

NABIYUNA

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And We have not sent you,
[O Muammad], except as a mercy
to the worlds.

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Editorial Note

In the Name of
Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most
Compassionate

All praise is due to Allah, who sent His Prophet with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all other religions. He is sufficient as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner. May peace and blessings be upon Muhammad, the Chosen One, whose prophethood enlightened minds and whose message uplifted values, and upon his noble Household and his chosen Companions.

With each issue of Our Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), we renew our connection with the noble Prophetic biography—not merely as a historical account but as a continuous source of insight, a field for reflection, and a space for critical and scholarly engagement, especially in response to the various challenges, misconceptions, and ideological distortions raised against it.

In this ninth issue, we shed light on multiple themes that re-examine the Prophetic biography through legal, political, social, and intellectual lenses. In our study of Prophetic migration, we revisit this foundational event from both a legal and political perspective, revealing its vital role in state-building and identity formation. In a critical review of how Western writings have portrayed the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) up to the time of the Crusades, we trace the contours of distortion and instrumentalization. We also highlight



the dangers
of ideologically driven readings
of the Qur'an and Hadith and their impact on
shaping Islam's political identity.

This issue also includes a study on the right to privacy in the Prophetic biography, demonstrating how the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) offered a sublime model for upholding human dignity. The issue concludes with a critical reading of the Prophet's image in Thomas Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, striking a balance between admiration and fairness while exploring the cultural filters through which the "other" receives his image.

In this and every issue of the magazine, we strive to bridge academic research with the noble Prophetic mission—defending it, refuting falsehoods imposed upon it, and affirming its values in a world overwhelmed by distortion and malicious interpretations.

We pray that Allah accepts this endeavor and grants it reward in the scale of all who serve the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and exert themselves in its defense. And our final word is: praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

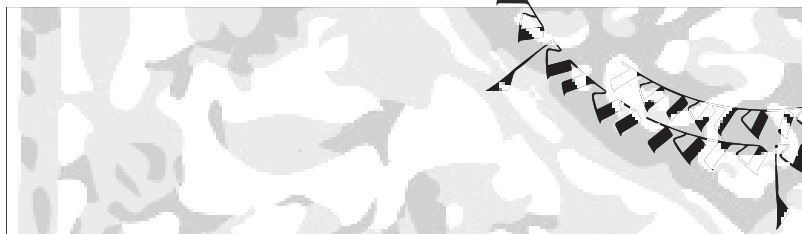
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The Right to Privacy in the Blessed Prophetic Biography



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The Right to Privacy in the Blessed Prophetic Biography

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Abstract

The right to privacy is one of the fundamental values that ensures human freedom and preserves dignity. This right has received considerable attention in contemporary legal systems. However, its roots extend far deeper, as we find clear foundations for it in the Prophetic biography, which provided a practical and ethical framework that guarantees individuals' right to privacy, based on the principles of Islamic law that safeguard human dignity and protect personal life.

This study explores the concept of the right to privacy in Islam through an examination of the Prophetic biography. It reviews how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) established a practical framework to protect this right across various fields. The research relies on a historical-analytical methodology based on inductive readings of the Qur'anic and historical Prophetic biography related to the right to privacy, offering interpretive analysis of these texts and drawing on historical sources connected to the life of the Prophet. It also highlights practical applications of privacy in the Prophet's life (peace be upon him and

his Household), whether within the family, in society, or in state administration.

Through this methodology, the research aims to present a comprehensive and precise understanding of this right as it manifested in the Prophetic biography. From this analysis, it attempts to outline an integrated vision of how modern Muslim societies can benefit from Prophetic values to enhance the protection of privacy in light of current challenges, particularly in the context of technological advancement and the expansion of digital surveillance tools.

Introduction:

The human being is, by nature, a social creature who does not usually live in isolation from society. Yet, at the same time, he seeks to establish a private domain into which only those he approves may enter. Privacy represents one of the fundamental rights that individuals strive to preserve, as its violation by individuals or institutions, including governments, poses a threat to human freedom and independence—two essential elements in achieving human perfection and fostering progress and prosperity. Accordingly, ensuring the right to privacy reflects a guarantee of human freedom and dignity. Nevertheless, the exercise of this right may require precise exceptions regulated by specific legal and Sharia-based criteria, to prevent its misuse in ways that may undermine it.

The Concept and Dimensions of the Right to Privacy:

The right to privacy is defined as an individual's right to protect their private life, whether morally or materially, from any form of unlawful interference. This right encompasses multiple dimensions, most notably:

- Protecting family life, homes, and their contents, thereby ensuring the sanctity of homes and preventing their violation.
- Safeguarding physical, psychological, and intellectual freedom, including protection from coercion or infringement upon personal liberties.
- Limiting defamation, spreading of false information, or exploitation of one's name and reputation, thereby reinforcing personal identity protection.
- Prohibiting unlawful surveillance and spying, whether by individuals or official entities, to preserve privacy in movement and communication.
- Guaranteeing the confidentiality of personal correspondence and writings, a fundamental right to uphold individual autonomy.
- Preventing the unauthorized publication of professional confidential information, thereby ensuring occupational and institutional security.
- Protecting the individual from unauthorized cloning, which reflects respect for human individuality and the right to uniqueness and distinction.

Research Challenges and Significance:

This research faces several methodological and epistemological challenges, most notably:

The conceptual challenge: It lies in the difficulty of applying a modern concept like “privacy” to a historical context such as the Prophetic biography, due to the differing temporal and social contexts between past and present.

Scarcity of previous studies: There is a noticeable lack of research addressing this topic from an Islamic perspective, making this area of study a challenging one that necessitates a careful examination of Islamic texts and sources, with an analysis in light of contemporary developments.

Hence, there is a need for comprehensive studies to pave the way toward codifying this fundamental right to ensure its protection and enhance its status within Islamic legal systems.

In addition to the necessity of legislating privacy protection laws and closing legal loopholes in this field, raising awareness of this right—through the study of the Prophetic biography—plays a pivotal role in embedding these values into social life and turning them into a general culture. This study aspires to contribute in this regard by offering a deeper understanding of the concept of privacy in Islam and exploring how it can be employed as an ethical and legal principle to address contemporary challenges, thereby enhancing respect for human dignity and supporting social stability. Neglecting the right to privacy leads to the erosion of the sense of security and creates a state of anxiety and psychological tension, which negatively affects both individuals and society as a whole. A study of the Prophetic biography reveals numerous practical examples that highlight the Prophet’s (peace be upon him and his Household) respect for individuals’ privacy, whether within the family domain, in his social interactions, or in managing state affairs.

Research Questions and Hypothesis:

The main question this research seeks to answer is: How did the Prophetic biography address the right to privacy within the family and Islamic society of that time, and how can these principles be applied in the modern era? From this central question arise the following sub-questions:

What is the definition of the right to privacy, and what are its limits in Islamic Sharia and secular law?

How did Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) respect the privacy of his household and companions, and what are the key incidents that reinforced this right?

How did the Prophetic biography contribute to establishing an ethical and legal framework for preserving privacy within the early Islamic society?

How can the Prophetic principles concerning privacy be employed to face contemporary challenges such as technological advancement and digital privacy violations? This study is based on the hypothesis that the Prophetic biography presented, among other things, a practical and ethical framework that guarantees the right to privacy for individuals, rooted in the principles of Islamic law that uphold human dignity and safeguard personal life.

Research Methodology:

The research adopts a historical-analytical methodology based on inductive readings of the Qur'anic and historical Prophetic biography related to the right to privacy, offering interpretive studies of these texts and drawing from historical sources linked to the Prophet's life. Through this approach, the study aims to present a comprehensive and precise understanding of this right as manifested in the life and interactions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household).

Research Sections:

Definition of Privacy: A review of linguistic and terminological definitions in jurisprudence and law.

Study of Qur'anic Legislation: Examining Qur'anic rulings related to privacy and the Prophetic biography's applications in the context of family relations, social life, and state governance.

Conclusion: A summary of the key findings of the study, along with recommendations that contribute to guiding future research on this subject.

Definition of the Right to Privacy:

The term "right to privacy" is relatively modern, as it is not found in classical jurisprudential and legislative sources in its technical formulation. However, its essence and substance date back to the earliest stages of human history, as human beings have always sought to secure a personal and safe space free from external interference. Hence, the right to privacy is not merely a contemporary legal concept, but rather an innate need rooted in human nature and the desire for autonomy.

The Linguistic Meaning of Privacy:

The Arabic term for "privacy" is derived from a root that conveys the idea of making something exclusive or reserved. For example, a traditional phrase meaning "he made something exclusive to someone"¹ reflects the act of granting something solely to a particular individual. This concept is reflected in the Qur'an, in the verse: "God chooses for His mercy whom He wills" (Surah Al-Baqara, 2:105), where the verb "chooses" implies the act of distinction and exclusive allocation. The word denoting particularity stands in contrast to generality, and it is used to describe what is limited to an individual or a specific group. The term also refers to what one keeps exclusively for oneself. It is also said that one person is "particular" to another, signifying a special and exclusive bond between them.²

1 Louis Maalouf, *Al-Munjid Fi Al-Lugha Wa Al-Adab Wa Al-Ulum*, 3rd ed. (Qom: Isma'iliyan, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 180-181.

2 Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Makram Ibn Manzur, *Lisan Al-Arab* (Qom, Iran: Adab al-Hawza, 1985), vol. 7, p. 24, entry: "Khasasa".

Privacy as a Terminological Concept:

It is believed that the first to introduce the term “right to privacy” in its modern legal sense was the American judge Thomas M. Cooley (1824–1898). The use of this term became established following the famous article by American lawyers Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis titled “The Right to Privacy,” which laid the foundation for a more developed legal understanding of this right.³

The need for privacy is not limited to human nature alone; it is also observable in some aspects of animal behavior, as living beings seek secure spaces that guarantee their protection and independence. The concept of privacy gained increased attention in legal and philosophical thought due to the growing focus on individualism and personal autonomy, which in turn shaped modern rights-based culture. With technological advancements, privacy violations became easier, which heightened the need to study this right from legal and ethical perspectives to maintain a balance between individual freedom and societal requirements.⁴ Given the pivotal role of this right in enhancing personal autonomy and well-being, it has become one of the essential rights protected by contemporary legal systems.⁵

Legal opinions regarding the nature of the right to privacy are generally divided into two main views:

Privacy as an extension of property rights: Some legal scholars argue that the right to privacy is akin to property rights, as it relates to the individual’s ownership over their personal domain and the protection of their material and moral belongings.

Privacy as a personal right: Others view privacy as part of personal rights because of its association with the essence of the individual, their dignity, and their right to choose and control their personal data and information.⁶

3 Tanweer Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Nadheer, *The Right to Privacy: A Comparative Study Between Islamic Jurisprudence and English Law* (PhD Dissertation in Islamic Jurisprudence) (Islamabad: Faculty of Sharia and Law, International Islamic University, n.d.), p. 45.

4 Baqer Ansari, *Privacy Rights*, 2nd ed. (Tehran: SAMT (Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities), n.d.)p. 1-2.

5 Abdulrahman Jamal al-Din Hamza, *Privacy and Freedom of the Press: A Comparative Study Between Secular Law and Islamic Sharia* (Cairo: Egyptian General Book Authority, 2004)p. 105.

6 Hamza, p. 84.

Based on the above, this study adopts the following definition of the right to privacy: “Privacy is a personal domain of an individual’s life, based on human nature, custom, or explicit declaration, where one expects to remain free from others’ interference, observation, or exposure to any information related to them in any form.”⁷

Definition of the Right to Privacy in Islamic Sharia:

The term “right to privacy” in its modern form is not found in classical jurisprudential sources, as it emerged in response to the development of societies and the increasing complexity of human relationships. Nevertheless, the essence of this right is deeply rooted in Islamic values and legal rulings that aim to preserve human dignity and protect individual freedoms.

Some contemporary Islamic jurisprudential writings have sought to define the right to privacy by emphasizing the sanctity of a Muslim’s private life in all its forms. This definition is grounded in the legal maxim of “preventing harm and securing benefits,” which is a foundational principle in Islamic law for guaranteeing individual rights.⁸

Another jurisprudential view considers privacy protection to be based on the ma-qasid (higher objectives) of Islamic law, namely: the preservation of religion, life, intellect, wealth, and honor. According to this view, the right to privacy is part of this objective-based framework due to its role in achieving psychological and social security and stability.^{9 10}

Based on all these perspectives, the right to privacy is considered an extension of the human dignity that Allah Almighty has granted to humankind, as stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam” (Surah Al-Isra, 17:70). This verse refers to the divine honoring of humanity, which includes safeguarding their fundamental rights, privacy among them. Consequently, privacy protection is

7 Ansari, Privacy Rights, p. 38-39.

8 Muhammad Rakan Dughmi, Protection of Private Life in Islamic Sharia (Cairo: Dar al-Salam for Publishing and Distribution, 1985)p. 5 and onwards.

9 Hosni Al-Jondi, Guaranteeing Rights of Private Life in Islam, p. 12.

10 Ali Al-Zoubi, The Right to Privacy in Criminal Law: A Comparative Study (Tripoli: Modern Foundation for Books, 2006) p. 137.

not merely a modern social demand but a fundamental value in Islam and a key pillar for achieving human happiness and a stable life.

Based on the definition of the “right to privacy” in legal sources, and grounded in the principles and foundations of Islamic Sharia, the right to privacy in Islam can be defined as:

“The right of a person to safeguard their private affairs and protect them from the knowledge or interference of others without their consent or approval, as an inseparable part of their human dignity which Islamic Sharia strives to preserve and respect.”

Certain personal matters enjoy special legal protection, whereby accessing them or informing others about them without a valid reason falls under the spread of indecency and immorality, which Islamic texts strictly warn against. On the other hand, issues that individuals hide for personal reasons or deny—as long as they do not violate others’ rights or threaten the public interest—enjoy specific protection applicable only to the concerned individual.¹¹

Instances of the Right to Privacy in the Prophetic Biography:

Many practical applications of the principle of the right to privacy can be drawn from the Prophetic biography. These can be classified according to various criteria, but the division most suitable for this study revolves around two main domains:

The Right to Privacy within the Family: This includes studying how relationships among family members were regulated and how Prophetic legislation protected individual privacy within the household, including guidelines related to private behavior, correspondence, and personal space.

The Right to Privacy within Society: This addresses interpersonal relations within the Islamic community and how Islamic Sharia organized respect for privacy in public life, preventing violations of personal information, spying, and the unauthorized disclosure of secrets. It also includes the Islamic state’s stance during the Prophet’s era toward individual privacy and the Prophetic legislations that regulated the relationship

11 Ali Jafari and Azim Abedini, “Narrative Foundations for the Protection of Privacy,” *Jurisprudence and Communication Law*, no. 1 (n.d.): 34, p. 47.

between ruler and subjects concerning privacy, including inspection and surveillance policies and the protection of individual rights within the public interest framework. This classification is not rigid, as overlapping cases exist that apply to both domains—such as issues that pertain to both family and society. However, it is adopted here as an organizational framework due to its comprehensiveness and clarity in analyzing privacy applications in the Prophetic biography. The following are some of the most prominent examples:

The Right to Privacy within the Family:

The family is the basic unit of Islamic society. Both the Qur'an and the Prophetic biography placed great emphasis on protecting individual privacy within the family. In this context, Islamic legislation ensures that no member's privacy is violated at home, promoting mutual respect among family members. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) established a complete moral and behavioral model in preserving marital and family privacy. His interactions with his wives and family were based on kindness and respect, with attention to their personal rights, protection of their secrets, and care not to violate their privacy, whether in personal life or family matters. Here are some practical aspects of this right from the Prophetic biography:

Notifying Family Before Entering the House:

Islam emphasizes the necessity of informing household members before entering the home to avoid any embarrassment caused by unexpected entry, which reflects respect for family privacy. The Qur'an underscores the importance of entering homes through their doors, which are symbols of privacy, and not through inappropriate ways: "Righteousness is not that you enter houses from the back, but righteousness is in one who fears God. So enter houses through their doors..." (Surah Al-Baqara, 2:189).

Before Islam, Arabs on pilgrimage would avoid entering their homes through the front door and would instead climb in through wall openings, believing this was an expression of piety. The verse came to end this practice and direct them to true righ-

teousness, which lies in piety, commanding them to enter from the main door in order to preserve the sanctity of the home and its residents.¹²

There are also explicit Prophetic instructions regarding this matter. Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said to him:

“O my son, when you enter upon your family, greet them with peace; it will be a blessing upon you and your household.”¹³

Though greeting is legally recommended, reports indicate an additional benefit concerning privacy. Imam Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: “A man should greet his family when he enters, and he should make noise with his sandals and clear his throat, so that he informs them he has come, so that he does not see anything he dislikes.”¹⁴

Seeking Permission Before Entering Sleeping Quarters:

The Qur’an addresses the matter of entering places of seclusion and sleep with clear rulings: “O you who believe, let those whom your right hands possess and those among you who have not reached puberty ask permission of you at three times: before the dawn prayer, when you put aside your clothing at noon, and after the evening prayer—these are three times of privacy for you” (Surah An-Nur, 24:58).

This verse outlines the requirement of seeking permission within the family during specific times—when individuals are likely to be in a state of privacy. Children, those not yet of puberty, and servants are required to seek permission before entering the sleeping quarters of parents or adults during these times. Although the verse addresses children and servants, a fortiori reasoning implies a stronger obligation upon adults.

Furthermore, the verse does not limit the requirement to bedrooms, but rather refers to “places of sleep” in general, covering any area used for sleeping within the house.

12 Mehdi Amadeh, *Protection of Privacy*, 1st ed. (Tehran: Dadgostar Publishing, 2013), p. 75.

13 Muhammad ibn Isa Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi*, ed. Bashir Awwad Marouf, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996), vol. 4, (10), section of Greeting Once Entering the House.

14 Ali ibn Hasan Al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat Al-Anwar Fi Ghurar Al-Akhbar*, 2nd ed. (Najaf: Al-Haydariyya Library, n.d.), p. 195.

In this context, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said:

“Indeed, seeking permission is to prevent one from looking [without consent],”¹⁵ meaning that the purpose of seeking permission is not merely to prevent unauthorized entry, but also to prevent any form of unwarranted observation, which reflects the profound concept of respecting privacy in Islam.

On the other hand, asking for permission is not limited to entering the couple’s sleeping quarters; it includes all rooms within the house—even if a person is responsible for the household. It is narrated:

A man said: “O Messenger of Allah, should I ask permission before entering upon my mother?” He said: “Yes.”

Then a man said: “But I live with her in the house.” He said: “Ask permission before entering.” The man said: “I serve her, should I ask permission every time I enter?” He said: “Do you wish to see her naked?”¹⁶

The man said: “No.” He replied: “Then ask permission before entering.”

In a similar narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) commands someone to ask permission before entering upon his sister. This reflects the Prophet’s sensitivity (peace be upon him and his Household) toward respecting the privacy of family members, including mothers and sisters.

If asking permission is required with one’s mother, it is even more so when entering the rooms of sisters, maternal or paternal aunts. This also applies to a girl in her home; she should ask permission before entering the room of her father or brother, reinforcing the principle of mutual respect within the family.

These Qur’anic teachings and Prophetic instructions present clear foundations for respecting individual privacy, even within the same family. Teaching the habit of seeking permission and maintaining boundaries of privacy helps cultivate a home environ-

15 Muhammad Qummi Mashhadi, *Tafsir Kanz Al-Daqa’iq Wa Bahr Al-Ghara’ib* (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Printing and Publishing Foundation, 2009), vol. 9, p. 273.

16 Abu al-Fadl Jalal al-Din Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Bakr Al-Suyuti, *Al-Durr Al-Manthur Fi Al-Tafseer Bil-Ma’tthur*, ed. Dr. Abdullah Abdul Mohsen Al-Turki, 1st ed (Cairo: Hajar Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies and Research, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 57.

ment built on respect, trust, and serenity, thus fostering healthy family relationships that honor moral and social values.

Privacy in Marital Relations:

Islam places great emphasis on the privacy of the marital relationship, which must be based on confidentiality and mutual respect. Revealing secrets of married life constitutes a severe violation of privacy and may lead to familial discord, loss of trust between spouses, and eventual breakdown of the marriage. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said:

“Among the worst of people in position before Allah on the Day of Judgment is a man who has intimate relations with his wife, and she with him, then he discloses her secrets.”¹⁷ This hadith underscores that marital secrets are among the greatest trusts.

The Qur’an’s command to treat one’s spouse with kindness, as stated in (An-Nisa: 19), and the Prophet’s repeated advice in his Farewell Sermon also highlight the Islamic concern for preserving married life and protecting it from intrusion.

Respecting Privacy in Embarrassing Incidents:

The Prophet’s behavior in many situations illustrates his deep concern for the privacy of his family members, especially in sensitive or embarrassing matters. One notable example is the Incident of the Ifk, where one of the Prophet’s wives was falsely accused. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) handled the matter with immense patience and wisdom, refraining from rushing to judgment or publicly disclosing any details. Instead, he awaited divine revelation to clarify the matter: “Indeed, those who came with the falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it is bad for you; rather, it is good for you...” (Surah An-Nur, 24:11).

The Prophet’s restraint and waiting for the revelation to resolve the issue reflect his deep respect for the privacy of women, wives, and family, as well as his commitment to avoid spreading rumors or premature judgments.

This Prophetic model establishes an ethical and social principle that rejects defa-

¹⁷ Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Nisaburi, Sahih Muslim, ed. Muhammad Fouad Abdul-Baqi (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ Al-Turath Al-Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, (21) Section of Prohibiting the Secrets of a Woman, p. 1060.

mation and attacks on individual dignity through unproven accusations, making it a foundational value in protecting privacy and promoting social justice.

Providing Separate Living Spaces for Wives:

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) ensured each of his wives had an independent living space. Each wife had her own private room, separate from the others. Though simple and modest, these rooms provided privacy and independence, allowing each wife to manage her personal affairs away from interference.

From the foregoing summary, it becomes clear that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) respected the privacy of his household, preserved the secrets of marital life, and emphasized seeking permission and respecting personal spaces within the family. His approach serves as an educational model that reinforces values of modesty and family stability. He taught the Ummah the importance of keeping family secrets and warned against revealing private matters, as doing so constitutes a violation of privacy and weakens familial bonds.

The Right to Privacy in Society:

The concept of the right to privacy in society is not limited to individual relationships but extends to the relationship between institutions or governing authorities and the individual. Due to the power and authority governments wield, their violation of citizens' privacy is particularly grave and harmful, necessitating strict regulations to protect individuals from unauthorized surveillance and intrusion into personal life.

Islamic Sharia approaches individuals with the principle of *Asl al-Bara'ah* (the presumption of innocence), a legal and ethical rule that provides individuals with protection against oppression, unjust interference, and unwarranted invasions of privacy. This principle implies legal and religious immunity from responsibility unless proven otherwise, thereby reinforcing citizens' rights in judicial, social, and civil matters.

The Qur'an affirms this principle by forbidding judgment without knowledge or hasty accusations: "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge..." (Surah Al-Isra, 17:36).

This verse emphasizes that issuing accusations without evidence or unlawfully interfering in others' affairs is a blatant violation of individual rights and privacy.¹⁸

The principle of "No authority of one human being over another" also safeguards individuals from unwarranted interference, as interfering in private affairs represents a form of imposed guardianship that Islam strictly prohibits.¹⁹

Protecting privacy fosters mutual respect and trust among members of society and encourages cooperation and commitment to ethical values. A well-known example from the Prophet's life illustrates this principle:

"We used to travel with the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), and neither did the fasting person criticize the one who broke his fast, nor did the one who broke his fast criticize the fasting person."²⁰

This hadith reflects the Prophet's commitment to not intrude on others' personal matters or impose opinions, while also respecting differences in worship and behavior, as long as these remain within what is legally permissible.

Here are some practical aspects of this right as manifested in the Prophetic biography:

Respecting People's Status:

The Qur'an instructs believers to show proper manners and reverence when addressing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household). They are commanded not to raise their voices above his, nor to address him as they would one another. Doing so may lead to the nullification of deeds without their awareness: "O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet..." (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:3).

These verses highlight that decorum, reverence, and humility distinguish the righteous. Out of compassion, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) would

18 Atiyeh Jubrani, *The Status of Privacy in Iranian and French Criminal Law* (Master's Thesis in Criminal Law and Criminology), ed. Supervisor: Jafar Kousha (Qom: Mofid University, n.d.), chapter Two, Section One.

19 Abu al-Qasim Naqibi, "Privacy in Family Relations and Interactions," *Semi-Annual Journal of Family Jurisprudence and Law* (Nida-Ye Sadiq), no. 52 (n.d.), p. 17.

20 Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, ed. Mustafa Al-Dhahabi (Dar Al-Hadith, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 322, Hadith 1757.

even ensure that his own voice remained louder than those addressing him, to protect them from divine punishment.²¹

In another verse, those who called out to the Prophet from outside his chambers without waiting were criticized for their lack of reason: “Indeed, those who call you from behind the chambers...” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:5).

While these verses address the sanctity of Prophethood, the underlying principle applies broadly—highlighting the need to respect others, especially those with special status and rights over us, such as parents, teachers, scholars, and elders.

Protecting Personal Reputation:

The verse “If you disclose your charitable donations, it is well; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you” (Surah Al-Baqara, 2:271) emphasizes that giving charity in secret is preferable, as it preserves the feelings and dignity of the recipient.

Preserving personal reputation is among the values Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) upheld in the Islamic community. He understood that suspicion and rumors cause deep psychological and social harm, necessitating proactive measures to prevent misinterpretation or unjust accusation.

A prominent example is reported by Imam Zayn al-Abidin from Lady Safiyyah bint Huyayy. She recounted visiting the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) while he was in i’tikaf during the last ten nights of Ramadan. When she left, he walked her out, and two Ansar men passed by. He told them:

“This is Safiyyah bint Huyayy.”

They replied: “Glory be to Allah, O Messenger of Allah!”

He said: “Satan runs through the son of Adam like blood, and I feared he might instill something [doubtful] in your hearts.”²²

This incident reveals the Prophet’s care in protecting his wife’s reputation and his

21 Hashim Bahrani, *Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir Al-Qur’an* (Qom: Al-Ba’tbah Foundation, Printing and Publishing Center, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 279.

22 Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol 10, p. 44-45, Hadith 5526.

initiative in preventing any misunderstanding. This behavior sets a general rule that applies to all individuals who might be in situations prone to misinterpretation.

Giving Advice Privately:

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) practiced giving private advice, preserving the dignity of his companions and avoiding public embarrassment. When he wanted to guide someone or correct a behavior, he would say:

“What is the matter with some people who do such and such...”²³
without mentioning names.

Another example is the Prophet’s interaction with women who asked him questions about personal matters. He would respond with gentleness and modesty, sometimes using gestures or euphemisms. At times, one of his wives would step in to clarify details.²⁴ This approach offers valuable lessons in respectful and effective communication.

Modesty and Privacy:

Satir (modesty and concealment) is a core value protecting human dignity and the body from indecency. The Qur’an commands believers to lower their gaze and guard their modesty: “Tell the believing men to lower their gaze...” and “Tell the believing women to lower their gaze...” (Surah An-Nur, 24:30–31).

Modesty is not limited to physical covering but includes visual privacy as well. Gazing without permission is a form of privacy violation, just like eavesdropping.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) taught his companions—both men and women—the difference between an accidental glance and a deliberate one that constitutes a violation. He said to Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

“O Ali, the first glance is for you, the second is against you.”²⁵

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) sternly warns against violating people’s privacy by looking at them unlawfully:

²³ Muhammad Baqir Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar (Tehran: Islamic Book House, n.d.), vol. 72, Chapter of Backbiting, p. 224.

²⁴ Al-Nisaburi, Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 261, Book of Menstruation, Hadith 61.

²⁵ Muhammad ibn Hasan Hurr al-Amili, Tafsil Wasa’il Al-Shi’a Ila Tahsil Masa’il Al-Shari’a, 1st ed. (Qom: Al al-Bayt Foundation, n.d.), vol. 20, p. 194.

“Whoever looks into the house of his neighbor and sees the private parts of a man, or the hair of a woman, or any part of her body, it is a right upon Allah to admit him into Hell with the hypocrites—those who used to track women’s private parts in this world. He shall not leave this world until Allah exposes his own private parts, and they become visible to people in the Hereafter. And whoever fills his eyes with forbidden looks at a woman, Allah will fill them on the Day of Judgment with nails of fire and burn them until judgment is passed among the people, then he shall be ordered to Hell.”²⁶ This hadith emphasizes that visual eavesdropping is one of the major sins due to its blatant violation of human dignity and sanctity.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) did not stop at prohibiting the violation of people’s privacy or intruding into their solitude; he went further by encouraging the concealment of others’ faults and the protection of their secrets. ‘Awrah (private matter) refers to anything a person dislikes being exposed—whether a physical imperfection or a shameful act tied to personal privacy. It is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “Whoever sees an ‘awrah and conceals it, it is as if he revived a buried girl from her grave.”²⁷

Among the behaviors strongly warned against by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) is spying on others’ private lives. Such behavior is a sign of weak faith or insincere Islam. He said:

“O you who have embraced Islam with your tongues but faith has not entered your hearts, do not slander Muslims nor follow their private matters. For whoever follows their private matters, Allah will follow his. And whoever Allah follows, He will expose him, even if he is inside his house.”²⁸

This hadith points to the idea that true Islam is not limited to outward belief but must manifest in ethical conduct, including the respect for others’ privacy.

26 Hurr al-Amili, vol. 20, p. 195.

27 Abu al-Qasim Bayandeh, *Nahj Al-Fasaha* (Short Sayings of the Prophet), 4th ed. (Tehran: Dunya-ye Danesh, n.d.), p. 745, Hadith 2882.

28 Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil Wasa’il Al-Shi’a Ila Tahsil Masa’il Al-Shari’a*, vol. 12, p. 275.

From Islamic legal principles, the “Principle of Concealment (Sitr)” has two essential dimensions:

Affirmative dimension: concealment is a legitimate and affirmed right and is part of the Islamic legal and ethical system.

Instructive dimension: Islam encourages Muslims to practice concealment and protect secrets due to its role in strengthening social cohesion and preventing discord and enmity.

Due to its importance, Islam prohibits investigating unannounced sins. Neither judges nor officials should spy or inquire into sins that are not public or have not caused harm to others. Doing so constitutes a violation of individual rights and personal privacy.

Prohibition of Defamation and Spreading Indecency:

Certain areas of private life are given special status in Islamic teachings, to the extent that they must not be revealed—even with the consent of the person involved—because doing so would be considered as spreading indecency (fahisha), which contradicts human dignity.

Islamic teachings stress the obligation of concealing faults and lapses, whether related to oneself or others. The Qur’an warns those who promote indecency: “Indeed, those who love that indecency should spread among the believers will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter” (Surah An-Nur, 24:19).

Some Words Are a Trust:

Avoiding betrayal in trust is a fundamental principle in Islamic law. The concept of trust is not limited to material possessions but also includes private conversations and confidential gatherings. It is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “When a man speaks a word and then looks around (to ensure privacy), it is a trust.”²⁹ His glance indicates a desire to keep the statement confidential, and it is thus impermissible to disclose it without permission.

Prophetic teachings affirm that private gatherings are a trust, and it is forbidden to

²⁹ Muhammad ibn al-Hasan Al-Tusi, *Al-Amali* (Qom: Dar al-Thaqafa, n.d.), p. 53.

disclose what is said therein—except in three cases involving serious violations. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said:

“Gatherings are a trust, except in three: a gathering in which unlawful blood is shed, or unlawful sexual intercourse is permitted, or unlawful wealth is taken without right.”³⁰

In addition to protecting the privacy of discussions and confidential meetings, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) prohibited sitting between two people without their consent, as one might overhear things they do not wish to disclose. He said:

“Do not sit between two men except with their permission.”³¹

Listening to others’ conversations without their consent is among the gravest sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) warned:

“Whoever listens to the conversation of a people while they dislike it, molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Judgment.”³²

Preservation of Private Correspondence:

Personal letters and private documents enjoy strict protection in Islam. Violating this protection constitutes an infringement on personal rights and privacy. It is narrated:

“Whoever looks into his brother’s letter without permission, it is as if he looked into the Fire.”³³

Prohibition of reading others’ letters—whether written, digital, or otherwise—without their consent is a general principle in Islamic law. It is part of the fundamental rights that guarantee a person’s freedom to keep their information private.

Prohibition of Suspicion, Spying, and Backbiting:

Prohibiting suspicion, spying, and backbiting is among the well-established ethical foundations in Islam. This prohibition is so frequent in the Qur’an and Sunnah that it has become a self-evident moral rule in Muslim social conduct. Allah says: “O you

30 Al-Tusi, p. 53.

31 Sulayman Abu Dawud, Sunan Abi Dawud, ed. Sayed Muhammad, 1st ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 2067.

32 Hurr al-Amili, Tafsil Wasa’il Al-Shi’a Ila Tahsil Masa’il Al-Shari’a, vol. 17, p. 297-298.

33 Husayn Al-Nuri, Mustadrak Al-Wasa’il Wa Mustanbat Al-Masa’il, 1st ed. (Beirut: Al al-Bayt Foundation for Reviving Heritage, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 146 - Chapter of the Legislations of Travel and Inhabitation, p. 159.

who believe, avoid much suspicion..." (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12).

Spying is an illicit attempt to gather information about others without their knowledge. The verse does not specify a particular type of suspicion or spying; thus, the prohibition is general, with exceptions only in cases where Islamic law permits surveillance under strict conditions—such as investigating crimes that threaten public safety.³⁴

The verse hints that spying often stems from baseless suspicion. Therefore, avoiding suspicion is not merely an ethical recommendation but a preventative measure to protect individual privacy and prevent actions like spying, slander, and the revealing of secrets.³⁵

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also prohibits suspicion before it leads to spying:

"Beware of suspicion, for it is the most false of speech. Be brothers in Allah as He commanded you: do not alienate, do not spy, do not speak obscenely, do not backbite, do not dispute, do not hate, do not turn your backs on one another, and do not envy—for envy consumes faith like fire consumes dry wood."³⁶

Backbiting is to mention something about someone that they would dislike, whether a flaw or deficiency. Shaykh Ali al-Mishkini notes that backbiting is not limited to physical flaws, but extends to issues of lineage, character, actions, words, religion, worldly affairs—even clothing, home, or transportation. Backbiting includes verbal statements and other expressions, such as actions, gestures, or writings intended to mention the person with negativity.³⁷

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) warned of the grave danger of backbiting, describing it as worse than adultery. When asked why, he said: "The one who commits adultery may repent and Allah will forgive him. But the

34 Jafari, and Abedini, "Narrative Foundations for the Protection of Privacy", p. 34.

35 Naqibi, "Privacy in Family Relations and Interactions", p. 15.

36 Abdullah Hamiri, *Qurb Al-Isnad*, ed. Al al-Bayt Foundation, 1st ed. (Qom: Al al-Bayt Foundation, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 29, Hadith 94.

37 Ali Al-Mashkini al-Ardabili, *Fiqh Terminology*, ed. Hamid Ahmadi Al-Jul'ai, 1st ed. (Qom: Dar al-Hadith Publishing, n.d.), p. 422.

one who commits backbiting cannot be forgiven until the person he wronged forgives him.”³⁸

Sayyid Musa al-Sadr emphasized that human value is not measured by physical abilities alone, but by dignity and the trust people place in one another. The merchant, scholar, physician, official—all serve society through dignity and integrity. When trust is lost, their effectiveness declines. Therefore, mutual trust is essential for cooperation and cohesion. If suspicion, backbiting, slander, and false accusations spread, society loses its potential and begins to collapse.

According to the Qur’an, backbiting kills a person socially. That’s why it compares it to eating the flesh of a dead brother. This graphic metaphor shows the severity of backbiting as a form of social assassination. Slander and defamation destroy the inner fabric of society. A society that retains all its members’ contributions is stronger than one that loses individuals due to these harmful behaviors. Thus, unethical practices not only isolate individuals but also threaten the structure of the community itself.³⁹

This prohibition applies not only to individuals but also to institutions and governments. No authority may treat people based on suspicion without clear legal evidence. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) applied this principle even to himself, saying: “I was not commanded to split open people’s hearts or tear open their bellies.”⁴⁰

Even in cases where governments or legal authorities might need to monitor someone for security or legal reasons, it must be done only under exceptional circumstances, with strict legal procedures and judicial authorization. Security surveillance must not become a general rule, but remain an exceptional measure under precise religious and legal conditions, and must not be used to violate privacy or infringe on personal sanctity unjustly.

38 Muhammad Husayn Al-Tabatabai, *Al-Mizan Fi Tafseer Al-Mizan*, 2nd ed (Beirut: al-Alami Publications, n.d.), vol. 18, p. 334.

39 Musa Sadr, “The Righteous Society - Morals,” in *Musa Al-Sadr and the Humanist Discourse: Lectures and Research* by Imam Sayyid Musa Al-Sadr, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Beirut: Imam Musa al-Sadr Center for Research and Studies, 2009), p. 373-375.

40 Bayandeh, *Nahj Al-Fasaha* (Short Sayings of the Prophet), p. 348, Hadith 961.

In Islamic judicial legislation, testimonies and accusations must be reliable and based on evidence—not obtained through spying or manipulating personal information. This principle applies not only in times of peace, but even in times of war and crisis. When the Prophet sent military expeditions, he would gather them, address them, and advise them: “Do not steal from the spoils, do not mutilate [the enemy]...”⁴¹

Obligation to Preserve the Secrets of Individuals and the State:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) not only forbade spying but went further by mandating the preservation of secrets—especially in security and military matters—for the sake of protecting the community and maintaining stability.

Governments are responsible for protecting sensitive information and must not release it randomly or irresponsibly, particularly regarding national security, military plans, and strategic matters.

The Qur’an instructs Muslims to refer security matters to leadership instead of spreading them: “And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it. But if they had referred it to the Messenger or to those in authority among them, then those who can draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it...” (Surah An-Nisa, 4:83).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) adhered to this principle strictly, especially during battles. He kept military plans confidential and shared final destinations or strategies only with a few companions, even until the last moment.

One reason for the success of the Islamic mission was that it began in secrecy and remained secret for three years. His migration from Mecca to Medina is a lesson in confidentiality and security planning.

⁴¹ Muhammad ibn Yaqub Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, ed. Ali Akbar Al-Ghaffari (Tehran: Islamic Book House, n.d.), vol. 9, Book of Jihad, Advice of the Prophet to Imam Ali in Battlefields, p. 408-409.

It is narrated from Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

“Whenever the Messenger of Allah intended a military campaign, he would pretend to be planning something else—except in the expedition of Tabuk, which he made known.”⁴²

The conquest of Mecca is a striking example of security planning, where secrecy led to victory without combat.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also used sealed letters for security. He sent a reconnaissance mission led by Abdullah ibn Jahsh during Rajab of the second year of Hijrah. He gave him a sealed letter and instructed him not to open it until two days into the journey.⁴³

Obligation to Respect Religious and Doctrinal Freedom:

The Qur’an affirms the principle of freedom of religious belief: “There is no compulsion in religion; the right path has become distinct from error” (Surah Al-Baqara, 2:256), and explicitly prohibits coercing people into faith: “And had your Lord willed, all those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel people in order that they become believers?” (Surah Yunus, 10:99).

Imam Al-Ridha (peace be upon him) was asked about the meaning of this verse, and he narrated that the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) said:

“The Muslims said to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his Household): O Messenger of Allah, if only you compelled those whom you could to embrace Islam, our numbers would increase and we would grow stronger against our enemies.”

The Prophet replied: “I will not meet Allah having introduced an innovation He did not command me to do, and I am not among the pretenders.”

Then Allah revealed to him: “And had your Lord willed, all those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely.”⁴⁴

42 Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 21, p. 237.

43 Saeed Hawwa, Al-Asas Fi Al-Sunnah Wa Fiqhiha: The Prophetic Biography, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 433.

44 Abu Mansur Ahmad Al-Tabarsi, Al-Ihtijaj, ed. Muhammad Baqir Al-Khurasan, 1st ed. (Mashhad: Nashr al-Muru tadha, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 412.

Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) dealt with people based on their outward actions, never probing into their inner beliefs or intentions. This principle was clear in his dealings with hypocrites, as he judged them only by their apparent behavior and never investigated what was in their hearts, despite knowing their true nature. This reflects Islam's approach of respecting the private faith and belief of each individual.

Prohibition of Violating Others' Sanctities and Beliefs:

Respect for others' sanctities is one of the most significant aspects of the right to privacy. It is forbidden to insult or demean them. The Qur'an affirms this principle: "Do not insult those they invoke besides Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge" (Surah Al-An'am, 6:108).

Commentaries explain that the polytheists warned the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), saying:

"O Muhammad, either you stop insulting our gods, or we will insult your Lord." So this verse was revealed. Qatadah ibn al-Nu'man said: "The Muslims used to insult the idols of the disbelievers, so Allah forbade them to do so lest the disbelievers insult Allah in ignorance."⁴⁵

It was also narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him):

He was asked about the Prophet's saying: 'Indeed, polytheism is more hidden than the creeping of an ant on a black stone in a dark night.' He said: 'Believers used to insult what the polytheists worshiped besides Allah, and so the polytheists would insult what the believers worship. So Allah forbade believers from insulting their gods so that the disbelievers would not insult the God of the believers, causing them to unknowingly fall into shirk.'⁴⁶

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) emphasized restraining the tongue and avoiding words that stir hatred. In a hadith he said:

"Among the major sins is for a man to insult his parents."

45 Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 18, Section 1, Prophetic Revelation and the Announcement of Prophethood, p. 158.

46 Muhammad Faydh al-Kashani, Tafsir Al-Safi (Tehran: Al-Sadr Library, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 147.

They asked: “O Messenger of Allah, can a man insult his parents?”

He replied: “He insults another man’s father, so that man insults his father and mother.”⁴⁷

Obligation to Fulfill Trusts, Covenants, and Contracts, and Prohibition of Betrayal:

These are well-established principles in Islam, emphasized in many verses such as: Al-Ma’ida: 1, Al-Hajj: 38, Al-Nisa: 58, Al-Baqara: 177, and Al-Ra’d: 20, as well as in numerous hadiths.

Fulfilling promises safeguards privacy, whereas betrayal—especially of trusts—often entails serious violations of personal rights. For the sake of brevity and clarity, detailed discussion is omitted.

Prohibition of Tale-bearing, Mockery, Insult, Slander, Cursing, and Lying:

Tale-bearing (namimah) is prohibited by the Qur’an, Sunnah, scholarly consensus, and reason. It is considered a major sin due to the social corruption it causes and its violation of privacy.

Shaykh Al-Ansari defined it as transmitting someone’s words to another to sow discord. Shaykh Ali Al-Mishkini added that it includes anything that reduces affection, incites hatred, or spreads enmity, regardless of the medium—spoken, written, gestured, or implied—and regardless of the content.⁴⁸ The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) regarded the tale-bearer among the worst of people.⁴⁹

Most instances of tale-bearing involve breaching a person’s privacy, revealing what they prefer to keep hidden, often with malicious intent.

The Qur’an also forbids mockery, using offensive nicknames, and making baseless accusations (Al-Hujurat: 11). The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) prohibited these actions, even in his Farewell Sermon.⁵⁰

47 Al-Nisaburi, Sahih Muslimj, vol. 1, p. 92.

48 Al-Mashkini al-Ardabili, Fiqh Terminology, p. 583.

49 Qummi Mashhadi, Tafsir Kanz Al-Daqa’iq Wa Bahr Al-Ghara’ib, vol. 13, p. 381.

50 Al-Tabatabai, Al-Mizan Fi Tafseer Al-Mizan, vol. 18, p. 334.

The Qur'an warns against false accusations and slandering the innocent, describing it as a grievous sin:

"And whoever commits a sin or wrongs himself, then blames it on an innocent person, has taken upon himself a slander and a clear sin" (Surah Al-Nisa, 4:112). It is narrated that this verse was revealed when a hypocrite falsely accused a Jewish man of theft, and the verse vindicated the Jew.⁵¹

As for insult, slander, and defamation, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said:

"Insulting a believer is immoral."⁵²

He went so far as to forbid cursing Satan, saying:

"Do not curse Satan, but seek refuge in Allah from his evil."⁵³

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also forbade cursing in general, saying:

"A believer is not a curser."⁵⁴

He even refused to curse the disbelievers and said:

"I was not sent as a curser. I was sent as a mercy."⁵⁵

He considered the perfection of one's Islam to lie in others' safety from their harm:

"The believer is the one whom people trust with their lives and property, and the Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe..."⁵⁶

Lying is a form of deception, manipulation, and violation of others' privacy. The root word *kadhib* (lie) appears 282 times in the Qur'an, always in negative contexts. The Qur'an describes lying as a form of injustice:

"And who is more unjust than one who fabricates a lie against Allah..." (Surah Al-An'am, 6:21).

51 Bahrani, *Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 170.

52 Husayn ibn Sa'id Al-Kufi al-Ahwazi, *Al-Zuhd*, 2nd ed. (Qom: Al-Ilmiyya Press, n.d.), p. 11, Hadith 23.

53 Bayandeh, *Nahj Al-Fasaha* (Short Sayings of the Prophet), p. 669, Hadith 2446.

54 Abdul Hussein Amini, *Al-Ghadir Fi Al-Kitab Wa Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Adab*, 1st ed. (Qom: Al-Ghadir Center for Islamic Studies, n.d.)vol. 11, p. 118.

55 Amini, vol. 8, p. 357.

56 Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil Wasa'il Al-Shi'a Ila Tahsil Masa'il Al-Shari'a*, vol. 12, 152, Section of Prohibiting Backbiting a Believer Even if It Was True, p. 278.

Hadiths prohibiting insult, slander, and defamation aim to preserve human dignity. Though these teachings are moral in nature, they also cultivate individuals who respect others' privacy and refrain from causing harm.

Privacy of Homes, Residences, and Private Spaces:

While the sanctity of homes was previously discussed in relation to their inhabitants, it is equally important from the perspective of society and government institutions. Disregarding the sanctity of others' homes—even visually—is an invasion of privacy and a violation of their rights, and it is among the harms warned against in both the Qur'an and the Prophet's biography.

Among the signs of the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his Household) respect for his family's privacy was his protection of their home sanctity. He asked people not to enter his homes without permission, and the Qur'an reinforced this: "O you who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted..." (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:53).

This respect is not exclusive to the Prophet's home, as the Qur'an commands: "O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own without first seeking permission and greeting their inhabitants..." (Surah An-Nur, 24:27–28).

The term *tasta'nisu* (seek permission) refers to seeking familiarity and comfort for the household members. Al-Tabari explains that it originates from *uns* (comfort), suggesting that unauthorized entry causes unease, hence the legislation of seeking permission to restore peace and comfort.

This verse establishes a clear rule to respect others' homes and privacy. Entry must be with permission, and even if the house appears empty, one must not enter without explicit consent. This applies equally to government authorities. Seeking permission is not merely procedural—it is a religious obligation that affirms respect for others' rights and establishes societal norms that protect privacy.

Etiquette of Seeking Permission:

Precise Prophetic instructions define how to seek permission. Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) narrates from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “If one of you seeks permission to enter, let him begin with peace (salam), for it is one of the names of Allah. Let him seek permission from behind the door before looking inside the house, for you have been commanded to seek permission because of the eye. Permission is sought three times: if you are told to enter, then enter; if you are told to return, then return. The first call lets the household hear, the second allows them to prepare, and the third lets them choose whether to allow entry. If not granted, then return. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his Household) never left a door until he had greeted three times.”⁵⁷

The Prophet would not stand directly in front of the door but would angle himself to avoid seeing inside. He said:

“Seeking permission is because of the gaze.”⁵⁸

Even those with legal access must still seek permission. For example, in the famous incident of Samurah ibn Jundub, the Prophet said to the Ansari homeowner regarding Samurah’s tree:

“Go and uproot it and throw it back to him, for there is to be no harm or reciprocating harm.”⁵⁹

Respecting Household Privacy After Entry:

Privacy is not limited to seeking entry; it includes conduct after entering. Guests must not overstay or inconvenience the household. The Qur’an states: “...But when you have eaten, disperse...” (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:53).

This verse was revealed because some companions would linger in the Prophet’s home after meals, enjoying conversation, which disturbed him and his family. Out of

57 Al-Nuri, Mustadrak Al-Wasa’il Wa Mustanbat Al-Masa’il, vol. 14, p. 284.

58 Ismail Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Qur’an Al-Azim, ed. Muhammad Hussein Shams Al-Din, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Muhammad Ali Baydoun Publications, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 34-38.

59 Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, vol. 10, 149, Section of Harms, Hadith 2, p. 476-478.

shyness, he would not ask them to leave, so the Qur'an clarified that guests should leave after eating.

Surah Al-Mujadila (58:11) also highlights the importance of making space in gatherings and yielding to those of greater knowledge or virtue, reinforcing humility and respect. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) even said:

"Those sitting in the summer should leave a space between every two equivalent to the length of a forearm, so that no one is bothered by the heat of another's body."⁶⁰

Protecting family honor is not just about respecting the sanctity of their homes from the outside or during visits, but also avoiding interference in their private matters. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) respected the personal lives of his companions and never interfered unless they asked for advice or if it related to religious guidance. For instance, when someone sought his permission to divorce, he did not object or inquire into their private life, but simply offered kind and practical advice to preserve the marriage.

Prevention of Harming Others:

When a person realizes that their privacy has been violated, they undoubtedly experience pain and distress. Islam emphasizes the necessity of avoiding harm to others in all its forms. The Qur'an states:

"And those who harm believing men and believing women for something they did not do have certainly born upon themselves a slander and manifest sin" (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:58).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said:

"Whoever harms a Muslim has harmed me, and whoever harms me has harmed Allah."⁶¹

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) demonstrated great sensitivity towards even the smallest forms of harm, such as an inappropriate glance. He said:

60 Al-Tabatabai, Al-Mizan Fi Tafseer Al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 188.

61 Bahrani, Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an, vol. 5, p. 318.

“It is not permissible for a believer to cast a glance at his brother in a way that harms him.”⁶²

Even jokes that frighten or disturb others are discouraged. It is narrated that the companions were once walking with the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), and one of them fell asleep. Someone took his bow, and when he awoke, he was startled, and the others laughed. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) rebuked them, saying: “It is not permissible for a Muslim to terrify another Muslim.”⁶³

He also prohibited two people from conversing secretly in the presence of a third, as this could cause distress.⁶⁴ The Prophet strongly disapproved of any form of emotional harm or unnecessary interference in others’ affairs.^{65 66 67}

The Prophet’s attentiveness (peace be upon him and his Household) extended to such detail that he even lowered his voice while reciting the Qur’an during night prayers so as not to disturb anyone. It is narrated:

“When the Prophet stood to pray at night, he would read softly. He was asked: ‘O Messenger of Allah, why don’t you raise your voice when reciting the Qur’an?’ He replied: ‘I dislike disturbing my companions or my household.’”⁶⁸

As for harming one’s parents, spouse, or neighbors, numerous authenticated hadiths warn against such behavior.

62 Ali ibn Husam Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi Al-Din, *Kanz Al-‘Ummal Fi Sunan Al-Aqwal Wa Al-Af’al*, ed. Bakri Hayani and Safwat Al-Saqa (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 1985), vol. 16, p. 10, Hadith 43703.

63 Warram Ibn Abi Firas, *Tanbih Al-Khawatir Wa Nuzhat Al-Nawazir*, 1st ed. (Qom: Maktabat al-Faqih, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 98.

64 Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, ed. Shuayb Arnaut, 1st ed. (Beirut: Al-Resalah Foundation, n.d.), vol. 38, p. 163.

65 Muhammad Ibn Abi Jumhur, *Awali Al-Lu’ali Al-Aziziyya Fi Al-Ahadith Al-Diniyya*, 1st ed. (Qom: Dar Sayyid al-Shuhada Publishing, n.d.), vol. 1, Chapter Eight on Religious Instructions, Hadith 79, p. 146.

66 Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak Al-Wasa’il Wa Mustanbat Al-Masa’il*, vol. 9, 125, Section of Prohibiting Harming a Believer, p. 99.

67 Al-Kulayni, *Muhammad ibn Ya’qub. Al-Kafi*. Edited by Dar. 1st ed., vol. 4. 204, 284.

68 Al-Din, *Kanz Al-‘Ummal Fi Sunan Al-Aqwal Wa Al-Af’al*, vol. 2, p. 319, Hadith 4123.

Conclusion:

Privacy is a fundamental human need. Its violation constitutes transgression and injustice, leading to blackmail and infringement upon rights. Therefore, protecting privacy is essential for justice and good governance. Enjoying privacy contributes to psychological and physical well-being, strengthens family bonds, and fosters a healthy and productive society. Hence, sound reason and the conduct of the wise affirm the necessity of recognizing and guaranteeing this right through a comprehensive legal framework that protects individual privacy.

From the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions cited throughout this study, it is evident that religious texts confirm—through mutawatir (mass-transmitted) meaning—the right to privacy. In some cases, the Divine Lawgiver used the style of prohibition and obligation to prevent violations, while in others, an instructive tone was employed to emphasize the importance of respecting this right.

The Qur'anic texts laid down clear principles for protecting privacy, making it an integral part of the Islamic social system. These principles cover the sanctity of homes, the necessity of seeking permission before entry, prohibiting spying, harboring suspicion, backbiting, disclosing secrets, breaching trust, and upholding contracts and covenants. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) practically embodied these principles in his dealings with his household and companions, offering a living model of Islamic values in action.

The impact of upholding privacy rights—as evident from the Prophetic biography—goes beyond enhancing social relationships. It plays a crucial role in building a cohesive society founded on peace, security, and stability. Upholding this concept fosters the foundations of social justice, where each individual feels valued, dignified, and safe—mentally and socially—contributing to the elimination of discrimination and injustice, and promoting equality and mutual respect. The outcome is a more harmonious and stable society.

This study has confirmed the hypothesis that the Prophetic biography provided a practical and ethical framework for safeguarding individual privacy, rooted in the principles of Islamic Sharia that preserve human dignity and protect personal life.

We conclude by summarizing the most important findings and presenting practical recommendations for applying privacy concepts in our contemporary context.

Findings:

The research concluded that the “right to privacy” in the Prophetic biography represents a core value with significant ethical, social, and legal implications. It is not merely a theoretical concept but a component of the integrated Islamic system that aims to uphold human dignity, freedom, and security, while promoting social stability. This necessitates a scholarly effort to understand, interpret, and apply these principles in alignment with the challenges of the modern era, which demands renewed understanding of Islamic concepts in light of societal and technological transformations.

A key consideration is how societies can benefit from the concept of privacy to build relationships based on mutual respect and trust. The positive influence of these values can extend to families, schools, and society at large, fostering a safe environment that supports trust among individuals and reinforces social cohesion and unity.

Another area requiring deeper research is the legal and ethical challenges related to privacy rights. In today’s technological and information-driven age, privacy concerns have become more prevalent. It is thus essential to develop clear policies that enshrine individual rights and protect personal information. Achieving this requires collaboration among educational institutions, legislative bodies, and NGOs to reinforce this right and ensure it is upheld in all aspects of life.

Among the most significant outcomes of this study is the realization that privacy rights in Islam and the Prophetic tradition should not be limited to academic discussions. Rather, they constitute a societal responsibility aimed at promoting justice, equality, and mutual respect. Accordingly, public awareness and practical efforts are necessary to foster understanding and stimulate discourse around the importance of these rights and their role in building a more cohesive and resilient society—one guided by the peace and brotherhood envisioned by Islam.

Recommendations:

Based on the Islamic values outlined in the Qur'an and implemented in the Prophetic biography regarding individual privacy, the following recommendations are proposed for contemporary application across various aspects of life:

1. Strengthening the Role of the Family in Teaching Privacy:

- Educate children about personal boundaries and respecting others' privacy within the home and society.
- Raise teenagers' awareness of the risks of violating privacy, both in real life and online.
- Promote awareness of the importance of marital confidentiality and its role in family stability.
- Encourage resolving family issues internally without external interference unless absolutely necessary.
- Incorporate privacy concepts into family counseling programs and pre-marital training to foster trust and mutual respect between spouses.

2. Enhancing Awareness of Privacy Protection in School Curricula:

- Include "Digital Ethics" as a subject in educational curricula to teach youth the etiquettes of internet use and respecting online privacy.
- Explain the Islamic values derived from the Prophetic tradition that support this right.

3. Empowering Religious and Media Institutions to Promote a Privacy Culture:

- Organize religious seminars and lectures to clarify Islamic values related to privacy in both real-life and digital contexts.
- Encourage media outlets to produce content that promotes respect for privacy and warns of its ethical and legal implications.

4. Implementing Legal Protection for Privacy in the Workplace:

- Adopt clear policies prohibiting unjustified interference in employees' personal lives.

- Ensure the confidentiality of employee data and prohibit its use or sharing without consent.
- Ban unwarranted surveillance in the workplace, balancing managerial oversight with employees' privacy rights.
- Align these policies with national and international laws to ensure a workplace environment that respects privacy.

5. Strengthening Digital Privacy Laws:

- Enact strict laws to prevent digital spying and the unauthorized use of personal information.
- Impose penalties on individuals or entities that violate online privacy, including the dissemination of personal data without consent.
- Require tech companies to respect user privacy and develop policies to safeguard personal data.
- Adopt Islamic values such as protecting secrets and discouraging intrusion as ethical and legal frameworks for digital privacy.

6. Balancing Privacy with Public Security:

- Achieve a legal balance between privacy protection and national security.
- Define specific exceptions that allow the collection of personal data, while ensuring safeguards against misuse.
- Require governments and security agencies to respect individual privacy and avoid random surveillance.

7. Regulating the Use of Cameras and Surveillance Tools:

- Set clear guidelines for the use of security cameras, limiting them to necessary areas and avoiding intrusion into private spaces.
- Post visible notices where cameras are used, define who may access the footage, and prevent misuse.
- Submit surveillance systems to periodic review by independent bodies to ensure balance between security and privacy.

8. Encouraging Governments to Establish Privacy Protection Institutions:

- Establish national bodies dedicated to ensuring that individuals, companies, and government agencies comply with privacy laws.
- Investigate privacy violation complaints and provide legal advice and public awareness about data protection.
- Publish regular reports on adherence to privacy policies and recommend legislative reforms when needed.
- Launch awareness campaigns on responsible use of social media, emphasizing the dangers of sharing personal information or posting others' photos without permission.
- Urge tech companies to adopt privacy-protective policies and develop tools to combat cyberbullying and digital spying.

In conclusion, implementing these recommendations will help Muslim societies benefit from the Prophetic values related to privacy protection, thereby reinforcing mutual respect and trust while providing legal safeguards in the face of technological advancement. Privacy is not merely an individual right—it is a foundational element in building a safe and stable society that respects human dignity and rights.

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