

Educational Themes and Prophetic Pedagogy in Sahih al-Bukhari: A Thematic Study of the Kitāb al-‘Ilm

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Abstract:

Certainly, Education occupies a central position in Islam: the acquisition, transmission, and application of knowledge forms an essential dimension of the Islamic intellectual and moral tradition. Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ approaches to teaching, learning, character formation, and the dissemination of knowledge can be understood by various sources. However, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī provides valid and significant insights about this. The purpose of this research is to examine the educational themes and Prophetic pedagogies embedded in *Kitāb al-‘Ilm* (The Book of Knowledge) of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī through a thematic analysis of its selected aḥādīth. Particular attention is given to the Prophetic pedagogies reflected in the narrations, including dialogue-based instruction, question-and-answer methodology, brevity and clarity, and teaching according to the intellectual and situational capacity of learners. Different Ahadith have been studied and analysis based discussion has been carried out. The study demonstrates the relevance of Prophetic educational principles to contemporary discussions by systematically identifying these themes and pedagogical approaches. The research contributes to the growing field of Islamic educational thought by presenting *Kitāb al-‘Ilm* as a significant textual source for reconstructing an authentic and comprehensive Prophetic philosophy of education.

Key-words: Educational Themes, Pedagogy, Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitāb al-‘Ilm

The importance of education in Islam is undeniable. The significance, encouragement, and emphasis placed on teaching and learning in Islam are unparalleled. The principles, manners, and methods of teaching and learning are, as it were, an integral part of this true religion. In this context, an examination has been made of the traditions in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī relating to knowledge, teaching, and learning.

Kitāb al-‘Ilm (The Book of Knowledge) is the third book of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and contains nearly fifty chapters. In this study, we have discussed those aḥādīth and chapter headings that relate specifically to the importance of knowledge and the teaching strategies and pedagogical methods of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The very first chapter deals with the virtue and excellence of knowledge. In accordance with his distinctive methodology, Imam al-Bukhārī presents relevant Qur’ānic verses under the chapter heading. Among these are the following two verses:

{يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ} ¹

"Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge by degrees. And Allah is Aware of what you do."

{وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا} ²

"And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'"

The second chapter is particularly interesting. Its title is:

"Chapter: If someone is asked about knowledge while he is engaged in a conversation, he should complete his conversation and then answer the questioner."

The chapter highlights the Prophetic etiquette of responding to questions: when a person is asked about knowledge while he is engaged in another conversation, he should complete his conversation first and then respond to the questioner.

The following ḥadīth is recorded under this chapter:

1. حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سِنَانٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا فُلَيْحٌ، ح وَحَدَّثَنِي إِبرَاهِيمُ بْنُ الْمُنْذِرِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ فُلَيْحٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي هِلَالُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: بَيَّنَّمَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي مَجْلِسٍ يُحَدِّثُ الْقَوْمَ، جَاءَهُ أَغْرَابِيٌّ فَقَالَ: مَتَى السَّاعَةُ؟ فَمَضَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحَدِّثُ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُ الْقَوْمِ: سَمِعَ مَا قَالَ فَكَّرَهُ مَا قَالَ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: بَلْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ، حَتَّى إِذَا قَضَى حَدِيثَهُ قَالَ: «أَيْنَ - أَرَاهُ - السَّائِلُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ» قَالَ: هَا أَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: «فَإِذَا ضُبِّعَتِ الْأَمَانَةُ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ»، قَالَ: كَيْفَ إِضَاعَتُهَا؟ قَالَ: «إِذَا وَسَدَ الْأَمْرُ إِلَى غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ» ³

Translation

While the Prophet was saying something in a gathering, a Bedouin came and asked him, "When would the Hour (Doomsday) take place?" Allah's Apostle continued his talk, so some people said that Allah's Apostle had heard the question, but did not like what that Bedouin had asked. Some of them said that Allah's Apostle had not heard it. When the Prophet finished his speech, he said, "Where is the questioner, who enquired about the Hour (Doomsday)?" The Bedouin said, "I am here, O Allah's Apostle ." Then the Prophet said, "When honesty is lost, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday)." The Bedouin said, "How will that be lost?" The Prophet said, "When the power or authority comes in the hands of unfit persons, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday)."

Analysis

It tells about the significance of questioning. Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not respond him immediately due to his important topic but he did not completely ignore the questioner. After finishing his speech, he responded not only his one question but he kept answering all other questions. This shows the significance of questioning in the journey of education.

The next hadith shows that the holy prophet used to motivate companions to answer the question as it says;

2. حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «إِنَّ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ شَجَرَةً لَا يَسْقُطُ وَرَقُهَا، وَإِنَّهَا مَثَلُ الْمُسْلِمِ، فَحَدَّثُونِي مَا هِيَ» فَوَقَّعَ

¹ [al-Mujādilah: 11]

² [Tāhā: 114]

³Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:21.Hadith number 59

النَّاسُ فِي شَجَرِ الْبَوَادِي قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: وَوَقَعَ فِي نَفْسِي أَنَّهَا النَّخْلَةُ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ، ثُمَّ قَالُوا: حَدَّثْنَا مَا هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «هِيَ النَّخْلَةُ»⁴

Translation

Allah's Apostle said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree, the leaves of which do not fall and is like a Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree." Everybody started thinking about the trees of the desert areas. And I thought of the date-palm tree but felt shy to answer the others then asked, "What is that tree, O Allah's Apostle?" He replied, "It is the date-palm tree."

Analysis

This hadith is the perfect example of how he liked interactive method where everyone should participate. He encouraged everyone to think about the tree with specific clue. Gave them time and then he gave the answer. So, his sessions were discussion type where gates of knowledge were open to everyone.

Imam bukhari has mentioned the same hadith in a different chapter. The title of chapter is fantastic. **بَابُ طَرَحِ الْإِمَامِ الْمَسْأَلَةَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِهِ لِيُخْتَبَرَ مَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ**

"Chapter: The Imam putting a question to his companions in order to test the knowledge they possess.

This is another technique of the holy Prophet of teaching and assessment. He sometimes asked a question in order to evaluate the knowledge of his pupils.

The next hadith is as follows :

3. حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا مَرْثَةَ، مَوْلَى عَقِيلِ بْنِ أَبِي ظَالِبٍ أَخْبَرَهُ عَنْ أَبِي وَاقِدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَمَا هُوَ جَالِسٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَالنَّاسُ مَعَهُ إِذْ أَقْبَلَ ثَلَاثَةُ نَفَرٍ، فَأَقْبَلَ اثْنَانِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَذَهَبَ وَاحِدٌ، قَالَ: فَوَقَفَا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَمَّا أَحَدُهُمَا: فَرَأَى فُرْجَةً فِي الْخَلْقَةِ فَجَلَسَ فِيهَا، وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ: فَجَلَسَ خَلْفَهُمْ، وَأَمَّا الثَّالِثُ: فَأَذْبَرَ ذَاهِبًا، فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنِ النَّفَرِ الثَّلَاثَةِ؟ أَمَّا أَحَدُهُمْ فَأَوَى إِلَى اللَّهِ فَأَوَاهُ اللَّهُ، وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَاسْتَحْيَا فَاسْتَحْيَا اللَّهُ مِنْهُ، وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَأَعْرَضَ فَأَعْرَضَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ»⁵

Translation

While Allah's Apostle was sitting in the mosque with some people, three men came. Two of them came in front of Allah's Apostle and the third one went away. The two persons kept on standing before Allah's Apostle for a while and then one of them found a place in the circle and sat there while the other sat behind the gathering, and the third one went away. When Allah's Apostle finished his preaching, he said, "Shall I tell you about these three persons? One of them be-took himself to Allah, so Allah took him into His grace and mercy and accommodated him, the second felt shy from Allah, so Allah sheltered Him in His mercy (and did not punish him), while the third turned his face from Allah and went away, so Allah turned His face from him likewise."

Analysis

The ḥadīth illustrates the importance of proper conduct, orderly participation, and respect for the learning environment. The three individuals demonstrate different levels of engagement with the Prophet's ﷺ gathering: one actively joins the circle, another remains at the back, while the third withdraws altogether.

This ḥadīth highlights the importance of learner engagement and proper etiquette within an educational gathering. The Prophet ﷺ carefully observed the behaviour of three individuals who entered his gathering and subsequently used their different levels of participation as a teaching opportunity. Rather than delivering an abstract instruction, he employed a narrative-based pedagogical

⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:22.Hadith number 61

⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:24.Hadith number 66

approach by explaining the consequences associated with each person's behaviour. The ḥadīth therefore demonstrates several Prophetic pedagogical principles, including learner observation, experiential and narrative teaching, and differentiated responses to learners according to their level of engagement. It also emphasizes that participation in a learning environment is not merely a matter of physical presence but reflects an individual's receptiveness to knowledge and guidance.

Another Hadith of the research is :

4. حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، قَالَ: كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يُذَكِّرُ النَّاسَ فِي كُلِّ خَمِيسٍ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ: يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ لَوْ دِدْتُ أَنَّكَ ذَكَّرْتَنَا كُلَّ يَوْمٍ؟ قَالَ: أَمَا إِنَّهُ يَمْنَعُنِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَلِّي أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أُمِلِّكُمْ، وَإِنِّي أَنْحَوُكُمْ بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ، كَمَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَخَوَّنَا بِهَا، مَخَافَةَ السَّامَةِ عَلَيْنَا

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Translation:

'Abdullah used to give a religious talk to the people on every Thursday. Once a man said, "O Aba 'Abdur-Rahman! (By Allah) I wish if you could preach us daily." He replied, "The only thing which prevents me from doing so, is that I hate to bore you, and no doubt I take care of you in preaching by selecting a suitable time just as the Prophet used to do with us, for fear of making us bored."

Analysis:

This ḥadīth highlights the educational theme of appropriate scheduling and moderation in teaching. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd deliberately selected a specific day for religious instruction rather than preaching daily, explaining that he feared causing the audience to become bored. He explicitly connected this practice with the Prophet's ﷺ method of teaching. The narration therefore demonstrates a learner-centred and psychologically sensitive pedagogy, in which the teacher considers learners' attention, receptiveness, and capacity to benefit. The Prophet's ﷺ pedagogical approach, as reflected here, emphasizes moderation, appropriate timing, continuity without overburdening learners, and avoidance of educational fatigue.

Another narration is :

5. حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا وَهَيْبٌ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سُئِلَ فِي حَجَّتِهِ فَقَالَ: دَبَحْتُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَرِي؟ فَأَوْمَأَ بِيَدِهِ، قَالَ: «وَلَا حَرَجَ» قَالَ: حَلَقْتُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْبَحَ؟ فَأَوْمَأَ بِيَدِهِ: «وَلَا حَرَجَ»⁷

Translation

Somebody said to the Prophet (during his last Hajj), "I did the slaughtering before doing the Rami." The Prophet beckoned with his hand and said, "There is no harm in that." Then another person said. "I got my head shaved before offering the sacrifice." The Prophet beckoned with his hand saying, "There is no harm in that."

Analysis

This ḥadīth demonstrates the educational theme of effective and context-sensitive communication. During the Prophet's ﷺ final Hajj, he responded to questions concerning the sequence of ritual acts through a simple hand gesture accompanied by a concise verbal response, "There is no harm in that." The narration illustrates that effective teaching does not always require lengthy verbal explanation; rather, the teacher may employ non-verbal communication, gestures, brevity, and clarity according to the nature of the question and the learner's needs. It also reflects the Prophetic pedagogy of simplifying instruction and removing unnecessary difficulty, particularly when learners seek clarification regarding practical matters.

⁶ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:55.Hadith number 70 -

⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:28 Hadith number 84

6. حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي جَمْرَةَ، قَالَ: كُنْتُ أَتْرَجِمُ بَيْنَ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ وَبَيْنَ النَّاسِ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ وَفْدَ عَبْدِ الْقَيْسِ أَتَوْا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: «مَنْ الْوَفْدُ أَوْ مَنْ الْقَوْمُ» قَالُوا: رِبِيعَةُ فَقَالَ: «مَرْحَبًا بِالْقَوْمِ أَوْ بِالْوَفْدِ، غَيْرَ حَرَّائِي وَلَا نَدَامَى» قَالُوا: إِنَّا نَأْتِيكَ مِنْ شَقَّةٍ بَعِيدَةٍ، وَبَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ هَذَا الْحَيُّ مِنْ كَفَّارٍ مُضَرٍّ، وَلَا نَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ نَأْتِيكَ إِلَّا فِي شَهْرِ حَرَامٍ، فَمُرْنَا بِأَمْرٍ نُخْبِرُ بِهِ مَنْ وَرَاءَنَا، نَدْخُلُ بِهِ الْجَنَّةَ. فَأَمَرَهُمْ بِأَرْبَعٍ وَنَهَاهُمْ عَنْ أَرْبَعٍ: أَمَرَهُمْ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَحْدَهُ، قَالَ: «هَلْ تَذَرُونَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ؟» قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: «شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَأَقَامُ الصَّلَاةَ، وَآيَتَاءُ الزَّكَاةِ، وَصَوْمُ رَمَضَانَ، وَتُعْطُوا الْخُمْسَ مِنَ الْمَغْنَمِ» وَنَهَاهُمْ عَنِ الدُّبَاءِ وَالْحَنْتَمِ وَالْمُرَقَّتِ " قَالَ شُعْبَةُ: رُبَّمَا قَالَ: «النَّقِيرِ» وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ: «الْمُقَيْرِ» قَالَ: «أَحْفَظُوهُ وَأَخْبِرُوهُ مَنْ وَرَاءَكُمْ»⁸

Translation:

Narrated by Abu Jamra I was an interpreter between the people and Ibn 'Abbas. Once Ibn 'Abbas said that a delegation of the tribe of 'Abdul Qais came to the Prophet who asked them, "Who are the people (i.e. you)? (Or) who are the delegates?" They replied, "We are from the tribe of Rabi'a." Then the Prophet said to them, "Welcome, O people (or said, "O delegation (of 'Abdul Qais).") Neither will you have disgrace nor will you regret." They said, "We have come to you from a distant place and there is the tribe of the infidels of Mudar intervening between you and us and we cannot come to you except in the sacred month. So please order us to do something good (religious deeds) and that we may also inform our people whom we have left behind (at home) and that we may enter Paradise (by acting on them.)" The Prophet ordered them to do four things, and forbade them from four things. He ordered them to believe in Allah Alone, the Honorable the Majestic and said to them, "Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah Alone?" They replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better." Thereupon the Prophet said, "(That means to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is His Apostle, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay Zakat, to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan, (and) to pay Al-Khumus (one fifth of the booty to be given in Allah's cause)." Then he forbade them four things, namely Ad-Dubba.' Hantam, Muzaffat (and) An-Naqir or Muquiyar (These were the names of pots in which alcoholic drinks used to be prepared). The Prophet further said, "Memorize them (these instructions) and tell them to the people whom you have left behind."

Analysis

This ḥadīth demonstrates the educational theme of structured, contextualized and participatory teaching. When the delegation of 'Abd al-Qays requested guidance, the Prophet ﷺ first established rapport by welcoming them and then assessed their understanding by asking, "Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah Alone?" Rather than simply providing information, he engaged the learners through questioning and subsequently explained the concept in practical terms. He organized the instruction into four commands and four prohibitions, thereby presenting complex religious guidance in a clear and memorable structure. Finally, he instructed them to memorize the teachings and transmit them to their people, extending the learning process from acquisition to retention and dissemination.

It contains several distinct Prophetic pedagogical techniques within a single teaching episode

1. **Welcoming and rapport-building** — "Welcome, O people/delegation."
2. **Questioning to assess understanding** — "Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah Alone?"
3. **Contextualization** — the delegation's circumstances and needs were taken into account.
4. **Structured teaching** — four commands and four prohibitions.
5. **C**
6. **Clarification through explanation** — the Prophet ﷺ explained what "belief in Allah" practically
6. **Knowledge dissemination** — "Tell them to the people whom you have left behind."

⁸ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:29. Hadith number 87

7. حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الصَّفَّارُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا ثُمَامَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ «إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَعَادَهَا ثَلَاثًا، حَتَّى تُفْهَمَ عَنْهُ، وَإِذَا أَتَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ، سَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ ثَلَاثًا»⁹

Translation

Whenever the Prophet spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greeting.

Analysis

This ḥadīth highlights the educational theme of clarity, comprehension, and effective communication. The Prophet ﷺ repeated his statements three times to ensure that his audience understood them properly. The practice demonstrates a deliberate concern for learners' comprehension rather than merely delivering information. Similarly, repeating the request for permission three times reflects consistency between his communicative practice and everyday conduct. The narration therefore illustrates a learner-centred pedagogy based on repetition, clarity, appropriate pacing, and verification of understanding.

8. حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَزْبٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَيُّوبَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَطَاءً، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ: أَشْهَدُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَوْ قَالَ عَطَاءٌ: أَشْهَدُ عَلَى ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - «خَرَجَ وَمَعَهُ بِلَالٌ، فَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يُسْمِعْ فَوَعَّظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ بِالصَّدَقَةِ، فَجَعَلَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ تُلْقِي الْقُرْطَ وَالْخَاتَمَ، وَبِلَالٌ يَأْخُذُ فِي طَرَفِ ثَوْبِهِ»¹⁰

Translation

Once Allah's Apostle came out while Bilal was accompanying him. He went towards the women thinking that they had not heard him (i.e. his sermon). So he preached them and ordered them to pay alms. (Hearing that) the women started giving alms; some donated their ear-rings, some gave their rings and Bilal was collecting them in the corner of his garment.

Analysis

This ḥadīth provides clear evidence of the Prophetic emphasis on women's religious education. The Prophet ﷺ deliberately approached the women and addressed them separately when he realized that they might not have heard his sermon. He then provided them with religious instruction and guidance concerning charity, demonstrating that women were recognized as an important and active audience for knowledge. The narration establishes that the Prophet ﷺ ensured women's direct access to religious teaching and created opportunities for their learning beyond the general public instruction. Their immediate response to his teaching further demonstrates the connection between women's education and the practical implementation of religious knowledge.

9. حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ الْأَصْبَهَانِيِّ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا صَالِحٍ دَكْوَانَ، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَتِ النِّسَاءُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: غَلَبَنَا عَلَيْكَ الرِّجَالُ، فَاجْعَلْ لَنَا يَوْمًا مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، فَوَعَّظَهُنَّ يَوْمًا لِقَائِهِنَّ فِيهِ، فَوَعَّظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ، فَكَانَ فِيهَا قَالَتْ لِهِنَّ: «مَا مِنْكُمْ امْرَأَةٌ تَقْدُمُ ثَلَاثَةً مِنْ وَلَدِهَا، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهَا حِجَابًا مِنَ النَّارِ» فَقَالَتِ امْرَأَةٌ: وَائْتَيْنِ؟ فَقَالَ: «وَائْتَيْنِ»¹¹

Translation

⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:30 Hadith number 95.

¹⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:31 Hadith number 98

¹¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:32 Hadith number 101

Narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri Some women requested the Prophet to fix a day for them as the men were taking all his time. On that he promised them one day for religious lessons and commandments. Once during such a lesson the Prophet said, "A woman whose three children die will be shielded by them from the Hell fire." On that a woman asked, "If only two die?" He replied, "Even two (will shield her from the Hell-fire)."

Analysis

This ḥadīth provides particularly strong evidence of the Prophetic commitment to women's education and their equal access to religious learning. When women expressed concern that men were occupying most of the Prophet's ﷺ teaching time, he responded to their educational need by designating a specific day exclusively for their religious instruction. This demonstrates an organized and deliberate approach to ensuring women's access to knowledge rather than relying solely on their participation in general teaching sessions. The Prophet ﷺ also encouraged interaction during the lesson by responding to a woman's question regarding the reward for losing children. Thus, the narration illustrates that women were not merely passive recipients of religious instruction but active learners who could ask questions and seek clarification.

Conclusion

The thematic analysis of the selected aḥādīth from *Kitāb al-'Ilm* of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī demonstrates that Prophetic education was a comprehensive and learner-centred process that extended beyond the mere transmission of information. The selected narrations reveal a coherent educational philosophy founded on the importance of knowledge, learner engagement, clarity, moderation, inclusivity, and the practical application of learning. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ employed diverse pedagogical approaches according to the needs, circumstances, and levels of his learners rather than relying on a single method of instruction.

A prominent feature of this pedagogy was the emphasis on learner comprehension and effective communication. The repetition of statements, use of gestures, concise responses, questioning, explanation, and structured presentation of information demonstrate a deliberate concern for ensuring that knowledge was understood, remembered, and appropriately applied. The Prophet ﷺ also employed question-and-answer, narrative, observation, demonstration, and practical instruction, making the learning process interactive and meaningful.

The selected aḥādīth further demonstrate the importance of appropriate educational planning and psychological sensitivity. The Prophet ﷺ avoided excessive preaching for fear of causing boredom and selected suitable times for instruction. Similarly, his observation of learners' behaviour within educational gatherings indicates an awareness that effective teaching requires attention to learners' engagement and receptiveness. This reflects an important principle of contemporary pedagogy: teaching should be adapted to learners rather than learners being expected to adapt entirely to the teacher's method.

Another significant dimension is the Prophet's ﷺ commitment to women's education. The narrations concerning the instruction of women demonstrate that women were recognized as an important and active constituency of learners. The Prophet ﷺ responded to their request by allocating a specific day for their religious education and, on another occasion, personally addressed women when he realized that they might not have heard his general sermon. Their questions were welcomed and answered, establishing that women were not merely passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in the educational process.

The analysis also shows that Prophetic pedagogy connected knowledge with practice, character, and social responsibility. The delegation of 'Abd al-Qays was instructed not only to learn but also to memorize and convey the teachings to their people. Thus, the educational process moved from acquisition of knowledge to comprehension, retention, application, and transmission. Education in the

Prophetic model therefore aimed at transforming individuals and society rather than simply increasing intellectual information.

Overall, the selected aḥādīth establish that the Prophetic model of education was holistic, interactive, flexible, inclusive, psychologically sensitive, and practice-oriented. Its major pedagogical principles include repetition for comprehension, questioning and dialogue, structured instruction, appropriate timing, learner observation, narrative teaching, non-verbal communication, dedicated education for women, and the practical application and transmission of knowledge. *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* therefore provides valuable foundations for understanding an Islamic philosophy of education in which the teacher is not merely a transmitter of information but a mentor, facilitator, observer, and moral guide. These Prophetic principles remain relevant to contemporary educational discourse, particularly in developing learner-centred, inclusive, ethically grounded, and effective approaches to teaching and learning.