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Reviving and Honoring Universal Human Values

Human ethical values such as self-respect, honor, honesty, forgiveness, justice, empathy, serving others, perseverance, etc., are virtues that all people consider sacred and have been praised in all schools of thought.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) exerted the utmost effort in reviving and revering moral excellences. Islam is a school of thought that, at the heart of its rules and legislations, holds humanity in high esteem and its goal in dispatching the Prophet was to guide society towards humanitarian values and towards the noble traits of morality. How could the prophet of such a school of thought be indifferent in regards to such values?"^{[1](#)}

When studying the public and private behavior of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), numerous examples that show the particular attention that he paid to reviving and honoring ideal values become evident:

1. The Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, peace be upon him, has said,

"When they brought the captives of the tribe of Tayy, one of the female captives said to the Prophet, 'Tell the people not to bother me and to treat me with respect for I am the daughter of the leader of my tribe and my father was one who fulfilled his oaths, freed captives, gave food to the hungry, greeted people constantly and would never turn down the needy. I am the daughter of Hatam Ta'i.' At that point the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, 'These attributes that you have mentioned are the attributes of true believers. If your father was a Muslim, I would certainly have shown him mercy. Then he said, set her free and do not bother her, for her father was one who revered noble traits and God likes those who adhere to the noble traits of morality.'"^{[2](#)}

2. Imam as Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said,

'Captives were brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and he ordered for all but one of them to be killed. The one whose life was spared asked, 'How is it that you have

decided to free me?' The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) replied, 'Gabriel has informed me that God, the Exalted, has said that you have five characteristics of which God and His Messenger approve. The first is that you take a great amount of vigilant care (ghayrah) in regards to your family and maharim [those in a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage], secondly, you are generous, thirdly, you possess good character, fourthly, you are honest and last of all, you are brave.'^{[3](#)}

According to the Noble Qur'an, the criteria for value and virtue are not wealth, race, language, skin color or ethnicity. Rather, the criteria are such things like God-wariness, fighting for God's cause, martyrdom, struggling for God's cause, migrating for the sake of religion, piety, purity and knowledge. The Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), the role model of the Islamic community, held those who possessed these excellent qualities in high esteem. Those who preceded others in faith, migrating [*hijrah*] and fighting for God's cause [*jihad*], were given particular respect by him:

1. When Ja'far ibn Abi Talib was emigrating to Ethiopia, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) escorted him some distance and prayed for him. When he returned after a number of years, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) got up and went to welcome him back and kissed him. Since Ja'far's return took place after the victory of Khaybar, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "I don't know whether to be happy for the victory of Khaybar or for Ja'far's return."^{[4](#)}

2. After the war of Dhat al-Salasil, which took place in the eighth year after the Prophet's migration, 'Ali (peace be upon him) headed for Madinah along with his victorious troops. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) informed the people of the victory of the Muslims and along with the people of Madinah, travelled three miles outside of Madinah (to welcome them back). When 'Ali (peace be upon him) saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), he got off the animal he was riding. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) also got off his steed out of respect for 'Ali, kissed his forehead, dusted off his blessed face and said, "Thank God, O 'Ali, that He has supported me with you and has strengthened me against the enemy by means of you."^{[5](#)}

3. The first battle that took place between the Muslims and the disbelievers was the Battle of Badr. Those who participated in this battle alongside the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) were known as *Ahl al-Badr* and were of a special status according to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and the Muslims in the early phase of Islam.

"One Friday, the Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was sitting in the mosque and due to the large number of people present, there was not much space. At that point, a group from amongst Ahl al-Badr, including Thabit ibn Qays, entered the gathering and stood in front of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), looking at the crowd of people sitting around him. None of them would make room for them. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him

*and his family) told a number of the Migrants (Muhajirin) and the Helpers (Ansar) who were sitting close to him (who were not present at the Battle of Badr) to get up and allow the Ahl al-Badr to sit in their place. This was difficult for the people who the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) told to get up and dissatisfaction was written on their faces. One of the hypocrites (munafiqin) seeking to take advantage of the situation said to the Muslims, 'Do you consider your prophet to be just in dealing with people? Then how is it that he did not implement justice in this situation? Certain individuals had arrived sooner and taken a seat for themselves. They wanted to sit close to their prophet and then he made them get up and seated those who came later in their place.'*⁶

The honor and respect the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) showed towards Ahl al-Badr demonstrated the valued position of those who fought for God's cause and the reverence given to eminent values in the society. After this event, a verse was revealed that endorsed the Prophet's action,

*"O you who believe, if you are told to make room in social gatherings, then make room. (As a result) God will make room for you. And if you are told to get up, then get up."*⁷

4. The Prophet honored martyrs and the family of martyrs: "In the eighth year after his migration to Madinah, in the event of the Battle of *Mutah*, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib was entrusted with command of the Muslim army. They fought a difficult war against the enemy and both of Ja'far's hands were cut off and his body was inflicted with numerous wounds. As a result, he attained the high station of martyrdom. In describing his station, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) has said:

'Verily, in exchange for his two arms, God has given Ja'far wings by which he flies in Paradise wherever he so desires.'

After this battle, the Muslim Army headed towards Madinah. The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), along with other Muslims and a group of children singing songs, went out to greet them. The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) who was riding an animal said, 'Sit the children (on the animals you are riding) and bring me Ja'far's son.'

Then he sat 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far in front of himself. 'Abdullah has said, 'The Messenger of God told me, 'I give you good tidings that your father is flying with the angels in the sky.'⁸

^{1.} The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) has said, "Verily I was dispatched in order to perfect the noble traits of morality Mizan al-Hikmah, vol.3, p. 149.

^{2.} Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. 4, p. 122.

^{3.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 108.

^{4.} Makarim al-Akhlaq, p. 249.

^{5.} Nasikh at-Tawarikh, vol. 2, p. 357.

^{6.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 17, p. 24.

^{7.} Surah al-Mujadalah 58:11.

^{8.} Sirah al-Halbi, vol. 3, pp. 9, 68.

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