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## The Importance of delineating the dimensions of the Holy Prophet's (S) personality and lifestyle

No human being is able to fully delineate different dimensions of the Holy Prophet's (S) personality and to present a picture of his personality that is close to reality. What we have learnt about the select servant of the Creator and the commander of all prophets is only a shadow of his personality. However, even this amount of knowledge is enough for Muslims to guarantee their movement towards perfection and provide them with a picture of the peaks of human virtues and human perfection.

It is also enough to encourage Muslims to come together and create Islamic unity. Therefore, my advice to all Muslims who live in different parts of the world is that it is necessary to work on various dimensions of the Holy Prophet's (S) personality, lifestyle and conduct as well as the teachings that have been recorded in writing.

After the Middle-Ages, widespread propaganda campaigns were launched by westerners and Christians against the personality of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) and sworn enemies of Islam realized that one way to fight Islam is to launch a smear campaign against the Holy Prophet (S).

Many things were done to achieve this goal. And today the enemy is using different methods to erase the memory of the Holy Prophet's (S) personality from the minds of liberated people throughout the world. From the Middle Ages to this day, many people in the world would have definitely developed faith in Islam and Islamic spirituality if they had known the Holy Prophet (S) to the same extent as Muslims and even less than that – that is to say, if they had seen only a shadow of his brilliant personality. It is necessary for us to work on this issue.

Maybe the most effective way to promote Islam is to present a picture of the Holy Prophet's (S) personality to people of the world. It behooves artistic and aware Muslims throughout the world to delineate his personality through scholarly, cultural, artistic and promotional activities before the enemies and opponents of Islam use complex cultural and artistic methods to distort the image of the Holy

Prophet (S) in the minds of unaware people throughout the world. These things are necessary.

We need to work on introducing the personality of the Holy Prophet (S). We need to focus on not just his lifestyle but on different dimensions of his existence, such as his conduct, his method of government, the way he treated the people, the way he worshipped God, his policies, his Jihad and his teachings. And we should not just write books, rather we should use new methods as well as the existing techniques and start doing artistic and promotional work. Also, we should not limit ourselves to the borders of the Islamic Republic, rather we should do these things in the entire world of Islam. [1](#)

As the followers of the Holy Prophet's (S) path at least, this is what we claim and what we are famous for in the world what is important is that we should try to emulate different aspects of his divine personality and create characteristics in ourselves that resemble the characteristics of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

It is not enough for those who struggle in the way of God and fight for Islamic rule to focus all their efforts on building an Islamic society and government although this is a major obligation and perhaps the most fundamental obligation that a Muslim has. Apart from the efforts that we make to establish and develop an Islamic system and to help it achieve success, it is necessary to make efforts to transform our hearts and souls, efforts that may be even more difficult than building an Islamic society and government. [2](#)

The point that I have in mind regarding the life of the Holy Prophet (S) is that in order to fully establish Islamic values and ethics in society and in the souls, beliefs and lives of the people, the Holy Prophet of Islam used to immerse the atmosphere of his society in Islamic values.

Sometimes people might be asked or ordered to behave well, be forgiving, remain patient and steadfast in the way of God, avoid oppression or try to administer justice, for example. This is a matter of teaching lessons and giving advice or orders, which is necessary. The Holy Prophet (S) used to do the same thing: he would

***“Instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom.”*** [3](#)

He used to teach the people wisdom and how to live. But some other times the issue is beyond the simple act of teaching. That is to say, the teacher acts in a way that ethics and Islamic obligations are firmly established in society. He confronts non-Islamic behaviors. He gives a shock to the people and society. At appropriate points and junctures and through using appropriate methods, he acts in a way that the general atmosphere of his society is fully immersed in particular characteristics and ethical values.

**[Examples of the techniques that the Holy Prophet \(S.\) would use to create an](#)**

## Islamic atmosphere in society

If a society is determined to grow and to develop Islamic ethics within itself, it has to adopt this method. In the Quranic Ayahs where “purification” comes before or after “*instruction*” [4](#)

it is possible that purification means purifying the people, just like a doctor who does not just tell his patient what to do and what not to do, rather he puts his patient in a special place and gives him whatever he needs and keeps away whatever that is harmful to him. The Holy Prophet of Islam (S) followed this method throughout his 23-year prophethood, especially during the ten years that he was living in Medina and had established an Islamic government.

There are a few examples that I would like to discuss. This is very important for our current conditions in the Islamic Republic, both for the people and particularly for government officials and those who can speak to the people. The point that we should keep in mind is that if we are determined to cleanse ourselves of the behaviors which have survived from the time of Taghut and which are extremely harmful to our growth and transcendence we have no choice but to courageously and decisively follow the methods of the Holy Prophet (S).

One example is related to creating a healthy social atmosphere, an atmosphere that is free from ignorant prejudices. Except for those who are at very high levels in terms of knowledge and understanding, in many cases the lives of people are ruled by prejudices, ulterior motives, spite and other such things which prevent people from acting in a just way and make the social environment unhealthy.

### 1. Promoting optimism and avoidance of slander and pessimism

It is necessary to make the social environment healthy. In order to create a healthy social environment and make the people think positively, the Holy Prophet (S) used to take certain actions besides the recommendations that he would offer, particularly during the time when this issue was very important in his society because there was a lot of spite, suspicion and tribal prejudice among Arabs of the Jahiliyya era, and the Holy Prophet (S) had to cleanse the hearts of early Muslims off these things and to clear mistrust and suspicion.

There is a narration from the Holy Prophet (S) which says: “None of you is allowed to speak to me behind the back of any of my companions because I want to come to you while I have nothing against you in my heart.” [5](#) Some people would go to the Holy Prophet (S) and speak behind other people’s back. Sometimes their statements were truthful and some other times they were not. The Holy Prophet (S) asked everybody to avoid speaking behind other people’s back. He told them to avoid going to him and speaking behind each other’s back. He said that he wanted to visit his companions without having any preconceptions or suspicions about them.

This is a narration from the Holy Prophet (S), an order to Muslims about how to behave as far as he was

concerned. Notice how much this act by the Holy Prophet (S) would help Muslims feel that they should have no suspicion towards each other in an Islamic society. According to Islamic narrations, when government is in the hands of evil and corrupt people, one should view everything with suspicion, but when government is in the hands of benevolent people, suspicions should be avoided and replaced with trust, vices should be ignored and virtues should be highlighted.

Muslims would customarily go to the Holy Prophet (S) and whisper in his ear. They would whisper certain matters in his ear. Then an Ayah was revealed which prohibited people from whispering in the Holy Prophet's (S) ear. This was because whispering would create suspicion in the minds of other Muslims.

### **Reference to the rumors about one of the Holy Prophet's (S) wives**

Spreading rumors against one of the Holy Prophet's (S) wives was a very important event. I have repeatedly reviewed it in my mind and I have frequently referred to the Ayahs which are related to the event. In Sura an-Nur, there are a few Ayahs which are related to this event. One of the Holy Prophet's (S) wives was left behind at a caravan stop in a battle. She was accompanying the Holy Prophet (S) on his trip.

The caravan did not realize that she was missing. The reason is not really important: she might have fallen asleep somewhere or she might have been away to take care of a personal matter. It was only later on that the caravan realized that the Holy Prophet's (S) wife was missing. Later on, she was found by a Muslim and accompanied to Medina.

Shia and Sunni Muslims do not agree which of the Holy Prophet's (S) wives she was. According to Shia narrations, she was Maria Al-Qibtiyya and according to Sunni narrations, she was Aisha. It is not important to debate who she was and about which of the Holy Prophet's (S) wives these Ayahs have been revealed. The point is that the story contains a very important ethical rule for social life.

### **Strong reaction of the Holy Quran to those who Spread rumours**

After she returned to Medina, certain people started rumors about where she had been, why she had been left behind and who the person who found her was. They started certain rumors among the people without being clear and leveling a specific allegation against her.

The point is not that she was the Holy Prophet's (S) wife and that she deserved respect. The point that has been highlighted in the Holy Quran is something else. The Ayahs in Sura an-Nur which are related to the rumors that were spread by hypocrites and ill-wishers in the Holy Prophet's (S) society, strongly react to the rumors. In several Ayahs, Muslims are strongly criticized for not silencing and reacting to those rumors.

Two of the Ayahs start with the word "lawla". Those who are familiar with Arabic know that "lawla" is

used when one wants to strongly criticize somebody for not doing something.

***“Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people, and say: This is an evident falsehood?”<sup>6</sup>***

And in another Ayah, Allah the Exalted says:

***“And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It not does beseem us that we should talk of it. Glory be to You. This is a great slander.”<sup>7</sup>***

Allah the Exalted says:

***“When you heard this rumor, why did you not say that we you do not have the right to spread it? This is a gross slander.”***

And finally another Ayah says:

***“Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers.”<sup>8</sup>***

That is to say,

***“Allah the Exalted advises you against such rumors and against giving rise to such events in the Islamic community, if you are believers.”***

This means that avoiding rumors is a requirement for religious faith.

As I pointed out earlier, the point is not that she was the Holy Prophet's (S) wife. Even if she was not the Holy Prophet's (S) wife, Muslims would still have the same obligation. In Islam, if a person accuses another person of certain things but fails to provide four witnesses to prove his claims, he will have to take the punishment for making unfounded accusations. One cannot just throw accusations at another person, create doubts and concerns and get away with it even if one fails to prove one's claims. If a person who makes certain kinds of accusations fails to prove his claims, he will have to take the punishment for slander.

I believe that the event is a very significant event in the history of Islam, one that helped counter efforts at spreading rumors about personal affairs of people in Islamic communities. Such efforts create suspicion among people and they make the general atmosphere unhealthy. This is the attitude of Islam. Therefore, one of the things that the Holy Prophet (S) did was that he filled the general atmosphere of his society with affection and love so that everybody could treat each other with affection and trust. And today this is an obligation that we should observe.

Another example of the efforts that the Holy Prophet (S) made in order to clear the general atmosphere was that he tried to cleanse Muslims' hearts off spite and enmity. In the case of the previous example,

the Holy Prophet's (S) efforts were focused on creating trust and promoting a healthy atmosphere in society. But in this case, the issue is beyond these things. That is to say, in an Islamic community, Muslims should be encouraged to stop being indifferent to one another. Islam does not approve of Muslims who live their lives and do not want to be involved in the affairs of other Muslims. One chapter in the life of the Holy Prophet (S) involves his efforts to turn this indifference into affection, cooperation and brotherhood. And this is exactly what we need in our system today.

Muslims should treat each other with affection and compassion and without the slightest indifference. A Muslim must not be indifferent to another Muslim who is suffering from a particular problem. One of the great things that the Holy Prophet (S) did was that he created a sense of support, compassion, sympathy and reciprocal affection among Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) would try his best to prevent Muslims from having spite and malevolence against each other in the Islamic community. That is to say, by relying on his wisdom and patience, the Holy Prophet (S) tried to create enjoyable and wholesome conditions that were imbued with affection.

It has been narrated that a Bedouin – who did not know anything about civilization and ordinary social manners – travels to Medina to visit the Holy Prophet (S). He finds the Holy Prophet (S) among his companions in a mosque or on the road. He asks the Holy Prophet (S) for something and the Holy Prophet (S) helps him by, for example, giving him money, food and clothes. Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (S) asks the man: “I tried to be kind to you. Are you happy?” Because of his background and crude manners – which is typical of such people – that man who was not happy with what he had received from the Holy Prophet (S), said: “No, you did not do anything for me. You did not do me any favors. Basically, what you gave me was nothing.”

His crude behavior towards the Holy Prophet (S) was understandably unacceptable to his companions. Everybody became angry. Some of the Holy Prophet's (S) companions wanted to react to the Bedouin's behavior, but the Holy Prophet said: “No, do not say anything to him. I will handle this issue myself.” He left his companions and took the man to his house. Clearly, the Holy Prophet (S) did not have anything else with him to give to the man, otherwise he would have done so. He took the man to his house and gave him other things, such as food, clothes or money. Then he asked the man: “Are you happy now?” The man said: “Yes.” He felt ashamed by the generosity and patience of the Holy Prophet (S) and he finally said that he was happy.

The Holy Prophet (S) told him: “Earlier you said certain things in front of my companions and made them angry. Do you want to go to them and tell them that you are happy now?” The man said: “Yes, I do.” The Holy Prophet (S) took the man to his companions on the same day or the day after. Addressing his companions, the Holy Prophet (S) said: “This Arab brother feels that he is happy with me now. If you are happy, you may say so.” The man started to praise the Holy Prophet (S) and said that he was happy and grateful to the Holy Prophet (S) for his kindness. He said what he wanted to say and left.

After the man had left, addressing his companions, the Holy Prophet (S) said: “That Arab man is

analogous to a camel that has strayed away from its herd and shepherd and is running away into the desert. As my friends, you run after him in order to bring him back to me. But this move makes him more frightened and less likely to return. I did not let you scare him away more than you already had. I went after him with love and affection and I made him return to us.” This was the technique of the Holy Prophet (S).

The existence of even the slightest spite and enmity in the Islamic community was unacceptable to the Holy Prophet (S). He tried to create affection and friendship among the people of his society. Even when Islam spread to other areas and the Holy Prophet (S) managed to capture Mecca, he granted a general amnesty for the people of Mecca. The people of Mecca were the same people who had forced the Holy Prophet (S) out of the city. The Holy Prophet (S), who used to live in Mecca, tolerated all the sufferings in Mecca for 13 years.

And later on there were several battles between his army and the army of Mecca. Many Muslims had been killed by the people of Mecca and Muslims had also killed people from Mecca. If the Holy Prophet (S) had decided to enter the city of Mecca with feelings of animosity, for many years it would have been impossible to make peace with the people of Mecca. Therefore, as soon as he arrived in Mecca, the Holy Prophet (S) announced: “You are free.” [9](#) He announced that he had granted a general amnesty. He pardoned Quraysh and put an end to everything.

One of the things that the Holy Prophet (S) did during the early months after he had settled in Medina was that he made Muslims take an oath of brotherhood. When we call a person our brother, this is not ceremonial gesture in Islam. That is to say, Muslims are like brothers to one another and they have the same rights and obligations as brothers do. Just as brothers have certain rights and obligations in their relationship, so do religious brothers in Islam. The Holy Prophet (S) translated this into action.

The Holy Prophet (S) created a sense of brotherhood among Muslims. He did not pay attention to the previous social distinctions and aristocratic backgrounds of the people of Medina and Quraysh. He made a black slave the brother of a great personality and a slave that had been freed, the brother of a famous aristocrat from Bani Hashim or Quraysh. In any case, this brotherhood enjoyed various dimensions and one of the most important purposes was to help Muslims feel like brothers.

## **2. Promoting the spirit of Gratitude**

I would like to provide another example to illustrate how the Holy Prophet (S) would imbue the general atmosphere of his society with Islamic values. Apart from political beliefs and tendencies and other such issues, in Islam what is important is the spirit of loyalty, respecting each other’s rights and showing gratitude for the efforts and services of other people. This is very important for the health of society and the Holy Prophet (S) would repeatedly stress this point. He would not just pay lip service to such things. For example, he would not just advise the people to respect their promises and show their gratitude, rather he would create the necessary conditions for the people to do so.

According to a narration, a delegation had been sent by Najashi the king of Abyssinia to meet with the Holy Prophet (S) in Medina and to deliver a message, which was a common practice among different states. Najashi was the king of Abyssinia and just like many other kings of his time, he was Christian, but when the delegation came to visit the Holy Prophet (S), he stood up to receive and serve them. His companions said: “Messenger of God, we are here, so let us take care of serving the guests.” The Holy Prophet (S) said: “No, when Muslims migrated to Abyssinia, their king showed a lot of respect and now I want to return the favor.” This is an example of showing gratitude.

During his life, the Holy Prophet (S) fought many battles against polytheists of Quraysh and he also fought a few battles against the Byzantine Empire which was in control of the Levant region as well as Palestine. He even took part in the Battle of Yarmouk, the Battle of Mu'tah and the Battle of Tabouk, but he never fought a battle against Abyssinia and he never deployed his army there.

It was not the case that the Holy Prophet (S) used to fight every king who did not believe in Islam. Najashi's commitment to his promises and the Holy Prophet's (S) gratitude for Najashi's favor were not forgotten even after the Holy Prophet (S) had established an Islamic government. Many such examples can be provided from the life of the Holy Prophet (S), but it would take too long to discuss every example.

### **3. Promoting the spirit of hard work in society**

I would like to discuss another example. After the Holy Prophet (S) had established an Islamic government, a woman came to visit him in Medina. His companions saw that the Holy Prophet (S) had a lot of respect for that woman. He welcomed her warmly and asked after her family members. He treated her in the friendliest way. After the woman had left, in order to clear confusion, the Holy Prophet (S) said: “That woman used to visit us frequently when Khadijah was alive.”

She must have avoided visiting Hazrat Khadijah (s.a.) when the Holy Prophet (S) was surrounded by his companions. This narration does not mention that she had converted to Islam she probably had not converted to Islam, but the Holy Prophet (S) treated her with respect many years later simply because she used to have a friendly relationship with the Holy Prophet's (S) household.

Another example is the efforts by the Holy Prophet (S) to create an appropriate atmosphere for hard work in society: he would not just order the people to work hard, rather he would revive the spirit of hard work among the people through different techniques and sometimes when he saw a young person who was idle, he would tell him, “God does not like a young person who is idle.”

According to a narration, whenever the Holy Prophet (S) saw a young person who was healthy and strong, he would ask him two questions: “Are you married? What do you do?” If that young person told him that he was single and jobless, the Holy Prophet (S) would say: “In my eyes, that youth fell from favor.” Through such techniques and behaviors, the Holy Prophet (S) would draw the people's attention

to the importance of hard work.

Once, a few people went to the Holy Prophet (S) and praised a particular person. They said: “Messenger of God, we went on a trip with this man and he is a very pure-hearted and pious person. He was praying constantly and at every stop we made, he would immediately start praying, reciting the Holy Quran and doing other such things.”

When they had finished speaking, the Holy Prophet (S) asked in astonishment: “But who was taking care of what he had to do? If he was constantly praying and reciting the Holy Quran at every stop, who was cooking for him? Who was taking care of his stuff? Who was loading and unloading them? Who was taking care of what he had to do during the trip?” They answered: “Messenger of God, it was a pleasure for us to do everything for him.” The Holy Prophet (S) said: “You are better than him.” [10](#)

The fact that he was not doing what he was supposed to do, the fact that he was putting all the responsibility on your shoulders to start worshipping God, does not make him a good person. You are the ones who are good because you do not avoid your responsibilities and because you even do another person’s duties.”

Through such techniques, it is possible to fill the general atmosphere of an Islamic society with the spirit of hard work. Today we are in need of all the lessons that I mentioned. [11](#)

- [1.](#) Ayatollah Khamenei’s speech delivered on October 16, 1989 in a meeting with participants of the Islamic Unity Conference, clerics, government officials, Friday prayer leaders and a group of ordinary citizens from different cities
- [2.](#) Ayatollah Khamenei’s speech delivered on October 18, 1989 in a meeting with a group of Friday prayer leaders, government officials, MPs and commanders on the occasion of birthday anniversaries of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq
- [3.](#) Sura Baqara, Ayah 129
- [4.](#) Sura Baqara, Ayah 129
- [5.](#) Makarim al-Akhlaaq, P. 17
- [6.](#) Sura an-Noor, Ayah 12
- [7.](#) Sura an-Noor, Ayah 16
- [8.](#) Sura an-Noor, Ayah 17
- [9.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 97, P. 59
- [10.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 73, P. 274; Makarim al-Akhlaaq, P. 265
- [11.](#) Supreme Leader’s Friday prayer sermons delivered on October 20, 1989

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