

The Significance of Gesticulations in Modern Teaching in The Perspective of The Seerah of The Holy Prophet: Muhammad SAW

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Abstract

Human being learn at each and every stage of life in one way or another. This learning is sometimes caused by a single event or sometimes by a repeated action. A teacher uses different skills and techniques to make the students learn easily. Many teachers, during their teaching, use body gestures, which help them to communicate with their students. The teachers move their hands to facilitate its students to understand an idea. Sometimes he/she changes its facial expressions while showing the intensity of a situation. The Holy prophet: Muhammad SAW was a teacher for the whole of humanity and that is why while teaching his students, he made different kinds of physical gestures. This research paper discusses the significance of these physical gestures during teaching and some examples of these gestures are given from the life of the Holy Prophet: Muhammad SAW.

Key words: *Learning, event, communicate, intensity, expression*

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Human being is a learner by nature. Allah has put in it abundance of curiosity. From the very childhood, human being is curious for learning. Allah Almighty indicates towards some of the organs of human being and calls them, "sources of learning". And warns the human being that all these organs ears, eyes and heart will be asked of its responsibilities. Allah says: " He is the One who created for you, ears and eyes and hearts. Little you are grateful".¹

Allah Almighty has mentioned some of the organs of human being because they are the sources of learning. By listening the words of Allah we get knowledge and advice. The human eyes looks and analysis many things. Without looking things no one can judge about something. Likewise the human heart is the greatest source of learning. This is the human heart which makes the life warm and moving. Therefore at another station Allah mentions these organs and indicates its significance by warning that these organs will be asked about their functions. Allah Almighty says: "And do not follow a thing about which you have no knowledge. Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about".²

Likewise the Holy Quran indicates, at many stations about thinking and uses many words. Rather it warns the ones who do not think in it as it says: "Then, do they not give serious thought to the Qur'an, or do they have locks on their hearts?"³

These are the primary sources of gaining knowledge while some of the secondary sources are also mentioned by the Holy Quran like the paper, book, pen etc. At one station it says: "By the mount of Tur. and by a book, written. on an unrolled scroll".⁴

In the teaching learning process, the role of the teacher can never be ignored. Each and every famous person in the world was effected by its teacher in a way or another because teacher is a key personality for learning. A skilled teacher can have impact over its student if he or she uses teaching techniques and teaching skills according to the suitable time and place. For example if a teacher, during teaching, uses its body gestures like moment of body, moving its hands, face gestures, use of loud and slow sounds, keeping them rhythmic and sometimes calling a student by name etc. these skills help the students be alert and learn easily but it is up to the teacher how he or she uses them.

The Holy prophet was an educationist and he played the role of a skillful teacher. He said: "I have been sent as a teacher".⁵ As a skillful and expert teacher, the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW, used so many techniques and skills. Some examples are given here for the teachers, if they adopt, their teaching can be more effective.

Use of the Head to indicate the importance of Something:

Sometimes a teacher wants to indicate that something is important, so he raises his head towards the students or when a student asks a question, the teacher moves his head

towards him/her. Such body gestures are movements of hand, arm, finger, leg or head. ⁶ Whenever someone asked a question, the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW, would move his head up so that a person could listen attentively and also the other listeners would listen with attention. For example: "Abu Musa Ashaari narrates that once a man came to the Holy Prophet SAW and asked: Oh Prophet! which fight is acceptable to Allah ? Some of us fight because of their anger on enemy while some fight because of their jealousy. Although the Holy Prophet was in a standing position but even then He raised his head and said: The one who fights for the reason to highlight the sayings of Allah, will be fighting in the path of Allah" ⁷ "And the credit mentioned for *mujahid* is for the one who fights for the sake of Allah. Allama Ibne Hajar derives the rule from this Hadith that the one ask question should turn its face towards the one who is asked". ⁸ In the modern teaching while teaching a teacher can show the students the importance of something by moving his/her head towards the students and it is one of the important tools among the body language and this body language is a complete language in itself. ⁹

Drawing lines:

Sometimes for easy learning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW would draw lines to make it easier for students. For Example: The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW was telling its students about the Right Path, he drew some lines on the earth on the right and left side and then a straight line in the middle. He said: the lines on the right and left are lines of Satan while the central straight line is the Right Path and the path of Allah. Under the verse of the Holy Quran: "And this is My path that is straightforward. So, follow it, and do not follow the other ways, lest they should make you deviate from His way. This is what He has enjoined upon you, so that you may be God-fearing". ¹⁰ "Abdullah bin Masood says that The Holy Prophet SAW drew a straight line and said this is the path of Allah and then drew some line to the right and left and said these is Satan on every path and then recited the Verse: And this is My path that is straightforward. So, follow it, and do not follow the other ways, lest they should make you deviate from His way. This is what He has enjoined upon you, so that you may be God-fearing". ¹¹

Teaching with the help of maps:

Sometimes the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW would draw different shapes for teaching. Telling about the death of a human being the Holy Prophet said: "Abdullah bin Masood RA said that the Holy Prophet SAW drew a square, then drew a straight line in the middle of the square which was a bit out of the square. And said that this central line is the human being and the square shape is his death which occupies him from every side. And all the lines coming out of the squares are the human wishes and these small lines are the problems he faces. When one of his problem finishes, the second comes and when it finishes the third one comes". ¹²

Use of Hands:

During the teaching, when a teacher makes gestures with fingers or hands. These are common but a finger gesture is not acceptable in Hindu society rather a thumb expression is appreciated.¹³ In Arab society gestures with hands is acceptable. When someone would ask about any problem, the Holy Prophet would answer with the gestures of hands. For example at the occasion of hajj, a companion asked that I have slaughtered my animal before stoning the Satan, the Holy Prophet told him with the gesture of hand that no problem, it is ok. "Ibne Abbas RA says that during the last hajj of the Holy Prophet SAW, a man asked him that I have slaughtered my animal before stoning the Satan. The Holy Prophet made gestures with his hand communicating him that "It is ok", then he said that I shaved my hairs before the slaughter of animal, the Holy Prophet again replied", "It is ok",¹⁴

Gesture of Killing:

While explaining the signs of the day of judgment, the Holy prophet said that many problems will come out in people. Abu Huraira RA says that I heard the Holy Prophet saying: "Near the day of judgment, the knowledge will be lifted, and chaos will be visible and *haraj* will be in abundance. Someone asked what is *haraj* ? The Holy Prophet said: killings And the Holy Prophet made the sign of killing with his hands. Likewise on another occasion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW said: Abu Huraira RA says that the Holy Prophet said: In near future there will be Problems and opposition of people. We asked him: what will be the way out of them ? The Holy Prophet SAW said: You should strictly follow the Muslim Caliph and indicated towards Hazrat Uthman".¹⁵

In the modern teaching making many gestures with body to show some tasks are appreciated and many times a gesture does more than many words.¹⁶

Sign about the Care of girls:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW always emphasized on the education and care of the girls, as they are always exploited about in every society, especially in the society of Arab, they were deprived of many rights, even survival. A father was authorized to even kill them if he was willing and nobody could stop him from this cruelty. A grave yard still exist in the Holy city of Makka in which the girls were buried alive. Therefore the Holy Prophet urged the Arabs to take care of the girls. Hazrat Anas RA says that the Holy Prophet SAW said: "Anyone who brought up two girls till adult age, will be in paradise with me and joined his fore finger and the middle".¹⁷

Care of the Orphans:

In many society many touch signs mean different. It may be a sign of love and can be a sign of hatred like the touch between mom and child.¹⁸ In the Arab society, at the times of the Holy Prophet and before him was deteriorated like the status of girls. People would deprive them from their legal and social rights. The Holy Prophet struggled a lot for their rights. Once he said: "I and the one who cares about the orphans will be in paradise like this and joined his fore finger and middle finger".¹⁹

Indication towards Mouth:

Abdullah bin Umar was one of the companion of the Holy Prophet, he would write each and every thing of the Holy Prophet SAW. "The people of Quraish stopped him from doing so saying that the Holy Prophet is also a human being. He faces different situations like other human beings. Sometimes he is happy while sometimes in sad mode. He also feel anger like us so you should not write and note all the things. He stopped his writing but was curious about it therefore he, once asked the Holy Prophet about it. The Holy

Prophet said: I swear the Allah, who hold my life: nothing comes out of this mouth, but the Right and indicated towards his mouth" ²⁰.

Taqwa piouness is the most precious property of the Muslims. Once telling about it the Holy Prophet SAW said: "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He never treats him with fraud nor calls him a liar. A Muslim always respects the wealth, honor and blood of another Muslim and *Taqwa* is here the Holy Prophet indicated towards his heart" ²¹.

Finger gestures:

In many societies some indications with fingers are meaningful but it depends upon the society, its culture and religion. In many societies index finger sign is acceptable while in other societies thumb expression is more acceptable. ²². Sometimes the Holy Prophet would use the finger gestures for making its students understand. For example: Abdullah bin Amar bin Al-Aaas said that the Holy Prophet SAW once said: "In near future, people will spying of others and the people will not care about their promises and trusts and will oppose each other and indicated with his fingers by joining them". ²³

Another Hadith is narrated by Abu Musa, he said: "A Muslim is foundation for another Muslim and he joined his finger indicating that one finger supports the other". ²⁴

This example can be linked with the modern teaching where the use of fingers is made in different contexts. ²⁵

Explanations by Examples:

Sometimes, the Prophet Muhammad SAW would give example and would depict to make its students understand. For example: Abu Musa narrates that once the Holy Prophet SAW said: "The example of the revealed knowledge is just like abundance of rain which rains on the earth. Some of the soil is good, so it accepts the water and a lot of greenery and plants comes out of it while some of the earth is dry and stops the water. People get benefit of the water, people drink from it and gives it to other people too and get their agriculture with the help of it. And some of the water rains over an earth which can neither absorb the water nor bears out the greenery. Same is the person who gets knowledge and get the benefit and through that which Allah sent me for". ²⁶

Example of His Prophet hood:

The Holy prophet gave the example of his prophet hood "like person who made a very beautiful building but left a place of a brick and when people entered this building, they said: why this brick is not present and I am that brick which completes the beautiful building the prophet hood". ²⁷

Giving the example of this World:

The Holy Prophet said about the life and stay in this world that: the example of "Me and this world is like a passenger who rests under a tree for sometimes and then starts his journey". ²⁸

Understanding the Students Psychology:

Psychology is the science of behaviour and mind. ²⁹ Many scientists wroked in this field to understand the human psychology. It is the science which makes the teaching easier for a teacher. The Holy Prophet was a good teacher and he would read the students mind and would act accordingly. For example: "Abu Sulaiman Malik bin Hwairis says that once we came closer to the Holy Prophet for learning. About twenty nights passed and we were busy in learning. In the meanwhile we missed our families. The Holy Prophet discussed with us about the families and felt our feelings about the families and He was very merciful. He said: Now you return to your families, educate them about Islam and

say prayers as I pray and at the time of prayer, one should give *adan* call for prayer and the elder should be your *imam* ³⁰

Making Voice louder while warning:

A teacher can warn his students by speaking a bit louder at sometimes. The Holy Prophet would make his voice louder in such situations. Abdullah bin Umar says that we were accompanying the Holy prophet once in a travelling. "The time was skipping for prayer and we were washing our feet. The Holy Prophet said loudly: Hell for those who do not wash their ankles and He said this twice or three times". ³¹

Mobilizing the Students:

There should be a closer relationship between the teacher and students so that the teaching learning process becomes more effective. That is why the Holy Prophet would many times act informally. For making the students under, the Holy Prophet would sometimes hold the hand of its student to make him attentive. Abdullah bin Masood says that "the Holy Prophet kept his palm on my palm while teaching me how to say Tashahud in prayer just as the Holy Prophet taught us other Surahs of the Holy Quran". ³²

In Hadithe Jibreel it is mentioned that Umar bin Khattab says: "Once we were sitting along with the Holy Prophet, suddenly a man in white clothes and silky black hairs came. There were no signs of travelling over him and none of us knew him. He came and sat in front of the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW and joined his knees with the knees of the Holy Prophet and put his palm over the thigh of the Prophet and said: Oh Muhammad! tell me about Islam. The Holy Prophet said: Islam is to say that There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah and say prayers and pay Zakat and keep fasting and if afford perform hajj. The guest said: you are right. We were astonished by listening this because he is asking a question and now agrees that you are right. Then he asked: What is Eman ? The Holy Prophet said: To believe in Allah, in the angles, in the books, in the prophets, in the day of judgment and to believe in fortune whether it is good or bad that is from Allah. He said: you are right. Then he asked what is *Ahsan* ? The Holy Prophet said: you pray Allah in such a state that you are watching Allah and if not possible at least imagine that Allah watches you. Then he asked to tell me about the day of Judgment. The Holy Prophet said: The one who questioned, know more than the one who is questioned. Then said: tell me its signs. The Holy Prophet said: the signs are when a mother will give birth to its slave and your will see the bare footed people, bear bodies, poor people and the shepherd will be proud of their high buildings. Then he the guest left. Hazrat Umar asked: who was he ? The Holy Prophet said: It was Jibreel and he had come to teach you your religion". ³³

Conclusion:

From the above discussion we can conclude that learning is natural for human being. He or She learns every moment as one of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet indicates that learn from cradle to grave. Allah Almighty has also drawn the attention of human beings towards learning and knowledge and has clearly mentioned the different organs of human beings as tools of learning. Some secondary and helpful things like, pen, paper and books are also mentioned so that the human being could bring them into practice and get knowledge through it. The Holy Prophet SAW as perfect teacher for humanity has also displayed many skills for human beings and the use of these skills makes him a perfect teacher. The Holy Prophet SAW used his body gestures on different occasions as teacher and many times gave examples to his students. A merciful and loving teacher adopts each and every tool for the benefits of its students and to create easiness for them at every

stage of life. This is the teacher who designs a nation and the teachings of the Holy Prophet SAW are living examples for every teacher till the last day.

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