

The Prophet's (PBUH) Strategies for Eliminating Social Divisions and Establishing Islamic Civilization: A Quranic, Narrative, and Historical Perspective

Abdulkhaliq Saeidi Abu-Ishaqhi*, Ali Mohammad Mirjalili**, Yahya Mirhosseini***, Ahmad Zarezardini****

* PhD Graduate of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.
Email: saeidy139@gmail.com orcid.org/0009-0008-2972-0761

** Professor of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.
(Corresponding Author)
Email: almirjalili@meybod.ac.ir orcid.org/0000-0003-2021-9360

*** Associate Professor of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.
Email: mirhoseini@meybod.ac.ir orcid.org/00000-0001-5695-8267

**** Associate Professor of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.
Email: zarezardini@meybod.ac.ir orcid.org/0000-0003-1859-8867

Abstract

One of the major challenges in human social relations is social fragmentation, a dangerous phenomenon that can lead societies toward collapse. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established an Islamic state in the highly fragmented society of the Arabian Peninsula and implemented strategic measures to manage these divisions, ultimately succeeding in laying the foundations of Islamic civilization. The Prophet (PBUH) identified all dimensions of social fragmentation in early Islamic society and applied tailored solutions to address them. The results of these efforts became fully evident in the social cohesion achieved during his ten-year rule. This article seeks to answer the following question: What were the Prophet's strategies for eliminating social fragmentation in early Islamic society and fostering unity within the Muslim community? The authors adopt a descriptive-analytical methodology, examining Qur'anic texts, narrations (Hadith), and historical accounts to conduct this research. The study demonstrates that the Prophet (PBUH) successfully unified the chaotic Arabian Peninsula through multifaceted strategies, including: Identifying and addressing divisive factors, promoting unifying elements such as brotherhood and mutual affinity, encouraging cooperation among neighbors and kin, Marginalizing polytheists and agitators who sought to disrupt social order and cohesion.

Keywords: Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Civilization, Social Fragmentation, Social Cohesion.

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Introduction

Social fragmentation refers to the division and rift between individuals, institutions, and groups within a society due to conflicts and disparities in values or access to resources, which may sometimes escalate into opposition against one another. These fragmentations have a relative capacity for separation and segregation within society and may intensify or weaken over time. They encompass various types of divisions, including generational, gender-based, religious, ethnic, and others (Parchami & Derakhshan, 2021, pp. 1–2). The inherent diversity among humans (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat 49:13), along with factors such as differing preferences and conflicting interests, can create divisions within society. These differences may lead to social fragmentation, and as conflicts intensify, social cohesion weakens. As the Holy Qur'an warns: "Do not dispute, lest you fail and lose your strength" (Qur'an, Al-Anfal 8:46). Moreover, the decline of social unity increases a society's vulnerability to external threats. Effectively managing these divisions requires deliberate strategies. Leaders must consistently develop and implement unifying measures to preserve societal harmony. In the early Islamic society, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sought to prevent the erosion of Muslim unity by actively resolving conflicts and urging the community to uphold harmony. He encouraged reconciliation to eliminate divisions and promote peace (Qur'an, An-Nisa' 4:128). This principle holds such significance in Islamic teachings that reconciling people is sometimes regarded as superior to optional acts of worship: "Settling discord among people is better than most voluntary prayers and fasting" (Tusi, 1993, p. 522). This study examines the strategies employed by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to manage social fragmentation and foster unity among Muslims and allied tribes in 7th-century Arabia—a context marked by severe tribal divisions (Qur'an, Āl-ʿImrān 3:103). By analyzing the socio-political dynamics of the prophetic era, the paper explores how he transformed a fractured society into a cohesive Islamic community while promoting the message of Islam. Central research question is: How did the Prophet (PBUH) address social cleavages in

the deeply divided Arabian Peninsula, and what mechanisms enabled him to establish a unified Islamic society? This study adopts a descriptive-analytical method, drawing upon Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions (Hadith), and historical sources to extract relevant data. Through systematic organization and critical analysis of these materials, the authors have developed the present research.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

A crucial step in conducting this investigation involves elucidating the While several scholars have addressed aspects of this topic in a fragmented manner—providing detailed accounts of the internal conflicts among Arab tribes—few have specifically focused on the strategies employed by the Prophet (PBUH) to resolve these divisions. Several scholars have examined aspects of social cohesion during the Prophet's (PBUH) era, though often fragmentarily: Hossein Ghazi Khani (2013), in his article "Conflict Prevention Management in Medina during the Prophet's Era," outlines select measures taken by the Prophet (pbuh) to mitigate tribal conflicts. The author of the article "Social Groups and Divisions in the Prophetic State" (2007) has analyzed the structure of these disputes. Narges Yazdanpour (2016), in her work "Causes and Factors of Islamic Unity," approaches unity as an ethical imperative, analyzing its Qur'anic foundations. Amir Mohsen Erfan (2020), in "The Prophet's Methodological Approach to Active Social Fragmentation," examines socio-ethnic conflicts of the era and the Prophet's (PBUH) contextual responses. Nasrollah Nazari (2011), in "Social Cohesion from the Qur'anic Perspective," systematically catalogs Qur'anic models for fostering and strengthening societal unity. Zeynab Sanchooli (2017), in her article "The Prophet's Methodology in Uniting Muslims," analyzes hadith-based evidence of the Prophet's (PBUH) unification strategies during early Islam. None of the aforementioned studies have comprehensively examined the Prophet's (PBUH) strategies for fostering social unity. Consequently, this study seeks to provide a detailed analysis of his approaches to resolving social fragmentation and promoting cohesion as foundational elements of Islamic civilization—representing a novel contribution to the field. This investigation is organized into two thematic sections: a) Identifying

Divisive Factors and Counterstrategies: Analyzing the root causes of social discord and the Prophet's methods for neutralizing them. b) Proactive Measures for Social Integration: Documenting the positive initiatives he implemented to bridge societal divides.

Strategies of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for Fostering Social Unity

In what follows, we examine the key approaches employed by the Prophet (PBUH) to establish harmony within Islamic society, which include:

1. Identifying and Addressing the Root Causes of Social Division

The social fabric of Medina at the time of the Prophet's (pbuh) migration was characterized by Deep-Rooted Tribal Conflicts. The historic rivalry between Aws and Khazraj tribes, Generational blood feuds dating back decades, Inter-Religious Tensions, Ongoing disputes between Arab tribes and Jewish communities, Economic and political competition along religious lines, Newly Emerging Frictions, Resentment between Muhajirun (Meccan migrants) and Ansar (Medinan helpers), Resource scarcity concerns due to migrant influx. The presence of the Prophet (PBUH) in Medina as the leader of Islam and the new ruler of Medina, for various reasons, including jealousy towards the Prophet (PBUH) and the presence of the immigrants, created a more favorable environment for the creation of new tensions. Social disunity and long-standing grudges dominated the people of Medina when the Prophet arrived in Medina (Qur'an, Āl-'Imrān 3:103). The Prophet (PBUH) initially identified the factors that caused division among the people of the society and forbade anything that would cause the united ranks of the Muslims to fall apart. The Prophet (pbuh) systematically identified and prohibited several destructive behaviors that undermined social unity, including:

A) Tribal Chauvinism (Al-'Asabiyyah) and Racial Supremacy:

Definition: Blind loyalty to one's tribe, lineage, or ethnicity at the expense of justice and collective unity. Tribal pride often led to exaggerated claims of superiority (e.g., inflating population counts, as

critiqued in Qur'an, At-Takathur 102:1–2). Unjustified defense of kinsmen, even when they were wrongdoers. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) vigorously warned against the destructive nature of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) tribalism and mindless partisanship. According to a hadith, he declared: Anyone who shows undue prejudice has left Islam and God will gather her on the Day of Judgment with the people of the Age of Ignorance (Al-Kulayni, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 308).

b) Pride and arrogant behavior: Arrogance disrupts the unity and cohesion of society. When a person feels inferior to another person, he tries to hurt the arrogant person, and this leads to the destruction of social unity. The Prophet (PBUH) fought against this moral vice and said: “Whoever has an atom of arrogance in his being will not enter Paradise” (Ibn Babawayh, 1998, p. 241).

c) Envy (hasad): It refers to a malignant form of rivalry where one resents the blessings granted to others and desires their deprivation. Unlike healthy competition, envy breeds: Social hostility, Unethical behavior, Disintegration of communal bonds. Allah commands believers to seek refuge from envy's evil: "And from the evil of the envier when he envies" (Qur'an, 113:5). This verse highlights envy as a spiritual and social poison requiring divine protection. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) explicitly prohibited envy due to its corrosive effects on unity: "Do not envy one another, do not hate one another, but be servants of Allah as brothers" (Al-Mufid, 1993, p. 46).

D) Pessimism and suspicion. In a society where pessimism is prevalent, the mental anxiety of individuals causes inattention and indifference to the main issues of the society and becomes a basis for division and sedition by enemies, and consequently, the social atmosphere is likely to be in disarray. The Holy Qur'an has forbidden suspicion (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat 49:12), and the Prophet Muhammad also said: “Indeed suspicion may be right or wrong” (Payandeh, 2003, p. 344). It means that it is not always reality-oriented, and mere suspicion should not be the basis for your actions. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said in another narration: “If you suspect something, do not act on it”

(Waram, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 127). When you suspect something bad, do not act on it. On the contrary, according to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), suspecting good things about others is itself a form of worship: “Good suspicion is among the best acts of worship” (Qudza’i, 1982, p. 357).

E) Reckless Speech and Unjust Argumentation: Another factor causing social division is improper speech and baseless disputes. Through speech and writing—the tools of thought—each individual can significantly influence social actions and behaviors, either positively and constructively or destructively. Thus, by controlling spoken and written words, many social harms can be eliminated. The Qur’an states: “Tell My servants to say what is best. Indeed, Satan incites discord among them. Surely Satan is a manifest enemy to man” (Qur’an 17:53). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said: “Avoid argumentation, even if you are in the right” (Barqi, 1952, Vol. 1, p. 8). It is worth saying that the Prophet (PBUH) was extremely sensitive to even the smallest actions or behaviors that could harm Muslim unity. He paid special attention to maintaining harmony and avoiding division, considering adherence to the Muslim community as a sign of genuine faith (Qummi, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 442).

By identifying factors that undermined unity and caused division, the Prophet (PBUH) exerted utmost effort to implement precise strategies. He first established cohesion among Muslims, then extended it to allies and neighboring tribes, ultimately transforming the fragmented society of the Arabian Peninsula into a united and cohesive community.

2. The Prophet's (pbuh) Measures to Address Social Divisions and Rifts As previously mentioned, when the Prophet (PBUH) entered Medina, several social divisions existed. Some, such as the conflict between the Aws and Khazraj tribes, were active, while others—such as tensions between Jews and non-Jews, or between Qahtani and Adnani Arabs—remained latent. These dormant rifts risked being exploited by the enemies of Islam to undermine its progress. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) took decisive steps to heal these divisions, including:

2-1. The Prophet's (pbuh) Measures to Alleviate Tensions and Divisions Before Establishing the Islamic State in Medina The Prophet's (PBUH) comprehensive efforts to resolve inter-tribal and factional social tensions in Medina before the formal establishment of the Islamic state included the following key initiatives:

2-1-1. Building Strong Social Foundations to Address Divisions and Tensions For the Prophet (PBUH) to successfully promote Islam and establish an Islamic state, he needed strong public support to mitigate social tensions—because without popular backing, lasting stability would be impossible. The Prophet (PBUH) dispatched Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr (RA) to Medina to gauge the level of support among its people (Saleh, 2006, pp. 45–46). Mus‘ab’s role: Teaching the Qur’an, mediating tribal disputes, and preparing the ground for Islamic governance. ‘Abbas (the Prophet’s uncle) questioned the Medinan delegates to ensure their commitment: "Are you fully resolved in your support?" "If all of Arabia turns against you, will you still defend him?" After receiving their firm pledge, the Prophet (PBUH) recited the Qur’an, called them to faith, and formalized the covenant (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 35).

2-1-2. Preventing Divisive Issues Among Medina's Tribes and Clans The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made every effort to preserve unity among the people of Medina, personally intervening wherever necessary to resolve conflicts and manage social divisions. *A Key Example: The Prophet’s Settlement in Medina* When the Prophet (PBUH) first arrived in Medina, every tribe sought the honor of hosting him in their neighborhood, which could have reignited old rivalries. To prevent tensions, the Prophet (PBUH) employed a wise and impartial approach: "Let my camel roam freely; wherever it kneels, I will settle there" (Ya‘qubi, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 41).

When Sa‘d ibn Zurarah, the chief of the Banu Najjar clan, passed away, his tribe approached the Prophet (PBUH) to appoint a new leader (naqib) from among them. Recognizing that selecting one candidate over others could rekindle old rivalries, the Prophet (PBUH) skillfully

resolved the potential conflict by declaring: "You are my maternal uncles—I share kinship with you. From now on, I myself will be your naqib" (Al-Tabari, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 930). With this wise intervention, their potential dispute was resolved, and they wholeheartedly accepted the Prophet's (PBUH) leadership and guardianship over them.

2-1-3. Drafting the Medina Charter to Manage Social Tensions and Foster Unity Upon his arrival in Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) meticulously formulated the groundbreaking Constitution of Medina to address the deep social divisions among the Muhajirun (migrants), Ansar (local supporters), and other resident tribes (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 501). This visionary charter served dual purposes: preventing Jewish-enemy alliances and securing a stable environment for Islamic propagation. By blocking potential political coordination between Medina's Jewish tribes and the Quraysh-led polytheists, the Prophet (PBUH) averted active opposition against Islam while fostering internal cohesion.

The Constitution of Medina introduced transformative principles, such as defining collective responsibilities for each group and establishing the "One Ummah" concept. By declaring all signatories—Muslims, Jews, and allies—as "a single community" (*ummatun wāḥidah*) (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 224), the Prophet (PBUH) replaced tribal fragmentation with social unity, emphasizing shared obligations over narrow loyalties. Recognizing the potential opposition from Jewish tribes like Banu Qurayzah, Banu Nadir, and Banu Qaynuqa, the charter proactively integrated them into a binding social contract. It granted them rights as protected citizens (*ahl al-dhimmah*) while imposing shared defense duties, ensuring their participation in Medina's collective security (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225).

Despite eventual rebellions by some Jewish tribes, these occurred only after Islamic authority had solidified in Medina. Acknowledging the inevitability of conflicts in a diverse society like Yathrib (Medina), the Prophet (PBUH) established a central judicial authority, appointing himself as the ultimate arbitrator to resolve disputes impartially (Ibn

Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). This approach aligned with Qur'anic guidance: "Judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires, but beware lest they turn you away from some of what Allah has revealed to you" (Qur'an 5:49). Furthermore, the Qur'an outlines a clear protocol for conflict resolution among believers: "If two groups of believers fight each other, then make peace between them. But if one group oppressively attacks the other, then fight the aggressors until they submit to Allah's command" (Qur'an 49:9). Through these measures, the Prophet (PBUH) laid the foundation for a cohesive, just, and resilient society.

2-1-4. Preventing the Cultural and Political Influence of Non-Muslims One of the clauses in the treaty of the Prophet (PBUH) with the people of Medina states: "Muslims must not shelter criminals or innovators; rather, they must firmly combat their heresies" (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). This clause demonstrates the exceptional emphasis the Prophet (PBUH) placed on the intellectual integrity and the cultural and ideological preservation of Muslims. Moreover, the enforcement of this clause ensured that foreign ideological storms threatening the foundations of Islamic thought would be neutralized by the Muslim community before gaining momentum. Additionally, this clause served as a restraint against the Jews residing in Medina or the polytheists who intended to enter the city. By preventing polytheists from entering Medina, the opportunity for them to sow discord and division among Muslims was eliminated, and their cultural and social influence on Muslims was curtailed. The Quran has repeatedly warned against the infiltration of foreign individuals and ideas into Islamic society: "O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not fail to corrupt you. They wish to see you suffer. Hatred has already shown itself from their mouths, but what their breasts conceal is far worse. We have made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason" (Qur'an 3:118). However, later, when Muslims gained strength and Islamic culture became dominant—eliminating any sense of vulnerability against polytheists and disbelievers—this ruling was lifted, as evidenced by the Prophet (PBUH) permitting the Tha'qif tribe to enter Medina. It is important to note that Muslims must remain

perpetually vigilant, for the enemies will not settle for anything less than turning Muslims away from Islam (Qur'an 2:217; 3:100; 3:149).

2-1-5. Preventing Tribal and Jewish Socio-Political Claims The prevailing tribal mentality in the Arabian Peninsula led to social division. In tribal thinking, the political and physical security of a tribe's members was prioritized, while the killing and plundering of other tribes was of no concern. In the treaty, the Prophet (PBUH) assigned social responsibility to all, stipulating that if anyone committed a crime or murder, everyone was obligated to pursue and apprehend the perpetrator—regardless of their status—and nullify all tribal privileges and leadership positions that hindered justice (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). On the other hand, among the citizens of Medina, the Jewish tribes of Banu Nadir, Banu Qurayza, and Banu Qaynuqa were considered the most prominent. However, the treaty stripped them of this superiority (Ameli, 2011, Vol. 2, p. 291).

Before the Prophet's (PBUH) arrival in Medina, the Jewish tribes considered themselves entitled to all privileges, insisting that every decision and treaty be structured to serve their interests. Following their Talmudic beliefs, they regarded themselves as rulers over people, believing others were created to serve them. The Prophet (PBUH) dismantled this Jewish dominance in Medina's governance by including the clause: "No individual from the Jews shall participate in war except with Muhammad's permission" (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). Moreover, this clause had profound psychological and social repercussions in the society of that time and across neighboring regions under Islamic rule. By establishing a unified governance, it significantly diminished the potential for discord and division.

2-1-6. Restricting the Rights of Polytheists in Medina In the internal covenant of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) granted polytheists no rights beyond the freedom to accept or reject Islam. Instead, he imposed restrictions on them, including prohibiting Muslims from sheltering polytheists or safeguarding their possessions. The treaty also stipulated that the residents of Medina must not prevent

any believer from exerting authority over polytheists, thereby placing psychological pressure on them to prevent Muslims from developing any inclination toward them. Furthermore, the privileges granted to believers in society served as an incentive for polytheists to embrace Islam (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). This clause effectively curtailed the ability of polytheists to interfere and sow discord within Medina.

2-2. Tension-Reducing Measures by the Prophet (PBUH) After Establishing the Government in Medina After forming and consolidating the Islamic government in Medina, the Prophet (PBUH) undertook several measures to stabilize it and reduce social tensions. Some of these measures include:

2-2-1. Addressing Tension-Inducing Tribal Customs During the pre-Islamic era of ignorance (Jahiliyya), the murder of an individual from one tribe would trigger prolonged wars of vengeance (*tha'r*) against the killer's tribe, resulting in numerous casualties (Mas'udi, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 484). The Prophet (PBUH) eliminated many potential social tensions arising from such killings by prohibiting the heinous act of murder and recognizing the payment of blood money (*diya*) (Qur'an 4:92; see also Ibn Qutaybah, 1992, p. 604). Furthermore, he outlawed the killing of the murderer's relatives under the pretext of revenge, permitting only the retribution (*qisas*) against the actual killer (Qur'an 17:33).

2-2-2. Establishing an Accountable Government for Its Actions One of the strategies the Prophet (PBUH) employed to reduce social tensions was ensuring his government remained accountable for the conduct of its officials and representatives. This stemmed from his divine mandate to establish justice: "I have been commanded to judge justly between you" (Qur'an 42:15).

For instance, after the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) dispatched Khalid ibn al-Walid to the Banu Jadhaima tribe to invite them to Islam. However, Khalid acted arbitrarily, unsheathing his sword and massacring a number of them in the region of Ghumaysa.

When the Prophet (PBUH) learned of this, he condemned Khalid's actions and dissociated himself from them. He then sent Imam Ali (AS) to console the Banu Jadhaima, compensating the victims' blood money (*diya*) from the public treasury (*Bayt al-Mal*). Imam Ali (AS) not only fulfilled this duty but also paid an additional amount beyond the blood money and reimbursed the tribe for the loss of property and belongings destroyed during the conflict (Tabari, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 67).

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) made it clear to all officials that every authority figure must be held accountable for their actions within the Islamic government. Even in cases where killings occurred unintentionally by Muslims, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered the payment of blood money (*diyyah*). For example, after the Treaty of Medina, one of his companions named 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri unintentionally killed two individuals from the Banu 'Amir tribe. The Prophet (PBUH) compensated their blood money (Ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani, 1984, p. 342; Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 20, p. 158). These justice-oriented actions of the Prophet (PBUH) expanded his social influence and significantly reduced societal tensions.

2-2-3. Firm Handling of Criminals and Disturbers of Public Security One of the key factors in establishing social unity and ensuring public safety is taking decisive action against criminals. The Prophet (PBUH) dealt with such matters uncompromisingly. A clear example of the Prophet's approach can be seen in the following incident: A group from the tribe of 'Uraynah (or Banu Dabayah) came to Medina and embraced Islam. They were extremely pale and physically weak. The Prophet (PBUH) sent them to a fertile area near Medina, allowing them to consume the milk of charity camels (*zakat* livestock) to regain their strength. However, they killed the shepherds guarding the public livestock, stole the *zakat* sheep and camels, and fled with them. This caused widespread fear among the people. When the Prophet (PBUH) learned of the incident, he dispatched a group of his companions to apprehend the criminals. To eliminate public fear and punish the murderers for disrupting social security, he ordered their execution

(Baladhuri, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 378). Regarding this incident, Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 33 was revealed (Huwayzi, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 662).

2-2-4. Enforcement of Legal Punishments to Maintain Social Order

The Qur'anic injunctions on retribution (*qisas*) for intentional murder (Qur'an 2:179), amputation for theft (Qur'an 5:38), and public flogging for adulterers (Qur'an 24:2) were rigorously enforced by the Prophet (PBUH) as essential deterrents to maintain societal security and justice. His unwavering commitment to these divine laws ensured that no individual, regardless of status or influence, could evade accountability. A striking example of this principle occurred during the Conquest of Mecca when the Prophet (PBUH) refused to pardon a female thief from a prominent and wealthy family, despite the intercession of Usama ibn Zayd. Emphasizing the absolute nature of divine justice, he declared: *"By Allah, if Fatima [my daughter] were to steal, I would cut off her hand"* (Muslim, 1991, Vol. 3, p. 1315). This resolute stance underscored that justice in Islam is blind to privilege, kinship, or social standing, reinforcing the sanctity of divine law above all human considerations. Through such firm yet fair enforcement, the Prophet (PBUH) established a society where security, deterrence, and moral integrity prevailed.

2-2-5. Strict Stance on Apostasy and Prevention of Social Collapse

One of the causes of social disintegration is the constant shifting of societal values and norms, a tactic often exploited by enemies of nations and ideologies through psychological operations. During the Prophet's (PBUH) time, certain Jews plotted to undermine and dismantle the nascent Islamic system through such schemes. The Qur'an explicitly references this Jewish conspiracy (Qur'an, Āl 'Imrān 3:72). On the other hand, the Prophet (PBUH) took decisive measures against apostasy to safeguard the integrity of the Islamic community. A notable example was the case of 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Sarḥ, whose apostasy was met with divine condemnation in Sūrah al-An'ām (Qur'an 6:93), and the Prophet (PBUH) subsequently ordered his execution during the Conquest of Mecca (Kulaynī, 1986, Vol. 8, p. 201; Huwayzī, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 745). This firm stance was rooted in the understanding

that unchecked apostasy could have far-reaching consequences for the stability of the nascent Muslim society. In an Islamic framework, frequent religious deviation poses significant risks, including the erosion of ideological authority and the destabilization of communal cohesion. Left unaddressed, apostasy could lead to broader societal repercussions, such as weakening the moral and spiritual foundation of the community, influencing vulnerable individuals to abandon their faith, and providing hostile forces with opportunities to exploit internal divisions for subversive purposes. The Prophet's (PBUH) strict approach to apostasy was thus not merely punitive but served as a protective measure to preserve the unity and ideological integrity of the Muslim ummah.

2-2-6. Decisive Action Against the Jews to Establish Social Peace As previously mentioned, the Prophet (PBUH) established a treaty with the various tribes residing in Medina to foster social cohesion. Among the Jewish tribes that signed this treaty were the Banu Qaynuqa'. However, it did not take long for them to begin undermining the agreement and conspiring against the Muslims. They made insulting Muslims part of their agenda, and on one occasion, they harassed a Muslim woman and killed a Muslim man who came to her defense. The Banu Qaynuqa' were considered the wealthiest and most powerful Jewish tribe in Medina, leading them to believe they could ultimately defeat the Prophet (PBUH). Arrogantly confident in their superiority, they were certain of their eventual victory. However, the Prophet (PBUH) had to act decisively to restore internal peace in Medina and prevent social chaos. Following this conspiracy and act of aggression, the Prophet (PBUH) took disciplinary action and expelled them from Medina (Baladhuri, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 309). Another tactic employed by the Jews during the Prophet's (PBUH) era was to create division among Muslims. They sought to disrupt the social peace of Islamic society by inciting groups of Muslims and provoking tensions. However, the Prophet (PBUH) effectively countered and neutralized their provocative actions. For example, Shas ibn Qays, an elderly Jewish man who harbored deep resentment toward Muslims, once exploited past grievances by reminding a group of Muslim allies from the Aws and

Khazraj tribes about the Battle of Bu'ath, a pre-Islamic conflict between them. His words stirred emotions and reignited old hostilities, leading some Muslims to threaten each other with renewed fighting. When the Prophet (PBUH) learned of this, he immediately intervened. Addressing them, he said: "Have you returned to the ways of Jahiliyyah (ignorance) while Allah has honored you with Islam and faith?" Through his wise and measured words, the Prophet (PBUH) restored peace among them. His psychological approach was so profound that not only did they abandon thoughts of fighting, but they embraced one another in remorse and wept (Ibn Athir, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 175).

2-2-7. Prevention of Divisive Social Rhetoric The Prophet (PBUH) implemented careful measures to regulate speech and social interactions in ways that would preserve communal harmony and prevent discord. During critical moments like the digging of the Trench (Khandaq), he demonstrated this wisdom by prohibiting Hassan ibn Thabit and Ka'b ibn Malik from reciting boastful tribal poetry (*rajaz*), recognizing how such competitive verses could reignite old rivalries and fracture the fragile unity of Medina's diverse community (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, Vol. 2, p. 447). This intervention reflected his profound understanding of how words could either strengthen or undermine social cohesion. The Prophet's approach to maintaining social order extended to economic spaces as well. He advised the Muslims of Tha'if to conduct their trade in controlled environments like their own courtyards and public squares rather than the chaotic 'Ukaz marketplace, which had become notorious for its corrupting influences. This strategic decision addressed multiple social ills simultaneously—it prevented exposure to the marketplace's toxic culture where tribal poets traded insults, women were verbally harassed through lewd verses, and divisive rhetoric flourished (Ameli, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 402). By redirecting economic activity to more wholesome spaces, the Prophet (PBUH) created conditions conducive to both ethical commerce and social harmony. These examples reveal the Prophet's comprehensive strategy for building a stable society. Rather than simply reacting to conflicts, he proactively shaped social environments and norms to minimize opportunities for discord. His interventions in

both cultural expression (poetry) and economic spaces (marketplaces) demonstrate how Islamic leadership carefully considers the social impact of all human interactions, from artistic expression to commercial exchanges. The wisdom behind these measures continues to offer relevant insights for maintaining social cohesion in diverse communities today.

2-2-8. Preventing Societal Polarization The Prophet (PBUH) demonstrated meticulous care in preventing polarization within Islamic society. A notable example occurred when Muslims were en route to the Battle of Banu Mustaliq. A minor dispute arose between a servant of Umar (RA) and a servant of Abdullah ibn Ubayy (the leader of Medina's hypocrites) over drawing water from a well. Abdullah, who constantly sought to sow discord among Muslims, attempted to create a "Muhajirun vs. Ansar" divide. The Prophet (PBUH) faced a complex challenge: while preparing for battle, his army was showing signs of division. With strategic wisdom, he ordered the army to march during extreme heat, kept them moving continuously for a full day/night cycle, and only permitted stops for obligatory prayers. This deliberate exhaustion made soldiers forget their disputes completely (Tabirsi, 1993, Vol. 10, p. 44). Simultaneously, he prevented the erosion of Muslim unity and strength through such subversive tactics. Through this intervention, all divisive tensions were eliminated from the Muslim forces.

2-2-9. Purifying the Islamic Army of Weak Elements In difficult wartime conditions, one of the factors leading to social disintegration and defeat is the infiltration of weak-willed individuals who, motivated by material gains, demoralize the fighters. Such individuals may easily be influenced by enemy threats, rumors, or propaganda. The Prophet (PBUH) made efforts to purify his army of such elements to prevent them from weakening the morale of the Muslim forces. This strategic approach by the Prophet (PBUH) eliminated potential fractures among Muslim combatants and strengthened their resolve for battle. For example, in the battles of Badr and Uhud, some Muslims wanted to seek help from their polytheist allies, but the Prophet (PBUH) declared: "We

do not seek help from polytheists against polytheists" (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1983, Vol. 14, p. 227). In the Battle of Khaybar, the Prophet (PBUH) barred those who had refused to join him during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah from participating (Maqrizi, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 306). In the Battle of Tabuk, the Qur'an explicitly states that the absence of hypocrites (*munafiqun*) in battle was insignificant, as their presence would have caused division and defeat among Muslims (Qur'an 9:45–48). Through these measures, the Prophet (PBUH) ensured that only steadfast believers remained in the ranks, reinforcing unity and combat effectiveness.

2-2-10. Severing Cultural Ties Between Muslims and Their Allies with Non-Muslims

Individuals who maintain frequent interactions—whether commercial, cultural, political, or otherwise—inevitably influence each other's behavior and conduct, regardless of whether such influence is positive or negative. Islamic society is no exception to this rule, especially during the early days of Islam when the faith of many believers was not yet deeply rooted. The Qur'an explicitly prohibits close alliances with disbelievers for this very reason: "O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not fail to corrupt you" (Qur'an 3:118). "O you who have believed, do not take My enemy and your enemy as allies..." (Quran 60:1). These verses emphasize the necessity of safeguarding the ideological and cultural integrity of the Muslim community by limiting deep social and political ties with non-Muslims who may undermine Islamic values.

2-2-11. The Prophet's Policy of Severing Ties with Polytheists

During the advent of Islam, the Prophet (PBUH) instructed Muslims and their allies to cut off relations with polytheists. The following were among the most frequently used phrases in his letters and treaties: "Separate yourselves from the polytheists" (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 205), "Fight the polytheists" (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 205), "Distance yourselves from the polytheists" (Ibn Athir, 1989, Vol. 4, p. 233), "Oppose the polytheists" (Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, 1994, Vol. 4, p. 523). Through this strategy, the Prophet (PBUH) successfully prevented polytheists from infiltrating Muslim ranks and disrupting the unity of

Islamic society. The objectives behind this policy were: Preventing Muslim assimilation of polytheistic influences – shielding believers from adopting pagan customs and beliefs. Applying pressure on polytheists – by cutting social and commercial ties, Muslims economically isolated them. Encouraging conversion to Islam – the hardship imposed by this boycott was meant to motivate polytheists to reconsider Islam. This approach proved effective in both preserving Muslim identity and gradually weakening pagan opposition.

2-2-12. Practical Approaches of the Prophet (PBUH) for Establishing Unity and Avoiding Division Islam is a social religion, and its strength lies in the unity of the Muslim community. As the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Allah's hand is with the jama'ah (community)" (Payandeh, 2003, p. 45). To prevent fragmentation and disunity, he also warned: "Whoever separates from the Muslim community by even a handspan has effectively removed the bond of Islam from his neck" (Ibn Babawayh, 1979, p. 333). Such hadiths demonstrate the Prophet's (PBUH) emphasis on social cohesion, as intellectual growth and unity flourish within a collective framework. While differences in thought, preferences, ethnicity, or tribal affiliations are natural (Qur'an 49:13), conflicts arising from selfishness, jealousy, oppression, or personal desires are unacceptable. Such negative disputes destroy psychological peace, create insecurity and arrogance, and lead to social fractures. The Qur'an condemns these divisive conflicts (Qur'an 3:19), as they undermine societal harmony through disunity in thought and action, disruption of collective security, and promotion of superiority complexes. The Prophet (PBUH) also distinguished between healthy diversity (like geographical/cultural variations) and toxic discord (stemming from ego/hostility). Disagreements rooted in ignorance and personal desires lead to behavioral deviance in society. This is why all civilized communities establish legal norms to safeguard social rights. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) expertly managed social norms through Islamic legislation, uniting scattered hearts under the principle of "ukhuwwah" (brotherhood). This social cohesion became a powerful attraction for many to embrace Islam. These legal principles are detailed in hadith literature and Islamic jurisprudential texts.

2-2-13. Establishing Social Cohesion Through the Bond of Brotherhood While the gathering of Muslims in Medina strengthened the Islamic community in terms of manpower and created a large population ready for action, the deep cultural, social, tribal, psychological, and emotional differences between the Muhajirun (migrants) and the Ansar (helpers) posed a serious risk of social fragmentation. Additionally, the newly arrived Muslims in Medina faced numerous challenges like economic hardships – many migrants had abandoned their wealth in Mecca, emotional distress – they suffered from homesickness and alienation, environmental struggles – some struggled to adapt to Medina's climate. To address these dual challenges, the Prophet (PBUH) instituted the "Mu'ākhāt Pact" (Brotherhood Covenant) as his first strategic measure. In the early years of Hijrah, he even decreed inheritance rights between paired brothers (Tabatabai, 1996, Vol. 9, p. 142). The transformational impacts of the pact were profound and multifaceted. Spiritually and socially, it strengthened bonds between the Muhajirun and Ansar, fostering deep emotional connections that transcended tribal affiliations and replaced them with a sense of Islamic brotherhood. It also served as a psychological sanctuary, eliminating the migrants' isolation by establishing new support systems and creating "emotional shelters" for displaced Muslims. Structurally, the pact promoted unity by forming interdependent social networks (Saleh, 2006, p. 70), which enhanced collective power as these bonds grew stronger. Ideologically, it reinforced commitment to Islam by demonstrating practical solidarity and embodying the principles of social justice, thereby deepening the believers' attachment to their faith.

2-2-14. Utilizing Kinship Ties to Bridge Social Divides The reduction of social divisions and divisive factors fosters greater unity and cohesion, with kinship ties being among the most powerful elements in bringing hearts together. A striking example of this is the Prophet's (PBUH) strategic use of kinship during the Battle of Hunayn. Facing a crisis when the Banu Sulaym tribe—leading the Muslim vanguard—suddenly retreated, causing widespread panic (Qummi, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 287), some Muslims reacted with condemnation, shouting, "Where are

you fleeing?" and even throwing dust at them. Recognizing the dangers of unjust collective blame, demoralization of a key allied tribe, and lasting tribal fractures, the Prophet (PBUH) intervened with a profound declaration: "I am the son of the 'Atikas' (descendant of the 'Atikas')." This statement carried deep symbolic weight, as three of his grandmothers bore the name 'Atika—'Atika bint Hilal (mother of Abd Manaf), 'Atika bint Murra ibn Hilal (mother of Hashim), and 'Atika bint Awqas (mother of Wahb) (Ibn Kathir, 1987, Vol. 4, p. 328)—and historical records note twelve 'Atikas among his ancestors, linking him to major tribes like Banu Sulaym, Quraysh, Kinana, Asad, Quda'a, and Azd (Baladhuri, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 533). By emphasizing this shared lineage, particularly with Banu Sulaym, the Prophet (PBUH) averted tribal discord and reinforced solidarity. This intervention was critical, as the aftermath of Hunayn saw the Meccans mocking Muslim disarray, claiming they were "in love with defeat" (Ameli, 2011, Vol. 8, p. 195). His measured response not only restored morale but also demonstrated how strategic kinship ties could transcend immediate conflicts to uphold Islamic unity.

2-2-15. Preventing Grudges and Resentment in Islamic Society In pre-Islamic Arab society, where conflicts could erupt over the smallest matters, effective solutions were needed to resolve disputes and remove grudges from people's hearts. One such solution was addressing estrangement between individuals. Unfortunately, cutting off ties often leads to the weakening or even termination of relationships. Estrangement occurs for various reasons—sometimes due to misunderstandings between friends, while other times, it stems from manipulative intentions, as some individuals use silence as a tactic to pressure others, gain attention, or simply due to personal preoccupations. To preserve friendships, the best approach when estrangement occurs is open dialogue, allowing grievances and misunderstandings to be resolved. The Prophet (PBUH) proactively addressed even the slightest issues that could fracture social cohesion, ensuring that unity did not dissolve into discord. He placed such high value on harmony among Muslims that he declared: "If two Muslims refuse to speak to each other for more than three days, they are no longer

considered within the fold of Islam." He encouraged reconciliation, stating: "When two Muslims cut ties for three days without making peace, they step outside Islam, and no bond remains between them. The one who initiates reconciliation first will be the first to enter Paradise on Judgment Day" (Al-Kulayni, 1407 AH, Vol. 2, pp. 344–345). Another narration emphasizes: "No estrangement should last beyond three days" (Al-Kulayni, 1407 AH, Vol. 2, p. 345). The Prophet's (PBUH) emphasis on reconciliation and avoiding resentment was rooted in the danger that lingering hatred could weaken a united community, leaving it vulnerable to external threats and endangering Islam itself (Al-Sharif al-Radi, 1379 AH, Vol. 5, p. 979). The importance of peace and friendship in society is so great that the Prophet (PBUH) considered it superior to fasting and prayer (Al-Tusi, 1414 AH, p. 522). Moreover, reconciling disputes (*Islah Dhat al-Bayn*) is sometimes an obligatory religious duty—even requiring financial support from public funds—while in other cases, it is strongly recommended, unless it concerns matters critical to the fate of Muslims (Alidoust Khorasani & Pishvaei, 2018, p. 96)

2-2-16. Neighborhood Ethics: A Prophetic Model for Social Cohesion The Prophet (PBUH) established neighborly relations as a cornerstone of Islamic society, emphasizing that strong neighborhoods build strong communities, mutual respect reduces social divisions, and collective welfare enhances religious outreach. The Qur'an commands: "Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the distant neighbor..." (Qur'an 4:36). The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) further defined true faith through neighborhood ethics, stating, "He who sleeps full while his neighbor is hungry is not a believer," and "Whoever harms their neighbor is not of us" (Al-Kulayni, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 668). These teachings highlight the deep connection between faith, social responsibility, and harmonious coexistence.

2-2-17. The Social Tradition of Honoring and Feeding Fellow Believers One of Islam's key directives for fostering social unity is the emphasis on honoring and feeding fellow Muslims. Islamic tradition

teaches that mere generosity is insufficient—Muslims must actively encourage one another to uphold this practice so that it becomes widespread in society (Qur'an 69:34; 89:18). The Qur'an repeatedly highlights feeding others as an act of charity (*infaq*) and kindness (*ihsan*), urging the wealthy to allocate a portion of their wealth for the needy to preserve human dignity and maintain economic balance: "And in their wealth was a rightful share for the beggar and the deprived" (Qur'an 51:19). Neglecting the poor carries severe consequences—it is described as a sign of disbelief: "Indeed, he did not believe in Allah the Almighty, nor did he encourage the feeding of the poor" (Qur'an 69:33–34), and a cause of social instability, as the Qur'an warns: "Spend in the way of Allah and do not cast yourselves into destruction by your own hands. And do good" (Qur'an 2:195). These teachings underscore the vital link between faith, charity, and societal harmony.

2-2-18. Charity as a Safeguard Against Social Collapse The absence of charity (*infaq*) in society—where wealth accumulates among a privileged few while the majority struggle in poverty—leads to dangerous consequences:

- **Social explosion**, marked by violent upheavals where accumulated wealth is destroyed in revolt
- **Economic implosion**, as extreme inequality destabilizes the entire community

Thus, *infaq* serves a dual purpose: ensuring wealth redistribution (economic balance) and wealth preservation (social stability). Beyond aiding the needy, the Prophet (PBUH) expanded the concept of generosity by encouraging Muslims to honor and feed even non-needy believers. This practice strengthened communal bonds: "The believer who feeds another believer will be shaded by Allah on Judgment Day" (Al-Kulayni, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 200), and normalized generosity as a consistent cultural value: "The most beloved deeds to Allah are those done consistently, even if small" (Ibn Babawayh, 1979, p. 283). Through the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings, this noble practice

flourished, resolving social issues, uniting hearts, and fostering greater social cohesion among Muslims.

Research Findings

Facing the social chaos and discord prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) employed the most effective strategies to restore social cohesion, resolve conflicts, and instill a spirit of unity and brotherhood among members of society:

1. **Identifying Divisive Factors:** Before implementing cohesive measures, the Prophet (PBUH) first identified the root causes of division and discord.
2. **Promoting Unity Over Division:** In the second stage, the Prophet (PBUH) rejected any factor that fostered disunity among Muslims, while actively encouraging whatever strengthened solidarity, brotherhood, and friendship.
3. **Marginalizing Agitators:** One of the Prophet's key strategies in preserving Muslim unity was expelling polytheists and divisive elements, such as hypocrites, to prevent their conspiracies from undermining the community.
4. **Firmness Against Disruptors:** Despite the Prophet's efforts to counter division, some opponents still sought to disrupt social order and cohesion. He dealt with them decisively to maintain stability.
5. **Building Unity from the Ground Up:** The Prophet (PBUH) began fostering social cohesion by addressing divisions within the smallest social unit—the family—then gradually expanding this effort to relatives, neighbors, and the entire Muslim community.

Through these strategies, the Prophet (PBUH) successfully healed many social rifts, strengthened the faith of new Muslims, and attracted numerous people to Islam. Within just ten years of his leadership, his approach significantly contributed to the spread and consolidation of Islam.

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