The Social Behavior of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

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Abstract

Providing education and development in moral ethics involves the process of preparing the grounds and the use of approaches for bringing about the formation, flourish, and enhancement of moral virtues and the elimination of immoral behaviors and attitudes in human beings. There is no doubt that improving and guiding the human self plays a significant role in man’s individual and social prosperity, both in this world and the afterworld. Therefore, the present research has endeavored to study social behavior as seen by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as an effort to make man’s individual and social duties a reality. Library methods and analysis have been used in this research. The overall results obtained from the research indicate that the social ethics of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) can serve as a guide for the Islamic society toward perfection and immunity from other barriers, problems and abnormalities by means of making individual and social duties a reality (Bayat, 2010, p.97).

Keywords: The Holy Prophet (PBUH), ethics, society, philanthropy, social relationships.
Introduction
Dignity-based social ethics is one of the characteristics of a religiously-oriented society. As a matter of fact, safeguarding others’ dignity can be regarded as the most fundamental aspect of the social behavior of the faithful. Man is exposed to a variety of environments after birth. Every environment contributes in some way to the development and flourish of man’s talents. The society is an example of such environments.

The right education can elevate human beings to the highest of values; otherwise, man will meet his demise. The Holy Prophet (PBUH), was well aware of this 1400 years ago, attempted to guide the society toward perfection and serenity by means of his logical positivism and set an example for other people.

We hope that this albeit small endeavor may make a contribution toward presenting the character of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and neutralizing the conspiracies planned by the enemies of Islam as efforts to ruin his character.

The Attention Paid by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) toward the Elimination of Social Inequities
A study of the behavior of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) points out that he regarded the eradication of differences that had gradually emerged between people of high importance.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) insisted that gatherings have a circular seating arrangement; there was to be no upper or lower sides. “Whenever you arrive at a gathering,” he always reiterated, “take a seat wherever there is a vacancy. Do not consider a specific location as your own seat, and do not put others under pressure so you can sit there.” If he arrived at a gathering, he did not like others rising before him. If they sometimes did, he would stop them and ask them to keep their seats. If he was riding, he would not allow others to walk along with him. Instead, he would ask his companion to ride with him or tell him to walk further ahead or behind him. In any case, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would not allow others to walk along with him if he was riding, and would sometimes even sit on the ground. (Faqihi, 1996, p.36)

The Respect Showed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for People’s Character
Each person regards his own self with respect. If we respect other people’s ideas, deeds and tastes within their own limits and avoid continually rejecting them, they will pay us respect in return. People feel comfortable and form a friendly relationship with those who regard them with respect, attention and appreciation. As a result, to attract people, one needs to provide them with what they want. It is obvious that people require merely respect rather than wealth and property from others in order to form amicable relationships with them. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) followed this principle quite well. For instance, “Whoever came to see the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was received quite respectfully; the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would sometimes even spread his coat as a carpet for his visitor to sit on, and also gave him the pillow he leaned against.” (Faqihi, 1996, p.53) Moreover, “when one of the Holy Prophet’s friends paid him a visit, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would remain seated as long as his visitor was there.” As Imam Sadeq (PBUH) has stated, “When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) shook hands with someone, he would not pull his hand back until the other person did so.” (Muhjat ul-Bayza, Vol. 3, p.388) “In order to pay his friends and his men due respect in social gatherings, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would cast his affectionate look equally at everyone present.” (Wasa’il al-Shi’a, Vol.8, p.499) In Islam, treating non-Muslims with respect and veneration has also been reiterated. When a non-Muslim man was impressed with the sincere respect he had unexpectedly received from
Muslims, he asked with surprise, “Has you prophet commanded you to do so (i.e. pay non-Muslims with respect)?” “Yes,” they replied. “Those who rose to follow the Prophet were fascinated by his ethical teachings and dignified, gracious deeds,” the non-Muslim man asked. He then changed his mind about where he was heading, and set off for Kufa along with Ali (PBUH). He spoke to Ali (PBUH) and eventually converted to Islam. One of the reasons for the development and propagation of the holy religion of Islam lay in the dignity and respect paid by prominent Islamic figures to people. Furthermore, Muslims were obliged to fulfill their duties regarding paying people respect and dignity—both in their words and their deeds—and never humiliate one another. As stated in the Holy Quran:

As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has stated in a hadith, “As long as one who respects one’s Muslim brother with kind words and relieves him of his grievance, one will be protected by God’s blessings provided this habit is kept.” (Majlisi, 3rd Print, 1403 HQ, Vol. 16, p. 84). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has also said, “Never humiliate Muslims or treat anyone with contempt, for a Muslim whom you regard as diminutive is in fact great in God’s eyes.” (Kulayni, 1415 HQ, Vol.2, p163)

The Philanthropic Aspect of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)
The deliverance of all mankind was of high interest for the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He loved all human beings, whether black or white, Arab or non-Arab, man or woman, child or adult and treated them affectionately. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always thought about how to provide mankind with deliverance both in this world and the afterworld. He was in continual endeavor to give humanity prosperity; this affection was, however, stronger when it came to Muslims and the faithful. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) stated, “Whoever starts a morning without thinking about Muslims’ affairs is not a Muslim.” (Boroujerdi, 1399 HQ, Vol.20, p.345) The Holy Prophet (PBUH) made such serious efforts toward bringing about improvements in people’s material and spiritual state that the Holy Quran has stated: The verse mentioned above implies the Holy Prophet’s philanthropic characteristics and his ambition toward guiding the faithful. (Makarem Shirazi, 2000, p.206)

Kindness and Tolomence in the Holy Prophet’s Logical Positivism:
This is a principle of high importance in the social conduct of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Attitudes displayed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) based upon gentleness and mildness rather than harshness and violence in his social communications were in fact the most constructive element in his attempts toward the modification of the society as well as social relationships. As historians have described the Holy Prophet’s social conduct, “[The Holy Prophet] was genial, courteous and mild-tempered at all times; he never behaved harshly or violently.” (Sheikh al-Sadouq, 1982, Vol.1, p.83) The Holy Prophet (PBUH) never turned to harsh or unkind approaches in order to further his social goals among Muslims. He had been assigned to uphold mandatory religious matters as well as to behave tolerantly and forbearingly. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said:

“My God has commanded me to uphold what religion has regarded as mandatory, as He has commanded to be tolerant toward people.” (Kulayni, 1305 HQ, Vol. 2, p.117) Through tolerance and forbearance, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) managed to transform the society; had it not been for such an attitude and this important social principle, no unity, bonding or movement would have been possible in the society.
As God has stated in regard to this aspect of the Holy Prophet’s moral ethics:
“This verse implies the total affection and compassion the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used in both his words and deeds.” (Makarem Shirazi, 2009, p.184) The lack of forbearance would have made it difficult to make modifications in the society. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had been assigned to treat people with tolerance while carrying out his prophetic mission. That was the principle the divine message had been based upon for him. As stated in a hadith by Imam Sadeq (PBUH), “Gabriel came to the Holy Prophet and said, ‘O Muhammad! Your God sends His regards and tells you to be tolerant toward My people.’” (Kulayni, 1405 HQ, Vol.2, p.117)

The Avoidance of Driving People Away

The Holy Prophet’s behavior consisted of no deeds which drove people away or repelled them. For example, when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) dispatched Muadh ibn Jabal to Yemen to preach Islam and also guide and lead the people there, he told him, “Now that you are to preach Islam and invite and encourage people to join Islam, be easy on them and do not be harsh with them. Harshness is not the way to lead people. Provide them with annunciating, and tell them about the advantages Islam can bring them both in this world and the afterworld. Present the people with the enunciations Islam has for them. Do not choose a path of intimidation and fear. Do not act in a way that would create hate in people. When saying prayers among these people, who have recently joined Islam and have not tasted the joy of worship yet, have in mind the weak, for there will be all sorts of people among those saying prayers.” Indeed, when it came to leadership and the commands issued in order to manage the society, the Holy Prophet’s practical conduct was founded on the psychological aspects and ways of humanity. (Ibn Hesham, 1436 HQ, Vol.4, p.237)

God’s religion is easy, and people must not be repelled or drove off from religion due to unnecessary severities. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has stated, “As seen by God, the best religion is one that is easy and lenient.” (Abduh, 1366 HQ, Vol.2, p.164) In fact, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was appointed to preach a religion that was easy to follow. In fact, his mission necessitated such a quality. His conduct and ways were also based on such a characteristic. As he stated, “I have presented a simple and easy religion, and whoever disagrees with my ways and my conduct is not a follower of mine.” (Payandeh, 1994, Vol.1, p.1373) Leniency is regarded as one of the objectives of this religion and in fact one of its general characteristics, whether in its decrees, beliefs, moral ethics, transactions or in its religious basics or minutiae. Moreover, God has reiterated the easiness of Islam in many verses of the Holy Quran, for example the following verse:

Through his mildness and his tolerance, the Holy Prophet of Kindness (PBUH) changed people’s hearts and guided them toward righteousness. It has been reported that a desert-dwelling Arab came to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and presented a request. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave him something, but he was still not satisfied and balked and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) unappreciatively. When the Holy Prophet enraged by the man’s reaction and his men rose to face him, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gestured that they should calm down. He then took the Arab home and gave him some more. “Are you satisfied now?” the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked him. Having seen the condition of the residence the Holy Prophet (PBUH) lived in and the graciousness and kindness the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had treated him with, the man answered, ‘Yes, may God bless you.’ Then the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘What you said in front of
my men made them angry. I would like you to express your satisfaction and gratitude in their presence so that their anger toward you can be removed.’ The Arab man accepted. The next day, he came to the mosque. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) turned to his men and said, ‘This man would like to say that he is satisfied with us, is that not so?’ ‘Indeed,’ the Arab confirmed.

**The Applied Logic of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) Used to Breathe Dignity into Social Relationships**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself and also the manner he conducted his social relationships were based on dignity. Without dignity, one will never be able to behave toward and provide others with dignity and compassion. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was the most dignified of all human beings. As historians have described him, “He was the dearest of all people.” (Tabarsi, 1392 HQ, p.81) The Holy Prophet’s social conduct was based upon paying human beings respect and tribute. He always advised people to hold their religious brothers dear and respectable. “Whoever treats his Muslim brother with respect has in fact treated God with respect,” as the Holy Prophet (PBUH) stated. (Al-Asqalani al-Shafe‘i, 1419 HQ, p.456) The Holy Prophet (PBUH) regarded all human beings as valuable and did not allow people to humiliate one another. “Beware not to humiliate any Muslim,” he said, “for even the most diminutive of Muslims is regarded by God as great.” (Maleki, 1408 HQ, Vol.2, p.369) The way the Holy Prophet (PBUH) behaved toward other people was always based on veneration and respect. As historians have written about the way he behaved toward people, “Whenever he met someone, he was the first to offer a greeting. If someone came to see the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and make a request, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would treat the visitor with patience [until the request was fulfilled] or the visitor changed his mind. When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) met Muslims, he would greet them. If he was saying his prayers and someone came and sat beside him, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would make his prayers brief. Then he would turn to his visitor and ask, ‘Is there something you need?’ He treated those who came to see him with respect and reverence. He would sometimes spread his coat for his visitor to sit on or have visitors sit on his mattress.” (Majlesi, 1403 HQ, Vol.16, p.228) These were clear examples of how the Holy Prophet (PBUH) treated people respectfully while the Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself did not want people to rise before him. He liked people to be comfortable and free of obligations toward him. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself behaved in a way that amazed everyone.

**Paying Children Dignity and Respect in the Conduct of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)**

Another significant principle the Holy Prophet (PBUH) followed in his social conduct was his respect and reverence for children. This led to the development and upbringing of human beings who were pure, good-intentioned and righteous due to the gem of dignity they had within them. This is why the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, “Treat your children with respect and communicate with them with kindness.” (Delshad Tehrani, 1993, p.52) The emphasis expressed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in regard to treating children with respect was an effort to prevent their innate dignity from being trampled upon. Behaving toward children with veneration and dignity makes them become independent, free-minded, strong and dignified individuals with honorable virtues. If children are treated with contempt and humiliation, however, the
growth and development of their virtues will be prevented and they will fall astray and be contaminated with deviations. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has stated, “When you utter your children’s names, treat them with dearness and dignity and provide them with a comfortably wide seat [i.e. treat them with veneration]; do behave harshly toward them.” (Tabarsi, 1392 HQ, p.25)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) treated children affectionately and respectfully at all times. As reported by historians, “When an infant was brought to be blessed or named by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he would embrace the infant and place the infant on his lap. Sometimes, the infant on the Holy Prophet’s lap would urinate. Those who saw this happen would cry out [and behave angrily in order to prevent the infant from urinating], but the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would stop them and say, ‘Do not treat the child with harshness to prevent him from urinating.’ the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would then allow the infant to urinate. When the prayer or naming was over, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would hand the infant over to the joyous parents. There was no indication of disappointment in the Holy Prophet (PBUH) due to the infant’s urination. Then, when the guests had left, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would set about cleaning his clothes. (Tabarsi, 1392 HQ, p.25) Some narrations have quoted the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as having said, “My clothes can be cleaned, but the harsh behavior the child receives due to a completely natural act will never be cleared from the child’s heart.” (Delshad Tehrani, pp.59-60)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always greeted children, thus providing them with a chance to strengthen and develop their characters. (Tabatabaee, 1996, p.35) “As humiliating children ruins their personalities and makes them become vulnerable, oppression-prone human beings with trampled characters riddled with complexes,” the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, “providing them with character leads to their becoming dignified, wise people of high moral ethics.” (Ahmadi, 2002, p.224)

Suggestion
Considering the sensitive circumstances we are in, and regarding enemies’ efforts aiming to destroy the face and credit of Islam, it is recommended that researchers make studies of the various aspects of the personality, words and deeds of the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams (PBUH).

Conclusion
In order to do the individual duties in the society, it is essential that the items mentioned above be taken into consideration. If a human being is educated based on such principles, he will be prepared to accept and tolerate any difficulty and thus be a useful individual for his society. As a result, attitudes displayed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) based upon gentleness and mildness as well as the avoidance of harshness and violence in his social communications have been the most constructive element in his attempts toward the modification of the society as well as social relationships. On the other hand, Islam’s enemies are ready to target our Islamic values. We need to be conscious and introduce the divine character of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), whose name is the ornament of the foundation of the universe, to the people of the world. We must seek help from his behavior, his words – whether in social, individual, governmental, economic or political aspects – in order to achieve happiness and prosperity in this world and the afterworld.
References

1. The Holy Quran