a camel growling or a cow bellowing or

sheep mooing, then he raised both his hands until we saw the whiteness of his armpits, and said twice: O Allah! I conveyed.”

Similarly, there is another occasion in which it is seen that three people came to the house of the holy Prophet to know what is his daily schedule, so that they may copy him. It is narrated by Anas bin Malik who says:

جاء ثلاثة رهط إلى بيوت أزواج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يسألون عن عبادة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فلما أخبروا كأنهم تقالوها فقالوا وأين نحن من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قد غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه وما تأخر قال أحدهم أما أنا فإني أصلي الليل أبدا وقال آخر أنا أصوم الدهر ولا أفطر وقال آخر أنا أعتزل النساء فلا أتزوج أبدا فبلغ ذلك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فحمد الله وأثنى عليه وقال : ما بال أقوام قالوا وكذا أما والله إني لأخشاكم لله وأتقاكم له لكني أصوم وأفطر وأصلي وأرقد وأتزوج النساء فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني.

“Three men came to the houses of the wives of the holy Prophet. They wanted to ask about the worship of the Prophet at home. When they were told about it, it was felt as if they belittled it. They said: where are we from the Prophet, peace be upon him? Allah has forgiven all his previous and latter mistakes. So one of them said, from now onward, I will pray the whole night. The second one said: I will observe fasting forever, and never break my fast. The third one said: I will avoid women. I will never marry. When this incident was brought in the notice of the Prophet peace be upon him, he after praising Allah and thanking Him, said: what is the matter with some people who said so and so? I swear upon Allah that I am the most fearing of Allah among you and the most pious among you, but I fast and I also break my fast, I pray at night and sleep also, and I marry the women. So whoever turns away from my Sunnah, is not from me”.

Consideration of the human nature and age

The Prophet kept in mind and gave consideration to the natural weaknesses that are based on the human nature. A good example could be of the actions or reactions showed by his fellow wives. Umm Salamah, the wife of the holy Prophet says:

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ، أَنَّهَا يَغْنِي أَتَتْ بِطَعَامٍ فِي صَحْفَةٍ لَهَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَصْحَابِهِ ، فَجَاءَتْ عَائِشَةُ مُتَزَرَّةً بِكِسَاءٍ وَمَعَهَا فَهْرٌ فَغَلَقَتْ بِهِ الصَّحْفَةَ ، فَجَمَعَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَ فَلَقَتِي الصَّحْفَةَ وَيَقُولُ: كُلُوا غَارَتْ أُمُّكُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَحْفَةَ عَائِشَةَ فَبَعَثَ بِهَا إِلَى أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ وَأَعْطَى صَحْفَةَ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ لِعَائِشَةَ.

“Once, when the Prophet was in Ayesha's house, she brought some food for the Messenger of Allah and some of his companions. Ayesha, covered in a garment, came, she had astone with her, so hit it on the pot. Consequently the food fell and the pot that contained food broke. (Instead of getting angry) the Prophet collected the food in the two pieces of pot and said twice: keep on eating, your mother got jealous. Then he took another pot from the house of Ayesha and gave it to the servant to take it to Umm Salama and gave the pot of Umm Salama to Ayesha.”

There is an interesting story narrated by Abu Huraira. He says:

أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَوْصِنِي، قَالَ: لَا تَغْضَبْ، فَرَدَّدَ مَرَارًا، قَالَ: لَا تَغْضَبْ. قَالَ الرَّجُلُ: فَفَكَّرْتُ حِينَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا قَالَ فَإِذَا الْغَضَبُ يَجْمَعُ الشَّرَّ كُلَّهُ.

"A man asked the holy Prophet to advise him. He advised him by saying: Do not get angry. He asked many times for another advice. The Prophet repeated the same advice by saying: do not get angry. The man later said, I thought a lot about what the Prophet said and I concluded that the anger has gathered all the evil in it.

Similarly, the following incident could be even more interesting:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رخص في القبلة للشيخ وهو صائم، ونهى عنها الشاب، وقال: الشيخ يملك إربهو الشاب يفسد صومه.

Ayesha the wife of the holy Prophet narrated that an old man came to the holy Prophet and asked him whether it was allowed for him to kiss his wife while fasting? The Prophet allowed him. Then a young man came to him and asked him the same question. The Prophet did not allow him. When he was asked about it he said: the old man will control his desire while the young man will spoil his fast.

While addressing the youth specially, the Prophet peace be upon him said:

يا معشر الشباب من استطاع منكم الباءة فليتزوج فإنه أغض للبصر وأحصن للفرج ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فإنه له وجاء

“O the community of the youth! Whoever among you can afford to get married the he must marry, as marriage helps you to lower your gaze and protect your private parts. And whoever cannot afford then he/she should fast, as fasting is a shield for him/her”.

Encouraging the good work

The Prophet used to encourage his companions to do good deeds. On the occasion of the battle of Tabook, the Prophet appealed from the companions to spend their money in the cause of Jihad. He had to prepare a big army to fight the Roman Empire. Hearing his appeal Uthman bin Affan presented 900 camels fully loaded with the equipments needed for this expedition. He also gave 100 horses and 1000 Dinars for this battle. The Prophet was so happy seeing all this that he said: from today onward no sin will harm Uthman.

In the preparation of the same expedition, it was seen that a poor man whose name was Abu 'Aqeel, worked all day as a laborer and earned some dates that were equal to 4 kilo grams. He gave 2 kilo grams to his house hold and brought 2 kilograms to the holy Prophet. The Prophet ordered that his dates be spread over all

the valuable goods that were brought for the expedition, as an encouragement for him.

Praising the good qualities

The Prophet peace be upon him used to praise the good qualities that he saw in his companions, so that the others may work hard to achieve them. He once said to AshajjAbd al-Qais:

إِنَّ فِيكَ خَصْلَتَيْنِ يُحِبُّهُمَا اللَّهُ: الْحِلْمَ وَالْأَنَانَةَ

"Certainly, you have two good qualities that Allah loves; forbearance and tolerance."

At another occasion when he was sitting with a group of his companions, he asked:

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مِنْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ صَائِمًا ؟ ، قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، قَالَ : فَمَنْ تَبِعَ مِنْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَازَةً ؟ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، قَالَ : فَمَنْ أَطْعَمَ مِنْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مَسْكِينًا ؟ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، قَالَ : فَمَنْ عَادَ مِنْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مَرِيضًا ؟ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : مَا اجْتَمَعْنَ فِي امْرِئٍ إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ .

"Who among you fasted today? Abu Bakr said, I. The Prophet said: Who among you attended and followed the funeral today? Abu Bakr said, I. The Prophet said: Who among you fed a poor person today? Abu Bakr said, I. The Prophet said: Who among you visited a sick person today? Abu Bakr said, I. Hearing this the Messenger of Allah said: If all these qualities get together in one person, he will surely enter the Paradise."

Scolding and Reprehension

The Prophet used to apply kindness and merciful behavior as much as possible. He said:

لَا يَكُونُ الرَّفْقُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يَنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

"Kindness if put in something, it makes it beautiful and if it is taken out of something it makes it ugly".

But sometimes where kindness does not work he ordered that strict measures be taken. He, while training the children over daily prayers, ordered that they should be punished if they do not pray. He said:

مَرُوا أَبْنَاءَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ لِسَبْعٍ وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لِعَشْرِ وَفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ

"Order you children to pray when they are seven. When they are ten, beat them for not praying and separate their beds".

Striking while the Iron is hot

The Prophet waited for the appropriate time and place to give his piece of advice. Once some prisoners of war were brought to the Prophet. There was a woman also among them. Milk was flowing out of her chest. She was looking for her lost child. Then she saw a child among the prisoners, she took him, held him to her chest and started feeding him. The Prophet and a group of his companions were seeing her. They were all highly impressed by her love to her child. Taking advantage of this feeling that the companions were going through the Prophet asked them a question. He said: if this woman is given the option to through her child in the fire, would she do that? All the companions who were there said: By Allah, she will never do that. The Prophet said: Allah loves His servants way more than the love of this woman for her child.

Narrowing or eliminating the gap between the religious knowledge and the modern knowledge

The separation of knowledge into religious and modern is actually based on the idea of separating between the religion and life. Hence this ideology is in total clash with the teachings of Islam, as the religion according to Islam is not something separate from the life. Moreover, considering the universe as Allah's dominion and considering the people in it as the servants of Allah who try to live their lives according to His will and injunctions, is actually the true meaning of religion. At the same time this the base on which the whole Sharia is based. A concept like this of the human life on this earth leads to converting all modern sciences into religious sciences. The same concept is mentioned in the statement of Allah when He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً

“O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam.”

If we teach history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, botany, zoology, geology, astronomy, economics, politics and the rest of the modern sciences in a way that there is no mention or part of Allah then we should not expect from the students that they will have any respect for the laws made by Allah or any intention for obeying His will. The knowledge, whatsoever, should be related to Allah. This is actually what is meant by the very first verses revealed in the Holy Qur'an where Allah the Almighty said:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

“Read in the name of your Lord has created. He has created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is the most generous. Who has taught by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.”

There is an incident that also leads to the same point. Imam Tabarani narrates this story:

أخرج الطبراني في "الكبير" عن كعب بن عُجْرَةَ، قال: "مر على النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - رجل، فرأى أصحابه من جلده ونشاطه ما أعجبهم، فقالوا: يا رسول الله، لو كان هذا في سبيل الله؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن كان خرج يسعى على ولده صغارًا، فهو في سبيل الله، وإن كان خرج يسعى على أبيوين شيخين، فهو في سبيل الله، وإن كان خرج يسعى على نفسه يعفها، فهو في سبيل الله، وإن كان خرج يسعى على رياء ومفاخرة، فهو في سبيل الشيطان.

"The Prophet was standing with some of his companions when a young man passed by them in a hurry. The companions were impressed by his activeness and strength. They said: We wish he went like this in the cause of Allah. The Messenger of Allah replied: if he went to bring something for his children then it is in the cause of Allah, if he went to bring something for his old parents then it is in the cause of Allah, if he went to bring something for himself so that he may not have to ask anyone, then it is in the cause of Allah, and if he went out to show off and be proud then it is in the cause of Satan."

One of the great scholars of Islam, Abdullah bin Mubarak considers earning Halah livelihood for the family as better and more rewarding than Jihad. He is quoted to have said:

لا يقع موقع الكسب على العيال شيء، ولا الجهاد في سبيل الله.

"Nothing takes the place of earning livelihood for the family, ever Jihad in the cause of Allah."

So this dualism in the education should be eliminated. We in Pakistan have religious schools where only religious education is given, and we have modern schools, colleges and universities where modern education is given. The graduates of the religious institutions know the Holy Qur'an, Sunnah and Hadith and Fiqh. They have the Islamic solutions to resolve the problems of the modern world, but the issue is they do not know the real problems of the modern world, as they were never exposed to these problems. On the other hand we have the graduates from the modern colleges and universities who know and are afflicted with the problems the world is facing, but they are unable to find the solutions from Islam as they never studies Islam as code of life.

Hasting for Specialization

It is wrong to let the student study so many subjects without knowing what he/she is going to be in future. It is highly important for the student and for the parents and teachers to help him/her in finding out his/her orientation, so that his/her precious time may not be wasted. The Prophet peace be upon him led us in this aspect also. He prepared some of his companions and let them excel in different fields. The companions of the holy Prophet also knew about these specialties among themselves. Once Umar bin Khattab delivered a sermon at a place called al-Jabiyah, and in that sermon he said:

مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ عَنِ الْقُرْآنِ، فَلْيَأْتِ أَبِي بِنَ كَعْبٍ، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ عَنِ الْفَرَائِضِ، فَلْيَأْتِ زَيْدًا، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ عَنِ الْفِقْهِ، فَلْيَأْتِ مُعَاذًا، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ عَنِ الْمَالِ، فَلْيَأْتِنِي، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَنِي خَازِنًا وَقَاسِمًا.

“Whoever wants to ask anything about the Holy Qur’an, he should consult Ubayy bin Ka’b, whoever wants to ask anything about the law of inheritance should consult Zaid, whoever wants to ask anything about jurisprudence should go to Mu’adh and whoever wants money should come to me as Allah has made me a treasurer and a distributor.”

Similarly, Abdullah bin ‘Amr narrated this Hadith:

اسْتَقْرَأُوا الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ أَرْبَعَةٍ: مِنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، وَأَبِيٍّ، وَمُعَاذٍ، وَسَالِمٍ مَوْلَى أَبِي حُدَيْفَةَ.

“Learn how to recite the Holy Qur’an from four people; ibn Mas’ood, Ubayy, Mu’adh and Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifah.”

It is suggested that a student may have a general syllabus in his/her first ten years of age. In this level he/she should learn whatever is necessary about the human history and his life, about the earth and universe from Islamic perspective. He should have the true picture of the universe that the Holy Qur’an gives us. In this level the student should know the language of his own country, the Arabic language which will help him understand the Qur’an and Sunnah directly, then he should also learn some of the European languages also, so that he may be able to appreciate the knowledge written in these languages and be able to examine it. After this general level the student may go for 6 or 7 years of specialization in the subject he/she chooses.

Student must have a goal

Every student must act like a soldier in an endless battle, for the sake of starting a new life based on faith in Allah and obeying His commands. This noble goal will leave its imprints over the whole system and penetrate in it like the soul penetrates in the blood veins. This noble goal will achieve its priority in the life of an individual, in the society, in dramas, sports clubs, education and research studies. In a nutshell it will control all manifestations of the mental and physical activities of the students. It will lead to only one result; the behavior of an individual and his dealings will come under the frame of Islam, as all the manifestations of life around him will start changing and whole society will become a society filled with faith, supporting each other towards development and prosperity, a society whose members will consider themselves as soldiers in the cause of Allah and in the cause of the betterment of humanity.

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