

A Literary Analysis and Authentication of Honor and Dignity (al-'Izzah wa al-Karamah) in Sīrah Perspective

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Abstract

Islam endows men and women with "Human Honour and Dignity" (al-'Izzah wa al-Karamah) and provides them with directions and guidelines to protect each other's rights with respect and honour. This research paper demonstrates the protection of honor and dignity as a significant tool of life. The denotation of "honor" and "dignity" according to the Qur'ānic and prophetic perspective has been focused in this research. In the preservation of human personal honor, dignity and other rights, Shari'ah evidences from Qur'ān and Sīrah are explored with the perspective of highlighting the emphasis on Shari'ah on this aspect of religion, which is also one of the dimensions of Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah as well. The paper ends with the note that human beings should endure the "best moral and ethical values" of mercy, faith, compassion, justice, piety, empathy and also with the fear of abusing one's honor and status in the society.

Keywords: honor, dignity, sīrah, maqāṣid al-Shari'ah, justice

Introduction

Human dignity has been one of the central themes in Islamic teachings. Islam is very concerned about the dignity of a person and highlights the status of protecting 'honor' and 'dignity'. It doesn't permit a person to abuse one's honor because one of the necessary features in the life of a person is his or her 'dignity' and 'honor'.

In the Holy *Quran*, Allah (S.W.T) takes account of all the humans to be worthy of respect and honor because human beings alone are trustworthy to prefer the "trust" of liberty of the free will. All the mankind is distinguished from other creatures on the earth and they are blessed with the persuasive aptitude by Allah, the Al-Mighty.¹ The Glorious *Quran* clearly declares that human beings are blessed with the capability to judge between right and

wrong wisely. Allah (S.W.T) had made them "in the best of molds".² Thus, man is a representative on this earth, so that on account of this trait all humankind is respected and honored by Lord; The Creator. To begin with, we declaim the straight and definite confirmation of the dignity and honor of man, Allah, the Most High, announces in a general and unqualified declaration: "Verily we have honored the progeny of Adam..."³

The Holy Prophet's make an effort primarily to reduce the social and economic injustices prevailing in the society so as to promote human dignity. The *Sīrah* of the holy Prophet (SAW) demonstrates multiple incidents of supporting the importance of dignity of human beings to be respected by fellow-men, for upholding the honour bestowed by Almighty Allah.

The Status of Honor and Dignity in Islam

In Islamic traditions, the intellectual dimension of mankind is persistently mentioned. Islam gives highest value to person's life and to their health. It identifies different phases of their life, which expressed the critical and rigid aspects to maintain human's personal honor and dignity. It has given high value to human life and health.

Different aspects of human life are catered in Islam to maintain human dignity and honour. In this regard, the holy Quran and *Sīrah* of the Holy Prophet (SAW) have given multidimensional approaches to uplift humanity in numerous facets of human life such as the corporal, financial, rational, societal, moral and spiritual aspects.

The sanctity of human life is highlighted by equating the saving of one life with the saving of all of humanity. Allah (S.W.T) in Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:32 lay emphasis on protection of life of human beings and killing one person is equated like killing whole humanity.⁴ Similarly, respecting others by not using bad words and not defaming their dignity is accentuated in Surah Qāf, 50: 18 where Almighty Allah highlighted the importance of accountability for each word uttered, and mentioned in Surah Al Fajr, 89: 14 that Allah is 'Ever-Watchful' for our words and deeds. These verses indicate the magnitude of dignity and honour.⁵

In the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet (SAW) declared 'I warn you that) your lives, your properties and your honour is as sacred to one another as this sacred Day, as this Sacred Month and this Sacred city.'⁶ Thus ensuring the security of life to every person, Islam has provided full guarantee of security of life to every person.

Moreover it is said that no one is responsible for the deeds done by someone else, Allah Almighty (S.W.T) says in Surah Al An'ām, 6: 164 that everyone is going to be responsible for his own deeds and no one shall bear the burden of deeds of others.⁷

Abu Hurairah (R.A) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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"مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ"

"Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, then let him speak always good or remain silent".⁸

The scholars have agreed upon the authenticity of this hadith, which is a precise proof that, "one should not talk, unless his speech is good". And if one is not sure as to whether or not his speech is good or consists of benefit, then he must not speak.

Abū Mūsā al-'Ash'arī reported:

"يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَيُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خَيْرٌ؟، فَقَالَ: «مَنْ سَلَّمَ النَّاسَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ»

"O Messenger of Allah!"Which of the Muslims is best?'
He (ﷺ) answered: "He is the best from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe from".⁹

It is also reported from Sa'eed Ibn Zayd (R.A) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Verily, one of the worst forms of Riba (interest) is being condescending with regard to a Muslim's HONOR, without due right".¹⁰

Abu Hurairah (R.A) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ، لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَأْسًا، يَرْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ، وَإِنَّ

الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ، لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَأْسًا، يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ"

"Indeed, the servant will speak words that are pleasing to Allah, due to which he will be given a condition in which Allah will raise him many levels. And indeed, the servant will speak words that are displeasing to Allah, due to which he will not be given a good condition, but (instead) be thrown into the Hellfire".¹¹

Abu Hurairah (R.A) also had reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) has said:

"الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ، وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ، التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا، حَسْبُ امْرِئٍ

مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَخْشَرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ"

"A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He does not betray him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he forsake him. All of the Muslim to (another) Muslim is sacred – his honor, his wealth and his blood. Taqwa (fear and obedience to Allah) is right here [pointing to his chest]. It is enough evil for a person to look down upon his fellow Muslim".¹²

The Almighty Allah has very beautifully uttered the dignity of man in Surah al Maidah ¹³ about the importance of sanctity of life and honour. Certainly, in Islam clear affirmations about the human honor and dignity are mentioned in a range of settings because honor and dignity of mankind is surely one of the dominant subjects in Islamic traditions. Thus, Islam has blessed a divergent position to humankind by recognizing them as the most honorable and noblest creature that is the vicegerent of Lord on this earth.

Human Beings as the Divine Final Objective

In spiritual ranking, human beings are higher than angels. Allah (S.W.T) ordered to the 'angels' and the 'Iblīs for bowing down to Adam (A.S). On that the angels bowed down, but 'the 'Iblīs rejected to do so;

"وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ"

"And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save 'Iblīs, who was not of those who make prostration".¹⁴

With this reaction, The Lord's discontent was then getting across in a query to 'Iblīs:

"قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَتَمَّ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ"
"What prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I created with My Own Hand, Art thou too proud of the high exalted?"¹⁵

'Iblīs then proclaimed its own superiority and stated:

"قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ"
"I am better than him. You created Adam from clay and created me from fire!"¹⁶

Again the same question was asked in a different situation, when God affirmed His intention to the angels that; *"I am about to appoint a vicegerent in the earth"*. The angels protested, and said: *"we extol and glorify Thee, and Man is prone to corruption and bloodshed"*. Then The Lord (S.W.T) told them: *"surely I know what you know not"*. This was immediately pursued by the declaration: *"And God taught Adam the names of all things..."¹⁷* which would give the impression to advocate that capacity to discover and knowledge are pertinent to the nobility, dignity and honor of Man.

A level of proximity and confidentiality of Lord (S.W.T) is clear in the divine statement, with His creation (humans) that *"I created (Adam) with My own Hand"*.¹⁸ And;

"فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ"
"I have fashioned him (Adam) and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate".¹⁹ And,

"لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ"
"Indeed, We created humankind in the best of stature/forms".²⁰
And,

"خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ"
"We created the heavens and the earth with truth, and shaped you in the best of images..."²¹

In the Universe, the divine ultimate objective in creating human beings is "dignity and honor" of a creature and the instrumental attitude towards other

beings. Allah (S.W.T) explicates clearly that man is the eventual reason of creation in all circumstances. He explains it with proofs such as the earth, sky, day and night, rain, seas, mountains, animals, and their philosophy of creation.²²

The Almighty Allah has allocated this in the following words:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who reflect".²³

Mulla Sadra, The philosopher and commentator, indicates the explanations of this verse over human dignity and honor. He says, the word 'lakum' shows that "whatever made after man's creation is only for his interest in religion and the world; they are for the interest of his body and also he can get energy for obeying God in the world and in religion, he can think about the signs of earth and heavens and the wonders of creation of God. So, this is indicative of man's superiority; for God created whatever is in earth and sky for the interest of man". According to him, one of its reason is that "this verse after the first blessing (creation of alive and powerful man during history) mentions another blessing which is related to it and it consists of enjoying earth and sky and whatever is in them". Surprisingly, he says: "What is good to consider the order from God; for this enjoyment will do after the realization of life. Therefore, at first God mentioned the life and then the earth and heavens in this verse".²⁴

The Protection of Human Honor and Dignity (al-'izzah wa al-karamah)

In the Holy Quran Allah (S.W.T) clearly states that:

"You, who believe, do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set." "Do not defame one another." "Do not insult by using nicknames." "Do not spy on one another" and "Do not backbite or speak ill of one another".

The Holy Quran also laid down the injunction for the Sanctity and Security of Private Life of individuals:

"Do not enter any houses unless you are sure of their occupant's consent".

Allah (S.W.T) commands in Surah AlHujurat, 49:11-12 that a true believer does not backbite, defame or insult other fellow beings. Such acts are abhorred by Allah Almighty and the example of such doers is given like the one who eats the flesh of his dead brother.²⁵ Similarly, in Surah Al Nur, 24:27 Muslims are specifically ordained to respect the dignity of others to the extent that much emphasis has been laid on taking permission before entering the houses and to greet the inhabitants in good words. Such gesture points to the principles and regulations set by Shariah for respecting and honouring each other.²⁶

Thus, Islam; a beautiful religion, is very anxious about the personal honor and dignity of humankind. And protection of 'honor' and 'dignity' also includes protection of all other individual rights. Such as; right to protect privacy and not to reveal faults or sensational misconduct of each other publicly. This means that there must be certifying respectful and responsible affiliations between men and women.

Protection of Lineage or Dignity (al 'Ird, - takrīm)

As regards, to the respect of human personal honor and dignity, according to the *Quranic* impression, to be honored is the 'birthright' of all humankind. With orientation to the human character, the Holy *Quran* stresses its biological entirety. The *Quranic* revelation of human dignity is expressed in various means and in altered frameworks.

Islam has ordained numerous strategies to shield the 'dignity' and 'personal honor' of humankind. Islam forbids its disciples from reproving others of disruption such as pledging infidelity or other wicked behaviors. The broad opinion that to put on to any allegation toward being is the maxim that says:

"Evidence is for the person who claims (accuse) the oath for the person who denies (the accusation)".²⁷

Based on this principle, each allegation must be validated by evidences/proofs; otherwise, the punishment will definitely be forced to implement for the fabricated prosecution. The punishment for such behaviors, which is termed as '*al-qazaf*' in Islamic law is eighty (80) lashes based on the following verse:

"وَالَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ"

"And those who accuse honorable women but bring not four witnesses, scourge them (with) eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their testimony - They indeed are evil-doers (liars, rebellious, disobedient to Allah)".²⁸

In addition to this, Allah's curse is released upon those who messed up with the 'dignity' and 'honor' or others.

"إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعُنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ"

"Lo! As for those who traduce virtuous, believing women (who are) careless, cursed are they in the world and the Hereafter. Theirs will be an awful doom".²⁹

Islam regulated several principles and legal relationships between men and women and between the other members of community to protect their dignity by reassuring believers that they can protect their honor, faith and dignity from evil doings, through the secure way of wedlock (by entering into matrimonial relationship).³⁰

Islam therefore, for the protection of 'honor' and 'dignity,' enunciates

believers to conceal their 'awrah' (private parts of body). It totally prohibits the manipulation of men and women, by manufacturing them as sensual and viable entities or representing them as lure for marketing commercial products. All such type of behaviors leads toward lowering their honor and dignity in the society.³¹

Textual Evidence on Human Honor and Dignity

The Quranic view of dignity and honor has been more explicitly recognized with reference to the Muslims. The dignified status (*al-izzah*) of the believers is so illustrated in conjunction with that of Allah, the Most High and His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ):

"وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ"

"And honor (al-izzah) belongs to God, to His Messenger and the believers, but the hypocrites know not".³²

Allah (S.W.T) states in the Holy book;

"وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ"

"And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong".³³

The following *hadith* gives more real expression:

"مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكَرًا فَلْيَعْبِرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ"

"If any of you sees something evil, he should set it right with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue, and if he is unable to do even that, then (let him denounce it) in his heart. But this is the weakest form of faith".³⁴

The Prophet (ﷺ) is also reported to have said:

"أَيُّ الْإِيمَانِ أَفْضَلُ قَالَ خُلُقٌ حَسَنٌ"

"The best part of faith is to have beautiful manners".³⁵

And that:

"بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ حُسْنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ"

"I have been sent in order to perfect moral virtues (among you)".³⁶

Samurah (R.A) reported that The Prophet (ﷺ) said;

"الْحَسْبُ الْمَالُ، وَالكَرْمُ التَّقْوَى"

"Honor itself is wealth and nobility is in the fear of Allah".³⁷

In this worldly domain, no any other spot of earth is holier than the House of Allah (S.W.T), the *Ka'ba*. Yet the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) illustrated the following analogous to convey the degree of human honor and dignity of

the humankind. The Prophet (ﷺ), while facing the Ka'ba, said in a symbolic language:

"How pure you are! And how pure is your fragrance! How great you are! And how great is your sanctity! By Him in whose hands lies the soul of Muhammad, the sanctity and honor of a believer his life and his property, is far greater than yours in the eyes of God".³⁸

Abū al-Dardā' (R.A) reported, that The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"مَنْ رَدَّ عَنْ عَرَضِ أُخِيهِ رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ النَّارَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ"

"Whoever defends the honor of his brother, then Allah will protect his face from the Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection".³⁹

Abu Huraira (R.A) reported, The Messenger (ﷺ) said:

"أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِخَيْرِكُمْ مِنْ شَرِّكُمْ؟ قَالَ: فَسَكَتُوا، فَقَالَ ذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَخَيْرِنَا بِخَيْرِنَا مِنْ شَرِّنَا، قَالَ: خَيْرِكُمْ مَنْ يُرْجَى خَيْرُهُ وَيُؤْمَنُ شَرُّهُ، وَشَرِّكُمْ مَنْ لَا يُرْجَى خَيْرُهُ وَلَا يُؤْمَنُ شَرُّهُ"

"Shall I not tell you what distinguishes the best of you from the worst of you? The best of you are those from whom goodness is expected and people are safe from their evil. The worst of you are those from whom goodness is not expected and people are not safe from their evil".⁴⁰

Unambiguous Verses on Human honor and Dignity

Undeniably, one of the best gifts which Allah (S.W.T) has granted to human beings is dignity and honor. In the glorious *Quran*, the status of humankind is exceptional, unique and matchless among all other creations because they have been inspired by the divine spirit. The following verse affirmed the human dignity and honor very explicitly:

"وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا"

"Verily we have honored the progeny of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom we created with a marked preferment".⁴¹

This positive verse discusses honor and dignity of humankind and expressively spectacles the dignity of human beings without earmarking it to Adam (A.S.), the Prophet (ﷺ) or a special group of individuals. Allah (S.W.T) also states:

"Adam has been bestowed with life, knowledge, power of hearing, seeing, understanding, but the features of Adam are different from those of Allah, only the names are the same, e.g., Allah has life and knowledge and power of understanding, and Adam also has them..."⁴²

Human dignity and honor is the result of human intellect and wisdom which is not given to other creatures of Allah and which distinguished bad from good and beneficial from hurtful. And the view of creation/children concerning their father, Adam (A.S.), is a locus of dignity and honor.⁴³

Again at another place Allah (S.W.T) states;

"بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ"

"Rather they are [His] honored servants".⁴⁴

Here, a researcher argued that "the verse indicates the secret of the honor of angels is the aspect of servitude and their submission, while, the secret of the honor of humans is human dimension and to be children of Adam (A.S.)."⁴⁵

These all vibrant statements about the dignity and honor of humankind are, in short validated in a range of other settings of *Quran* and *Sunnah*, of which one is the "harmony and cooperation" amongst the supreme creation; human beings. "Human dignity and honor" is the respect, inordinate necessity and appreciation of human requisite, desire and anticipation of one individual from the other. This recognition is obligatory because no human being survives alone. Respect and honor generates the substance of humanity and development. And religion always delivered this elementary foundation of courteous civilization.

Emphasis on Human Dignity in Sīrah of the Holy Prophet (SAW)

Dignity and honour of civilizations are judged on the basis of how well its teachings are demonstrated in practice. The ultimate objective in Islamic teachings is preservation of honour and dignity of the believers. It includes all *Maqasid al-Shari'a*as every Divine message came with the emphasis on safeguarding its believers' blood, property and honor. The essence of this message is portrayed in various traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) who has communicated so while circumambulating Ka'bah as:

*"How pure you are! And how pure is your fragrance!
How great you are! And how great is your sanctity! By Him in whose hands lies the soul of Muhammad, the sanctity of a believer is greater with Allah than even your sanctity (i.e., the Ka'bah). That is (the sanctity) of his property, his blood and that we think nothing of him but good." (Sunan Ibn Majah)*

At another occasion, it has been reported by 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (d. 74 AH/ 693 CE), that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said while glancing at the Holy Ka'bah,

"How great you are! And how great is your sanctity! But the sanctity of a believer is greater with Allah than even your sanctity (i.e., the Ka'bah)." (Sunan al-Tirmidhi)

Being one of the most important issue of human life, honour and dignity is emphasized not only in the Holy Quran but also in various

discourses of hadith as well. This endowed human dignity is uniform to all human beings, regardless of their ethnicity, race or origin. Human dignity is acquired through being more virtuous. ⁴⁶According to themuḥadithīn,

*"If the people keep discharging their duties, testifying the 'Oneness of Allah' and the 'Prophet hood of Muhammad (PBUH) keep offering the prayers and observing the fasting, the right of their lives and properties will be protected under the safe custody and guard of Islam except those who are proved otherwise to breach the discipline and dishonour the clause of protection of other's life and property."*⁴⁷

Honor and dignity of Muslims is also emphasized in the last pilgrimage farewell address of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that denoted the framework of regulations for all times to come. He said

"Verily, your blood, property and honor are sacred to one another (i.e., Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours (i.e., the day of Nahr or slaughtering of the animals of sacrifice), in this month of yours (the holy month of Dhul-Hijjah) and in this city of yours (the holy city of Makkah)." ⁴⁸

This message is an elaboration of the words of the Divine, as it comes in Surah Hujrat, v. 10 that all believers are brothers and sisters collectively; and the best among them is the one who is more God-fearing and righteous (Surah Hujrat, v.13) Since all believers are expected to be bound to one another like a compact unit, Ummah, the ones who damage or violate the dignity and honour of other believers are being addressed in the Holy Quran⁴⁹ as:

*"Indeed, those who like that immorality or scandal should be spread (or publicized) among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter."*⁵⁰

*And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you -- when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided."*⁵¹

Not only did the Prophet (SAW) emphasized on preserving the honour of all Muslims, it was clearly stated in the clause 63 of Medina Pact that stated

*"And this is a full guarantee from Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) the messenger of Allah, for provisioning of all rights to those who stand loyal and firm to the piety and good deeds."*⁵²

Another significant event that we find in the books of Sirah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) happened 20 years before his prophet hood. It was the participation of the Holy Prophet (SAW) in an 'oath ceremony' known as 'Half-ul-Fuzool'⁵³ This oath is significant because of its focus on maintenance of peace, dignity and mutual respect.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says:

*"I witnessed the oath in the house of Abdullah Bin Judaan. I would not be willing to withdraw from the honour of being one of the participants of the occasion even in lieu of the heavy compensations of a flock of red camels, and If someone appeals for assistance in the name of that oath even in Islamic era, I would extend my help to him."*⁵⁴

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and Protection of Honor and Dignity

The leading staple of Islam, the *Qur'ān*, has a number of references that point out to the position and responsibilities of human beings in this world. Allah (S.W.T) determined a multiple rights and duties for human race. A significant characteristic for beings is "dignity and honor", which include several meanings like; independence/liberty, self-respect/self-esteem, self-sufficiency, impartiality, and autonomy in the community.⁵⁵

Allah (S.W.T) blessed the human beings with special favor unto them with physical and cerebral capabilities, natural resources and with superiority of honor and dignity over most other creatures in this world, regardless of color, race, religion and tribe. The whole of mankind, as vice-regent (*khalifah*) is liable for establishing peace and harmony on earth through divinely proposed values such as trust (*amanah*), justice (*'adalah*) and consultation (*shura*).⁵⁶

The *Quran* and *Sunna* defend the right to life, reputation, wealth and pledge an unbolt society in which all the human beings including even non-Muslims shall not be miserable of life, respect, property, and honor without uncertain practice of *Shari'ah*. These commands are frequent in the Holy *Quran*:

"قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا
تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَمُوصَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ"

*"Say: Come, I will recite unto you that which your Lord hath made a sacred duty for you: That ye ascribe no thing as partner unto Him and that ye do good to parents, and that ye slay not your children because of penury - We provide for you and for them - and that ye draw not nigh to lewd things whether open or concealed. And that ye slay not the life which Allah hath made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He hath command you, in order that ye may discern".*⁵⁷

People mostly depend upon the essentials of religion and worldly affairs, the abandonment in these essential matters of life leads toward disorders and disturbance which ultimately lead to destruction. In the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* all the necessities must be retained in a right place under the decree of essential needs.⁵⁸

According to Muhammad Hashim Kamali, 'human Rights' and 'compulsions' are the indicator of human dignity and honor in all its foremost permitted conducts and the Islamic law/*Shari'ah* is of no concession.⁵⁹ It could be, there are some discrepancies of placement in between legitimate systems, but seeing that *Shari'ah* is concerned, too much stress is not so on the obligations and rights of humans as per the emphasis is on "integrity". Though an conventional slant is compulsory for the 'rights' and 'duties' and for the outset of impartiality in the all authorized ethnicities, yet for this a proper legal system is required to shaped in order to some extents.⁶⁰ The more stress here inclines to be on the 'mutual respect for rights and duties' of each other's, than 'personal rights and duties'. So, the *Shari'ah*, is frequently inclined toward 'duties' more than 'rights'.⁶¹

Moreover, M. H. Kamali has had advanced the view on this that in Islam, the conception of human honor and dignity offers a neutral basis to the contemporary doctrine of human rights, conceivably, in partiality to the "rights-based concept" of the basic mortal rights dissertation. In *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*, this "rights-based approach" is enunciated. Besides, he states that a "duty-based concept" to the basic mortal rights, is not in fully coordination with central theme and concerns of the *Quran* on 'integrity and impartiality'.⁶² Furthermore, opponents have also declared the apprehension that human honor and dignity is 'ethical approach' relatively than any authorized impression. Accordingly, Donolly stated; "violation of a right goes well beyond merely falling short of some high moral standards".⁶³ To this, a fractional reaction is that, those six essentials or necessities of Islamic law together with "personal honor" are recognized as "*al-daruriyyat*", to precede human personal honor and dignity into a "rights-based approach".⁶⁴ Al-Shawkānī and Al-Qaradāwī, the renowned Muslim scholars, also stated that "dignity and honor is very much important that it appears as a radical *Shari'ah* objective, which Islam aims to protect".

As stated by Ibn 'Abbas:

"Allah, The Al-Mighty has honored human beings, blessing them the aptitude of reason".

And al-Alusi has mentioned that however,

"every mankind including the pious and the sinner are endowed with dignity, nobility and honor, which cannot be exclusively expounded and identified".⁶⁵

Human dignity and honor is not grossed by commendable behavior; it is a countenance of Lord's grace. Muṣṭafa al-Siba'ī and Ḥasan al-Ili have similarly remarked that "dignity is a proven right of every human being regardless

of color, race or religion". Ahmad Yusri has drawn the conclusion that "dignity is established for every human being as of the moment of birth".

Sayyid Qutb has similarly stated that "dignity is the natural right of every individual". Human's honor and dignity is not grossed by their commendable behavior; it is just because of the countenance of Lord's grace. "Honor" and "Dignity" is consequently, the unqualified right of Human beings.

An impartial review of the Sīrah implies that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) conveyed the message of love and peace for whole of mankind. The world mired in vices can be a peaceful, hospitable and affectionate place to live by embarking upon the path shown by Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Title of 'Raḥmatulil 'Ālamīn' and his Sīrah truly depict that his teachings are the foundation of honouring each other and respecting the dignity of the mankind.

Conclusion

Dignity and honor is a gift from Allah (S.W.T). In this mortal world the purpose behind the creation of everything is to bring about and maintain a high-and-mighty position of humankind, all other things are unimportant before its status. Textual evidences from Quran and Sunnah not only support this phenomenon but various evidences from the Sīrah shown the emphasis laid down by he Holy Prophet on respect for dignity and honour. In Islam, the conception of human honor and dignity offers a neutral basis to the contemporary doctrine of human rights, as depicted in objectives of Shari'a. The article concludes that the inherent dignity of man is the foundation of human rights which emphasized that all human rights are derived from the inherent dignity of the human person. The contribution of the Prophet (SAW) of Islam to the enhancement of human dignity is diversified; the theoretical foundations of human dignity found their basis in the Sīrah of the Holy Prophet (SAW).



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¹Surah al Baqarah, 30-34

²Surah al Tin, 4-6

³Surah al Isrā', 70

⁴Surah al Ma'idah, 32

⁵Surah al Fajr, 14

⁶Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Abū Dāw'ūd

⁷Surah al An'am, 164

⁸Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī, 11:308 of al-Faṭḥ and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth #, 47

⁹Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī, 1:54 of al-Faṭḥ and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth # 42

¹⁰Reported by Abū Dāw'ūd, Ḥādīth # 4876, Aḥmad, 1:190, Al Haytham, Ibn Kulayb, al Musnad, 2:30 from the path of 'Abdullah Ibn Abi Husayn from Nawfillbn Masaahiq. I say: This chain of narration is authentic – all of its narrators are reliable. The Ḥādīth has supporting evidences from other traditions reported by Al Bara' Ibn 'Āzib, 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (R.A). See: *al Targhib*, 3:503-505

¹¹Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī, 11:308 of al Fath.

¹²Al Tirmadhī, (1992) from the path of Hishām Ibn Sa'ad from Zayd Ibn Aslam from Abu Ṣāliḥ, al Tirmadhī declared it Ḥasan, and it is as he said. It has another path of narration reported by Muslim Ḥādīth # 2564 and Aḥmad, 2:277, 311 and 360) from Abū Sa'īd

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¹⁴Surah al A'rāf, 11

¹⁵Surah al Ṣād, 75

¹⁶Surah al Ṣād, 76

¹⁷Surah al Baqarah, 30-32

¹⁸Surah al Ṣād, 75

¹⁹Surah al Ṣād, 72

²⁰Surah al Tīn, 4

²¹Surah al Taghabun, 3

²²Shirazī, *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al Karīm*, (Qom: Bidār Publications, 1379), 2:274

²³Surah al Jāthiyah, 13

²⁴Sayyid Muḥammad Kalantar Kousheh, "The Roots of Human Dignity in Quran Verses", *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, Vol. : 7, Issue: 10, (2013), p: 2, Available at: <http://works.bepress.com/kalantar/16/>

²⁵Surah al Ḥujurāt, 11-12

²⁶Surah al Nūr, 27

²⁷Muḥammad Adil Khan Afrīdī, "Maqāṣid Al Shari'ah and Preservation of Basic Rights Under the Theme "Islam And Its Perspectives On Global & Local Contemporary Challenges", *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, (June 2016), p: 281

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³⁶Ibid., Ḥādīth # 5097

³⁷*Sunan Al Tirmidhī*, Ḥādīth # 3271

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⁴⁰*Sunan Al Tirmidhī*, {Grade: *Ṣaḥīḥ*, (Authentic) according to Al Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth # 2263

⁴¹Surah al Isra', 70

⁴²Surah al Shūra, 11

⁴³Amolī, *Dignity in Quran*, (Tehran: Raja Cultural Publication Center, 1369)

⁴⁴Surah al Anbiyā', 26

⁴⁵Nubahār, An Essay on Religion and Human Dignity, Paper presented at the *Second International Conference on Human Rights, Qom. (1384)*, See also: Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan Lavasānī, and Sayed Muḥammad Kalantar Kousheh, "The Roots of Human Dignity according to Quranic Verses", *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, Vol.: 7, Issue: 10, (2013), p: 394.

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⁴⁸Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhari

⁴⁹<https://www.islamicity.org/5567/islam-as-a-religion-of-human-dignity-and-honor/>

⁵⁰Surah al Nūr, 19

⁵¹Surah al 'Imrān, 103

⁵²Surah al Nisā', 135

⁵³Named so because of the persons executing it commonly sharing the substance of 'FADL':Al Faḍl Bin Fuḍalah, Al Faḍl Bin Widaah and Al Faḍl Bin Qudhaah, For reference please see: Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah Al Nabawīyyah*, 1:90

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