

Treatment of children in a classroom environment as per the Prophetic way

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Abstract

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim – male and female.”

To attain knowledge is one of the fundamental rights of a child. The Shariah – in the light of the Quran and Sunnah - tells us how this knowledge should be imparted.

This paper emphasizes what kind of environment we should provide children so they can achieve the knowledge required by Islam. Moreover this paper addresses the expected exemplary behavior of the teacher towards children in the light of the Seerat-un-Nabi. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the rights of children in the classroom and how the Prophet (SAW) gave his example as a teacher towards his Sahabah while instructing them in the matter of religion. This paper also answers the basic questions about the methodology of teaching a child, the need for punishment and reward and how to provide encouragement for seeking knowledge through the life of the Prophet (SAW) and Quranic verses.

Towards the end, the paper brings to light the current situation and problems that children face in the classroom. The author attempts to propose a solution to the problems at hand – all keeping in mind the verses of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Keywords: education, children, Shariah, Seerat-un-Nabi, classroom environment, methodology, punishment, reward, Sahabah, knowledge

Introduction

The prosperity and longevity of any country depends greatly on its succeeding generation’s potential for thought and action. An intellectual

nation focuses on building this potential through education and due attention. Islam too stresses on the gaining of knowledge and makes it compulsory for every man, woman and child to acquire knowledge. The very first Divine revelation on the Prophet (SAW) too emphasized the importance of knowledge:

أَفْرَأُ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٢) أَفْرَأُ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمَ (٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (٥)

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created –Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous –Who taught by the pen –Taught man that which he knew not.”¹

If we focus on this revelation, it can be noted that in these five verses, the command to read has been given twice and the mention of knowledge thrice. The Prophet (SAW) too, knowing the importance of gaining knowledge, made it obligatory on all Muslims. He said:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.

"Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim."²

The Holy Quran has deeply encouraged seeking knowledge and has labeled it man's distinguishing feature from other creations, commanding students to constantly seek more knowledge and to increase this treasure. Allah (SWT) in the Quran has also discouraged the practice of those who do not gain knowledge, emphasizing that the status of those with knowledge and those without can never be equal. He says:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (٩)

“Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.”³

It is narrated from Abu Hurairah (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said:

الكلمة الحكمة ضالة المؤمن فحيث وجدها فهو أحق بها.

Every word of wisdom is a believer's lost treasure. Wherever he finds it, he is the most deserving to have it.⁴

Now that we've established the importance of knowledge, let us move on to the kind of education system that can help us in gaining the true essence of the knowledge we are seeking. A detailed study of the Quran and the

Hadith reveals that true knowledge is that which alerts man to his true purpose in life whether that may be religious or worldly knowledge.

According to the Islamic method of education, an Islamic country should offer such education which helps prepare individuals according to the latest techniques for various professions as experts and workers.

No nation denies the importance of knowledge and education. Therefore, instead of focusing on individual attempts, a united and organized system was created, introducing schools and madrassas, where students spend much of their day and learn about various subjects. There was an age when education would begin at home. Over the years, as the system evolved, schools became the new obligatory face of the base of education.

A school doesn't merely refer to a building made out of bricks and cement, rather according to Wikipedia.org, a school is "an institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers."⁵ According to this definition, a school has three main constituents; teachers, students and the environment. The very best of institutions with the very best of education can only be established when teachers, students and the environment are all given their due importance. There have been countless researches about teachers and students but the classroom environment, which is equally important, is often overlooked. Amy A Turano says in her thesis, 'The impact of classroom environment on student learning': "The classroom environment cannot be pinpointed as one specific entity. The whole environment of the classroom consists of several factors; indeed "it [the classroom environment] is constructed in much the same manner as a quilt-numerous and diverse parts gain distinctiveness through the contribution of each piece to a whole" (Stewart, Evans & Kaczynski, 1997, p.56). Classroom environment can be broken down into four main factors as explained in "Setting the Stage for Success: Assessing the Instructional Environment" (Stewart et al., 1997). The four factors are: (1) physical environment, (2) time/instructional management, (3) behavior management, and (4) teacher effectiveness. When implemented properly, these four factors can play an important role in contributing to student learning. If one of these four factors is neglected, this could be detrimental to the learning process. These factors need to be implemented all together in order to make the most positive impact on student learning."⁶

Through this paper, we will attempt to understand what type of education system is the most effective and practical and has been endorsed by the Prophet of Allah (SAW). In Islam, where the rights of teachers are highlighted, the rights of students too are given significance so that there aren't any obstacles in their seeking knowledge.

1400 years ago, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) arrived in the Arabian Peninsula as the last prophet of Allah. The Prophet (SAW), under the guidance of Allah Almighty began spreading the knowledge of Allah's religion amongst the Makkan people of that era who were majorly illiterate and unlettered. We will look at some of the techniques the Prophet (SAW) employed as a teacher and instructor. Keeping in mind the rights, psyches and needs of students, the Prophet (SAW), changed the lives of desert dwellers into some of the most civilized people on earth. This article is an attempt to know the main features of his (SAW) educational method and the rights he gave to his Sahabah as students while educating them.

1. Safe and proper place

The very first right of a student –especially that of a child – is that the place where he/she is going to seek knowledge is safe. Upon reaching Madinah, the very first step that the Prophet (SAW) took was to lay the foundations of the Masjid-al-Nabawi which was to become one of the greatest centers of learning. In the Masjid, he (SAW) created a specially appointed area for learning and teaching. The classroom was a raised platform which was termed 'Suffah' in Arabic. Doctor Hameedullah dubbed it as a 'residential university'.⁷ The Prophet (SAW) did not establish any such formal institution in his time in Makkah because the environment was not secure enough for Muslims to learn openly due to the Quraish's enmity, rather the companions of the holy chose one of their houses (the house of Arqam bin Abi Arqam) to be their first school where the Sahaba gathered secretly and learned the teachings of Islam from their beloved teacher the Prophet of Allah. However, as soon as the Muslims arrived in Madinah, the Prophet (SAW) introduced the Suffah. This proves that the Prophet of Allah (SAW) was concerned about the safety of his students and only created an openly declared learning center when it was safe for them. Moreover, he had some study circles inside Masjid-al-Nabawi also.

2. Equality of students in front of the teacher

One of the fundamental rights of a student in a classroom environment is that all students are equal in the sight of the teacher. A student's physical appearance, caste, social background or family should not make any difference in how the teacher treats him/her. If such biases creep into a classroom, students will not be able to focus on learning with dissatisfaction and frustration growing amongst the students, destroying the very purpose of education. We can learn from the life of the Prophet (SAW) as a teacher, who completely eradicated the difference between rich and poor. A classic example of this can be seen in how the Prophet (SAW) chose amongst all his companions of wealth and noble birth, Bilal (RA) who was a freed Abyssinian slave. This selection teaches us and all Muslims to come that any position should be based solely on 'taqwa', not wealth, nobility or beauty. The Prophet (SAW) said in his farewell pilgrimage speech:

يا أيها الناس إن ربكم واحد وإن أباكم واحد، كلكم من آدم و آدم من " تراب، ألا لا فضل لعربي على أعجمي ولا لأعجمي على عربي ولا لأحمر على أسود ولا لأسود على أحمر إلا بالتقوى ، أبلغت ؟ "قالوا بلغ 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 does a black have any superiority over a 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."⁸

Nu'man ibn Bashir narrates another incident from the life of the Prophet (SAW) where he shows the importance of equality amongst children.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَانُ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو حَيَّانَ التَّمِيمِيُّ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنِ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أُمَّي أَبِي بَعْضَ الْمَوْهَبَةِ لِي مِنْ مَالِهِ، ثُمَّ بَدَأَ لَهُ فَوَهَبَهَا لِي فَقَالَتْ لَا أَرْضَى حَتَّى تُشْهَدَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِي وَأَنَا غُلَامٌ، فَاتَى بِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّهُ بِنْتُ رَوَاحَةَ سَأَلْتَنِي بَعْضَ الْمَوْهَبَةِ لِهَذَا، قَالَ " أَلَيْكَ وَلَدٌ سِوَاهُ " . قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ فَأَرَاهُ قَالَ " لَا تُشْهَدُنِي عَلَى جَوْرٍ " . وَقَالَ أَبُو حَرِيرٍ عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ " لَا أَشْهَدُ عَلَى جَوْرٍ "

“My mother asked my father to present me a gift from his property; and he gave it to me after some hesitation. My mother said that she would not be satisfied unless the Prophet (ﷺ) was made a witness to it. I being a young boy, my father held me by the hand and took me to the Prophet (ﷺ). He said to the Prophet, "His mother, bintRawaha, requested me to give this boy a gift." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do you have other sons besides him?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do not make me a witness for injustice." Narrated Ash-Shu`bi that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I will not become a witness for injustice.”⁹

In the Holy Quran too, the right of equality between students of knowledge has been mentioned. In Surah Al-‘Abas, Allah (SWT) corrected the Prophet (SAW) when he was preaching the word of Allah to the leaders of Quraish and a blind Companion came to the Prophet asking him some questions. The Prophet (SAW) focused more on attending to the Quraish and ignored the Companion for a little while. Allah (SWT) called the Prophet (SAW) out on this act of his, saying in Surah Al-‘Abas that the Prophet (SAW) should have paid greater attention to the Companion than he should have the leaders of Quraish, perhaps, the Companion would have benefitted from it. Allah says in Surah Al-‘Abas:

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى (٢) وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى (٣) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٤) أَمَّا مَنْ أَسْتَعْنَى (٥) فَانْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى (٦) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا يَزَّكَّى (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى (٨) وَهُوَ يَخْشَى (٩) فَانْتَ عَنْهُ تَلْهَى (١٠)

“The Prophet frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, To him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge]. While he fears [Allah], From him you are distracted.”¹⁰

These various examples clarify the concept of equality amongst all students according to the principles of Islam.

3. Softness

The classroom’s environment is perhaps, affected most by the teacher’s behavior and attitude towards the students. It is this very attitude of the teacher that eventually becomes the cause of a subject becoming beloved or disliked by a student. Studies show that subjects taught by a teacher who is soft-spoken are more likely to be enjoyed and loved by students compared to subjects whose teachers are harsh, where students feel frustrated and upset. Therefore, it is concluded that it is a right of students to have a soft-spoken teacher so that they can learn that subject with interest and attentiveness.

The Prophet (SAW) was also taught this methodology. Mu’awiah bin Hakam al-Sulami says:

بيننا أنا أصلي مع رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - إذ عطس رجلٌ من القوم، فقلتُ: يرحمك الله، فرماني القومُ بأبصارهم، فقلتُ: واأكل أميأه! ما شأنكم تنظرون إليّ؟ فجعلوا يضربون بأيديهم على أفخاذهم، فلما رأيتهم يُصمّتونني، لكني سكت، فلما صلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فبأبي هو وأمي، ما رأيتُ معلماً قبله ولا بعده أحسنَ تعليمًا منه، فوالله ما كهرني ولا ضربني ولا شتمني، قال: إنَّ هذه الصلَاة لا يصلح فيها شيءٌ من كلام الناس، إنّما 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 thighs 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.”¹¹

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 (١٥٩)

“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.”

These clear examples from the Quran and the Hadith illustrate how Islam instructs teachers to be soft in their dealings with students, making this a fundamental right of a student.

A teacher should be even kinder to his student than his actual father is, because he is his spiritual father.¹²

4. Right to question

The classroom environment needs to be casual so that the questions that take form in the student’s minds can be fully satisfied. If the classroom’s environment is too strict, and such that students are unable to solve their queries, hurdles may arise in the process of learning. This certainly will not leave a positive impact on them and there may be many unanswered questions that would cause the students anxiety and restlessness in the future. Hence, it is the student’s right whether he asks a trivial or significant question. Often, teachers are not very fond of pupils who question frequently and dislike explaining to them, which may create hardships in their learning process. Therefore, it is the duty of a good teacher that he satisfies his students. From the study of the life of the Holy Prophet

(SAW), it becomes apparent that he (SAW) would always gratify his questioner.

A man from the tribe of Sa'ad bin Bakr whose name was Dhimmam 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." Anas bin Malik narrates the story of this man and how he accepted Islam:

عن أنس بن مالك - رضي الله عنه - قال : بينما نحن جلوس مع النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - في المسجد دخل رجل على جمل فأناخه في المسجد ثم عقله ثم قال لهم : أيكم محمد؟ ، - والنبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - متكئ بين ظهرانيهم - ، فقلنا هذا الرجل الأبيض المتكئ ، فقال له الرجل : ابن عبد المطلب ، فقال له النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : قد أجبتك ، فقال الرجل للنبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : إني أسألك فمشدد عليك في المسألة ، فلا تجد عليّ في نفسك ، فقال : سل عما بدا لك ، فقال : أسألك بربك ورب من قبلك ، الله أرسلك إلى الناس كلهم ؟ ، فقال : اللهم نعم ، قال : أنشدك بالله ، الله أمرك أن تصلي الصلوات الخمس في اليوم واللييلة ؟ ، قال : اللهم نعم ، قال : أنشدك بالله ، الله أمرك أن نصوم هذا الشهر من السنة ؟ ، قال : اللهم نعم ، قال : أنشدك بالله ، الله أمرك أن تأخذ هذه الصدقة من أغنيائنا فتقسمها في فقرائنا ؟ ، فقال النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : اللهم نعم ، فقال الرجل : آمنت بما جئت به ، وأنا رسول من ورائي من قومي وأناضمام بن ثعلبة أخو بني سعد بن بكر رواه البخاري.

"While the Prophet was with his Companions a man from among the desert people came and said: 'Which of you is the son of 'Abdul-Muttalib?' They said: 'This white man who is reclining on a pillow.' The man said: 'I am going to ask you questions and I will be harsh in asking.' He said: 'ask whatever you like.' He said: 'I ask you by your Lord and the Lord of those who came before you, and the Lord of those who will come after you; has Allah sent you?' He said: 'By Allah, yes.' He said: 'I adjure you by Him, has Allah commanded you to offer five prayers each day and night?' He said: 'By Allah, yes; He said: 'I adjure you by Him, has Allah commanded you to take from the wealth of our rich and give it to our poor?' he said: 'By Allah, yes He said: 'I adjure you by Allah, has Allah commanded you to fast this month out of the twelve months?' He said: 'By Allah, yes.' He said: 'I adjure you by Him, has Allah commanded you to go on pilgrimage to this

House, where can afford it?' He said: 'By Allah yes.' He said: 'I believe, and I am Dimam bin Thalabah."¹³

5. Should not be humiliated

Man is a social animal who prefers working together with other people and never wishes for his weaknesses to be put on display before others. The self-esteem of students with such experiences is damaged, due to which their performance is adversely affected. They feel abased to be reprimanded before their class fellows. Thus, it is the student's right if he errors somewhere, he should be corrected in such a manner that he does not feel ashamed in front of other pupils. Understanding this psychological behavior, the Holy Prophet (SAW) would never address the one who made a mistake in front of an audience. 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 Abi Shaiba, who says:

استعمل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رجلا 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 شيئا 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 Banu Asad, 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 mooring, then he raised both his hands until we saw the whiteness of his armpits, and said twice: O Allah! I conveyed.”¹⁴

6. Cooperation

To make the classroom environment knowledge-friendly it is necessary to establish cooperation. This can be established between fellow students, whereas cooperating with teachers develops a healthy environment. It is the right of the student that his fellows and teachers aid him in his hardships. If his work is left incomplete due to an illness so he should be helped concerning his missed work. And if the pupil is handicapped or underprivileged then his teachers should provide him with financial aid. For this purpose various strategies should be adopted so that the student's self-esteem is not lowered whereas he is also facilitated.

Allah the Almighty says:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (2)

And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.¹⁵

We learn from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), that he (SAW) would make special arrangements for people who would come to gain religious knowledge. He (SAW) himself would arrange for the sustenance of the Ashab as- Suffa and often, the wives of the Prophet (SAW) would send food for them. And the Ashab as- Suffa's only job was to learn and teach the Holy Qura'n. We have found numerous similar examples in the Islamic history. It is written about Abu Yusuf that when, in his childhood he would attend Imam Abu Haneefa's lectures, his domestic situation was unstable. His parents needed Abu Yusuf to work and earn a living. When Imam Abu Haneefa learned of this, he set an allowance for Abu Yusuf's family so that he could study whole-heartedly. This allowance remained till he remained Imam's student. Later Abu Yusuf himself became a great Imam and was appointed Chief-Justice for the whole Islamic world during the Caliphate of Abu Ja'far al-Mansoor the Abbasside Caliph.

Today, education is extremely expensive and many intelligent students cannot afford it, so are incapable of obtaining knowledge. In this case, it is the students' right to be offered a scholarship or stipend so that there is no other obstacle that can hinder their education.

7. Right to differ

In a classroom, the students present are of varying mental capabilities and perceptions. A single topic can be comprehended differently. A healthy environment is such that it provides every point of view to be expressed. A teacher should be open minded enough to permit students to voice his opinion, and if he disagrees with his teacher, instead of admonishing him, his idea should be seriously considered. Furthermore, the pupil should not be punished for correcting the teacher if he errs at some point, instead he should admit his mistake.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) acknowledged this right of the student and such examples can be found in his life that grant students this right. For instance, when the Prophet (SAW) came to Medina, the Ansaar were pollinating the palm trees by attaching male and female parts of the plant, and the Prophet (SAW) advised them not to do so. But when the Sahaba complained that this had decreased the dates' yield, he admitted that he (SAW) had not foreseen such a result.

عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ طَلْحَةَ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ ، قَالَ : " مَرَرْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِقَوْمٍ عَلَى رُءُوسِ النَّخْلِ ، فَقَالَ : (مَا يَصْنَعُ هَؤُلَاءِ ؟) فَقَالُوا : يُلْقِحُونَهُ ، يَجْعَلُونَ الذَّكَرَ فِي الْأُنْثَى فَيُلْقِحُ ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : (مَا أَظُنُّ يُغْنِي ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا) . قَالَ فَأُخْبِرُوا بِذَلِكَ فَتَرَكَوهُ ، فَأُخْبِرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِذَلِكَ فَقَالَ : (إِنْ كَانَ يَنْفَعُهُمْ ذَلِكَ فَلْيَصْنَعُوهُ ، فَإِنِّي إِنَّمَا ظَنَنْتُ ظَنًّا ، فَلَا تُؤَاخِدُونِي بِالظَّنِّ ، وَلَكِنْ إِذَا حَدَّثْتُكُمْ عَنِ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا فَخُذُوا بِهِ ، فَإِنِّي لَنْ أَكْذِبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ .

It was narrated by Musa bin Talhah bin `Ubaidullah that his father said: "I passed by some palm trees with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and he saw some people pollinating the trees. He said: What are these people doing? They said: They are taking something from the male part (of the plant) and putting it in the female part. He said: I do not think that this will do any good. News of that reached them, so they stopped doing it, and their yield declined. News of that reached the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: That was only my thought. If it will do any good, then do it. I am only a human being like you, and what I think may be right or wrong. But when I tell you: "Allah (SWT) says," I will never tell lies about Allah (SWT)."¹⁶

This incident makes it evident that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gave the Sahaba the right to

differ with him (SAW). The classroom environment yields a more productive result when there are students of various points of view and is given the opportunity to elucidate themselves. In this manner, they will not feel subdued; rather their concepts will be made clear. Even Allah the Almighty has praised those Sahaba who question the holy Prophet about the verses of the holy Qur'an. Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا دُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا (73)

And those who, when reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind.¹⁷

8. Knowledge must be authentic

Even if a teacher is the students' ideal and they are content with him, he must understand that it is his duty to transfer authentic knowledge as the students' minds resemble a plain slate. All that the teacher conveys to them is imprinted on their minds and this information forms the basis for the rest of their lives. Hence, it is compulsory for the teacher to ensure that information in his lecture is reliable and authentic. During a lecture, in case a student raises a question which the teacher is unable to answer, he should admit that he does not have the solution to it and would research on the topic to provide the student with a suitable answer, instead of formulating an answer on his own to avoid embarrassment.

By the study the life of the Prophet (SAW) we find many examples concerning this. When the Sahabah would come forth with a question to the Prophet (SAW), he would wait for an inspiration to come to him, instead of answering on his own.

Whenever he was asked regarding the date and time of the Last Day, he would reply, saying that he was as unaware of it as the questioner was. Imam Bukhari narrates on the authority of Abu Huraira:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ إِذْ أَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ يَمَشِي فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ الْآخِرِ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ " الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ " الْإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ قَالَ " مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ

مِنَ السَّائِلِ، وَلَكِنْ سَأَحَدُّتُكَ عَنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا إِذَا وُلِدَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ رَبَّتَهَا، فَذَلِكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا، وَإِذَا كَانَ الْخُفَاءُ الْعُرَاءُ رُغُوسَ النَّاسِ فَذَلِكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا فِي خَمْسٍ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ {إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ} . ثُمَّ انصَرَفَ الرَّجُلُ فَقَالَ " رُتُّوا عَلَيَّ " . فَأَخَذُوا لِيَرْتُدُّوا فَلَمْ يَرَوْا شَيْئًا . فَقَالَ " هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ جَاءَ لِيُعَلِّمَ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ " .

One day while Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting with the people, a man came to him walking and said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). What is Belief?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the meeting with Him, and to believe in the Resurrection." The man asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Islam?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Islam is to worship Allah and not worship anything besides Him, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the (compulsory) charity i.e. Zakat and to fast the month of Ramadan." The man again asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Ihsan (i.e. perfection or Benevolence)?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you." The man further asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) When will the Hour be established?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "The one who is asked about it does not know more than the questioner does, but I will describe to you its portents. When the lady slave gives birth to her mistress, that will be of its portents; when the bare-footed naked people become the chiefs of the people, that will be of its portents. The Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah. Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs." (31.34) Then the man left. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Call him back to me." They went to call him back but could not see him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion."¹⁸

Likewise, when the Jews sent a few people of the Quraish to the Prophet (SAW) with four questions, claiming that if he answered them they would accept him as the Prophet, he (SAW) did not answer immediately, but he said he will answer tomorrow, waiting for the inspiration of Allah (SWT) and forgot to say "إن شاء الله" (God willing), and sent His revelation fifteen days later containing the answers in Surah Al-Kahf, Surah number 18 of the holy Qur'an. Allah the Almighty also emphasized on saying "إن شاء الله" before planning to do anything. He said:

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لشيءٍ إني فاعلٌ ذلك غداً (23) إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا (24)

And never say of anything, "Indeed, I will do that tomorrow," Except [when adding], "If Allah wills." And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct."¹⁹

9. Acknowledgement of individual talent

Allah (SWT) has blessed every individual with a unique talent. Some are more inclined to subjects of science, some exceed in arts, while others relish solving complex math problems. However, often students are ignorant of the talents hidden within them. For example, a student may find himself weak in mainstream subjects such as science, math and English as he does not perform too well in them. On this basis his fellow students and teachers do not acknowledge his abilities. But it is the same student who when attends an arts class shows the most unique and outstanding performance. On such occasions it is the obligation on the teacher to appreciate his capabilities and train him accordingly so that the student can become confident and excel in his field of expertise.

Prophet (SAW) would be fully aware of this psychological aspect, which is why he readied a team of specialists in religious fields. For the recitation and tajweed of the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (SAW) prepared Ubai' bin Ka'ab, Ibn Masood 'Ali, Ma'az bin Jabal, Salim and Maula Abi Hudhaifa. He said:

" اسْتَقْرُوا الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ أَرْبَعَةٍ مِنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ وَسَالِمٍ وَمَوْلَى أَبِي حُدَيْفَةَ، وَأُبَيٍّ، وَمُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ "

"Learn the recitation of Qur'an from four persons: Ibn Mas'ud, Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifa, Ubai and Mu`adh bin Jabal."

The knowledge of Ubai' bin Ka'ab was blessed such that by the command of Allah, the Prophet (SAW) recited the Qur'an before him specially.²⁰

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ شُعْبَةَ، سَمِعْتُ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِأَبِي " إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَقْرَأَ عَلَيْكَ {لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا} " . قَالَ وَسَمَّانِي قَالَ " نَعَمْ " فَبَكَى .

The Prophet said to Ubai, "Allah has ordered me to recite to you: 'Those who disbelieve (Surat-al-Bayina 98).' "Ubai said, "Has He mentioned my name?" The Prophet said, "Yes." On hearing this, Ubai started weeping.²¹

Prophet (SAW) educated Zaid bin Thabit in the fields of inheritance and Ilm-ul-Faraiz and Mu'az bin Jabal regarding the lawful and unlawful.

Anas bin Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said regarding them and others:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَهَّابِ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَجِيدِ النَّفَّيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا خَالِدُ الْحَدَّاءُ، عَنْ أَبِي قِلَابَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَرْحَمُ أُمَّتِي بِأُمَّتِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَأَشَدُّهُمْ فِي أَمْرِ اللَّهِ عُمَرُ وَأَصْدَقُهُمْ حَيَاءً عُثْمَانُ وَأَفْرَوُهُمْ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ أَبِي بَنُ كَعْبٍ وَأَفْرَضُهُمْ زَيْدُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَمِينًا وَإِنَّ أَمِينَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ " . هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ .

"The most merciful of my nation to my nation is Abu Bakr, and the most severe of them concerning the order of Allah is 'Umar, and the most truly modest of them is 'Uthman bin 'Affan. The best reciter (of the Qur'an) among them is Ubayy bin Ka'b, the most knowledgeable of them concerning (the laws of) inheritance is Zaid bin Thabit, the most knowledgeable of them concerning the lawful and the unlawful is Mu'adh bin Jabal. Truly, every nation has a trustworthy one, and the trustworthy one of this nation is Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah."²²

10. Balance in physical punishments

There is an ever present and major element of punishment present in the classroom environment which often causes a majority of students to remain tense. Though it is true that without the fear of being castigated, children become non-serious regarding their studies, it does mean that they should be punished such that he begins to resent studies and his self-esteem is damaged and is ashamed before his fellow students. Such rebuke can never leave a positive impact on the students. They should not be punished for the sake of punishment but for their correction.

Na'eem Siddique in his article "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) as a teacher", he presents his view regarding punishment: "Prophet (SAW) 's department of education has put forth the idea of punishment in two ways, firstly, the physical punishment should not be such that it leaves a mark on the student's body, and secondly, under severe conditions the student can be punished after the age of ten."²³

Umar bin Shoaib narrates from his father that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

مروا أبناءكم بالصلوة لسبع واضربوهم عليها لعشر وفرقوا بينهم في المضاجع

"Order you children to pray when they are seven. When they are ten, beat them for not praying and separate their bed."²⁴

Punishment does not necessarily have to be physical as it has several other types, such as, making a certain number of hours compulsory for community service, or making the pupil responsible for the classroom's tidiness.

Therefore, it is the student's right that his mistakes are corrected in a humane manner, such that his self-esteem is not damaged and the punishment brings about a positive transformation in him.

11. Appreciation

Although the tradition of reprimanding students for their errors has been ever present, it is important that the students' achievements are celebrated and acknowledged, so that they are motivated to work harder and progress, becoming a source of encouragement for others.

Ideal institutes pay special attention to this aspect as they recognize the rights of the students and adopt several methods, such as, calling for a round of applause, granting achievement certificates, and in case of extraordinary accomplishments, they are offered scholarships. At times, their fee is also lowered. This appreciation not only boosts the child's morale, but also instills in fellow students the passion to outshine.

At an occasion when he was sitting with a group of his companions, the Prophet (SAW) 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 مِسْكِينًا ؟ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، قَالَ : فَمَنْ عَادَ مِنْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مَرِيضًا ؟ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ : أَنَا ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : مَا اجْتَمَعَنَ 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.”²⁵

The Islamic methodology is to praise students. Allah (SWT) repeatedly mentions, in the Holy Qur’an, the reward for righteous acts in both this world and the Hereafter. The Prophet also 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 equipment 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.”²⁶

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 kilograms. He gave 2 kilograms 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.

12. Character building

The classroom is a place where a student spends time not only with the teacher, but also interacts with other fellow students. In this case, it is

necessary to groom him such that he possesses a positive and amiable nature. A classroom where students' character building is not given ample attention, may become a mere source of transferring information. However, it does not succeed in making them productive members of the society, and when these students commence with their practical lives, they have to face failure. Thereafter, it is the students' right to be educated concerning mannerism and spirituality.

Ghulam Sarwer Chatta writes in his article, "Teacher: Builder of nation" that, 'Once, Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid was sitting next to his window and saw that both his sons, Ma'mun and Ameen, rose to their feet immediately, and put his shoes in place when their teacher, Imam Maalik, stood up. Later, the Caliph complained to Imam Maalik, saying: "You have princes straighten your shoes." The Imam's reply has been recorded in golden letters.

He said: "Sir, you see to their physical upbringing whereas I see to their spiritual upbringing. Therefore, my right on them is greater than yours." At hearing this, the Caliph was shocked. The Imam was actually teaching the children to respect the knowledgeable and the elders.²⁷

Prophet is reported to have said,

" لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ " .

"He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, respect our elders, and command good and forbid evil."²⁸

13. Knowledge must not be concealed

It is a quality of an ideal teacher that he does not hesitate in sharing his knowledge, rather he not only transfers all the knowledge that he holds, to his students, but also continues to learn and spread the information further.

Nowadays, the tradition of tuition centers is quite common due to which the same teachers that teach in schools in the morning, provide extra classes in the evening. Some of these teachers do not explain the subject sufficiently at school in order to compel pupils to join the academy in the evening for help, via which they are able to earn much more. Islam strictly forbids this behavior and the Prophet (SAW) announced a very harsh punishment for someone who keeps knowledge to himself.

The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said as narrated by Abu Hurairah:

" مَنْ سَتَلَ عَنْ عِلْمٍ عَلَّمَهُ ثُمَّ كَتَمَهُ أَجِمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ مِنْ نَارٍ "

Whoever is asked about some knowledge that he knows, then he conceals it, he will be bridled with bridle of fire."²⁹

14. Utilization of time

Parents entrust their children to the school, and rely on the teachers to make their children's valuable time useful, which is why teachers should plan their lessons before time. They should know how much time a certain activity requires and should be aware of the mental capability of their students. The lecture should neither be so lengthy that the students lose interest and stop paying attention, nor should it be so short that they remain idle and unproductive in class. The same was understood by his companions as we see this rule of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has reached us through ibn Abbas:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَ النَّاسَ، كُلَّ جُمُعَةٍ مَرَّةً، فَإِنْ أَبَيْتَ فَمَرَّتَيْنِ، فَإِنْ أَكْثَرْتَ فثَلَاثَ مَرَارٍ وَلَا تُمَلِّ النَّاسَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ، وَلَا أَلْفِينَكَ تَأْتِي الْقَوْمَ وَهُمْ فِي حَدِيثٍ مِنْ حَدِيثِهِمْ فَتَقْصُ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَتَقْطَعُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَدِيثَهُمْ فَتَمْلُؤُهُمْ، وَلَكِنْ أَنْصِتْ، فَإِذَا أَمْرُوكَ فَحَدِّثْهُمْ وَهُمْ يَشْتَهُونَهُ، فَانظُرِ السَّجْعَ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ فَاجْتَنِبْهُ، فَإِنِّي عَاهَدْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَصْحَابَهُ لَا يَفْعَلُونَ إِلَّا ذَلِكَ. يَعْنِي لَا يَفْعَلُونَ إِلَّا ذَلِكَ الْاجْتِنَابَ".

Ibn `Abbas said, "Preach to the people once a week, and if you won't, then preach them twice, but if you want to preach more, then let it be three times (a week only), and do not make the people fed-up with this Qur'an. If you come to some people who are engaged in a talk, don't start interrupting their talk by preaching, lest you should cause them to be bored. You should rather keep quiet, and if they ask you, then preach to them at the time when they are eager to hear what you say. And avoid the use of rhymed prose in invocation for I noticed that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions always avoided it."³⁰

15. Co-curriculum activities

The classroom environment in which a pupil attains knowledge for several years is very different from the practical world outside, which is why it is vital that such methods are adopted that keep the students aware of the vastness of the real world. In order to mature their thinking

capability, to instill in them the habit of observation, and to give rise to their self-confidence, teachers should arrange for them study tours, recreational excursions or sport events. This will provide them with the opportunity to participate in physical activities along with enjoying.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) not only had others contest in races, but he too would take part in them. He himself (SAW) raced against Aisha (RA). The Holy Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ قَالَتْ فَسَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقْتُهُ عَلَى رِجْلِي فَلَمَّا حَمَلْتُ اللَّحْمَ سَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقْتَنِي فَقَالَ " هَذِهِ بَيْنَكَ السَّبَقَةُ".

Aisha (RA), UmmulMo'mineen narrated that while she was on a journey along with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "I had a race with him (the Prophet) and I outstripped him on my feet. When I became fleshy, (again) I had a race with him (the Prophet) and he outstripped me. He said: This is for that outstripping".³¹

Umar al- Khattab (RA) is narrated to have said:

"علموا أولادكم السباحة والرماية وركوب الخيل".³²
 "Teach your children swimming, archery and horse riding."

Conclusion

After the above discussion, it is apparent that the Prophet (SAW) was well aware of the needs and rights of students and put great emphasis on taking care of that these rights were fulfilled. In today's day and age, school systems have become more of businesses than centers of learning. They compete with each other in generating the best results and often leave behind the rights of students in this race to gather money and fame. The students' character building is vastly ignored, they aren't given the right to form their own opinions and are led to believe that the teacher's word is law. The students are pressurized from day one to achieve the highest scores possible, and are severely reprimanded if they fail to perform well on a mere class test. Well-known institutions present a long list of dues if they hire an expert teacher automatically eliminating a number of deserving students from their admissions list based simply off of their financial status. Recognized teachers often start their own tuition centers where they deliberately teach better than they do at school, forcing students to attend evening academies where they pay extra fees.

All of these contemporary issues within our education system can only be solved if we educate ourselves with the rights of students and work to implement them as well. Some of these rights are as follows:

1. Students should be provided with safe, appropriate and organized classrooms.
2. All students should be given an equal opportunity to education and should be treated fairly, without bias in the classroom. No student should be preferred over the other based on physical appearance, family background or contacts.
3. The classroom environment should be a friendly one where students are dealt with in a soft manner.
4. Students should be given the right to question the teacher if they are unclear about something or to ask for further information. Their questions should be catered to by the teacher and should be answered appropriately until they are free of confusion.
5. It is the student's fundamental right that he/she be respected and not referred to by a nickname or title that he/she may find offensive or humiliating.
6. A student should be given his/her due help whether that may be financial aid or related to studies.
7. A student should be allowed to have an opinion different from the teacher and that opinion should be respected.
8. It is the student's right that whatever information the teacher provides him/her is authentic and up to date.
9. Every child should be given individual attention and importance. His/her personal abilities should be acknowledged and given a direction.
10. In case of a mistake, the student should be punished as a means of correcting behavior, not inflicting harm or venting out anger.
11. Accomplishments and outstanding achievements should be appreciate, rewarded and encouraged.
12. The student's character building and moral values should also be addressed alongside his/her academics so that he/she may become a valuable citizen.
13. The teacher should pass on all the knowledge he/she possesses to the student.
14. The student's time too should be considered valuable and utilized in a productive manner.

15. Other than the prescribed syllabus, the classroom should also be home to various fun-filled and learning activities which appeal to the children and help energize them to focus more during studies.

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- ¹⁷ The Holy Qur'an, 25: 73

¹⁸ [Sahih al-Bukhari](#) » Prophetic Commentary on the Qur'an (Tafseer of the Prophet (pbuh)), (See Hadith No. 47 Vol 1)

¹⁹ The Holy Qur'an, 18: 23-24

²⁰ : Sahih al-Bukhari 3806: Book reference: Book 63, Hadith 32. English reference : Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 150

²¹ Sahih al-Bukhari : Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 154

²² Arabic reference :Book 49, Hadith 4160

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