

Chapter 18: The Morals and Behaviour of the Holy Prophet

The more science and technology advances, the greater is the need for the observance and practice of the teachings and instructions of divine prophets in human societies. This is because science and technology provide only machines and instruments and by no means prevent their misuse by human beings.

The terrible rise in murder, other felonies, corruption, suicide and so forth clearly points to this very fact. If morality, which is a significant part of the teachings of divine prophets, does not prevail and govern in human societies, surely not only will advanced science and technology fail to ensure human peace and prosperity, but they will add to our problems and miseries.

For the exploiters and colonialists utilize advanced technology and sciences for their own satanic purposes. They murder or make homeless millions of human beings as they have always done and trample upon the rights of the weak and the defenseless.

As a matter of fact, the only factor that can halter man's restive soul and control his stormy instincts and passions and thus utilize science and technology for human prosperity and pacific life is true morality, which originates in faith in God.

The moral teachings and precepts of the divine prophets and their moral behaviour are the best means of leading man to his ideal life. It goes without saying that both in personal and in social life the observance of moral principles is required of all.

However, for those who must lead societies and guide the people, this requirement is much greater, because, first, the one who is the instructor of society must himself be a model of supreme moral behaviour and excellent human characteristics, so he will be able to wipe moral decay out of people's hearts and minds. Obviously if he himself is lacking in morality, he will fail to lead the people onto the path of humanity and virtue.

Second, the responsibility of leading human societies is so great and crucial that no one can successfully perform it unless he has perfect morals. For this reason, God selected his prophets from among those who possessed exalted spirits, great tolerance, extraordinary patience, and other excellent moral characteristics. It was with this weapon of morality that divine prophets overturned the debased societies that were plunged in corruption and led the ignorant people who had gone astray onto the path of virtue and salvation.

In the holy Qur'an, God has addressed the Prophet Muhammad:

'Thus it is due to mercy from God that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you' (3: 159).

The sublime celestial morals of the Prophet brought about the waves of the revolution of Islam first in Arabian society and afterwards all over the world. In the light of this all-embracing spiritual and intellectual resurrection, dispersion turned into unity, unchastity into chastity and virtue, idleness into hard work and industry, selfishness to altruism, and Arab arrogance to modesty and affection.

Men and women were thus trained to become models of good moral behaviour and have altruistic manners forever. The morals of the Prophet were so sublime and praiseworthy that God has regarded them as great.

'And truly you (Muhammad) possess great morals' (68:4).

The Prophet Among The People

The Holy Prophet of Islam possessed the magnificent status of prophecy and divine leadership, but his manners in dealing with the people and his way of life were so simple and gentle that when he was among the people and a newcomer wanted to know about him, he had to ask, 'Which one of you is the Prophet?' 1

He had no love for luxuries or the illusions of this mortal world. He was never enchanted by any worldly things, and he invariably looked upon this world's life as a passing one. 2

The Holy Prophet of Islam spoke in short, meaningful sentences and was never seen or heard to interrupt anybody's speech.3

He never spoke with a morose face, nor did he ever apply rough, awkward words. Unlike grants and despotic rulers, the Holy Prophet of Islam never looked at those who were addressing him with half-closed eyes. 4

The Holy Prophet of Islam did not care to sit down in the seat of honour in gatherings, and on entering any place would sit down in the= first empty seat available. 5

He did not let anybody stand up before him and treated others most respectfully. Of course, the virtuous people were most revered by him. 6

The Holy Prophet was justly angered when he observed a violation of God's commands and of Islam and was most pleased at the good deeds. Both his pleasure and displeasure were for God. He would never allow anybody to accompany him on foot when he himself was riding. He would pick him up beside himself if he was able, and if not, the Holy Prophet of Islam gave him a time for an appointment in a given place and would ride alone.

On group journeys, the Prophet would work like the others and would never let anybody work instead of him. Once on a journey, his companion asked him to allow him to do the work. In answer to this request, the Holy Prophet of Islam said, 'I do not like to be treated as if I were privileged because God does not like any of His creatures to consider himself privileged or to be treated as if he were privileged over others'. And he got up and collected firewood. 7

He invariably stood by his words and pledges. He paid affectionate visits to his relatives and friends but would never take their side unduly. The Holy Prophet of Islam would never permit anybody to backbite others and said, 'I want to meet people with a loving heart'.

His modesty was peerless. He was extremely patient, tolerant, and forgiving. 8

Anas ibn Malik, who was the servant of the Holy Prophet of Islam, has narrated, 'I used to prepare milk for the Prophet to break his fast with. One night he was home late. Thinking that he had been a guest at somebody's house and thus had broken his fast there, I drank the milk. Before long he returned home. I asked his companions if he had broken his fast and they said that he had not.

'When the Holy Prophet of Islam was informed of the matter, he made no remark about it and behaved as if he were not hungry at all and went without supper with a cheerful face. The next day he also fasted. 9

The Holy Prophet of Islam immensely loved the ritual prayers, but on occasions when people demanded to talk to him about something, he would say his ritual prayers briefly and instead, pay attention to the demands and needs of the people. He would spare no efforts to fulfill the people's needs.

The Prophet treated everyone with great respect and considered nobility and honour to be owing to faith, piety, and good behaviour. He was not interested in wealth or status, nor did he revere anybody for his riches or position.

His behaviour towards slaves was amazingly affectionate, and he would do his best to remove the troubles and sufferings of the slaves and the poor. 10

The Prophet's Tolerance And Forgiveness

The Holy Prophet of Islam never attempted to retaliate against the insults and disrespect of anybody, and forgave people's mistakes or their misconduct. His reaction to the torment and disregard of the ignorant people was forgiveness and tolerance.¹¹

In spite of all the tortures and torments that the Quraysh had inflicted upon the Holy Prophet of Islam, on conquering Makkah, he forgave them and set them free. ¹²

In the war of Uhud, a man named Wahshi killed Hamzah, the beloved uncle of the Holy Prophet of Islam. However, he forgave his sin. Also, he forgave the many torments and troubles that Abu Sufyan and his wife, Hind, had caused for him and he did not take revenge. ¹³However, for all his tolerance and mercifulness, he did not take pity on those who violated God's threshold and sacred precepts and would punish the violator in accordance with divine rules. In affecting God's orders, he would take no notice of anybody's intercession.

When the Prophet was informed that Fatima Mukhzumiyah had committed theft, he punished her according to the laws of Islam concerning theft and did not regard the intercession of Asamata ibn Zayd in this respect, saying, `The ruin and downfall of the preceding peoples was due to the fact that they did not enforce the laws of punishment in the case of the aristocrats and the people of status. I swear by the One in Whose hands is my life that even if Fatima (his daughter) had committed such a sin, I would cut off her hand'. ¹⁴

The Prophet's Cleanliness And Orderliness

The Holy Prophet of Islam was fond of scent ¹⁵ and spent more on buying perfumes than on food. ¹⁶ His pleasant smell filled the air of any place he passed, so that whosoever passed there knew that the Holy Prophet of Islam had passed that way. ¹⁷

He used to brush his teeth frequently ¹⁸ and washed his blessed hands both before and after meals. ¹⁹ Whenever the Holy Prophet of Islam was about to leave his house, he would look into a mirror or into water; he always left home with a clean, pleasant appearance. ²⁰

The Prophet Was A Pious And Sincere Worshipper Of God

The Holy Prophet of Islam had great love for ritual prayers so that during the night he would get up several times, brush his teeth, and then offer the most devoted prayers. ²¹ He would stand worshipping God and talking sincerely to the Almighty Creator for so long that as a result of so much standing in prayer, his legs were swollen. ²²

The Holy Prophet of Islam took lessons from watching the sky, the moon, the sun, and every other thing

in nature, and these phenomena attracted him to their Creator more than to themselves.

He was so devout and pious that not even for a single moment was he enchanted by any luxury or pleasure of this mortal world. In short, the Holy Prophet of Islam was a perfect model of all excellent virtues and sublime human qualities.

In such a small book it is not possible to describe all his praiseworthy manners and morals. In fact, we have just presented a pale reflection of his celestial, resplendent portrait so that all over the world Muslims who regard themselves as the followers of Islam can make his morals and conduct their own model of behaviour and learn divine morality and correct programs for life from him.

As the Holy Qur'an says,

'Certainly you have in the Apostle of God an excellent exemplar for he who hopes in God and the latter day, and remembers God much' (33:21).

May God's greetings be upon him who was the selected superior and the best of pious human beings. And the greetings of the angels upon the faithful.

We too greet him most cordially and sincerely. May he accept our respectful greetings as well as the greetings of you, our sisters and brothers in Islam. May Almighty God help all of us to follow exactly the blessed footsteps of the Holy Prophet, whose path is sure to lead us into eternal salvation and paradise.

To end this book, we narrate an invaluable tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam and his honoured family. In the Holy Qur'an there is a verse closely related with the Tradition of the Cloak:

'And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of gore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-due (zakat) and obey God and His Apostle. God only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a thorough purifying' (33:33).

This verse is famous as the *ayat-i-tathir* and is closely related with the Tradition of the Cloak. The following is the tradition:

One day the Holy Prophet of Islam came to the house of his daughter, Fatima, and told her that he was very tired and asked her to cover him with his cloak. As she was covering the Apostle of God, his face lit up and shone like the full moon. After a while Imam Hasan came to the house and said that he could smell the fragrance of his grandfather. Fatima said that he was resting under the cloak. Hasan greeted the Holy Prophet and asked his permission to come under the cloak. The permission was granted.

Similarly, Husayn, 'Ali, and Fatima, after greeting him and receiving permission from the Apostle, went under the cloak. Fatima, peace be upon her, said that when they, the *ahl al-bayt*, gathered under the cloak, Almighty God said, 'Let it be known to you, my angels and those who are in the heavens, that I

swear by my honour and might that I have not created the heavens and the earth and what are in them, but only out of love for the five honourable ones who are under the cloak¹.

Gabriel asked God who was under the cloak. God informed him that they were the people of the house of the Apostle. Gabriel requested permission from God to be the sixth under the cloak. Gabriel greeted the Prophet and received permission to enter under the cloak. Gabriel said that God has created the universe because of them and out of love for them. And

'God only desires to keep that which is ritually unclean away from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a thorough purifying'. (33:33).

'Ali asked the Holy Prophet to explain the significance of their gathering under the cloak. The Prophet said, 'I swear by God that whenever this tradition will be recited among our friends and lovers, God's mercy will descend upon them and the angels will surround them and ask forgiveness for them until they disperse. God will also remove the sorrow and answer the prayers of those who had come to ask'. 'Ali swore by the Lord of the Ka'aba that the *ahl al-bayt* and their friends had profitted both in this world and the next.

'Surely God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe! Call for blessings on him and salute him with a good salutation' (33:56).

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1. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 16, pp.220–229.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Kohl ul-basar, p.69.
 4. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 16, pp.226–228.
 5. Ibid., p.240.
 6. Ibid., pp.229, 281, 182.
 7. Kohl, pp.67–68.
 8. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 16, pp.226–232.
 9. Kohl, pp.67–68.
 10. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 16, pp.228–229.
 11. Ibid., pp.264–265.
 12. Kamil, Vol. 2, p.252.
 13. Ibid., pp.248–252.
 14. Irshad us-Sari Lisharhi Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 9, p.456.
 15. Wasa'il, new edition, Vol. 1, p.442.
 16. Ibid., Vol. 1, p.443.
 17. Safinat, Vol. 1, p.419.
 18. Wasa'il, new edition, Vol. 1, p.349.
 19. Ibid., Vol. 16, p.472.
 20. Ibid., Vol. 3, p.344.
 21. Ibid., Vol. 1, p.365.
 22. Kohl, p.78.

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