

# Addressing Essential Dimensions of an Ideal Teacher's Relationship with Students in the light of Islamic Educational Philosophy

**Dr. Muhammad Zulqarnain<sup>a</sup> \* Dr. Manzoor Ahmed Al-Azhari<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> Founding Principal, Ghazali School of Excellence, Wah Cantt, Pakistan

<sup>b</sup> Associate Professor, HITEC University, Taxila, Pakistan

\*Correspondence author: [zulqarnain4386@gmail.com](mailto:zulqarnain4386@gmail.com)

## Abstract

*Teacher-Student relationship (TSR) had been considered an important element of quality education. The purpose of this academic work was to explore the different dimensions of an ideal teacher's relationship with the students from Islamic perspective. Qualitative, descriptive and abductive research techniques were employed for the collection, analysis and demonstration of data. The review of literature concluded that our Holy Prophet PBUH had an ideal relationship with learners in terms of sympathy, forgiveness, kindness, politeness, humbleness, mercy, respect, and self-esteem. He equally focused on both essential aspects of education; academic and moral development. In order to develop balanced personality, he presented himself as a role model in front of learners. Throughout educational process, he maintained strong and positive relationship with learners which produced ideal personalities with respect to academia and morality. The research therefore recommended to take guidance from prophetic relationship with learners in order to achieve educational goals, develop morality and produce peaceful, creative and productive learners. Furthermore, it was also recommended for teachers to follow the methodology of Holy Prophet PBUH to become an effective, mobile, vigilant, and an ideal teacher.*

**Kew words:** Ideal Teacher, Relationship, Students, Islam, Education

## Introduction

The discourse of Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR) has gained significant attention in education since last few decades. Due to its significant effects on learners' academics and behaviour, educationists laid a great stress to form positive relationship between teachers and students to ensure the quality of education. According to Ulwan (2000), psychologists, sociologists, and educationists are agreed upon the forming of close

relationship between teacher and student to develop scientific, moral and psychological aspect. According to Urooj (2013), “Relationship between teacher and student has significant impact on the school as well as the behavioral adjustment”. According to Liberante (2012), “An optimistic master-pupil relationship is a basic element for successful teaching and learning”.

Though the relationship in education is comprised from both sides (teacher and student) but the most important dimension is teacher’s attitude. This article basically intended to address the essential and important aspects of an ideal relationship which a teacher could possess with his students. The author tried to explore the most influential and significant dimensions of teacher’s behaviour which left direct effects on education, morality, confidence and personality development of students.

According to Islamic injunctions, our Holy Prophet PBUH is declared an exemplary personality in Noble Quran. Allah Almighty introduced him as a role model in all walks of life as it is mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab;

(Al-Quran, 33:21) (لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ)

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern”.

In educational context, one of the amazing features of his educational methodology was tremendous relationship with the learners. He by maintaining polite and ideal relationship made educational process easy, interesting and thought-provoking. This scholarly work was designed to uncover the and highlight the important dimensions of Prophet’s relationship with his students (companions). The seerah of Holy Prophet revealed that he by his influential attitude, trained the learners from both: academic and moral dimension. It was his influential methodology which prepared such men who changed the course of time within few decades. In this connection, this study at one hand will highlight the salient features of prophetic relationship with learners (in education) while on the other hand provide guideline to educationists, scholars, teachers, instructors and professors to critically analyse and improve their relationship with students.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To highlight the importance of teacher-student relationship in educational process.
2. To explore salient features of Holy Prophet's PBUH relationship with learners.
3. To present the Prophetic relationship with students as a role model for teachers.

## **Research Methodology**

The aim of this research work was to analyze the Holy prophet's PBUH strategy of education. Qualitative and descriptive research approach was employed. For the collection of data, first of all Quran and Sunnah were consulted as primary sources and afterward books, theses, and biography of Prophet Muhammad PBUH were consulted as secondary sources. Some relevant material was also taken from internet after verification. Moreover, the author used the abductive reasoning by relating with the available literature in order to assess the ground realities and make the research applied and effective.

## **Literature Review**

Our Holy Prophet PBUH was an ideal educationist. He was well aware of objectives of education, teaching pedagogy, methods of effective teaching, learners' psychology and mental capabilities, authenticity of contents and art of developing academic and moral values. One of his prominent characteristics was building strong and positive relationship with the learners in educational process. Some of the salient features of his relationship are presented below.

Diagram: 1



- **Greeting Learners**

One of the signs of positive relationship among teacher and student is greetings. It is a source of pleasure, trust and morality. Our Holy Prophet PBUH used to greet the learners while interacting with them. He also instructed his companions in many traditions to greet one another as it is quoted by Behqi (1410 AH) in Shoab ul Eman:

﴿أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ﴾

“Spread peace among you”

Imam Bukhari (1422 A.H) quoted the manners of greetings with reference to instructions of Holy Prophet PBUH as he ordained:

«يُسَلِّمُ الصَّغِيرُ عَلَى الْكَبِيرِ وَالْمَارُّ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِ وَالْقَلِيلُ عَلَى الْكَثِيرِ»

“youngers should greet elders, walkers to sitters, and small (number) to large (numbers)”.

- **Welcoming Students**

The Holy Prophet PBUH behaved with the learners in a respectful way. He used to treat his companions with respect, honour and dignity. He also advised his companions to give respect to learners and welcome them for seeking knowledge. We can often see the exercise of welcoming learners in the seerah of Holy Prophet PBUH as a companion came to him and showed his willingness of to acquire knowledge. Our Holy Prophet PBUH welcomed him for learning. Tabrani (1994) has quoted this hadith in Al-Mojam al-Kabir;

«مَرْحَبًا بِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ، طَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ لَتَحُفَّهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَتُظِلُّهُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا...»

“Welcome to the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of knowledge is covered by the angels of Allah who put their wings upon him ...”.

- **Giving Respect**

The messenger of Allah always behaved with learners in a respectful way. He also advised his companions to give respect to students. The advice of Allah’s messenger could be seen in the lives of his companions that they showed caring and respectful attitude for the learners. Ibn-e-Qattan, (1997) has quoted the saying of Abu Saeed Khudri in this regard in Bayan-ul-Wahm wal Ehaam fi Kitab il Ihkaam:

«مرحباً بوصية رسول الله، أمرنا أن نحفظكم الحديث، ونوسع لكم في المجالس»

“Welcome to the legacy of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, we are ordained to give you ahadith and space (respect) in gathering”.

- **Mercy and Kindness**

Mercy and kindness are fundamental characteristics of a good teacher. An optimistic and productive learning could only be placed in a fear free environment. Unfriendly and unhealthy learning environment stop intellectual, academic and moral growth of students and they become unable to make appropriate decisions in their lives.

In this connection when we look towards Prophetic behaviour towards learners, we find it very kind and sympathetic. He was the symbol of mercy and sympathy as he neither showed any kind of harshness in his sayings and deeds. It was due to the instructions of Allah Almighty in Noble Quran as it was stated in Surah Al-Imran:

(Al-Quran, 3: 159) ﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ﴾

“So, by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them”.

The mercy of Prophet Muhammad PBUH was not limited to educational Process but his mercy was spread upon whole universe. Allah Almighty mentioned the range of his mercy in Surah Al-Anbia:

(Al-Quran, 21:107) ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds”.

- **Humbleness and Modesty**

Humbleness and modesty were prominent features of Our Holy Prophet PBUH. Though he was ideal personality, final prophet, and beloved to Allah, but he never used these gifts and blessings as a source pride and arrogance. He always presented himself a humble and polite personality.

His companions showed the level of utmost respect for him but he never showed any kind of superiority upon them. For instance, he used to work with them at the time of collecting woods for fire. One of the most common examples of his humbleness could be seen when he worked for the construction of Masjid-e-Quba. Despite of his unparallel status and

position, he presented himself like a humble person. Baghwi (1983) has quoted a tradition of Holy Prophet PBUH in this regard:

«لَا تُطْرُونِي كَمَا أَطْرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ، إِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدٌ، فَقُولُوا: عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ»

“Don’t make me superior as Christians made Ibn-e-Maryam, I am Abd (Slave of Allah) so call me his slave and prophet”.

He forbade from all forms of proud and arrogance. He even stopped his companions to stand on his arrival as it is quoted by Faouri (1981) in *Kanz ul Ummal*:

«لا تقوموا كما يقوم الأعاجم...»

“Don’t stand as Non-Arabs stand (in terms of showing highness to others )”.

- **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is one of the basic qualities of a good teacher. Students commit many mistakes in their learning phase. A good teacher forgives their mistake and prepare themselves to diminish the repetition of mistakes. Allah’s messenger often ignored the learners’ mistakes and urges them to attain perfection. His attitude of mercy and forgiveness was not only limited to education but his complete life was full of these values. Not only believers, but he was very kind to non-believers as well. This lenient attitude toward humanity was according to the commandments of Allah as he ordained him in Noble Quran:

(Al Quran, 3:159) ﴿فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ﴾

“So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them”.

Mubarakpuri (1995) quoted one of the prime examples of forgiveness of Holy Prophet PBUH during his visit to Taif. When he asked people to accept Islam, the tribal leaders refused to accept his call and sent their young ones who threw stones upon him. Allah’s messenger was seriously injured and his shoes became full of blood. On this brutal response, Allah Almighty send his angel to his messenger who asked him to curse upon them but he showed his mercy and forgave them.

- **Appreciation and Encouragement**

Fruits of appreciation and encouragement are obvious in every walk of life and particularly in education. The learning capacity, moral attitude, and academic worth of students increases on appreciation and encouragement. A professional teacher uses the art of appreciation to enhance the academic and moral advancement of learners. Our Holy Prophet PBUH was well aware of this technique. One could see that how did he appreciate and emphasize the learners to develop different aspects of their personality and attain desired results. Some of the examples from his traditions are given below: He appreciated Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit as it is quoted by Hanbal (1999) in *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*:

«وَأَفْرَضُهُمْ زَيْدُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ»

“He is the greatest scholar of inheritance law in my Ummah”.

Hazrat Ali R.A was nurtured by our Holy Prophet PBUH. He was expert in jurisprudence. Our Holy Prophet PBUH acknowledged his expertise by declaring him a great scholar of jurisprudence. Ibn-e-Aseer (1972) has mentioned a saying of Holy Prophet PBUH in *Jamey ul Usool*:

« وَأَفْضَاهُمْ عَلِيٌّ »

“Ali is the greatest scholar of jurisprudence”.

He appreciated Hazrat Muaz bin Jabal as it is quoted by Haisimi (1991) in *Majma ul Zawaid wa Manba ul Fawaid*:

«وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ»

“Muaz bin Jabal is the greatest scholar of permissibles and impermissibles in my Ummah”.

#### • Moral Development

According to Alkanderi (2001), Education is not limited to intellectual development but it includes moral development as well. Allah’s messenger was well aware of the harms of merely filling head with information without moral development. Due to such importance of ethics and morality, he equally emphasized through his sayings and actions to adopt good morals. One could see his seerah that he used to pray Allah Almighty for the development of good morals. One of his famous narrations is quoted by Behqi (1410 A.H) in *Shoab ul Eman*:

« اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسَنْتَ خَلْقِي فَأَخْسِنْ خُلُقِي »

“O Lord God! Thou hast made good my creation; therefore make good my character”.

One of the basic duties of his prophethood was to promote good morality as the Noble Quran stated:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾ (Al-Quran, 62:2)

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom -although they were before in clear error”.

The same has been mentioned in many traditions of Holy Prophet PBUH one of which is quoted by Behqi (1344 A.H) in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*:

« إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ »

“I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals”.

#### • Role Model

Educationists are agreed that students copy their teachers. The teachers therefore should present their selves a role model in front of students. They must abstain from all sorts of bad and unrighteous deeds particularly in front of students. We can see the life of Holy Prophet PBUH as he was an exemplary personality for the humanity as it is demonstrated in Holy Quran;

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ﴾ (Al-Quran, 33:21)

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often”.

There must not be contradiction between sayings and actions of teachers. Almighty Allah condemned those people whose sayings are contradict to their actions. The Quran stated:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ (Al-Quran, 61:2)

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



The application of above verses of Noble Quran could be seen hundred percent in the life of our Holy Prophet PBUH as a single example of contradiction between his sayings and actions could not be found. He also strongly delivered this concept to his companions and warned those who have contradiction in their behaviour. He even considered it one of the signs of hypocrisy.

### **Conclusions & Recommendations**

The purpose of this research was to explore different dimensions of an ideal relationship of a teacher with students in Islamic context. The systematic review of literature revealed that the Holy Prophet PBUH had an ideal relationship with his students. The relationship of Holy Prophet PBUH was based on mutual respect, kindness, self-esteem, mercy, sympathy, forgiveness, humbleness, politeness, and cooperation. He equally focused on educational, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and ethical development of students by establishing strong, positive and ideal relationship. He never overlooked any inadequacy in the character and morality of learners. First, he presented himself as a role model and then asked them to perform righteous actions. The optimistic relationship of Holy Prophet PBUH produced strong positive effects on academic, intellectual and moral development of learners which enabled them to change the course of time in few decades. In the light of cited literature, it is recommended that teachers should follow the footsteps of Holy Prophet PBUH to become an effective, mobile, vigilant, and ideal teacher as well as build strong and positive relationship with students.

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