

The Political Strategies adopted by the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) to Promote and Establish Islam (From Hijrah to His Death)

Abdulkhaliqh Saeidi Abu Ishaghi¹ | Alimohammad Mirjalili^{2✉} | Yahya Mirhoseini³

1. Department of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran. Email: Saeidy139@gmail.com

2. **Corresponding Author**, Department of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran. Email: almirjalili@meybod.ac.ir

3. Department of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran. Email: mirhoseini@meybod.ac.ir

Abstract

Despite numerous political, social, and other challenges, the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) adopted effective political strategies to bring about significant political transformations in the Arabian Peninsula. Within ten years, he not only established Islam in Medina but also extended its influence to the surrounding tribes and neighboring states. By carefully monitoring the political environment of Medina and its surroundings, the Prophet (pbuh) used various political strategies step by step to promote Islam. The present study seeks to answer the question 'What political strategies did the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) use to promote and establish Islam?' This is done through a descriptive-analytical method and with Qur'ānic verses, historical sources, and hadiths. The findings indicate that the Prophet (pbuh), as a reformist with a universal vision of Islam and a peaceful approach, could successfully implement his political strategies. While fostering internal political cohesion, he extended his strategic policies externally. His political actions were proportionate to his social and political authority, and he acted with tolerance or decisiveness based on the level of the power he had. A key aspect of his political strategies was the prevention of foreigners or strangers from infiltrating the Islamic society, which not only blocked their influence but also strengthened the authority of the Islamic state.

Keywords: Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), Islam, Political conduct, Political strategy, Promotion of Islam

1. Introduction

The history of Islam serves as a living document and a guide for Muslims. The political strategies of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) to promote Islam have served as a beacon for Muslims throughout history. These strategies can be extracted with a new outlook at any time.

At the beginning of the third year of the Prophet's mission and the divine command to publicly declare his message (Qur'ān, 15:94), the Quraysh polytheists, particularly their leaders, felt threatened and began to subject the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims to various

forms of persecution. By imposing social and economic boycotts, they forced them to settle in the valley of Abū Tālib. Later, the Muslims migrated to Yathrib (Medina) and resumed their political activities.

In political practice, governments typically employ various peaceful methods to implement foreign policies, safeguard national interests, and achieve understanding in international relations (Chelongar, 2008: 5). An examination of the Prophet's behavior and interactions with his enemies indicates that rationality and political realism were central to his approach. Despite possessing divine power, he consistently relied on soft power and rationality to confront his enemies. This research seeks to answer the question 'What political strategies did the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) employ during his time in Medina to promote and establish Islam?'

History books have sporadically touched on the subject of this article. For instance, Jafariān, in *The Analytical History of Islam*, Saleh Ahmad Ali, in *The State of the Prophet of God*, and others have mentioned some of the political strategies of the Prophet. Several articles have also explored various dimensions of his political conduct, such as *Diplomacy and Political Behavior of the Prophet of Islam*, *The Political Conduct of the Great Prophet*, *Honesty in the Political Conduct of the Prophet from the Qur'ānic Perspective*, and *Typology of the Objectives of Political Negotiation in the Prophetic Tradition*. However, the present study focuses on the specific political strategies that directly influenced or facilitated the promotion and establishment of Islam. Compared to previous research, this one presents a new perspective on the political strategies of the Prophet (pbuh). It actually opens a new window onto the subject, making it more tangible with new ways of studying the history.

2. The Political Activities of the Prophet (pbuh) in Medina

The Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) faced certain political challenges after migration to Medina. Social and political heterogeneity, threats, and insecurity, directly or indirectly caused by the Quraysh through inciting the bedouins of Medina who often raided the livestock and agricultural products in the town, along with the provocation of their Jewish allies, put pressure on the Muslims and residents there (Gharīb & Ālami, 2018, p. 7). These conditions were hardly bearable for a newly established government. Additionally, after the Battle of Badr, the Quraysh actively waged several wars to overthrow the newly established Islamic state. Other challenges that the Prophet (pbuh) faced in Medina included tribal divisions, conflicts among the residents of the town, and the threat posed by the hypocrites and Jews living there (Ibn Hishām, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 513). This slowed down the prophet's political dynamicity and postponed his intended reforms.

Moreover, the urban structure of Medina differed from that of other places. Not all the houses in Medina were connected or closely clustered; rather, the city was composed of small villages, the most famous of which were Qubā, Zahrā, Zubalā, and Yathrib. Vast farmlands and plains separated these villages (Saleh, 2006, p. 79), and security in the town was fragile due to pre-existing tribal hostilities. When the Prophet (pbuh) arrived there, the city political system was tribal, with each tribe under a clan-based system that had its own distinct characteristics, leading to social and political heterogeneity. The inter-tribal relations were not always friendly; at times, severe conflicts and disputes arose, disrupting the public peace. The religious composition of the population in Medina was not uniform either. It consisted of people with various religions and beliefs; some were Jews, others were monotheists with Christian-like ideas (Saleh, 2006, p. 139), and many were polytheists.

Given the cultural and social conditions of the people, engaging in political activities in Medina was not an easy task. Internal conflicts and enmities, which often led to intense tribal

clashes, further complicated the conditions. In that tribal system, individuals felt obligated to take sides with the tribe that defended and supported them.

After migrating to Medina and considering the aforementioned political challenges, the Prophet (pbuh) implemented several key multifaceted strategies to protect the Islamic state from potential threats, promote Islam, and strengthen the faith of new Muslims. These strategies are explained in the subsections below.

2.1. Creating Political Solidarity by Establishing Bonds of Brotherhood among the Muhājerīn, Ansār, and the Other Residents of Medina

Internal political solidarity is the most critical factor that enables any power to withstand external political pressures. The stronger this solidarity, the better it not only resists but also counters such pressures. In other words, it shifts from a purely defensive political stance to an offensive one.

The first political strategy of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) was to establish brotherhood among Muslims, creating the initial ring of political unity in Medina. To counter the threats posed by enemies, foster greater unity among Muslims, and alleviate the loneliness and hardships of the Muhājerīn (migrants), the Prophet encouraged the Muhājerīn and Ansār (helpers) to form bonds of brotherhood (Ibn Hishām, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 505). After that, he urged Muslims to unite, support, and sacrifice for one another. By abolishing the privileges of the pre-Islamic era, he declared "*All of you are from Adam, and Adam is from dust*" (Majlisī, 1983, Vol. 67, p. 287). Thus, he eliminated the past arrogance and established piety as the criterion for honor and dignity. This was based on the Qur'ānic verse "*Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you*" (49:13). As a result, God removed the hatred of the pre-Islamic era from their hearts, and, by divine grace, they became compassionate and brotherly toward one another. Also, their division and dispersion transformed into an unbreakable Islamic community (Qur'ān 3:103).

Another political strategy used by the Prophet (pbuh) was to establish treaties with the tribes residing in Medina. In these treaties, he considered even the smallest religious connections. Judaism, despite its deviations, was a monotheistic religion. Although the Jews were envious and hostile toward the Muslims (Qur'ān 5:82), the Prophet (pbuh) entered agreements with them to reduce enmity (Ibn Kathīr, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225). The Jews did not remain faithful to their covenant, but he aborted their plots with his specific discernment.

2.2. Considering the Population as a Component of Political Power

One of the parameters that a political power can rely on to carry out political actions and expand its territory is population. For the Messenger of God, the number of Muslims in Medina was of great importance. To enhance the political power of Muslims, he stipulated with newly converted Muslims that they would remain in Medina. The increasing presence of Muslims in Medina played a significant role in boosting the Prophet's capability to implement both domestic and foreign policies (Alīkhānī, 2007, p. 635). Through the policy of increasing population, the Prophet elevated the strength of Islam and encouraged the growth of the Muslim community. As he advised, "Marry and have children, so that your number will increase, for I will take pride in you before other nations on the Day of Resurrection" (Shu'ayrī, n.d., p. 101). Additionally, the growing population would make Islam more appealing to others, encouraging them to convert (Mahdavī Athar, 2017, p. 64). Perhaps, this policy is more relevant nowadays; the less populated a society, the more vulnerable.

Furthermore, in the first year after his arrival in Medina, the Prophet ordered a census to record the names of those who had converted to Islam, which amounted to 1500 people. His

goal was to make precise plans for the future in political, economic, and military domains and to take necessary actions to increase the Muslim population (Mahdavī Athar, 2017, p. 70).

2.3. Delineating the Boundaries of Medina

To delineate the boundaries of Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) asked some of his companions to mark the limits of Medina as a *Haram* (sanctuary), signifying the sovereignty of the people of Medina and the prohibition of any conflict with them. He thus defined the territory of the Islamic state and declared "Anyone who belongs to the political community of Muslims and holds the citizenship of the Islamic government of Medina is secure within this sanctuary" (Alīkhāni, 2007, p. 200).

After defining the boundaries, the Prophet (pbuh) involved all the inhabitants of Medina in maintaining its security. Additionally, to ensure that the citizens of Medina or those migrating there were clearly identified, he made a covenant with various tribes and clans in Medina and stipulated "Whoever leaves Medina is secure, and whoever settles there is secure, except for those who commit oppression or sins" (Ibn Kathīr, 1986, Vol. 3, p. 255). He considered leaving Medina as *Ta'arub* (a form of desertion) and a disgrace (Ibn Khaldūn, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 154). Through this policy, the Prophet attached psychological and political weight to leaving Medina, aiming to influence the pride of the Arabs of that time and discourage them from easily abandoning Medina. This ruling was lifted after the conquest of Mecca, when the threat of attacks on Muslims had diminished. With that plan, the Prophet could gradually increase his power and promote Islam in pace with the population growth. This made a context for his later political decisions.

2.4. Using Sacredness as a Value to Establish Internal and External Security

To establish internal security in Medina and prevent war and bloodshed, the Prophet (pbuh) declared Medina a sacred sanctuary (*Haram*). As he declared, "Indeed, Yathrib (Medina) is a sanctuary, its heart is sacred..." (Ibn Hishām, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 504). This declaration aimed to prevent conflicts among tribes and clans and to establish lasting peace in the city. By using the term *Haram* (sacred place), the Prophet framed security as a religious matter, which had the strongest impact on the inhabitants of Medina. Alongside Muslims, Jews also lived there. In a covenant that the Prophet (pbuh) signed with all the residents of Medina, the Jews were obligated to support the Muslims against invaders during times of war (Ibn Kathīr, 1986, Vol. 3, p. 226). Through this covenant, the Prophet took full control of the political administration and leadership of Medina, depriving the Jews of any role in political affairs. The covenant stipulated that, whenever the Muslims called upon the Jews to make peace with a group, they were required to comply (ibid.). Similarly, the Muslims would accept the Jews' request for alliances with others, provided that such alliances were not detrimental to the Muslims. The wording of the covenant implies that the Jews were not permitted to declare war against any individual or group.

Additionally, the Jews were not allowed to leave Medina without the Prophet's permission, as there was a possibility of them conspiring with external parties against the Muslims (ibid., p. 225; Majlisī, 1983, Vol. 19, p. 171). This part of the covenant significantly hindered the Jews from forming solidarity or alliances with the Quraysh; none of the Jews were permitted to offer protection to any individual or property belonging to the Quraysh or to prevent a Muslim from exercising authority over them (Ibn Hishām, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 4). Through this policy, the Prophet (pbuh) blocked the path of communication and alliance between the Jews and the Quraysh.

By adopting this policy and engaging in active diplomacy in Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) prevented non-Muslims from communicating with polytheists and taking their support. On

one hand, he stopped the polytheists from infiltrating Medina to gather intelligence, and, on the other hand, he sought to utilize the non-Muslim residents of Medina as supporters and allies against the polytheists of Quraysh whenever possible.

2.5. Deployment of Patrols and Security Forces

In addition to ensuring the security of the city of Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) monitored its surroundings. He sent out reconnaissance and patrol groups for various purposes to gather information and news from the areas around Medina. This allowed him to swiftly and decisively address any potential threats or instability, preventing invaders from entering Medina.

Another objective of the Prophet in deploying these patrols and reconnaissance units was to demonstrate the readiness and vigilance of the Muslims to their rebellious enemies, thereby intimidating them and controlling their economic and trade routes. This display of power by the Prophet (pbuh) strengthened the unity between the Muhājerīn (migrants) and the Ansār (helpers) and fostered a spirit of bravery, military readiness, and defense among them (Hosseiniyā, 1999, p. 110). Such security measures and alertness helped Muslims not to be ever taken by surprise.

2.6. Establishing Relations with the Neighboring Tribes and Countries

The Prophet (pbuh) initiated political relations with the neighboring tribes and countries on the purpose of propagating Islam, creating conditions for its acceptance, and preventing large and small tribes from attacking Medina. By sending letters and dispatching official delegations to Iran, Rome, Egypt, Abyssiniā, Ghassān, and others, he pursued certain objectives. Although the rulers in some of those places, such as the kings of Rome and Iran, did not respond positively, his efforts yielded significant results as follows:

- a)** He could demonstrate the power and extent of Islamic governance to other regions, encouraging them to consider Islam as a significant factor in their political relations.
- b)** He assessed the reactions of the leaders of those regions to make precise decisions to regulate foreign relations with them.
- c)** His correspondence with the superpowers of the time, such as the kings of Iran and Rome, had a profound psychological impact on the people of the Arabian Peninsula, inducing many local powers, such as the Banū Tamīm and Thaqīf tribes, to convert to Islam (Ibn Hishām, 1996, Vol. 2, pp. 349, 352, 367).
- d)** He ensured security and promoted peace among Arab tribes, who until then had often maintained hostile relations and were constantly engaged in raids and bloodshed. For this purpose, the Prophet (pbuh) actively pursued policies and signed non-aggression treaties with them.

In general, the Prophet (pbuh) sought to invite tribes and individuals to Islam through power and intellectual and cultural persuasion. If this approach did not succeed, he would establish security agreements with them to ensure they would not attack the Muslims. For example, one may refer to the treaties with the Jews of Medina and the agreement with Yahnā bin Rawāha, the leader of Ayla during the Prophet's expedition to Tabūk (Bal'amī, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 287; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, 1993, Vol. 2, p. 271), and the treaty with the representatives of the people of Najrān (Tabarī, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 1267). Many tribes also wrote letters to the Prophet (pbuh), committing to pay *jizya* (a kind of tax) in exchange for protection under the Islamic state (Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1998, Vol. 3, pp. 100-147). By paying *jizya*, they became the protected subjects of the Islamic government. Thus, the prophet's active diplomacy could effectively subjugate the tribes around and ward off the threat of their assault on Medina at the lowest cost.

2.7. Laying the Groundwork for the Conquest of Mecca through the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah

2.7.1. Background for the Treaty

After consolidating his rule in Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) gradually employed precise strategies to weaken and ultimately dismantle the power of the polytheists of Mecca. Finally, after a careful assessment of the declining power of the Meccan polytheists, he decided to conquer Mecca and get it back to Islam at no cost. It was the city he had longed to return to since his migration (*Hijrah*). Allah had promised him this return (Qur'ān, 28:85).

In the sixth year on the lunar calendar, the Prophet (pbuh) set out for Mecca with a group of Muslims, intending to perform *Umrah*. The Muslims did not carry many weapons or equipment on this journey. However, the Quraysh prevented the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions from entering Mecca. Through his purposeful and diplomatic actions, the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah was eventually concluded (Ya'qūbī, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 413). At the same time, some short-sighted individuals considered the terms of the treaty to be a defeat for the Muslims. However, the Prophet (pbuh) foresaw the eventual conquest of Mecca through this agreement, a vision that was later realized.

One of the clauses of the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah stipulated that any Qurayshī who fled to Medina without the permission of his or her guardian would be returned to Mecca (Balādharī, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 352). While this condition appeared to be undesirable to the Muslims and caused dissatisfaction among some of them (Ibn Hishām, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 218), the revelation of Surah Al-Fath, which described the treaty as a "clear victory" (Qur'ān, 48:1), reassured the Muslims. It promised them triumph and the humiliation of the hypocrites and polytheists (Qur'ān, 48:5-6) and foretold future victories, such as the conquests of Mecca and Khaybar (Qur'ān, 48:18-19). This assured the hearts of the Muslims especially the elite, encouraging them to remain patient and await the outcomes of this strategic treaty.

After the conquest of Mecca, it became clear that the Prophet (pbuh), with his foresight, had used this clause to create the conditions for the Muslims' eventual entry into Mecca. By accepting this term, he laid the groundwork for the peaceful and victorious return to the city, fulfilling Allah's promise and demonstrating the wisdom of his strategic planning. The way the event occurred denotes that the prophet's strategy was implemented through psychological operations in the political arena rather than high-casualty military operations.

2.7.2. Political achievements of the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah

In addition to showcasing the Prophet Mohammad's influence on the culture of the people of Mecca and his merciful and compassionate demeanor, the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah brought about significant political and security benefits for the Muslims. These included the following:

1. **Opportunity for religious and political activities:** The Treaty of Hudaybīyyah provided the Prophet (pbuh) with the opportunity to expand his religious and political activities beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Following the treaty, the Prophet extended his call to Islam to regions outside Arabia, sending envoys to various areas such as Yemen, Bahrain, Yamāma, and Ghassān (Āyatī, 1979, pp. 445-450). Additionally, he wrote letters to the rulers of that time, inviting them to Islam, including Khosrow II of Persia, Muqawqīs of Egypt, and Caesar of Rome (Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 190). The growing influence of Islam led some rulers to incline toward it. For example, Bāzān, the Sassanid governor of Yemen, converted to Islam (Ibn Khaldūn, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 464). Muqawqīs of Egypt did not convert, but he sent gifts, including a mule, to the Prophet (Ibn Sa'd, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 123). The Negus of Abyssinia also sent gifts as a sign of his good will for Islam (Mustawfī, 1985, p. 149). In general, the

prestige of Islam spread across the world, prompting the leaders of nations and tribes to pay special attention to Islam and recognize its unique position among other powers. The prophet could also make himself universally known with peaceful diplomacy and complement the oral propagation of Islam with written advertisements.

- ✓. **Recognition of the Prophet's political authority:** After the signing of this treaty, the Quraysh effectively acknowledged the political authority of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) (Ja'fariyān, 2006, p. 104). This stabilized his regional power and, thus, provided security for the tribes and individuals who had previously been too afraid of Quraysh's threats to establish relations with the Muslims.
- ✓. **Disruption of ties between the Jews of Medina and the Quraysh:** The treaty effectively cut off the relationship between the Jews of Medina and the Quraysh, reducing the threats posed by both groups to the Muslims. For this reason, the Qur'ān described the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah as a "clear victory" (48:1; see also: Tabātabāī, 1997, Vol. 18, p. 252). Then, Islam began to appear more powerful than before, which made other tribes show tendency to it as a valid power.
- ✓. **Reduction of the Muslims' concerns about Quraysh aggression:** The treaty alleviated the Muslims' fears of Quraysh aggression, allowing them to propagate Islam around Mecca without psychological distress and to get out of social isolation. As a result, Islam spread among all the tribes and clans of the Quraysh and its surrounding areas (Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 95), and people began converting to Islam in large numbers (Qur'ān, 110:1-2). The increase in the population of Muslim was a parameter of their power.
- ✓. **The Prophet's peaceful entry into Mecca in the 7th Year of Hijrah:** The peaceful entry of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions into Mecca in the seventh year of Hijrah to perform the ritual of Umrah freely was a form of official recognition and acknowledgment of the power of Islam by the Quraysh. This was not the case before despite the Muslims' peaceful conduct.
- ✓. **The conquest of Khaybar:** The fortresses of Khaybar had become a safe haven for enemies of Islam, such as the Jews of Khaybar and the remnants of Banū Nadir. This treaty allowed the Prophet (pbuh) to destroy this stronghold, which was a major bastion of Jewish opposition to Islam. In addition to the acquisition of significant booties (Qur'ān, 48:20), the defeat of the Jews instilled fear in the hearts of the enemies, made the Muslims more powerful, and eliminated the threats from other tribes like Banū Ghatfān and Banū Asad, who had long been plotting against the Muslims (Tabārī, 1993, Vol. 9, p. 177).
- ✓. **Increased interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims:** The treaty facilitated interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims, leading to commercial relations with other tribes and the cultural supremacy of Islam over them. As a result, many who had previously hidden their faith openly embraced Islam (Amīlī, 2011, Vol. 5, pp. 578-585 and Vol. 6, p. 132). Even some of the Prophet's powerful enemies, such as Khālid ibn al-Walīd, Amr ibn al-Ās, and Uthmān ibn Talhah, converted to Islam in the 8th year of Hijrah (Ibn Athīr, 1992, Vol. 7, p. 270).

8. The Conquest of Mecca in the 8th year of Hijrah and its political achievement

The conquest of Mecca in the 8th year of Hijrah marked the Prophet Mohammad's control over the largest stronghold of his opponents. This victory, achieved through the Prophet's meticulous planning and reliance on soft power with minimal military confrontation, granted the Muslims a profound sense of self-confidence. As a result, the people of Mecca and many surrounding tribes accepted Islam. Even the prominent leaders of disbelievers, such as Abū Sufyān, explicitly accepted Islam. This not only

reinforced the Prophet's authority but also demonstrated the power and appeal of Islam, leading to its rapid spread across the Arabian Peninsula.

2.8. Declaration of disassociation from polytheists in the 9th year

Nine years after Hijrah, the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) appointed Imam Alī (pbuh) to convey Surah Al-Barā'ah (Chapter of Disassociation) to the polytheists. On the day of Eid al-Adhā, Imam Alī (pbuh) delivered the order of God to the polytheists in Mina and gave them four months to return to their homes. After this period, no polytheist would be under any covenant with the Messenger of God, except those who had prior treaties with him (Qur'ān, 9:3-4). This would remain valid until the end of their agreed term (Tabarī, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 1252).

This firm action by the Prophet (pbuh) led to the conversion of approximately one hundred thousand Arab polytheists to Islam within a year (Mas'ūdi, n.d., p. 238). Following the conquest of Mecca, various tribes visited the Prophet, and announced their faith in Islam and allegiance with them. They were welcomed with the Prophet's kindness (Qur'ān, 110:1-2). By the end of the year 9 AH, Islam had established its dominance over nearly the entire Arabian Peninsula. This year became known as the "Year of Delegations" due to the large number of tribal representatives coming to join Islam. The Islamic state emerged as a significant power both domestically in Arabia and internationally (Montazer al-Qā'im, n.d., p. 228).

2.9. Elimination of idolatry and strengthening of people's faith

Given that some Muslims were likely to be still inclined to idols and pre-Islamic traditions, and considering the potential for polytheists to influence them through cultural, psychological, and propagandistic means, the Prophet (pbuh) removed all manifestations of idolatry from the Masjid al-Haram. He also decreed "from this year on, no polytheist will be allowed to enter the sacred mosque" (Qur'ān, 9:28). This measure solidified Islam among the newly converted Muslims in Mecca and effectively eradicated the symbols of polytheism from the House of God. Additionally, anyone who had become a Muslim was granted privileges such as security, protection under the Muslim community, and social integration. It is to be noted that, in the culture of that time, forming an alliance with a tribe meant coming under its protection. The political power of Islam brought security to the Arabian Peninsula, and it turned into a safe haven for the tribes there.

3. The appeal of Islam versus tribal inclinations

Due to the aforementioned privileges and the profound contrast between the attractiveness of Islam and the outdated customs of the pre-Islamic era, many tribes were attracted to Islam. They went to the Prophet (pbuh) from everywhere to declare their acceptance of Islam (Ja'fariyān, 2001, p. 660).

4. The role of negotiation in the Prophet's political strategy and its results

To establish and promote Islam, as well as to counter threats that hindered its progress, the Prophet Mohammad conducted a series of authoritative negotiations during his life in Medina.

4.1. Prophet's negotiations

- Negotiation with the Quraysh delegation led by Badīl ibn al-Khazā'i: This negotiation aimed to halt the center of sedition against the Muslims and ensure that the Quraysh would not attack the Muslims, allowing them to propagate Islam among other tribes with greater peace of mind (Bal'amī, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 219).

- **Negotiation with Urwah ibn Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī on behalf of the Quraysh:** It played a significant role in the conclusion of the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah. The Prophet's demeanor deeply influenced Urwah, who later converted to Islam, participated in Islamic battles, and was martyred (Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 407; Ibn Abd al-Berr, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 6).
- **Negotiation with Suhayl ibn Amr (Quraysh's representative in the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah):** This negotiation resulted in a ten-year truce between the Muslims and the Quraysh. During this period, Suhayl's son converted to Islam, and Suhayl himself did later. He also participated in the Hajj with the Prophet (pbuh) during the Farewell Pilgrimage (Wāqidī, 1990, p. 64).
- **Diplomacy with the Thaqīf delegation in the Year 9 AH:** The Prophet's excellent treatment with the Thaqīf delegation, headed by Ibn Amr ibn Awf, led to their acceptance of Islam (Ibn Sa'd, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 271).
- **Post-Hudaybīyyah and conquest of Mecca negotiations:** After the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah and the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (pbuh) engaged in negotiations with the representatives of various tribes. Over seventy delegations went to Medina to negotiate with the Prophet (Sajjādī, 2003, p. 165). The main topics of these negotiations were mutual rights, invitation to Islam, resolving economic issues, granting political and administrative responsibilities, and signing bilateral agreements (Ahmadī Miyānī, 1999, Vol. 3, pp. 97-473). These multifaceted political measures manifested the influence of Islam more than ever.

4.2. Outcomes of the negotiations

As a result of these negotiations, many tribes became Muslims or signed non-aggression pacts with the Muslims. This somehow removed the obstacles to the spread of Islam. Additionally, the Prophet (pbuh) sent letters to the leaders of other nations, further extending the reach of Islam.

5. The objectives pursued by the Prophet (pbuh) in diplomacy and foreign policy

The prophet's diplomacy and foreign policy were consistently based on the three principles of dignity, wisdom, and expediency. In his political strategies, the Prophet pursued several key objectives as explained below.

5.1. Preventing the domination of non-believers over Muslims

One of the most important strategies in the Prophet's foreign policy was to prevent non-believers from dominating the believers. Islam and Muslims should never be subjugated by external forces, as emphasized in the Qur'ān and Hadith:

- **Qur'ānic verses:**

"Allah will never grant the disbelievers a way (to dominate) over the believers." (4:141)

"Do not incline toward those who do wrong." (11:113)

- **Hadith:**

The Prophet (pbuh) said: *"Islam is superior and cannot be surpassed"*. (Ibn Bābawayh, 1993, Vol. 4, p. 334)

The Islamic concept of *Nafy-e Sabīl* (rejection of domination) means rejecting any form of political, cultural, military, or economic control by outsiders over the destiny of Muslims. Muslims are obligated to eliminate any factors that lead to dependence or humiliation, ensuring their dignity and preventing foreign domination.

5.2. Promoting Islam

A key objective of the Prophet (pbuh) in his political negotiations was the promotion of Islam. To achieve it, he sent messages and letters to the leaders of tribes, regions, and nations, inviting them to Islam (see: Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1999, throughout the work). Through these efforts, the Prophet aimed to spread the message of Islam far and wide, ensuring its growth and acceptance among diverse communities. From another viewpoint, this was a kind of political showdown, challenging those communities; without power, no such diplomatic moves were possible.

5.3. Expanding the political and geographical domain of the Islamic state

In the Holy Qur'ān, Mohammad described Islam as a universal religion:

- *"Say, 'O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.'"* (7:158)
- *"And we have not sent you except as a mercy to the whole world."* (21:107)

In line with this issue, the Islamic state needed to expand its domain through wise propagation and conveyance of the message of Islam to the farthest corners of the world. Therefore, the Prophet sought to spread the religion through many of his negotiations. By the end of his life, he had gained control over most of the Arabian Peninsula.

5.4. Ensuring security for Muslims and promoting peace

During that era, tribes, nations, and communities were often in hostile relations, engaging in violence, plunder, and instability. Their political relations were primarily based on tribal affiliations. As a result, they yearned for peace and justice, which Islam championed:

- *"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it."* (Qur'ān, 8:61)
- *"Reconciliation is best."* (Qur'ān, 4:128)

Sending delegations to Medina and signing treaties with the Prophet (pbuh) as the leader of the Islamic community provided a sense of security for both the tribes and the Muslims.

Alongside defensive wars and the use of hard power, the Prophet employed soft power strategies to ensure the security and independence of the nascent Islamic state against the polytheists of Quraysh. These strategies included signing treaties with neutral tribes such as Ilāh, Ahl Muqannah and Bani Janbah, and Jarbā and Adhrāh (Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1999, Vol. 3, pp. 98, 100, 114). Through this proactive defensive strategy, the Prophet ensured mutual peace for Muslims and the tribes with whom the treaties were signed. He also sought to use non-Muslims as allies against the polytheists of Quraysh and expand his strategic depth to faraway points, thereby decreasing the influence of those polytheists.

5.5. Preventing cultural and political influences

One of the key strategies adopted by the Prophet in his political activities was to ensure that Muslims would not be influenced by polytheists and to neutralize the external conspiracies against the Muslims in Medina. In the treaties he signed with various tribes in Medina, the Prophet stipulated that no non-Muslim could seek refuge in Medina unless it aligned with the interests of the Muslims, and no Qurayshī was allowed to enter Medina (Ibn Hishām, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 501). Thus, he prevented the Quraysh from spying, recruiting allies, and plotting against the Muslims in Medina. He also safeguarded the Muslims from the cultural and political influences of the polytheists. The following phrases in the Prophet's letters can be understood in this context:

- *"Separate yourselves from the polytheists."* (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 205)

- "Fight the polytheists." (Ibn Sa'd, *ibid.*)
- "Avoid the polytheists." (Ibn Athīr, 1989, Vol. 4, p. 233)
- "Oppose the polytheists." (Asqalānī, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 523)

5.6. Preventing religious minorities from interfering in Muslims' political affairs

The Prophet (pbuh) signed treaties with the people of Yathrib (Medina), the Jews, and the other inhabitants of Medina. Through those treaties, he actually established the first written constitution in the Islamic world, but he never allowed non-Muslims to interfere in the political affairs of the Muslim community. Although the Prophet built a united community (Ummah) in Medina with the participation of all the groups and granted non-Muslims internal and religious autonomy ("For the Jews, their religion", Ibn Kathīr, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 225), he maintained full control over the foreign policies, appointments, relations, and military commands. The non-Muslims were not given any role in these areas. Through this policy, the Prophet ensured that Medina would remain under his control, allowing him to implement his political strategies effectively. The others also found out that he was the unrivaled man of power in Medina and the sole political decision-maker.

5.7. Ensuring the security of travelers and merchants

To guarantee the safety of Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad included specific security clauses in the treaties that he signed with tribes and communities. For example, in the treaty with the representatives of the Thaqīf tribe, one of the conditions regarded the protection of Muslims' property. It was stipulated that theft and oppression in their territory were prohibited, and, if someone was absent, his property would remain as secure as if he was present (Ahmadī Miyānjī, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 57). The inclusion of such terms indicates that theft and oppression were prevalent among these tribes, so the Prophet emphasized eliminating these practices.

To secure the safety of Muslims' caravans, the Prophet requested certain tribes along the routes not to obstruct the caravans ("They must not block the passage of travelers", *ibid*, p. 193). Also, to ensure the security of the roads, he ordered "Make the paths safe" (*ibid*, p. 221). With this policy, he pursued two objectives simultaneously; first, to discourage tribes from engaging in theft and banditry and, second, to prevent other thieves and bandits from causing harm (*ibid*, p. 259).

The tribes that were known for their warlike and aggressive nature were bound by the Prophet's treaties to refrain from attacking others or engaging in warfare (*ibid*, p. 263). This wisdom of the Prophet effectively kept those tribes from any aggression against Muslims. The security created under the political power was somehow effective in attracting non-Muslims to Islam.

5.8. Addressing tribal retribution and blood feuds

In the pre-Islamic era, tribal alliances and blood ties often led to unjust acts of vengeance. For example, in retaliation for the murder of one person, not only the murderer but also his entire tribe could be targeted. The Qur'ān condemns this unjust practice:

- "And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly, we have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]." (Qur'ān, 17:33)

To address this issue, the Prophet included clauses in some treaties, such as the one with the people of Najrān, stipulating that no one would be held accountable for the crimes of another. Only the perpetrator would individually bear the consequences of his or her acts (Ahmadī Miyānjū, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 152). Through this approach, the Prophet made the concept of

security appealing to them, while the just rulings of Islam also played a significant role in establishing this security.

5.9. Meeting the needs of Muslim's military caravans

In his treaties with the neighboring tribes, the Prophet Mohammad ensured the security of the Islamic army. Since there were no markets along the routes of Muslims' military caravans to purchase necessary supplies, the Prophet asked the tribes not to hinder Muslims from using their fields and orchards during spring and summer so as to meet their needs (Ahmadī Miyānī, 1999, Vol. 3, p. 293).

It is worth noting that the corresponding letter was written to the Banū Barīq families from the Azod tribe in the year 9 AH, when the Islamic state had already expanded significantly. The Prophet wrote the letter mainly a) to foster good relations between the Islamic government and the Arab tribes, b) to eliminate resentment and hostility from their hearts, and c) to address the logistical challenge of supplying the army, as there were no markets along their routes, and it was not feasible to for caravans to carry all the necessary supplies with them.

By encouraging the tribes to support the Muslim fighters and highlighting the spiritual rewards of contributing financially to jihad, the Prophet (pbuh) motivated the believers to assist the military forces for the sake of Allah. This made it easier for them to support the army, enhanced their religious commitment, and inspired them to strive for the preservation of Islam.

5.10. Providing a market for Muslims

One of the objectives of the Prophet's political strategies was to build trust and provide a secure market for Muslims. The caravans that entered Medina for trade or traveled from Medina to Syria in the summer were threatened by the inhabitants of Tabūk. By signing treaties with various tribes, the Prophet (pbuh) ensured the security of the routes and built trust among the trade caravans entering Medina. This not only secured the livelihood of Muslims but also attracted goods and capital to Medina. The relative stable economic conditions, reasonable prices, and sufficiently supplied goods would deter the dissidents' political moves.

6. The success of the Prophet's political strategies and use of soft power

To measure the success of the political strategies and soft power of any government, it is necessary to evaluate the outcomes of their implementation, whether they have achieved the intended objectives or not. Despite numerous social, political, economic, and cultural challenges in the Arabian Peninsula, the prophet's strategies can be considered highly successful. This is because he achieved entirely positive outcomes through their implementation, as outlined below:

- The expansion of Islam's influence across most of the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, reaching the borders of Iran and Rome, suggests that the Prophet (pbuh) successfully extended the strategic depth of the Islamic state.
- Although the people of the Arabian Peninsula were very rigid and strongly attached to their ancestral and tribal traditions, the appealing aspects of Islam, such as justice, equality and simplicity, were able to make them obedient and submissive.
- The flexibility of the Prophet (pbuh) in dealing with the beliefs of other religions and his refusal to force the acceptance of Islam reduced the intensity of their stubbornness. At the same time, the rationality of Islamic teachings compared to other religions attracted followers of other faiths to Islam. For example, the discussions and debates of the Prophet with followers of other religions and beliefs increasingly exposed the weaknesses of those beliefs.

- Granting political privileges and recognizing local powers on the condition that they did not conspire against Muslims led to the conversion of the leaders of those states and tribes to Islam. When the chief of a tribe accepted Islam, the majority or the entire tribe would usually follow him.
- The emphasis of the Prophet (pbuh) on justice attracted many people to Islam. On the other hand, the political instability in Iran and Rome, along with the injustices in those governments, could not withstand the Islamic ideology, leading the people of those regions to turn to Islam.
- The despotism and oppression of local governments began to decline in the face of Islam's message of brotherhood and equality. The equality of slaves and masters, black and white, Arabs and non-Arabs in the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) encouraged people to embrace Islam.

7. Conclusion

Through rational political strategies and the effective use of soft power, the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) made significant political achievements during his time in Medina. They are itemized as follows:

- 1. He unified the Arabian Peninsula under Islamic rule, enabling it to rival major powers like Rome and Persia. He entered negotiating with them as an independent political power and invited them to Islam.
- 2. Unlike traditional powers that relied on military force, the Prophet (pbuh) achieved dominance with minimal military conflict. He could expand his political rule to faraway areas.
- 3. His political actions were proportionate to his social and political authority, balancing tolerance and decisiveness.
- 4. He simultaneously strengthened internal solidarity and engaged in external diplomacy. This all-around political growth kept increasing the power of the Islamic government, which continued for decades and even centuries.
- 5. By excluding non-Muslims from political decision-making, he prevented foreign influence and bolstered Muslim authority. Thus, the awe of Muslims was seen better inside and outside the Islamic territories, fascinating non-Muslims.
- 6. Through strategic treaties, he secured the safety of Medina and its travelers and traders, ensuring economic stability. This helped him pursue his political objectives and prevent political tensions on the part of opportunists.
- 7. The political-social treaties that the Prophet (pbuh) formed with tribes, Jews and Christians aimed to create a peaceful, conflict-free environment for Muslims, laying the foundation for a united Islamic society. At his time, the social unity was relative, but it continued through next generations more strongly.
- 8. Although the discussed strategies were implemented at the prophet's time, they can be of benefit to empower Muslims anywhere and anytime provided that the corresponding requirements are met.
- 9. The findings of the study generally suggest that Muslim societies cannot have a due position in international centers of power unless they are powerful enough.

References

The Holy Qur'an (translated by Nāsser Makārem Shīrāzī). (2010). Qom: Negāresh Publishing House.

Ahmadī Miānjī, ‘A. (1999). *Schools of the Prophet (pbuh)*. Qom: Dār al-Hadīth.

Alīkhānī, ‘A.A. (2007). *Prophetic Politics*. Tehran: Cultural and Social Studies Research Institute.

Āmelī, S.J.M. (2011). *The True Biography of the Prophet Mohammad* (translated by Mohammad Sepehri). Tehran: Islamic Culture and Thought Research Institute.

Āyatī, M.I, 1979, *History of the Prophet of Islam* (edited by Abulqāsim Gorjī). Tehran: Tehran University Press.

Bal’amī, M. (1999). *Tabarī History* (edited by Mohammad Roshan). Tehran: Soroush.

Belāzārī, A. (1996). *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (edited by Sohail Zakkār and Riyād Zerekli). Beirut: Dār al-Fekr.

Chalūngar, M.‘A. (2008). The Diplomacy of the Prophet of Islam. *Islamic Revolution Research Journal*, 5(2), 80-97.

Gharib, Q. & Kh. Ālamī (2018). The Prophet’s Decision-Making Method in Determining the Military Strategy of Medina (From the Hijra to the Conquest of Mecca), *Kharazmi History Journal*, 22, 111-134.

Hosseiniā, A. (2000). *Islam and the Religion of War*. Tehran: Rāmin Publishing House.

Ibn Abd al-Berr, Y. (1992). *Al-Istiyāb fī Ma’rafat al-Ashāb* (edited by Alī Mohammad al-Bajāwi). Beirut: Dār al-Jail.

Ibn Athīr Jazari, ‘A. (1989). *Asad al-Ghāba fī Ma’rafah al-Sahāba*. Beirut: Dār al-Fekr.

Ibn Athīr Jazari, ‘A. (1985). *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*. Beirut: Dār Sāder.

Ibn Athīr Jazari, ‘A. (1992). *Al-Kāmil: The Great History of Islam and Iran* (translated by Abulqāsim Hellat and Abbās Khalīlī). Tehran: Scientific Press Institute,

Ibn Bābawey, M. (Sheikh Sadūq). (1993). *Man lā Yahdoroh al-Faqīh* (edited by Alī Akbar Ghafārī). Qom: Islamic Publications Office.

Ibn Hajar Asqalānī, A. (1995). Notes on *the distinction companions* (edited by Ādel Ahmad Abd al-Mawjūd and Alī Mohammad Mo’awez). Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Elmiyya.

Ibn Hishām, A.M. (n.d.). *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah* (edited by Mustafā al-Saqqah, Ebrāhīm Abiyārī, and Abd al-Hāfiẓ Shalabī). Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rafah.

Ibn Kathīr Dameshqī, I. (1987). *Al-Bedāya wa al-Nahāya*, Beirut: Dār al-Fekr.

Ibn Khaldūn, ‘A. (1984). *Al-Ebar/Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*. (translated by Abd al-Mohammed Āyatī). Tehran: Institute of Cultural Studies and Research.

Ibn Sa'd, M. (1995). *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā* (edited by Mahmūd Mahdavī Dāmghānī). Tehran: Farhang and Andisheh Publications.

Ibn Sa'd, M. (1990). *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā* (edited by Mohammad Abd al-Qadīr Attā). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Elmiyya.

Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, M. (1994). *Oyūn al-Āthār fī Fonūn al-Maghāzī va al-Shamā'il va al-Sair* (annotated by Ibrāhīm Mohammad Ramadhān). Beirut: Dār al-Qalam.

Jafariān, R. (2001). *Analytical History of Islam: The Life of the Messenger of God*. Qom: Al-Hādī.

Jafariān, R. (2006). *History of Islamic Iran: From the Birth of Islam to Islamic Iran* (7th edition). Tehran: Kānūn Andisheh Jawān.

Mahdavī Athar, M. (2017). *Political Thought in Islam*. Qom: Imām Khomeinī Educational and Research Institute.

Majlisī, M.B. (1983). *Bihār Al-Anwār* (2nd edition). Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā Al-Turāht Al-Arabi.

Majlisī, M.B. (2000). *Reasonings* (translated from Bihār Al-Anwār and edited by Mūsa Khosrawī). Tehran: Islāmīyya Publications.

Mas'ūdi, 'A. (n.d.). *Al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf* (edited by Abdullāh Ismail al-Sawī). Cairo: Dār al-Sawī, offset in Qom: Islamic Cultural Sources Publishing House.

Meqrīzī, T. (2000). *Knowledge of the conditions, wealth, grandchildren and possessions of the Prophet* (edited by Mohammad Abd al-Hamīd al-Namīsī). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Elmīyya.

Montazer al-Qāim, A. (n.d.). *Manifestation of Guidance*. Isfahan: Kausar Publishing House.

Mustowfī Qazvīnī, H. (1985). *Selected History* (edited by Abdul Hossein Navāyī). Tehran: Amir Kabir.

Sajjādī, S. 'A.Q. (2003). *Diplomacy and Political Behavior in Islam*. Qom: Boostān Ketāb.

Sāleh, A. 'A. (2006). *The State of the Messenger of God* (translated by Hādī Ansārī). Qom: Hawza and University Research Institute.

Sho'airī, M. (n.d.). *Jāme'e Al-Akhbār*. Najaf: Heydarīyya Press.

Tabarī, M. (1996). *History of Tabarī* (translated by Abu al-Qāsim Pāyandeh). Tehran: Asātīr.

Tabarsī, F. (1993). *Majma' al-Bayān in the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*. Tehran: Nāsser Khosrow Publications.

Tabātabāī, S.M.H. (1997). *Al-Mīzān Interpretation of the Qur'ān* (5th edition). Qom: Islamic Publications Office.

Wāqedī, M. (1980). *Al-Maghāzī* (2nd edition translated by Mahmūd Mahdavī Dāmghānī). Tehran: University Publishing Center.

Ya'qūbī, A. (1992). Ya'qūbī History (6th edition translated by Mohammad Ibrāhīm Āyatī). Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publications.

Accepted Article