

RETURNING THE FAVOR: ITS PRACTICES IN THE SUNNAH AND PORTRAITS FROM THE LIVES OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to address the moral of returning the favor as an example of the Prophet (PBUH), moral education and the examples through which the Companions copied his practices to be clear examples of future pedagogical practices. There are few studies addressing the pedagogical practices of the Prophet and his moral education and how they can be used for educational purposes in order to cultivate into the minds of children in primary schools and Kindergarten the Islamic ethical values like the returning of the favor. In addition, the paper reminds of the consequences of ingratitude through some events in the Prophet's era. The research adopted the narrative -analytical approaches. The results of the study showed that the Prophet's (PBUH) ethical values like good morals not only educated the Companions on virtues but also help kids and students at schools of sustaining affection and intimacy among people in the society. The Messenger also asserted that a person should not relinquish his good morals even if others encounter him with ill-treatment. The study recommended the incorporation of the Prophet ethical values like returning favor into the curriculum of schools as a part of moral education.

Keywords: Moral Education, Pedagogical Practices, Children Education, Returning the Favor, Practices of the Prophet

INTRODUCTION

In such a world of materialistic values, conflicts, lack of good moral, there has been an urgent need to cultivate into the minds of the younger generations in schools the spirituality and the good values. Indeed, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad can be considered a rich source for these humanistic values which can help foster love, respect, and the returning favor into the minds of young learners through incorporating these values into their pedagogical practices. There are many studies that have tackled the moral practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his good deeds and ethical values (for example, Halstead, 2010; Jensen, 2006; Ismail, 2016; Tan, 2011). However, there are few studies that link the moral teaching of Prophet Muhammad to education (Alwani, 2019; Hamid, 2003; Malek, 1994). This study is mainly concerned with examining one of the moral teachings adopted by the Prophet, which is the return of favor and how it is important to be added to the curriculum delivered to the children at primary schools. Allah the Almighty says in the Quran: "Is there any reward for good other than good?" (Qur'an 55:60). In the verse, God teaches us that the reward for the goodness is goodness because it leads to spread good values of gratitude and love among the members of the community. Quran abounds with examples of moral teaching as Almighty God says "For those who do good in this world is good; and the home of the Hereafter is better. And how excellent is the home of the righteous," (Qur'an 16:30). God confirms that people who do good deeds will receive two rewards from God. The first one is a good reward in this world, and the second one is a better reward in the hereafter, which is the Paradise (Ibn Atiyah, 2001). Accordingly,

Similarly, the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) derives its principles and values from Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "If anyone does you a kindness, recompense him; but if you have not the means to do so, pray for him until you feel that you have compensated him (Ibn Hanbal, 1996)." This paper is divided into the following sections; the first section presents the introduction of the study, and its significance. The second section presents the problem of the study. The third section introduces definitions and the terminology of the study; the fourth section is mainly concerned with the review of literature tackling the subject; The fifth section presents examples of returning favor taken from the Prophet's deeds which can be used as valuable examples of Islamic moral teaching; The sixth section is the analysis and discussion that bridges the gap between Prophet's teaching and moral teaching; the last section is the conclusion and the recommendation of the study.

THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The studies addressing the Prophet's practices of returning favor are scarce and the applications of the Prophet practices of returning favor to moral teaching have not been introduced in a separate study yet, and this is due a major problem that "returning the favor" has been indirectly mentioned in many examples of Sunnah which impede scholars from addressing the problem.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The studies addressing the returning favor in the Prophetic tradition are almost non-existent in the Arabic literature dealing with collecting and classifying the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him. However, there are few studies that address the relationship between the Prophet practices and the moral education. Rifai (2021) investigates the pedagogies of the Prophet Muhammad in his teaching as his study is based on a comparison held between the modern teaching methodologies and the prophetic teaching methods. However, he argued that such a kind of comparison is not appropriate due to large differences between contextual realities in the modern time and those prevailing during the prophet time. Alwani (2019) addresses the transformative role of the Prophet Muhammad as an educator through analyzing the divine texts and his practices exposed in Sunnah from a hermeneutic perspective. Alawan (2019) added that the practices of the Prophet can be taken as a model for the contemporary generation through them can be well informed of good moral and humanistic values. However, in her endeavor she focused only the Holy Quran without resorting to Sunnah, which makes her thoughts and ideas suffer from ambiguity. In another important study, Rahim & Rahiem (2012) suggested that moral education for children can be easily delivered through using the stories of the Prophet Muhammad and teaching them to the children in order to copy his behavior. This study seems to be general in its focus since it does not specify which kind of Prophet's stories can be helpful to the children and it also does not explain how these stories can be simplified and transformed into attractive for fitting well with the mentality and mind abilities of the children. In his seminal study, Ismail (2016) argued for the importance of the Islamic religious education for building the moderate and good character especially in a time full of crime, moral deviations, and so on. Therefore, Islamic ethics like honest, self-discipline, and tolerance should be taught to children in their schools.

DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMINOLOGIES USED IN THE STUDY

Ibn Faris (1979) stated that that Arabic word "rad Al-jamil" "returning favor" is a compound word which consists of two parts, "rad" and al-jamil." The central meaning of the word

“Rad” is to “return something.” Its peripheral senses are “return, dismiss, rejection, and making a sin” (Ibn Duraid, 1987; Al-Jawhari, 1956). However, the meaning adopted by the study is the central meaning, which is “to return.” Al-Jawhari (1956) stated that “al-jameel” refers to “beautiful,” which is the opposite of “ugly.” He also added that *tajammul* is the display of beauty. ‘May Allah beautify you’, is used when you invoke Allah to beautify someone (al-Jawhari, 1956).

Isfahani (1992) believed that human beauty can be reflected in one’s own inner-self, physical appearance or his deeds. Hence, Ibn Al-Atheer points out that beauty can be in appearance, as in: a beautiful woman, and a beautiful place. It can also be intangible like saying ‘beautiful morals’ (Ibn Manthoor, 2000), which can be proven by quoting the following verse: God Almighty said: “So overlook (any human faults) with gracious (beautiful) forgiveness” (Qur’an 15:85).

The intangible meaning is the closest to the topic of the current research, as it is related to the practices and directions from the Prophet (PBUH), and that the honorable Companions adhered to. They are all actions, meaning that they are within the intangible rather than the tangible contexts. In this way, one can conclude that the intangible connotation of the lexical item *al-jamil* is related to making beautiful and good things and good actions for others; therefore, it is the closest equivalent to the English lexical item, *favor*.

When compounding the two lexical items, “Rad” and “Al-jamil” “return favor” it becomes clear that the purpose of the current research is to highlight the mutual good-doing between people, and the reward for good with none other than good. Moreover, Islamic law goes beyond that and presses countering ill-treatment with kindness, in accordance with the almighty saying: “The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! He, between whom and thee there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend.” (Qur’an 41:34).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

For the purposes of this paper, the discussion is limited to the hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH) that dealt with returning the favor and the acknowledgement of good deeds, as well as the consequences of ingratitude.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to highlight the need to exercise returning the favor due to its positive effects on the individual and society and incorporate the value of returning favor into the moral education that has to be delivered for the students of the primary schools by benefiting from the prophetic practices in returning the favor.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the inductive approach and the deductive-analytical approach, as they are the most relevant to the research and its themes.

Discussion and Analysis: Prophetic Practices to Return the Favor

Returning the favor is one of those good manners that the Messenger (PBUH) taught us. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a role model for the Muslim nation in practicing this noble moral.

Real-life events have proven that this moral has a great positive influence on people. Following are some examples of prophetic practices in returning the favor:

Returning the Favor to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (May Allah be Pleased with him)

Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him) took the initiative to convert to Islam and worked hard to serve and support the Prophet (PBUH). He also continued to call to Islam throughout his companionship with the Prophet (PBUH). As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a paragon of moral perfection, he gave credit to those who deserved it and rewarded them, and so he recognized the importance of returning the favor to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. The Prophet (PBUH) spoke about the favors of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, saying: “No doubt, I am indebted to Abu Bakr more than to anybody else regarding both his companionship and his wealth. And if I had to take a Khalil from my followers, I would certainly have taken Abu Bakr, but the fraternity of Islam is sufficient. Let no door of the Mosque remain open, except the door of Abu Bakr” (Muslim, 1996).

In the hadith, there is a clear indication to crediting Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him) and showing his favors that no one in this ummah can excel. The Prophet’s (PBUH) saying, “I am indebted to Abu Bakr”, indicates that he is the most generous and tolerant Companion with himself and his money (Al-Nawawi, 1972). Abu Bakr knew that God first and then His Messenger have the favor, goodness, and gratitude, but the Prophet (PBUH), with his good morals, and his gracious companionship, acknowledged the favor to the one who deserved it. Al-Tirmidhi mentioned the hadith of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “There is no favor due upon us from anyone, except that we have repaid him, with the exception of Abu Bakr. Verily upon us, there is a favor due to him, which Allah will repay him on the Day of Judgement. No one’s wealth has benefited me as Abu Bakr’s wealth has” (Al-Qurtubi 1996; Al-Tirmidhi, 1998).

Therefore, the Messenger (PBUH) would become angry because of Abu Bakr’s anger, blaming his Companions for him, and always reminded them of his stances. Once there was a debate between Abu Bakr & Umar (may God be pleased with them). Abu Bakr regretted that and besought Umar to forgive him, but Umar refused. Abu Bakr went to the Prophet (PBUH) and told him, and Umar regretted that he had not forgiven Abu Bakr, so he also went to the Prophet (PBUH). Expressions of anger appeared on the face of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and then he said: “Will you leave my Companion? Will you leave my Companion? O people, I said: I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, but you said (to me), ‘You are telling a lie. While Abu Bakr said: ‘You have spoken the truth’” (al-Bukhari, 1959).

Ibn Al-milaqqin said in *altawdih*: a distinctive characteristic of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq appeared in the saying of the Messenger (PBUH): “Allah sent me (as a Prophet) to you (people), but you said (to me), ‘You are telling a lie’, while Abu Bakr said: ‘You have spoken the truth’, and consoled me with himself and his riches. He then said twice, ‘Won’t you give up hurting my companion?’ After that nobody ever harmed Abu Bakr” (Ibn al-milaqqin, 2008).

Returning the Favor to Umm al-Mu'minin Khadija (May God be Pleased with her)

Umm al-Mu'minin, Khadija (may God be pleased with her) realized early, in her sagacity, the condition of the Prophet before the message of Islam. This prompted her to deal with him in trade, and to become his wife as well (Ibn Ishaq, 1977). When it was the time of the Prophet’s mission, she took the initiative to declare her faith and stood by the Prophet with herself and her

fortune (Ibn Hibbān, 1996). She remained supportive of the Prophet until she died in the Year of Grief.

The Messenger of God (PBUH) preserved the favor of his beloved wife, the greatest of all women. The prophetic biography does not mention that he thought one day to marry a second woman while she was with him. She was his first and only wife for twenty-five years (Muslim 4:1886), so jealousy of other wives did not touch her heart. He always remembered her after her death, and commended her a lot, until some of his women felt jealous of her although she was dead. Aisha (may God be pleased with her) said: “Never did I feel jealous of any woman as I was jealous of Khadija. She had died three years before he (the Prophet) married me. I often heard him praise her. His Lord, the Exalted and Glorious, had commanded him to give her the glad tidings of a palace of jewels in Paradise. Whenever he slaughtered a sheep he presented (its meat) to her female companions” (al-Bukhari, 1959; Muslim, 1996). In this behavior of loyalty and return of the favor is a confirmation of the Messenger’s (PBUH) eternal love for her.

Returning the Favor to Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’

Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’ (may God be pleased with him) was known for his valor, gentleness of morals, generosity, loyalty and trustworthiness. He was also known for his great love for the Messenger of God (PBUH), and his love for his wife Zainab (may God be pleased with her), the daughter of the Messenger (PBUH).

Some scholars mention that Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’ was such a twin to the Prophet (PBUH) (Ibn Hajar 5:67). When *Umm al-Mu'minin* Khadija (may God be pleased with her) - his aunt - wanted to marry him to Zainab, the Prophet (PBUH) immediately agreed. When Muhammad (PBUH) became prophet, the elders of Quraysh asked Abula’as to divorce Zainab, but he said: I do not leave my companion (wife), and I do not like that I have a woman from Quraysh except my wife (al-Tabrani, 1994). He remained in love with her even after she migrated, but her conversion to Islam separated them.

Given these noble morals of Abula’as, the Prophet (PBUH) was keen to return the favor to him, and that was evident in several cases:

- The Prophet’s praise of Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’ as a good son-in-law on several occasions. Amongst the things the Messenger (PBUH) said: “We have never slandered the son-in-law of Abula’as” (Ibn Asakir 7:67). He praised him on another occasion and said: “I married Zainab to Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’, and whatever he said was the truth” (Muslim 4:1903), and in Bukhari’s phrase: “Whatever he said was the truth, and he promised me and fulfilled his promise” (al-Bukhari, 1959).
- The approval of the Messenger of God (PBUH) for his daughter Zainab to remain celibate awaiting the conversion of Abula’as, as she refused Al-khatab, and said: O Messenger of God, as you know, Abula’as was a good son-in-law, if you allowed me to wait for him. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) kept silent when he heard that. That meant he consented to her request (al-San’ani, 1983).
- The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged the Companions who had conquered Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’s trade caravan while returning from the Levant (AL-Sham) to return his money to him. The Companions responded to that immediately, and returned everything, so Abula’as did not lose anything from his trade (al-Hakim, 1990). The leader of the brigade was Zaid bin Haritha (may

God be pleased with him) when they conquered the trade caravan and captured some men, but Abula'as was able to escape. Then he went to Madinah at night, seeking protection by Zainab, the daughter of the Messenger of God (PBUH). She waited until the dawn prayer (Fajr), and she shouted: O people, I have granted protection to Abula'as bin Al-Rabi'. When the Messenger of God (PBUH) finished his prayer, he said to the people: "O people, have you heard what I heard?" They said: "Yes." He said: "By whom the soul of Muhammad is in His Hand! I did not know about that until I heard from her what you heard," Then the Messenger of God (PBUH) left and went to his daughter Zainab, and said: "O my daughter, make his stay honorable, and beware that you are unlawful for him to marry" (al-Hakim, 1990).

Two things were combined in this noble prophetic behavior. The first of them is returning the favor to Abula'as (may God be pleased with him) and a reminder of his kinship to the Messenger of God (PBUH), as he was his son-in-law and the son of Khadija's sister (may God be pleased with her). This is also a return of the favor to Khadija herself (may God be pleased with her). The second is to encourage Abula'as to convert to Islam. Perhaps the Prophet (PBUH) felt the willingness of Abula'as to convert to Islam, so he treated him with kindness so that he would rush to Islam. Some other narrations indicate that the Companions also noticed that, and said to him: "O Abula'as, can you embrace all this money and enjoy what you have of the wealth of the people of Makkah, so you rule over Quraish and be their richest? He said: "It is miserable that you invited me to start my new religion with treachery" (Ibn Asakir, 1995).

- The Prophet returned his daughter Zainab to her husband Abula'as bin Al-Rabi' upon his conversion to Islam. Abdullah bin Abbas (may God be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet returned his daughter Zainab to her husband Abula'as based upon the first marriage, and he did not perform a new marriage" (Abu Dawud, 1997).

Returning the Favor to the Ansar – the Muslims of Madinah

The Prophet (PBUH) invited all the Arab tribes to embrace Islam and asked them to protect him so he can convey the call to Islam (da'wa). The tribes did not respond to that, except the Ansar (may God be pleased with them) because Allah Almighty gave them the advantage. The Ansar accepted the invitation to embrace Islam, and swore allegiance to grant peace and protection to the Prophet (PBUH). Therefore, Madinah was the destination of the Messenger (PBUH) for immigration (Hijrah), and its people were then being called by the Messenger (PBUH) the Ansar. Their support was not limited to their pledge of allegiance only, but they made a great sacrifice until Islam was firmly established and people converted in increasing numbers. The Prophet (PBUH) upheld this great favor from the Ansar and was determined to return it to them, and this materialized in several cases:

- The Prophet (PBUH) made the love of the Ansar a sign of faith, as he said: "Love for the Ansar is a sign of faith, and hate for the Ansar is a sign of hypocrisy" (al-Bukhari, 1956; Muslim, 1996). In another phrase, Imam Muslim said that the Prophet (PBUH) said about them: "Only a believer loves them, and only a hypocrite hates them. Allah loves him who loves them and Allah hates him who hates them" (Muslim, 1996). The Messenger of God (PBUH) gave them this status for their role in the support and spread of Islam.

- The Prophet's (PBUH) mention of the strength of the Ansar's faith. He described them as his own people and his inner circle, in his saying: "Wouldn't you be willing to see the people go away with sheep and camels while you go with the Prophet to your homes? But for the migration, I would have been one of the Ansar, and if the people took their way through a valley or mountain pass, I would select the valley or mountain pass of the Ansar. The Ansar are Shiar and the people are Dithar" (al-Bukhari, 1956; Muslim, 1996). Judge Ayyad said, in the hadith Shiar are "those clothes which are in direct contact with the body and are worn inside the other garments", and Dithar are "those clothes which are not in direct contact with the body but are worn on top of other garments" (Iyadh, 1998).

The Prophet (PBUH) instructed the Muslim nation to always praise the Ansar. In the hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik (may God be pleased with him): The Muhajirin came to the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah! We have not seen a people more willing to solace, nor more generous than the people whom we are staying among. Provisions they bestowed on us are bounteous, and we share with them in their produce such that we fear that all our reward is gone." So, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "No. As long as you supplicate to Allah for them and praise (show gratitude to) them (for it)" (Ibn Hanbal, 1999). It should be noted that the Muhajirin had the advantage of converting to Islam first and enduring the harm of the polytheists. Also, among them were the best of creation. This hadith is for urging to hasten towards all that is good. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) wanted to guide the Muslim nation in general to the moral of rewarding those who do well for their good and returning the favor to them.

Although the Prophet (PBUH) said that to the Muhajirin, this is mandatory for all the Ummah after them. There is another facet of returning the favor in the hadith, whereby maintaining the supplication for the Ansar means the perpetuation of the favor for them as long as the nation of Islam exists.

The Position of the Prophet from Al-Mut`im bin Adi

Al-Mut`im bin Adi was one of the nobles of Quraysh and among its elders and wise men. He did not convert to Islam. Nevertheless, he had two good stances with the Prophet (PBUH) and the early Muslims:

First, when the Prophet (PBUH) and the early Muslims, in addition to Banu Hashem, were besieged in a mountain trail for three years, and Quraysh wrote that oppressive document, Al-Mut`im bin Adi, along with a group of Quraysh pagans, sought to revoke the document and disown it, which helped end the siege on the Prophet (PBUH) and the others (Ibn Ishaq, 1977).

Second, the Prophet (PBUH) obtained Al-Mut`im's protection after his return from Taif. He and his relatives carried the weapons and went out until they came to the mosque (Kaaba), then Al-Mut`im sent to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to enter, so he entered the mosque, toured the Kaaba, and prayed there, then went back home (Ibn Hisham, 1955).

Al-Mut`im bin Adi died, but the favor that he did remained seen by the most honorable of mankind, Muhammad (PBUH). When it was the day of the Battle of Badr, and seventy of the mushrikeen were captured, The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Had Al-Mut`im bin Adi been alive and

interceded with me for these mean people, I would have freed them for his sake.” That position of the Messenger (PBUH) was just in returning the favor to Al-Mut`im (al-Bukhari, 1956).

The noble prophetic lesson here is that returning the favor does not depend on the person being present, but rather it is in any occasion to the extent possible.

Returning the Favor to the Prophet’s Uncle - Abu Talib

Abu Talib fostered the Messenger of God (PBUH) at the age of eight after the death of Abdul-Muttalib. Abu Talib loved him very much, and he frequently said to the Prophet (PBUH): “You are blessed” (al-Asbahani, 1986). When Muhammad (PBUH) was assigned by God to deliver the message of Islam, Abu Talib gave him protection to the fullest of his potential. He also entered the mountain trail with him, as did Banu Hashem, and he continued to protect the Prophet (PBUH) even after leaving the mountain trail until he died.

Vis-à-vis these noble stances, the Prophet (PBUH) was concerned about returning the favor to Abu Talib. Among those cases were the following:

- The Prophet (PBUH) sponsored his cousin, Ali bin Abi Talib (may God be pleased with him) when Quraysh was going through difficult living conditions, and Abu Talib had many children with little money. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) took care of Ali, and urged Al-Abbas (may God be pleased with him) to take care of Ja’far (Ibn Hisham, 1955).
- The Prophet (PBUH) wanted his uncle Abu Talib to convert to Islam. When his uncle was dying, the prophet (PBUH) kept urging him to say ‘La ilaha illallah’ (there is no God but Allah). He said to him: “O my uncle, say La ilaha illallah, a word which I may use as evidence in your favor before Allah (in the Hereafter)”, but Abu Talib refused to say it. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said “By Allah, I shall certainly seek forgiveness for you unless I am told not to” (al-Bukhari, 1956). Then Allah revealed the verse: “It is not right for the Prophet and those who have iman to ask forgiveness for the mushrikun even if they are close relatives after it has become clear to them that they are the Companions of the Blazing Fire” (Qur’an 9:113). Also, Allah revealed: “Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like” (Qur’an 28:56).

The Prophet’s concern for his uncle’s conversion to Islam endured even in the last moments of his life is an attempt to return the favor to him. There was another attempt from the Prophet (PBUH) to return the favor to his uncle by asking Allah to forgive him, but God forbade him to ask pardon for non-Muslims, so the Messenger stopped.

- The intercession for Abu Talib to reduce the punishment inflicted on him in the hereafter. In the hadith, Al-Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib (may God be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (PBUH): “You have not been of any avail to your uncle (Abu Talib) (though) by Allah, he used to protect you and used to become angry on your behalf.” The Prophet (PBUH) said, “He is in a shallow fire, and had it not been for me, he would have been in the bottom of Hell Fire” (al-Bukhari, 1956). In this there was a special intercession for the Prophet (PBUH) (Ibn Rajab, 1966). The Messenger of God (PBUH) was concerned to return the favor by saving his uncle Abu Talib from the torment, but the showing of the straight path is in the hands of Almighty God alone. The Messenger (PBUH) complied with the limits set by Allah, and did only what Allah Almighty permitted.

Returning the Favor to Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul - the Hypocrite

Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul, the head of hypocrisy, was an evil man, who pretended to embrace Islam and concealed his disbelief. He did not hesitate at all to backbite the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims, and he disappointed them whenever he could, as he did on the day of the Battle of Uhud. Despite all his immorality and abuse, he did one favor with Al-Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib (may God be pleased with him) on the day of the Battle of Badr. Jabir bin Abdullah (may God be pleased with him) says: “When it was the day of the Battle of Badr, prisoners of war were brought including Al-Abbas who was undressed. The Prophet (PBUH) looked for a shirt for him. It was found that the shirt of Abdullah bin Ubai would do, so the Prophet (PBUH) let him wear it. That was the reason why the Prophet (PBUH) took off and gave his own shirt to Abdullah.” Ibn Uyaynah said that, “He had done the Prophet (PBUH) some favor for which the Prophet liked to reward him” (al-Bukhari, 1956).

When Ubai bin Salul died, the Prophet (PBUH) attended the burial, so people took him out of the grave, and the Messenger (PBUH) put his inner shirt on him, then he prayed on him (Muslim, 1966). This happened before the noble verses were revealed prohibiting the prayer for the hypocrites or standing on their graves.

Among the benefits of this appealing act is the sympathy with his son, the Companion Abdullah bin Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul. The Messenger of God (PBUH) directed the Muslim nation to strive for love, harmony, and friendship. He also forbade them to hurt one another, including insulting the dead people who are non-Muslim (al-Hakim, 1990).

The Companions’ Practices in Returning the Favor

The Companions, especially the Muhajirin, the Ansar, and those who lived in Madinah, received their teachings directly from the Prophet (PBUH). They learned their religion and morals from him theoretically and in practice. They also observed the actions of the Prophet (PBUH) and found in them guidance, advice and education. It is no wonder that they were influenced by the Prophet (PBUH) in returning the favor, of which some examples have been mentioned. Following are some of the practices of the Companions.

Zainab, Daughter of the Prophet, and her Returning the Favor to her Husband Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’

It has been mentioned that Abula’as bin Al-Rabi’ loved his wife Zainab (may God be pleased with her) dearly, and it was difficult for him to leave her, but her conversion to Islam had driven them asunder. Nevertheless, Zainab wished that Abula’as would convert to Islam because she admired his morals and honesty. In the biography of the Companions, there were stances in which Zainab returned the favor to Abula’as, namely:

First, on the day of the Battle of Badr, when Abula’as was captured by the Muslims, and the Prophet (PBUH) decided to take a ransom to release the prisoners, Zainab (may God be pleased with her) sent a necklace, which her mother Khadijah (may God be pleased with her) had given to her on her wedding day, to ransom Abula’as. “When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saw it, he felt

great tenderness about it and said: If you consider that you should free her prisoner for her and return to her what belongs to her, (it will be well). They said: Yes” (Abu Dawud, 1997)

Second, Zainab remained unmarried awaiting for Abula’as to convert to Islam, as mentioned previously.

Third, her acceptance to grant protection to Abula’as when he escaped from the brigade of Zaid bin Haritha (may God be pleased with him), as mentioned previously.

The Consequences of Ingratitude

Talking about ingratitude and its consequences shows the integrity of the Islamic law. The good thing in Islamic law is that if the one who does well is rewarded for it, then the offender does not wait for thanks and praise, but rather punishment and reprimand, commensurate with the nature of the ingratitude. Following are examples of the dire consequences of ingratitude:

The Punishment of the People from the Tribe of 'Uraina

Some People from the tribe of 'Uraina came to Madinah, and they got sick, and then they got sicker and sicker. The Prophet (PBUH) gave them a favor by guiding them to the way to heal. He said to them: “If you so like, you may go to the camels of sadaqa and drink their milk and urine.”

They followed the directions of the Prophet (PBUH) and spent days receiving treatment from the camels’ milk and their urine until their bodies recovered. The Messenger of God (PBUH) expected them to return the favor and thank those who were good to them. However, because of their bad morals, they killed the shepherds, stole their camels, and apostatized after accepting Islam. This news reached the prophet (PBUH), so he sent (people) on their track who brought them back. He then penalized them severely, so that no one would dare after that to do what they did: “He got their hands and feet cut off, and gouged their eyes, and threw them on stony ground in blistering heat until they died.”

The Punishment of Abu Azza Al-Jamhi

Abu Azza Amr bin Abdullah Al-Jamhi was a poet from Quraysh, who was poor. He was impecunious and had five daughters, and he went out to fight with Quraysh on the day of Badr. He was captured by the Muslim army, but the Prophet (PBUH) released him without ransom on condition that he not supports non-Muslims physically or verbally, and he pledged to the Prophet (PBUH) that he would do so.

At the beginning, he kept his pledge, but when Quraysh mobilized for the Battle of Uhud against the Prophet (PBUH), he broke the pledge. He went out with Quraysh and incited them with his poetry against the Muslims. He was the only one to be captured on the battlefield. He asked the Prophet (PBUH) to bless him again by releasing him for the sake of his daughters, but the Messenger of God (PBUH) said to him: “By God, I won’t let you rub the sides of your face in Mecca saying: I deceived Muhammad twice.” Then the Prophet (PBUH) ordered to strike his neck (*i.e.*, execute him).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of returning the favor is of paramount importance. Ingratitude brings about dire consequences. Those two parameters are useful in education; they involve glad tidings and warnings, inducement and threatening, both of which are good to humanity. Following are the main conclusions of the current research:

1. Returning the favor should be commensurate to, or better than, the favor itself.
2. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was always keen to return favors and to acknowledge them. By so doing, he was teaching his Companions the best of virtues, which was already a highly regarded virtue in Arab society.
3. One should return the favor even if the other party has done something inappropriate. The Prophet instructs us to behave in accordance with our good principles, not according to other people's behavior.
4. Good morals and returning the favor endows feelings of love and togetherness on families, which helps ward off the vicissitudes of life that might befall family life.
5. The Muslim society is enjoined to constantly praise people of who do habitually favors, since this makes doing favors a natural part and parcel of the Muslim society.
6. Favors should be returned to their doers even when they are absent or dead.
7. Ingratitude brings about dire consequences, and it may cause the downfall of the ungrateful person. The ungrateful person is liable for severe punishment, to say the least.

Since returning the favor has great influence on individuals and societies because it uplifts their morals and their standards and helps spread love and respect between people, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Extending research in the concept of returning the favor.
2. Urging educators to study the concept of returning the favor in the Prophet's sunnah and to endeavor to inculcate such principles into the younger generations utilizing practical educational methods.
3. Fostering the value of returning the favor and shedding light on it in social media, and presenting it as a highly regarded Islamic concept, and the Prophetic examples are absolutely the most exemplary applications of it.

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