

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); the Model Instructor

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Part 2

It goes without saying that the advent of the reviving religion of Islam and the spread of Divine teachings made marked changes in the Arabian society and of course other societies and improved their conditions tremendously. History is witness to the fact that it was Islam which gave humane rights to women, making them honourable members of the society and that before Islam, not only in Arabia, but in other parts of the world women were mostly looked down upon and mistreated. As a result of Islamic teachings and of course the ceaseless endeavours of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in guiding the people, the very people among whom even the heinous practice of burying female children alive had become prevalent, started learning human values and manners. People turned to Islam, because Islam being presented by Allah, the All-Knowing is in harmony with human nature, and every human being is born with a nature which looks for the truth and perfection. Those who opposed the Holy Prophet of Islam and fought against Muslims were obviously against Islam because of their domineering and profiteering inclinations, since they observed that Islam is against all oppression, bullying, injustice and other such vices. Of course, there have been a

number of people who out of obstinacy at first refused to accept Islam, but who later after observing the nobility of character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) radiated in his conduct, changed their minds and embraced Islam.

In connection with correcting human beings and human societies, Allah's last messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would, as per Allah's commands, emphasize the significance of marriage and of keeping the marital life and family environment safe, healthy and happy, thus making it the basis for the elevation of human soul and its perfection. His Holiness advised the people to promote conditions for marriage, since "celibacy can breed corruption". Likewise Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been quoted thus: "If a suitor whose (level of) religiousness and also whose temper you find good enough, do let your daughters marry them, otherwise corruption will spread on the earth." Also in another Prophetic Narration we are taught: "To Allah nothing is more loveable than a home made through marriage and to Him nothing is more detestable than a home broken up through separation (divorce)."

As we see, these Divine teachings have been markedly neglected in many societies, particularly the Western societies today, as a consequence of which corruption of all sorts have spread. It seems, it is high time humanity should return to Divine Messengers' teachings and commands.

In the same vein, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised both men and women to be (as spouses) kind, loving and forgiving to each other, and also as parents to their children. Being himself a model husband, His Holiness would help in house chores and would do things like mending his shoes and patching up his clothes himself. Also, as testified by his wives, His Holiness would never complain about such things as the taste of the food, and would urge the other men to behave the same way, through such statements as: “The best of you is the one who is best to his family and I am the best of you to my family.” Likewise, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has regarded marriage and the making of families a sacred affair and has in this regard urged men to attach great significance to their efforts towards earning halal means of livelihood for their families (regarding those efforts equal in merit to worship); let's ponder upon these Ahadith now: “What a man spends on his family is as reward-worthy as giving charity in the way of Allah.” And “The one who works and strives to provide for his family is to Allah like the one who makes Jihad in His way.” Of course, as inferred from numerous other Ahadith, including certain Ahaith from Imam Ali (AS) a man's responsibility towards his family members is not confined to his duty of providing them with material necessities, such as food and clothing; rather a man is also duty-bound to attend the spiritual needs of his family, most importantly to their need for religious education. As a matter of fact, teaching the Holy Qur'an to the children is regarded as

one of the most significant duties of a Muslim father. It is also quite worthy to cite another Hadith here: “Teach your children (authentic) Ahadith before your enemies lead them astray.” So, the parent who is careless about his children's religious upbringing and who just cares about their material welfare cannot be regarded as a dutiful one and will have to answer to Allah for his negligence. Another noteworthy point in this regard is that respect towards not only women and children, but also towards servants has been one of the manners of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and also the other Infallibles. It has been narrated that His Holiness was most tender and respectful towards women (both his family members and servants) and advised the other men to be so: “The best of people in terms of faith is the one who has the best temper and who has the most pleasant behavior towards his family....” It has been narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would even milk the cattle himself. Likewise, as an exemplary man, His Holiness would, on leaving the house, ask the residents if they needed anything and His Holiness would teach the other men to do so, since, according to His Holiness, it is possible that due to shyness or other reasons, some might not ask the man of the house for what they need and so, through that question, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam would urge them to let him know if they needed anything. And no wonder, since, as he himself has said: “I have been assigned the Divine Mission of completing moral virtues.” And in the same vein, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would severely frown upon

any disrespectful conduct on the part of men towards women. In a well-known Hadith, we read: “The noble hold women in reverence, the mean in contempt.”

Of course, holding women in reverence in Islam is not limited to just respectful behavior to them, rather this Divine teaching embraces a whole range of rights for women, including the right to be treated politely, provided for and given shelter properly even as divorced women. In The Holy Qur’an, these rights have been stipulated clearly and how good it will be if all those who unknowingly and under the influence of the anti-God Zionist propaganda, accuse Islam of oppressing the women, and praise the West for giving freedom to women, come to know that quite the opposite is true; Islam gave the women freedom (the humane freedom, not the freedom to become slaves to lustful men), dignity, honor, protection and thus true happiness.

Also, concerning his pleasant behavior in the family environment, suffice it to say that as repeatedly mentioned in Islamic narrations, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the most jovial of all with his family, thus setting an example of kindness and pleasant behavior. This attitude is just the opposite of the wrong attitude of some who imagine that being tender and showing affection by men spoils the women and the children.

Regarding attaching value by the Infallibles (AS) to children, there are many Ahadith, including: “A virtuous son or daughter is as a flower

from the flowers of Paradise.” Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has indeed on various occasions advised the people against looking down upon their female children. It has been narrated that once His Holiness observed that a man had become unhappy upon hearing the news of the birth of a girl to his wife and His Holiness immediately addressed the man thus: “Why are you unhappy. This child is a flower, the fragrance of which you enjoy and as for her Rizq(means of sustenance) it will be given by Allah.” Besides showing love, care and affection, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would also show respect for children, thus setting an example for the others, since His Holiness knew that respect is consistent with human nature and likewise receiving disrespectful behavior can cause very undesirable emotional problems, in particular in children. It has been narrated that His Holiness would always greet the children first anywhere he met them and would never wait for them (or even for the adults) to be the first to greet. His Holiness would even play and joke with the children, in particular with the orphans. At the time when children were mostly ignored or mistreated, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) urged the people to caress and kiss children to attract Allah’s Mercy. And likewise His Holiness would warn all against treating their children unequally, and unjustly, and would advise them to observe justice and equality among their children. Imam Ali (AS) has narrated that once Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saw a man with his two children, kissing just one of them, and upon observing this unfair treatment, His

Holiness addressed the man thus: “Why didn't you observe equality between your children?” - Certainly being a Divinely-guided leader and teacher of humanity, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) knew that unfair treatment results in negative, undesirable effects upon the children, including jealousy and rancor. In another Hadith, parents have been advised thus: “Act among your children justly (on a fair, equal basis and without discrimination), just as you like them to be just and fair to you.”

At the time when most people, in particular Arabs preferred their male children over female ones considerably, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the benefits of having daughters through various teachings including such Ahadith as: “The best of your children are your daughters.” And “Virtuous daughters are the best of one's children. The one who has a virtuous daughter, will be given by Allah a shield against the hellfire for that and the one who has two virtuous daughters will be placed in paradise by Allah for that and the one who has three or more than three virtuous daughters will be exempted by Allah from Jihad.”

And regarding the rights of children over parents (and also regarding the rights of parents over children) there are numerous narrations from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) including: “Be loving and affectionate towards your children, treat them mercifully and fulfill any promise you give them, because children look upon you as the ones who give them sustenance.” And: “It is the right of a child upon the parents to be given

a good name, to be taught the Holy Qur'an and to be left a pure inheritance by them.”

Besides, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been most hospitable towards guests. It has been narrated that whenever a guest entered his house, His Holiness would show him the best place to sit in and even when there were many guests and so some couldn't be seated on the rug, His Holiness would spread on the ground his own cloak for them to sit on. Also Salman, a well-known companion of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has narrated this story; “ One day I met Prophet Muhammad while His Holiness was leaning on a pillow, and when I sat down beside him, His Holiness offered his pillow to me to lean on and said: “O Salman! Any Muslim who, when his Muslim brother comes to visit him, places a pillow for him as a sign of respect will be forgiven his sins by Allah for this act.”

And of course, as witnessed by many, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would neither ridicule nor humiliate the others, nor would His Holiness allow the others to do so. This lesson is particularly beneficial to those who desire to become exemplary persons as parents, spouses, colleagues, neighbours and friends.

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