

TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH IN THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

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INTRODUCTION

Learning by heart is the most sustainable method of preserving any text... Muslims have been using this human technique for preserving the Quran from the first day of its revelation and hence the Quran has been surely the most and probably the only memorized book throughout the human history.

(Saifullah Bhutto, 2015)

THE CENTRALITY OF QUR'AN IN THE MUSLIM COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

- Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) surrendered himself completely to the universal task of conveying the true religion of God to his family, intimate friends, clan, Arab people and the rest of humanity. At his own house, the main priority of the Prophet then was to teach his companions the tenets of the religion, reciting the Qur'anic passages and interpreting its meaning.



- Prophet Muhammad is the main source of the Qur'anic knowledge.
- Gradually, studying and memorizing Qur'anic passages constituted what could be informally considered as a syllabus for a burgeoning curriculum of Islamic education.
- *Dar al-arqam* was the first educational institution in Islam which provided some forms of Qur'anic education



- Besides reciting Qur'anic revelations to his motivated followers in Mecca, the Prophet employed *dar al-arqam* as a center for other Qur'an related activities including explaining the meanings and memorizing them. The memorization of Qur'an was emphasized because Arabia at that time was an oral society.
- Meccan period of the Islamic message can be divided into two phases. During the first phase, which lasts about five years, the prophet had only a handful of followers who clustered around him, and he preached to them in secrecy. This followed by a period of eight years during which the Prophet openly and actively propagated his message and faced a hostile reception from the Quraysh, the dominant tribe of Mecca.



THE ISLAMIC TRADITION OF MEMORIZING QUR'AN

- Muslims regarded the forms of interaction with the Qur'an by way of recitation, memorization, analysis and interpretation as a key part and prerequisite for learning and spiritual salvation.
- Prophet's instructional teaching methods, involved:
 1. Reciting various passages of the Qur'an loudly in the congregational prayers (to learn proper recitation, pronunciation and memorization of many chapters of the Qur'an)
 2. Requiring new converts to learn some amounts of Qur'an which enable them to perform their individual daily prayers.
 3. Motivating the followers to take interest in learning Qur'an by informing them that the best among them were those who learned and taught the Qur'an.



- Muslims across history continued to revere any related to Qur'an activities; and memorization in particular was maintained as a primary educational tradition.



TRADITIONAL/CONVENTIONAL METHODS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR QUR'AN MEMORIZATION

- Al-Qabsi considers the main objective of learning in Islam in general is to know the religion.
- *Talqin* - directed repetition according to Al-Qabsi is the most suitable method. The teacher would read the verses and the students repeat after him until they memorize. According to him this pedagogy is based on three main techniques, *tikrar* - repeating, *al-raghabah* - desire and *al-fahm* - understanding, *al-tadarujj* - graduation and *istikhdam al-hawas* - using senses.



- The main learning objectives of Qur'an memorization according to Al-Qabsi are:
 1. Memorizing the verses correctly without looking into the *mushaf*.
 2. Understanding what is being memorized by the students.
 3. Recalling what they have memorized with proper pronunciation.”
- In the history of Islamic education, Qur'an was the main subject of the early schools' curriculum.



- Learning Qur'an started to take the form of an isolated educational practice.
- Teaching Qur'an following classical methods on one hand and separating it from other subjects on another hand became the dominant trend in religious schools



CURRENT TRENDS IN THE TEACHING OF QUR'AN

- Memorizing the Qur'an is still done in many Muslim countries by following the traditional methods of early *kuttabs* and *madrasas*, which normally involves “memorizing (it) by heart and learning the art of reciting (it) in ten different ways.
- Directed memorization ‘rote learning’ usually receives a lot of criticism(The exclusion of reflective thinking, discarding the very basic objective of learning Qur'an that is learning Islam itself, passive, receptive and submissive minds, in-effectiveness of this method for children who do not master Arabic, speak it as a second language, or they do not speak it at all)



- Another crucial point to mention here is to what extent this method (memorization) takes into consideration the findings of science vis-à-vis the methods of storing and recalling of the human memory.
- Incompatibility of memorization with the objectives of modern education which emphasizes on developing the thinking skills of the students by training them to think critically, creatively and solve problems.
- Association of Qur'an schools with the so-called Islamic terrorism.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Reviewing the formation and training programmes of Qur'an teachers.
- Using up to date teaching and technological tools.
- Varying the teaching approaches, in order to make learning Qur'an an enjoyable moment for young students. This can be done by infusing mobile and immobile images to help the students visualize events or phenomenon narrated in the Qur'anic passages.
- Focusing on passages discussing positive aspects of life, wonderful creations and beautiful scenes in order to create a good impression in their hearts and minds about the religion in general, create a positive view about the world, and most importantly to foster the feeling of love for the Qur'an, and motivate the young learners to continue learning it as a way of life before being a way of salvation in the hereafter.



THANK YOU

