

**In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.**

**Behavior and Manners:**

**The Holy Prophet as a Family Man**

**By Qazi Fazlullah**

Literally speaking, the word Seerah means character and conduct. To a Muslim, however, Seerah always means the biography of the Holy Prophet, which would be incomplete if it didn't include what he said (Hadith), and what he practiced (Sunnah). In a broader sense, practices and sayings of the Holy Prophet are known as Sunnah. Jurists agree that the Holy Quran and the Sunnah are the two basic and original sources of the Islamic Shariah, which is the supreme law that every Muslim must obey.

There are numerous verses in the Holy Quran, which portray the character and conduct of the Holy Prophet. For instance, the verse, "*You are exalted to the highest notch of character,*" (Al-Qalam: 4) is the character certificate of Allah (SWT) to the Holy Prophet. The fact of the matter is that the Holy Quran is also a source; in fact, it is a very important source of the Seerah of the Holy Prophet. The fact of the matter is that the Holy Quran and the Sunnah are so intertwined with each other that they cannot be separated. When Ayesha (RA) was once asked by the Sahabah about the character and conduct of the Holy Prophet, she instantaneously replied, "*His character was the Quran.*" That is, he was the Holy Quran personified. His teachings and his practices were the explanations and practical demonstrations of the Quranic injunctions and commandments. It must be for this reason that Allah (SWT) Himself made it absolutely clear in Surah Al-Ahzab, "The conduct of the Messenger of Allah (SWT) is the best example for you to follow," (33:21).

The Holy Prophet was a man of superb character and conduct. Even those who do not believe in his Prophet hood cannot help to admire his character. His character is

a standard of excellence in every aspect of life. I have chosen to speak on only one such aspect: Character and Manners of the Holy Prophet as a family man. My choice of this topic is not arbitrary; it is based on painful observation of the contemporary scene of the family life of the Muslim Ummah in the United States.

No one can deny that the solidarity of the whole society depends on the strength of a family unit. If a society is like a building, the family unit is like a building block. The building would crumble if the building blocks do not hold. The Holy Prophet has warned us that the agents of Iblis (satan) are busy around the clock alluring human beings to commit sin. The agent who succeeds in causing the breakup of a family get marks from Iblis. It is so unfortunate that the family structure in the West is in shambles. It is even more unfortunate that the structure is showing signs of cracks among the Muslims too. Marriages are failing and families are breaking up. The tragedy could assume a crisis proportion.

### **Family Unit As An Organization**

A family unit is like an organization, members have their duties and responsibilities. The husband being the head of the household has the leadership position. His responsibilities are many. According to the Holy Prophet, every man (husband) is like a shepherd and he would be asked about his herd. It is the responsibility of the husband to provide food and shelter, ensure safety and security of the family and protect them from external threats, but the survival and strength of the

family needs more than that. The family ties would grow stronger when there is love, galore, there is mutual trust and respect, and where there is caring and sharing. That is why the Holy Prophet has said, *"The best among you is the one who is good to his family."* He has also reported to have said, *"The best among you is the one who is best to his woman (wife)."*

The responsibilities of the wife as the deputy to her husband are extremely important. She is the guard of the family prestige and honor. She runs the household. Her role as a mother in raising children is simply indispensable. Every child gets his or her first schooling in the lap of his or her mother. She also acts as liaison between her husband and her extended family, as well as between her extended family and her husband's extended family. This is an awfully difficult job for which she should be held in high regard by her husband and given ample loving attention.

### **Leadership Qualities Of A Husband**

The husband as a leader must demonstrate character and qualities that befit his position. He should be generous and accommodating, giving and forgiving, and tolerant and patient. Imam Tirmizi has reported a lengthy Hadith narrated by Ayesha (RA). She was talking about some wives whose husbands were not nice to them. One of them, wife of Abu Dzara (RA), gave a beautiful account of her married life. She said, *"Abu Dzara (RA) gave me so much jewelry that my ears feel heavy and my arms felt loaded. He has pleased me and I am so proud of him. He found me when I lived in*

*poverty with my parents who owned only a few sheep. He brought me to a respectable family that owned horses and camels, and ran a grain business. He does not call me names or insult me if I say something (that he does not like). He does not restrict my sleeping hours nor does he control my eating and drinking."* Apparently, Ayesha (RA) told the story of the wife of Abu Dzara (RA) to the Holy Prophet who said, *"I am to you (O Ayesha) as Abu Dzara (RA) was to his wife."* Note, how patiently and with all ears the Holy Prophet heard the whole story, and how graciously he approved and applauded the behavior of Abu Dzara (RA).

Stories of behavior of the Holy Prophet are many and heartwarming. Ayesha (RA) was married to him at a very young age. So much so, that even as a married lady she often acted like a little girl, such as playing with dolls. Many times the Holy Prophet would come home to find Ayesha (RA) playing with her girlfriends who would run away and hide somewhere. The Holy Prophet would find them and send them back to play with her. He never frowned or felt back to play with her. He never frowned or felt irritated. In fact, he always had a cheerful disposition.

Once Ayesha (RA) spotted two men from Habsha who were practicing martial arts in an open area adjacent to Masjid Nabwi (sas), so she became interested and started to watch them perform. The Holy Prophet came up to her, covered her with a cloak and stood by her as long as she wanted to watch and then left that place when she did.

The Holy Prophet had a very small room as his private chamber. There was not enough space for him to properly offer Salatul Tahajjud because Ayesha (RA) occupied a good portion of it. He used to push her legs aside in order to do Sajdah properly. She would stretch her legs again to the place of Sajdah, and the Holy Prophet would again push her legs. All along he would be patient and tolerant, kind and affectionate. Never even once was there any sign of frustration or unhappiness on his face. He was so sensitive to the needs of others.

Abu Hiban (RA) has reported a Hadith narrated by Ayesha (RA). She said that she arranged the marriage of a girl from the Ansar. The Holy Prophet was anxious to find someone who could recite poetry. He said that the tribe that the girl was going to after the marriage loved poetry. He was looking for someone who could recite poems and go with the girl to sing: *We came to you, we came to you. So greeting to us and greeting to you.*

Even though the Holy Prophet was the last Prophet of Allah (SWT) and during his lifetime the Deen of Islam was completed and perfected, yet he was down-to-earth with his wives. In good humor once he said to Ayesha (RA), *"I know when you are pleased with me and when you are not."* She said, *"How do you know that?"* He replied, *"When you are pleased with me you swear by the Lord of Mohammad, and when you are not you swear by the Lord of Ibrahim (leaving my name out)."* She admitted but added, *"I may leave your name out but I never leave you."*

Once the Holy Prophet and Ayesha were on a journey together, they broke their journey at a place in which the Holy Prophet challenged her to run a race with him. She accepted the challenge. Being slim, trim, and young, she beat him in the race. A few years later they were together at a place. The Holy Prophet invited her to run a race with him. She accepted the invitation but she was no longer slim and trim; she had put on weight and grown heavy so she lost the race. Smilingly the Holy Prophet said, "*This (victory) is for that (defeat).*" Doesn't that tell you how friendly and frank the Holy Prophet was as a family man?

Once Abu Baker Siddique (RA) came to visit with the Holy Prophet. He became very upset to see his daughter (Ayesha) speaking in a loud and angry tone to her husband, the Messenger of Allah. In fact, he was frightened by the verse of Surah Al-Hujrat, "*O you, who believe, do not raise your voice above the voice of the Prophet...*" (2). He felt like disciplining his daughter. The Prophet noticed his resentment, pacified him, and stopped him from taking any action. When he was gone, he (the Prophet) turned to his wife, Ayesha, and smilingly told her that he had rescued her from punishment.

Ayesha (RA) was the youngest and the closest to the Holy Prophet among all of his wives. Yet, she used to be envious when he mentioned about his late Khadija (RA), with love, affection, and respect. He used to say in deep, "*She supported me when people rejected me.*"

The Holy Prophet loved children. He would hug them and kiss them. Amazed at his behavior a Bedouin asked him, *"Do you kiss children, because we don't."* The Holy Prophet said, *"What can I do when Allah (SWT) has taken mercy out of your heart."* Aqra ibni Habis said to the Holy Prophet, *"I have ten children and I never kiss them."* He replied, *"Those who have no mercy, will receive no mercy."*

Hasan and Hussain sons of Ali (RA) used to ride on his shoulders and when he was in Sajdah, they would sit on his back. Once they came to the Holy Prophet in Masjid Nabwi when he was giving Khutbah. They were wearing long shirts and stumbling. He stepped down from his Mimbah and helped them sit by him. Whenever his daughter Fatima (RA) would come to visit him, he would stand up and kiss her hands.

Ibrahim, the son of the Holy Prophet was on his deathbed. Heart broken and emotionally devastated, he helplessly watched his son breathing his last breath, he took him in his lap as tears gushed out of his eyes. He had no other son. Abdur-Rahman Bin Auf (RA) who had known the Holy Prophet as an embodiment of patience and restraint could not understand his condition. *"It is mercy, O son of Auf,"* said the Holy Prophet. Then he said that which only a prophet could have said, *"Eyes tear and the heart grieves, and we do not say but (words) which are allowed by our Lord. O Ibrahim, we are extremely sad because of your death."* The Holy Prophet taught his companions to revere and respect their mothers. *"Paradise lies under the feet of your mother,"* he said. Once Haleema (RA) came to visit the Holy Prophet, she was the lady



who breast-fed him in his early childhood. When he saw her, he got up and hugged her saying, "*My mother!*" *My mother!*" Then he spread a sheet and made her sit on it.

The Holy Prophet was kind and gentle to his servants as well. Anas who spent some ten years in the household of the Holy Prophet as a servant reported that Prophet (sas) never snapped at him or even said UFF to him.

The Holy Prophet was kind, helpful and sympathetic to his relatives too. His Uncle, Abu Talib, had a large family and limited means. Realizing his difficulties, the Holy Prophet requested his other uncle Abbas to let Jafar son of Abu Talib to move in with him. He himself took Ali son of Abu Talib into his household.

There is a vast amount of literature that high-light the behavior pattern of the Holy Prophet as a family man. Imam Shah Wali Ullah, the great scholar of Quran and Sunnah in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, has distilled the family life of the Holy Prophet into a four-point summary of generalized principles for the Muslims to follow:

**ZAWAJ:** Both spouses deal with each other gently and kindly. They recognize the right of each other, performing their duties and fulfilling their responsibilities.

**AL-SUBAH:** All the family members are like friends and colleagues to each other. The Holy Prophet said: "When your son is ten years old, treat him like a brother."

***AI-WALAD***: Raise children with loving care, and giving them good (Islamic) education.

The responsibility belongs to both parents, they are the first teachers of their children.

Their teachings and character will have a lasting effect on the children during their formative years.

***AI-MULKA***: Parents assume responsibilities on the basis of their natural qualities. The

man does what he is supposed to do, and the woman does what she is supposed to

do. The elders show mercy on the minors and the minors will respect the elders. The

Holy Prophet said, "Deal with your elder brother like your father. Deal with your

inferiors, even slaves, kindly, and be afraid of Allah (SWT)."

May Allah give us Taufeeq to emulate the Holy Prophet. May Allah give us satisfaction and contentment in this world and a prosperous life in the hereafter. AMEEN.