

# Seats of Scholars

## Humanity's Teacher: 21 Teaching Techniques

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Weekend 1 (January 20, 2007) & Weekend 2 (January 27, 2007)

Rasulullah SAW is the greatest teacher humanity has ever known.

If someone looks deeply into the techniques used by Rasulallah saw, they will have more effect in bringing truth to other people.

The techniques are well known in psychology

### **Good Cop & Bad Cop Theory**

One officer will be very harsh and the other will be very nice. They decide beforehand who will act as the bad cop and who will act as the good cop.

- this technique works to open people up
- can be used in Islamic school etc

### **How does this benefit us?**

1. When we understand the techniques we're better able to grasp what is said
2. Increase our love for Rasulallah SAW
3. If someone becomes Muslim on your hands, it's better for you than a red she camel (better than the dunya and everything in it). This is your way to win the jackpot-by knowing these techniques
4. Islam Awareness week: when someone comes and approaches them, the critical words are going to come at that time, if they know the techniques they will be better able to convey the words of Islam to others
5. Our duty is to bring people to Islam and not to push it away, if we learn this, we will know how to teach it.

6. Be able to explain what you're talking about when giving dawah (e.g.- explain why we do salat to kids)
7. Some of these techniques are taught in school of education, but in essence these are techniques used by the prophet SAW.
8. When person learns how to pass on the message of Islam, they will be more healthy

### **Neural Linguistic Programming**

Three types of learning : audio, visual, kinesthetic

- some will benefit from slide show, some from word and some from quiz
- everyone will get touched somehow because there are only those 3 types of learning
- people who always benefit from khutbah are people who benefit from listening
- 70% or more people are visual (from TV), so whenever can use visual aids, use it

## **The 21 Teaching Techniques**

### **1. Not to bore the listener**

- When prophet saw speaks, Aisha said the people listening could count the words on their fingers
- The prophet SAW never gave a 'marathon' lecture.
- Sahih Bukhari, Imam Bukhari has a chapter to this effect: Al I'tidaal fi ta'leem chapter of being moderate when teaching

Couple consistent programs with special events (e.g. special event in weekly halaqa)

#### **How to tell if someone is bored?**

1. They're sleeping
2. If they're reading the newspaper while you're talking
3. When their eyesight leaves the focus of you

### **2. Speak at the intellectual level of the listener**

- One should understand how much that person already knows, because it can be a fitnah for that person and you can push that person into an argument in something that they don't fully understand yet.

- Hadeeth of whoever says shahadah, one companion said, shouldn't I tell everyone? the prophet SAW said no, because people will get lazy after that.
- The problem was that someone would think that if only they would say that they would enter jannah no matter what actions they do.
- Ibn Rajab said regarding rukhsah: rukhsah shouldn't be passed on to the lay people because the lay people will then take it as the complete sunnah

### **Examples of how prophet SAW spoke at level of questioner:**

1. Two persons who came and asked prophet about kissing while fasting. Prophet SAW gave permission to one and not the other. When asked why, he said one who was asking was a senior person (has more control) and the other one was a newly wed.
2. You see all ayah encouraging jihad and one person came asking about jihad for himself. The prophet SAW asked if his parents are alive and then told the person to do jihad in the kind treatment of his parents. The person might not have been in the perfect condition to do the physical jihad.
3. When people came and said "Give me advice," we'll see that the prophet SAW gave many different advices. E.g.: the hadeeth of man who was told: "Don't get angry," and he asked again, the prophet SAW answered the same and he asked again and again and received the same answer again and again. The prophet saw didn't say that to everyone who asked for advice

### **How the prophet saw would pay attention to the intellectual level of the person asking.**

"Which action is most beloved to Allah?"

The companions always asked this question because they want to beat the others in term of doing good deeds. The prophet SAW would answer, "To feed the hungry," and maybe that person is wealthy and has wealth and the most beloved thing would be," To spend your money in sadaqah," and to another person he would say, "Not to harm others, to have iman in Allah and His messenger." He would pay attention to who is asking.

## **3. Use questions and debate**

This is one of the most popular techniques you will see in the books of sunnah that the prophet SAW would use .

- A teacher can make a statement to a child but when the teacher evokes a child's thinking, it is more effective.
- Hadeeth of : “What would one do if there was a river at their door and every day they would take a bath at that river?” The companions answered, “There would be no dirt on that person.”. The prophet SAW then likened bathing in the river to the five daily prayers.
- Hadeeth of: “Who is the Muslim?” The prophet SAW answered, “A Muslim is the one whom other people are at peace from his hand and his tongue.” The way the answer is put makes it easier to remember.
- “Who's the bankrupt person?” The prophet SAW answered, The person who comes on the day of judgment with his good deeds and starts crying “This person and that...” until all his good deeds are gone and he is thrown into the hellfire.
- These questions are so important because they provoke the thinking of a person

#### **Example of two children playing with toy**

- Two children are fighting over it. One cries and the parent comes and takes the toy away and gives it to the child who is crying. Parent leaves and the fighting will resume.
- ‘How to Raise a Thinking Child’ (book): if parent goes to child and says calmly, "Is it fair that you play with the toy all the time and your brother doesn't get to play with it?"
- The child has to answer in fairness. If he doesn't, ask it again calmly. The child eventually has to think.
- Set up a menu and give them solutions: “Are you talking in class because you are bored or because you have something to say?”
- Power of asking proper question to get the child thinking.

## **4. Use analogies**

### **Analogy of cash fardh and credit fardh**

- Cash is something you have to do right now. Credit is something you can do/pay back later.
- If a person travels in Ramadan, it's fardh for them to fast but it's fardh fi zimmah (credit fardh), meaning they're on a debit, they owe this to Allah and they have to make it up, it's still fardh status.
- If someone misses fajr, they think it's a credit fardh, and they think they don't have to do it right away, but they don't realize that they have to do it right then.
- People are able to grasp concept and message because of an analogy they can understand.
- A woman came to prophet SAW and asked about her mother who died and couldn't do hajj. The prophet saw said "If your mother had any debts, would you pay that on her behalf?" She answered, "Yes." He said, "The debt owed to Allah is more worthy of being fulfilled."
- The companions were complaining to the prophet SAW about racing each other to do good deeds. They were sad because they couldn't give sadaqah like a wealthy person when he told them that the most beloved action is to give your wealth away in sadaqah.
- He said, "Didn't Allah give you something which you can give sadaqah with? Subhanallah alhamdulillah allahu akbar. Even marital relation is sadaqah." They asked, "How can this (marital relation) be rewarded?" He replied, "Don't you see that if you did this in a haram way, wouldn't you be susceptible to punishment and be blameworthy for it? Then see that if you do it in a halal way, you will be rewarded?"
- In many hadeeth, the prophet SAW would compare things to Mount Uhud and people would understand it right away.
- An analogy of what people can comprehend and what they cannot comprehend will make a huge difference.
- If a person is so focused on soccer, give them an analogy related to soccer, not cricket or golf etc

## 5. Using drawings

The prophet SAW used to use drawings on earth or dust.

### **Diagrams that the prophet SAW drew on the sand**

1. The prophet SAW made a straight line through sand and after that made lines to the right and left and mentioned verses relating to sabil Allah (the way to Allah). "This is the sabil of Allah and do not follow the other paths for they will distract and divide you from the path of Allah." As he said the verse, people looked down at the drawing in the sand.
2. The prophet SAW drew a box and a line going from middle of box to outside box and another line cutting into that line. The line going out is the hopes of that

human being, the middle is the person, and the box is the qadr. The arrows coming to the person are the things that will happen in the person's life.

- So if we ever get a chance to make a diagram, do so, because for people who are visual, the percentage of them understanding what is taught will increase.
- People who are only listening will only get 20% of what they listened to but if a visual aid is introduced, their understanding might go up to 60%
- What kicks understanding up? Do an activity (quiz)
- It will increase retention up to 80%
- E.g.: showing students notebook, they huddle around teacher.

## **6. Joining statements and hand movement while talking**

- Hadeeth of: “The one who takes care of an orphan is in paradise like 'this',” and the Prophet SAW demonstrated a hand movement.
- Very rarely will someone recall this hadeeth without demonstrating the hand movements of the Prophet SAW
- Hadeeth of the Prophet SAW giving the companions advice and he grabbed someone’s tongue to demonstrate.
- If someone grabs their tongue and holds it, it's very descriptive, it's not like telling someone, "Watch your tongue"
- In the farewell khutbah, the prophet SAW said, "You're going to come on the Day of Judgment and Allah will ask you about me and what will you say?" They answered, “You did your mission and did your duty to Allah.” He raised his hand and pointed to the people and said “Testify. Testify...”
- Someone in business knows these things very well but when it comes to teaching our children these books are not opened.

### **Psychology of hand movement**

- If you want to make someone comfortable, you would imitate that person and s/he would feel comfortable.
- If a teacher is too unlike the student, the student is not very comfortable around that teacher.
- If someone leans back with hand on leg, you do the same to make them feel comfortable
- Stand beside them, not in front of them

- Front = confrontation
- Side = we're together in this problem
- When teacher says, "Are there any questions?" one way to make a person feel comfortable is to raise your hand so person more likely to raise hand and say "Who has the first question?"
- When want to conclude session, say, "Who has the last question?" and people will naturally keep their hands down.

## **7. Use of an exhibit**

The prophet SAW raised gold and silk and said “These are haram for men of my ummah and halal for women of my ummah.”

Any teacher knows that if you have a chance of bringing a 3D exhibit to class, it will be more effective than just telling them about it

- Hadeeth of when the prophet SAW was speaking about ghulool (spoils of war when enemies run away they leave valuable weapons, and taking from it before imam declares or allows it). The prophet SAW picked up from the war spoils and told the companions about the haramness of taking from this before the leader allows it.

## **8. Answer questions before they are asked**

- Think of how a statement will confuse the person, and address it before they ask it.
- You would take subconscious thoughts and address them before they are asked.
- Hadeeth of: The shaytaan will come to a person and ask who created this and that until shaytaan brings the person to a conclusion of who created Allah..Say surat ikhlas and spit three times to the left and say auzubillah... Did this happen to someone? No, but it may. The issue didn't come about but the prophet SAW said IF it comes about, this is what you should do.

## **9. Answer questions with more than what he was asked**

- By paying attention to their situation and seeing how this answer will benefit the person.

- Someone asked the prophet saw how to make wudhu from sea water (not taahir) because he has an issue with using drinking water for wudhu because if it's all gone, he won't have any more water to drink, but sea water is not drinkable so it's great he could use it to make wudhu'. Answer: the water is tahoor ..the animals that are dead from the water are halaal. The person didn't ask about fish but the Prophet SAW gave him more answer because he knew that this person had issue about making wudhu, that he later on would have issue about the fish (because it would benefit the person also).
- This is a key characteristic of a teacher because people don't normally ask the most important question but the teacher will realize this and address this for them.
- Hadeeth of a woman asking the prophet SAW about hajj for her infant, she lifted up the baby and asked, "Is there hajj for this baby?" "Yes," answered the Prophet SAW, and then he added, "And you will have the reward." That addition is something that everyone focuses on when they bring their children for hajj (the reward); the additional part she didn't ask about but the prophet SAW answered because it's an issue that will arise.

## **10. Turn the question to something that was not asked because of the immense benefit behind the question that it was turned into.**

- "When is the hour?" The prophet SAW disliked this question and this is the technique the kuffar would use to make the prophet SAW look bad in front of everyone.
  - A Bedouin would come and didn't know the situation and asked, "When is the hour?" The prophet SAW answered, "What have you prepared for that final hour?" The Bedouin replied, "I haven't prepared a lot of salah, zakat but I'm preparing one thing, my love for Allah and His messenger." The prophet SAW said, "You will be with whom you love."
  - Hadeeth of: The prophet SAW was asked, "What should the muhrim wear?"(going into hajj) He answered the question by 'what the muhrim should NOT wear'
  - Now when someone wants to wear any innovated products, they will look at this list and know what NOT to wear.
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## Q&A

When a teacher explained Quran, the children are talking and then the teacher asks them "Don't you know that you're not supposed to talk when Quran is being recited?"

The children DON'T know but they're expected to know

A mistake a teacher will make is they have a herd mentality.

### **Herd mentality:**

If one sheep is going in one direction the other sheep will follow

Human beings are like sheep (70% of them)

70%-people with herd mentality

10%-some people no matter how bad the lecture is they will love it.

10% - no matter what you do they will hate the class

### **3 kinds of souls mentioned in the Quran:**

1. ammara bissoo' -will do bad even if people do good
2. mutmainna - will do good even if people do bad
3. lawwama - when people do good they do good and vice versa

Majority of the people are lawwama

### **So what should teacher do?**

If one person is causing trouble, look over the whole class and find the best student in class, and say to everybody, "Do you see how beautiful he's sitting, taking notes, etc?", so people will start copying the good student.

Make a point to reward the good student and not punish the bad ones because it's a way of giving them (bad students) attention.

At end of class, the best student will always be rewarded. They will this learn to attach happiness and joy to being good.

Weekend 3 (February 3, 2007) & Weekend 4 (February 10, 2007)

## **11. Letting others answer the question first occasionally**

### **The prophet SAW would train the companions to answer questions**

- E.g.: the prophet SAW allowed Abu Bakr to interpret a dream, and then told him that he was correct on some points and mistaken on some points.
- The prophet SAW also used to have certain companions judge between people.
- These companions later became Muslim judges

## **12. Taking advantage of special occasions**

### **This technique might not be clear as the others**

- People wouldn't attend Hajj workshops even four days before Hajj, but the time of Arafa for instance, is an occasion because that is when people would actually listen and pay attention.
- The dead goat that had deformity: The prophet SAW asked the companions, "Who would buy this animal?" They said, "Even if it was alive no one would buy it because of its deformity." The prophet SAW took advantage of that occasion to tell them how the dunya (world) is nothing and told them that this dunya (world) is more worthless than this dead goat that has deformity.

## **13. Using playful fun**

- Do not bore the people (do not make the lectures long)
- Smile
- The hadith of Abu Umair (a boy that the prophet SAW visited, because his pet (bird) died.) The prophet SAW asked him, "Yaa AbuUmair, *maatha fa3ala al-Nughair?* (what did the *Nughair* do?)" He said it in a nice way. The bird's name is not *Nughair*, but the prophet SAW said it like that to rhyme it with Abu Umair's name.
- The prophet SAW put his hands over a companion's eyes and asked, "Who would buy this slave?" The companion wasn't a slave. At first the companion wanted to move away, but when he realized it was the prophet SAW, he stayed and said, "Yaa Rasulullaah, no one would buy me because I am not worth anything." The prophet SAW told him, "In the sight of Allah you're worth a lot."
- Fun shouldn't be used all the time, there are other times that the teacher needs to be serious.

## **14. Using oath (Swearing by Allah)**

## **15. Repeating, repeating, and repeating what is being taught**

- At the time of the prophet SAW, people used to memorize everything. To make it easy for them, the prophet SAW would repeat what he is teaching three times.
- Anas r.a. said that the prophet SAW would repeat something three times, so the statement would be understood.
- The hadith where the prophet SAW said, “*waylun lil a3qab mina al-nar* (Beware and destroyed are the ankles from hell fire)”. The prophet SAW said that to the companions out loud three times because they weren’t making proper wudhu at the moment.

## **16. Calling out the listeners without telling them why**

- The prophet SAW called Mu’adh by his name when he was trying to give him wudhu. He told him “Yaa Mu’adh!” a couple of times with silence in between to get his attention.

## **17. The Prophet SAW would hold the shoulders of a companion to get their attention**

- The hadith of the man who asked the Prophet SAW’s permission to commit zina: After the prophet SAW explained the issue to him, he touched his chest and made dua for him.

## **18. Using cliff hangers**

- E.g.: a teacher might have interesting news. The teacher should tell the class “Insha Allah if you are good today, I have something interesting to tell you.”

## **19. Teaching people using stories and the accounts of the people that came before**

- It is easier for people to remember stories than words. Even the ahaadith that have stories are well known to the lay people.
- When you are using a story you grab the attention of the people from beginning to the end.
- Example of the boy and the king: since most kids know this story, the teacher should rush through the story then go straight to the lessons from the story.

## **20. The prophet SAW would pay attention to women's education and give them advice.**

- The prophet SAW would also give special attention to children and focus groups.
- At Eid the prophet SAW would stand in front of women and direct the khutbah to them. One of the things the prophet SAW used to emphasize to them was giving sadaqah.
- The prophet SAW made a specific day for the women to ask their questions and address their concerns.

## **21) Using anger when it is appropriate**

- In all the battles; Uhud, Badr etc. many people became Muslim
  
- ◆ The prophet SAW used to have a tree to lean on when he gave the khutbah.
- ◆ After a minbar was created for the prophet SAW, the tree started crying because it knew the prophet SAW wouldn't lean on it anymore.
- ◆ The tree understood more than many people understand Islam and the nobility of Ilm and the nobility in gatherings like that.
- ◆ In Andalus the masjids were converted to churches, and Muslims are not allowed to pray there.
- ◆ Even in America many Masjids are empty most of the time, "Where are the musaleen?"
- ◆ When a student came, the companions used to say "Welcome talibu ilm (student of knowledge)"

### **There is the desire to learn Islam:**

Some times when someone memorized like 40 surahs, they would start teaching and they would never go beyond that point because there aren't any teachers to teach.

People who are assigned to get a khatib have the most stressful job; the khatib might cancel the night before.

After 30, 40 years how come there are not enough khatibs?

### **To study Islam:**

- The manhaj of studying should be taught by the scholars
- Some people say if you want to study the deen, study Arabic first (this advice is given by lay people not scholars).
- A person should always start with learning the Quran first and then that will push them to learn Arabic. It doesn't work the other way around usually.

### **What went wrong?**

1. Sometimes the teacher is centralized
  - That forces the teacher to make up new material every single time. That takes the quality out of the work.
  - It might take 4 days to prepare a khutbah, but it can be reused over and over in different masajids (recycling)
2. Limited or no use of technology
  - Something like a PowerPoint presentation can increase the retention of knowledge from 20% to 40%
  - It doesn't have to be a PowerPoint presentation all the time, it can be an exhibit (e.g.: when explaining about miswak, a big miswak can be used to illustrate)
3. No assignments or exams to make sure the students understood the lesson
  - If you say. "Quizzes and exams are great, let's apply it to our halaqa," No one would come to your halaqa.
  - There has to be a review (e.g.: at the end of the class, everyone should say one thing that they learned from the lecture)
  - Many times these things are never researched at all
4. No creativity
  - As time passed, Muslims started studying in chairs. Some people say studying in a chair is bid'ah, laughing and having fun is bid'a.
  - It is sunnah to make drawing when explaining something.

### **How to make things creative:**

- Instead of calling it the weekly youth halaqah, call it the weekly youth bowling night. Then use like 15 minutes to remind them about Allah, and do a little review.
5. Trying to teach everything at one time:
    - It is good to give a little sample of everything, that way people would be interested all the time.
    - Teach one thing and teach correctly instead of teaching everything at the same time with no quality.

- E.g.: AlMaghrib classes cover one subject a whole weekend/two weekends

#### 6. Motivational Lecture:

- There is no such thing as a motivational lecture.
- As soon as people leave these lectures, they forget about everything.
- E.g.: “*Fadhuqu falan nazidakum ila adaba*(every time that the people of the Fire asked for the punishment to be lightened, it will be a cause for the punishment to intensified)” It is one of the toughest ayat against the inhabitants of the Hellfire. Many people have memorized this surah, so why do people continue to commit sins?

#### **The dedication factor:**

- E.g.: How many people want to memorize the Quran?
- People usually don't keep their commitment to memorize the Quran.

#### **How do you make the dedication factor?**

- Financial commitment
- Exam

We can dedicate short term not long term.