

Prophetic Principles Governing Cultural Crisis Management from the Perspective of the Holy Quran: A Case Study of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*

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ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental topics in the field of Quranic studies is the examination of the various dimensions of the lives of the divine prophets and the derivation of their managerial patterns. The present study, aiming to extract and explain a model of cultural crisis management from the perspective of the Quran, analyzes the Battle of the Confederates (*al-Aḥzāb*), also known as the Battle of the Trench (*al-Khandaq*), which took place in 627 CE, in order to redefine and systematize the principles governing the Prophetic strategies for confronting and managing cultural crises. Employing an exploratory, meta-synthesis, and interrogative (*istinṭāqī*) method, and drawing on the macro-level criteria of crisis management — including forecasting, prevention, preparedness, warning, immunization, assessment and mobilization of resources, special operations, containment, reconstruction, purification (cleansing), and learning — this research has developed a theoretical framework for cultural crisis management. The findings indicate that the Noble Prophet (s), across three stages — before the crisis, during the crisis, and after the crisis — by establishing an effective intelligence network, engaging in purposeful consultation with his companions, and adopting strategic decisions, not only neutralized the enemy's military threats but also managed cultural crises by strengthening the foundations of faith, trust in God (*tawakkul*), and fostering cohesion among the believers. The Prophet (s), through the reconstruction of social structures, the elimination of negative consequences, and an emphasis on education and drawing lessons from the event, guided the society of Medina toward greater stability, steadfastness, and resilience. This study confirms that the Prophet's model of cultural crisis management is an intelligent synthesis of preventive measures, the utilization of human and material resources, and reliance on the divine will — one that can be employed as a comprehensive framework and a practical model for managing cultural crises in the contemporary world.

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Introduction

Human societies today face a wave of cultural crises that target both collective identity and values and, with unprecedented speed and complexity, destabilize the intellectual, moral, and social foundations of nations. Unlike natural or economic crises, these crises infiltrate the hidden layers of a society's thought and belief slowly and are often not recognized until they have taken root; hence, managing them is among the most complex and sensitive types of management, doubling the necessity of revisiting religious models. In this regard, the conduct (*sīrah*) of the divine prophets, despite apparent differences, is all rooted in a single truth and offers an authentic and enduring framework for confronting crises; it is precisely for this reason that the managerial conduct of the prophets (peace be upon them) serves as a clear and guiding light in the management of cultural crises.

The Holy Quran and the practical conduct of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him), as the most complete and comprehensive guiding sources for governing societies through major crises, provide a guiding framework based on prevention, containment, and reconstruction. As the Quran states in reference to the unseen assistance during the Battle of the Confederates: *"O you who have faith! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when the hosts came at you, and We sent against them a gale and hosts whom you did not see. And Allah sees best what you do"*¹ (Quran 33:9). Among the most prominent historical instances in which a full-scale crisis — with military, political, psychological, economic, and especially cultural dimensions — occurred is the Battle of the Confederates (the Trench), in which the Noble Prophet's intelligent management, across the three stages of before, during, and after the crisis, constitutes an enduring and operational model for confronting contemporary cultural crises.

This study examines the Battle of the Trench (*Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*) as a case study to derive the Prophet Muhammad's model of crisis management in the cultural domain. The battle is selected for analysis

¹. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

بَصِيرًا﴾ (الأحزاب/٩)

because it constitutes a paradigmatic instance of a multidimensional crisis, encompassing military, political, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions simultaneously. Through this analysis, the study aims to identify the managerial principles and strategies the Prophet employed in navigating this complex crisis, with particular attention to their applicability to contemporary cultural crisis management. This event was selected due to its unique characteristics, including the enormous size of the enemy army, the internal sabotage carried out by the Jews of *Banū Qurayzah* and the hypocrites, severe psychological and economic pressures, and the simultaneous threat to the identity and security of the Muslim community (see Rasūlī Maḥallātī 2010, 415); the verses of this Medinan sūrah provide a suitable ground for extracting the principles of cultural crisis management from the Prophetic conduct.

Research Method

The present research has been conducted based on an exploratory, meta-synthesis, and interrogative (*istinṭāqī*) method. The research process is as follows: first, preliminary data and information in the field of cultural crisis management were collected and categorized from scholarly sources through a documentary method; then, employing Martyr Sadr's method of "interrogation" (*istinṭāq*) of the Holy Quran, a case study of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* was undertaken. After the result of the interrogation was determined, this result was compared with the managerial conduct of the Noble Messenger (s) on the subject of the research. Thus, the process of the present study is a combination of several methods.

Literature Review

In the general field of management and crisis management, numerous works exist; however, specialized studies with a Quranic approach that focus on the Prophet's managerial conduct in cultural crises are very limited. Some related works are outlined below as a general background:

- ‘Abbās Nīkzād in his book “The Managerial Method of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH)” [in Persian] (2011) examines the Prophet’s managerial characteristics, including justice, consultation, meritocracy, care for the people, attention to knowledge, and the rights of women and children.

- Meysam Āghdāghī et al. in their article, “Investigating and Understanding the Islamic Principles of Cultural Policymaking Based on the Prophet’s Ruling Method” [in Persian] (2018), extract and examine seven principles: guidance, comprehensiveness, gradualism, social unity, mosque-centeredness, the cultivation of knowledge, and the strengthening of the family and women.

- Sultānzādeh Pasyān et al. in their article, “Educational Management Based on the Life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) with Emphasis on Quranic Verses” [in Persian] (2022), classify and explain the subject under three axes: ultimate goals (guidance and communication), principles (warning, reminding, giving glad tidings, referring to the source, and exemplification), and methods (recitation, purification, and the teaching of the Book and wisdom).

- Riḍā Shāhquliyān Qahfarrukhī, in the article “Military Principles and Tactics in the Management and Commanding System of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)” [in Persian] (2020), examines the subject according to four key indicators: the application of principles of warfare, creativity, training, and the organization of forces.

The main difference between the present study and the works mentioned above is that it first derives the principles of crisis management from Quranic propositions and then analyzes their application in the Prophet’s practical conduct through a case study of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* — an approach that is novel and entirely Quranic-managerial in nature.

Conceptual Framework

Undoubtedly, the correct understanding and analysis of a scholarly subject depends on a correct understanding of the terms and concepts employed around it, since “identifying the key variables and concepts in any research has a significant effect on resolving ambiguity and

ensuring the reliability of the study” (‘Abbāsī-Muqaddam 2000, 31); therefore, before entering into the main discussions of the article, it is necessary to clarify the key concepts.

1. Management

Linguistically, management (*mudīriyyat*) means the ability to administer, lead, control activities, and competence and capability in directing affairs (Dihkhudā 1998, 13:44; Mu‘īn 2007, 3973). In technical usage, management scholars have defined management as “the process of the effective and efficient utilization of human and material resources in planning, organizing, mobilizing resources, directing, and controlling in order to achieve organizational goals based on an accepted value system” (Riḍā’iyān 2001, 7). Alvānī has likewise stated that management is “the science and art of coordinating efforts within an organization and using resources to achieve defined goals” (Alvānī 2022, 11). A common thread running through existing definitions of management is that it constitutes both a science and an art involving the administration of human and material resources through key functions—including planning, organizing, directing, and controlling—with the aim of achieving organizational objectives.

2. Crisis

The concept of “crisis” does not have a single, agreed-upon definition in the various sciences, particularly in management, and its definitions are relative and diverse; however, the common thread running through all definitions is an abnormal, emergency situation that disrupts equilibrium. Linguistically and in usage, it has been rendered as the equivalent of pressure, anxiety, a turning point, catastrophe, and violence (Āryānpūr 2017, 1:313). Crisis, in fact, has been defined as “disintegration, disorder, excessive fragility, the threatening of values, socio-political instability, and military hostility” (Abharī 2007, 13). In technical usage, it can be said that a crisis refers to a situation that, “due to its pervasive and complex nature, lacks semantic consensus” (Tājīk 2000, 48). In another definition, it has been said that a crisis is

“a set of rapidly occurring events that disrupt the equilibrium of systems and increase the likelihood of intensified hostility” (Kāzimī 1987, 13). From the sum of these definitions, it emerges that every definition of crisis is relative and gains meaning in relation to concepts such as security, power, national interests, and threats. In this study, the concept of crisis refers to emergency situations that disrupt the equilibrium of society throughout the Prophet’s conduct, possessing military, political, psychological, and cultural dimensions.

3. Culture

Culture is a broad, multidimensional term for which more than 300 definitions exist, and it is used across various disciplines. Linguistically, it is composed of “*far*” (up, forward) + “*hang/hanj*” (to pull, to intend), and denotes knowledge, art, skills, education, upbringing, manners, and customs (Mu‘īn 2007, 2773).

Culture has been defined as “the collection of teachings, beliefs, values, norms, art, literature, political-legal systems, ethnic practices, and tools that human beings have acquired in the process of evolution and transmit to subsequent generations” (Sutūdiḥ 2005, 72). It has also been defined as “all forms of a people’s life, including intellectual foundations, habits, tools, clothing, buildings, and adaptation to the environment” (Ibrāhīmī & Ṭāhirī 2007, 37). Culture is the quality of collective human life that is transmitted from one generation to another, and it has two main uses: culture in its broad sense, which relates to the advanced products of civilization, such as literature, art, philosophy, knowledge, and technology, and culture in its anthropological sense, which includes the creations of thought, habits, and everyday objects that give rise to humanity’s complex adaptation to the natural environment (Sharīfzādīḥ & Kāzimī 1998, 83). Therefore, culture is a form of social capital and collective heritage that encompasses all the material and spiritual aspects of a society’s life and is transmitted to subsequent generations.

4. Cultural Crisis

A cultural crisis is a situation in which a society, as a result of rapid social, political, economic, or globalization-driven changes, faces serious difficulties in preserving its identity, values, traditions, and beliefs, and its ethical and cultural principles are altered or threatened. More precisely, cultural crises are “soft, internal threats that target the intellectual and doctrinal infrastructure of a society and seriously disrupt social security and health; these threats initially appear in the form of social conflicts, unrest, psychological pressures, uprisings, and unregulated cultural protests” (Qadīrī Abyānih et al. 2006, 28).

5. Crisis Management

Crisis management is a set of continuous actions and processes carried out with the aim of preventing the occurrence of a crisis, rapidly containing and controlling it when it occurs, minimizing damages and consequences, quickly returning society to its normal state, and improving post-crisis conditions. In effect, crisis management is “the creation of readiness and the provision of the necessary measures and preparations for confronting a crisis or minimizing its destructive effects” (Āhanchī 1997, 8). Likewise, any necessary measure aimed at “avoiding crisis, carefully examining it, and resolving and containing it in order to secure national and transnational interests” (Tājīk 2000, 85) is considered crisis management, and it includes “planning related to the crisis and activities before, during, and after the crisis” (Mujtahidzādih 2012, 18). As a result, crisis management is a comprehensive process comprising prevention, rapid response, containment, damage mitigation, and reconstruction, the ultimate goal of which is to preserve the functioning of society and return it to favorable conditions.

Prophetic Principles Governing Cultural Crisis Management

The Battle of the Confederates (627 CE) is the most prominent example of a multidimensional, full-scale crisis in the history of Islam, one that simultaneously encompassed military, political, economic, psychological, and cultural dimensions. This crisis was accompanied

by features such as the prolonged siege of Medina by a massive coalition of unbelieving tribes (more than 10,000 men), a severe shortage of food and intense economic pressure, the internal betrayal of the Jews of Banū Qurayzah (acting as a “fifth column”), and the sabotage of the hypocrites, along with extensive psychological warfare and the spreading of fear, anxiety, and rumors aimed at weakening the morale of the Muslims (Rasūlī Maḥallātī 2010, 415). The Noble Prophet (s), as a resolute (*ulu a-‘azm*) leader of unwavering will, managed this complex crisis effectively through an active, *jihādī*, and strategic approach. Since the Battle of the Trench, owing to the magnitude of external and internal threats, its socio-political complexity, and the intense psychological pressure involved, is considered the most difficult and challenging confrontation of the era of the Prophetic mission, the verses of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* provide the best context for extracting the Prophetic principles of cultural crisis management. In what follows, these principles will be examined across the three stages of before the crisis, during the crisis, and after the crisis.

1. Before the Crisis

Cultural crisis management in the Prophetic conduct begins with a preventive approach; the Prophet (s), by strengthening the foundations of faith and morality within society, creating cohesion and unity among the Muslims, and making them aware of potential threats, laid the groundwork for reducing cultural vulnerability. Some of the elements and measures involved in this stage will be examined below.

1.1. Anticipation (Forecasting)

Anticipation is one of the most important pillars of cultural crisis management in the Prophet’s conduct, one that was built upon a broad intelligence network and the careful monitoring of threats. Following the Battle of *Uḥud*, the Prophet (s) established permanent intelligence-gathering networks, including surveillance personnel and informants, in the areas surrounding Medina (Khājevand Ṣāleḥī et al. 2025, 408) in order to be informed of any “movement, transfer of forces, or gathering of enemies” (Ṭallās 1975, 370). Prior to the Battle of the

Confederates, the report of the enemy tribes' alliance was received in time, and the Prophet (s) was also informed of the impending attack through the revelation brought by Gabriel; this anticipatory approach shielded the Muslim community from surprise attacks while enabling strategic preparations, most notably the construction of the defensive trench (Ibn Hishām 1936, 2:48). The decision to dig the trench was made after consultation with the companions and the acceptance of Salman Farsi's proposal, and the Prophet (s) himself actively participated in the digging (see Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 17:225; Haqqī 1912, 7:144); the result of this early anticipation and preparedness strengthened the faith and morale of the believers to the point that they said: "... *'This is what Allah and His Apostle had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger were true.'* And it only increased them in faith and submission"² (Quran 33:22).

At the same time, the Prophet's foresight extended beyond military considerations. He clearly recognized that the crisis posed by the Confederates was also a profound cultural and social challenge, fragmenting the community into distinct groups—including steadfast believers, those with weak faith, hypocrites, and internal collaborators—and placing Islamic religious values at serious risk; therefore, alongside military measures, he worked to strengthen faith and cohesion and to counter the hypocrites' psychological warfare. The outcome and function of the Prophetic principle of anticipation was an intelligent combination of a human intelligence network, reliance on revelation, and the precise analysis of cultural threats, which laid the groundwork for victory in one of the most difficult crises in the history of Islam.

1.2. Prevention

Prevention was one of the main pillars of the Noble Prophet's *jihādī*-cultural management, one built on foresight, the monitoring of threats, and practical action prior to the occurrence of a crisis. The Prophet (s), drawing on the Quranic principles of "*indhār*" (warning against the dangers of deviation) and "*tabshīr*" (glad tidings of victory on the path

². ﴿... هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا﴾ (الأحزاب/٢٢)

of truth), prepared society to confront major challenges: “*O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner*”³ (Quran 33:45).

Prior to the Battle of the Confederates, the Prophet (s), by dispatching numerous expeditionary units and military campaigns, suppressed any internal opposition and neutralized external threats. These campaigns, particularly those personally led by the Prophet (s), were carried out with objectives such as creating deterrence, consolidating Islamic authority, and securing lasting stability in the region (Ṭallās 1975, 370). The fruit of the Prophet’s preventive measures not only forestalled many potential attacks but also strengthened the foundations of the Islamic movement and paved the way for victory in the great crisis of the Confederates; this approach represents an outstanding example of strategic, preventive management of a cultural crisis aimed at preserving divine ideals and spreading Islam.

1.3. Preparedness

Preparedness is the most important preventive pillar of cultural crisis management in the Prophet’s conduct, and it rests on two foundations:

a) The continuous guidance and education of society: The Noble Prophet (s), by establishing a comprehensive and balanced educational system, attending simultaneously to both otherworldly and worldly dimensions, prepared the society of Medina to withstand the most severe crises; the foundation of this education was faith in God, belief in the Hereafter, the remembrance of God, and following the path of the Prophetic tradition: “*In the Messenger of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar; for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly*”⁴ (Quran 33:21); such that the Muslim individual “acted in worldly life as though he would live forever, and behaved toward God as though he stood at the threshold of death at every moment” (Zarrīnkūb 2008, 70). The practical result of this approach in the Battle of the Confederates reflects the

³. «يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا» (الأحزاب/ ٤٥)

⁴. «لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا» (الأحزاب/ ٢١)

successful management of material (hardware) resources and an extraordinary strengthening of morale, faith, and cohesion (software) in the difficult moments of the crisis.

b) Constant vigilance and a deep understanding of the enemy: The Prophet (s), possessing comprehensive awareness of the political, social, cultural, and economic structures of his enemies—including the polytheists, Jews, and hypocrites—as well as a precise understanding of their patterns and intentions, was never caught off guard; “with a deep understanding of how the enemy operated, he always kept the possibility of an attack in mind and kept society in a state of full vigilance” (‘Āmilī 1996, 9:74). Thus, it was the enemies who were caught off guard by the vigilance of the Prophet and his companions, not the Muslims. The ultimate outcome of preparedness in the Prophetic conduct was the integration of comprehensive doctrinal, moral, and practical education with strategic vigilance, thereby maximizing the cultural and military resilience of the Islamic community in response to the greatest crisis in early Islamic history: the Confederates.

2. During the Crisis

At the time a cultural crisis breaks out, the Prophet (s) acted swiftly and decisively, striving to manage the crisis and prevent its spread by exposing the enemy’s conspiracies, clarifying intellectual and cultural deviations, and mobilizing the forces of the believers. This stage requires rapid decision-making, effective communication with society, and the optimal use of all available resources, which will be explained below.

2.1. Warning and Immunization

In the initial moments of a crisis, precise and rational warnings can prevent potential harm and provide the necessary readiness for confronting it properly. In this regard, during the Battle of the Confederates, the Holy Quran warns the Prophet (s) about the hypocrites—who were, in fact, the enemy’s fifth column—by instructing the believers “not to trust or place confidence in them, and introducing them as corrupters on earth and the greatest enemies of truth and reality” (‘Alīkhānī et al. 2007, 413).

In the narrative of the Battle of the Confederates, the Holy Quran identifies three groups: true believers, hypocrites, and those who hesitated and hung back; among these groups, the hypocrites receive the greatest attention, since hypocrisy has made them unreliable and no hope can be placed in them, as stated in verse 19:

﴿أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِأَلْسِنَةٍ حِدَادٍ أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَبِيرِ أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يُمْنُوا فَاحْبِطْ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا﴾ (الأحزاب/١٩)

“grudging you [their help]. So when there is panic, you see them observing you, their eyes rolling, like someone fainting at death. Then, when the panic is over, they scald you with] their [sharp tongues in their greed for riches. They never have had faith. So Allah has made their works fail, and that is easy for Allah” (Quran 33:19)

The Holy Quran warns the Prophet (s) not to trust the hypocrites, since these people possess numerous negative traits: cowardice, fear, the sowing of discord, the breaking of covenants, and a lack of faith. Their falsehood and hypocrisy undermine trust and generate despair among the Muslims. In this same vein, the Quran, through its clarifications, makes the Prophet (s) aware of the hypocrites’ schemes. These individuals try to deter others from participating in *jihād* and to prevent Muslims from joining the ranks of battle. They even suggest to their accomplices that they refrain from *jihād*, while they themselves exert little effort and avoid sacrificing themselves for the Muslims. In critical circumstances, fear and terror become visible in the hypocrites’ gaze — an aimless look and anxious eyes over which they have no control. Yet once the danger has passed, they attack with tongues sharper than swords, criticizing and reproaching, and begrudging and envying any achievement or blessing that comes to the Muslims. “These individuals — whose traits have been clearly described — do not possess true faith, and their hearts have not embraced faith” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 16:288).

Therefore, in confronting the cultural crises arising from hypocrisy and mistrust within society, the Prophet (s) adopted an approach based on “warning and immunization”; he, by exposing the hypocrites and clarifying their malicious aims, delivered precise warnings to society so that it would be protected from the harms of the enemy’s cultural infiltration. These warnings, combined with the strengthening of the Muslims’ faith and insight, ensured the intellectual and cultural immunity of society and laid the groundwork for properly confronting the cultural threats of that era. In this way, the Prophet (s), through anticipation and awareness of the dangers, safeguarded society against cultural instability.

2.2. Resource Mobilization and Special Operations

When news of the attack on Medina reached the Noble Messenger (s), he immediately informed the people and consulted with them regarding how to confront the threat. The Prophet (s), emphasizing the necessity of seriousness and effort, promised victory in the event of patience and piety, and called on the people to obey God and the Messenger. Most of the consultations at that time concerned the strategy for the upcoming battle, and “the Prophet (s) asked the people: Is it better to confront the enemy outside Medina? Or should we remain in the city and dig a trench? Or should we position ourselves near the city with our backs against the mountain?” (Āmilī 1996, 9:76). After hearing various opinions in the consultative session with the companions, the Messenger of God’s final decision was to remain stationed in Medina; this decision and the strategy of digging the trench were the result of consultation with his companions — Salman Farsi proposed that, by digging a trench around the city, the enemy could be prevented from entering Medina. The Messenger of God (s) approved Salman’s advice and put it into practice. This conduct and method of the Noble Messenger of Islam (s) demonstrates that, through consultation with other Muslims, he carried out a precise assessment of existing conditions and, by drawing on collective wisdom, worked toward the mobilization of available resources and capacities.

In the Prophet’s conduct, cultural crisis management was carried out through a comprehensive approach that included careful assessment and the mobilization of resources; he, through consultation

with his companions, gathering various opinions, and “developing a participatory system” (Gadoev 2023, 406), properly assessed the conditions and cultural threats and, by drawing on collective wisdom, selected the best solutions. He then acted to confront the crisis and preserve the cultural identity of society by mobilizing all available resources — from faith and piety to the knowledge and experience of his companions. This approach shows that the Prophet (s) was well aware of the importance of precisely understanding threats and making optimal use of internal capacities to confront them.

In the Quranic model of cultural crisis management, trust in God (*tawakkul*) and faith in His grace constitute a special and guiding operation; this approach is based on belief in a transcendent, unseen power that will come to humanity’s aid in difficult circumstances. Therefore, the manager of a cultural crisis in this model never surrenders to despair and hopelessness, nor does he display it, for he is certain that God is always his support. In the Battle of the Confederates, too, this principle is clearly manifested; at the height of the difficulties and threats, divine assistance came to the aid of the Muslims. The verses of *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* speak explicitly of this unseen support and aid. This experience shows that faith and trust in God, beyond being a personal and inward belief, are an operational strategy in cultural crisis management that grant individuals and society the capacity for resistance and victory. In this way, the manager of a Quranic cultural crisis, by relying on God and drawing on spiritual resources, can manage the crisis with confidence and hope and guide society toward security and tranquility: “O you who have faith! Remember Allah’s blessing upon you when the hosts came at you, and We sent against them a gale and hosts whom you did not see. And Allah sees best what you do”⁵ (Quran 33:9); and likewise the verse: “Allah sent back the faithless in their rage, without their attaining any advantage, and Allah spared the faithful of fighting, and Allah is all-strong, all-mighty”⁶ (Quran 33:25).

⁵. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا﴾ (الأحزاب/٩)

⁶. ﴿وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا وَكَفَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًا عَزِيزًا﴾ (الأحزاب/٢٥)

In the Battle of the Confederates, the believers, with firm confidence in the divine promise, cast aside fear, and throughout this battle the Holy Quran repeatedly reminds the faithful companions of God's grace and favor; the truth that trust in God and seeking His help is the primary key to overcoming crises is a principle that must never be forgotten by Muslims at any moment. God is the Causer of causes and the source of every victory, and if everyone properly fulfills his duties, divine aid and support will likewise come to him; and "this divine assistance comes to the believers from a source that does not occur to the mind" (Faḍlullāh 1998, 16:85).

Cultural crisis management in the conduct of the Prophet (s) can be regarded as a set of "resource mobilization and special operations" designed and executed with great subtlety and precision; he, by employing various methods such as exposing the hypocrites, clarifying the enemy's objectives, strengthening the faith and insight of the Muslims, and creating unity and solidarity within society, confronted cultural threats. These measures were not only aimed at the immediate resolution of crises but were also carried out with the goal of creating lasting cultural resistance and consolidating Islamic values within society. The Prophet (s), through a deep understanding of the various dimensions of the cultural crisis and reliance on the power of faith and trust in God, was able to protect society from the harms of cultural aggression and pave the way for the spread of Islam.

2.3. Continuous Monitoring (Containment)

Continuous monitoring and containment is one of the essential pillars of cultural crisis management, one that focuses on preserving spiritual and intellectual stability and steadfastness among those affected, since "one of the main axes in any crisis is the crisis's effect on how the actors of the affected systems or domains perceive themselves and determine their position" (Kāzīmī 1987, 52); in confronting social and cultural crises, stability, steadfastness, and resistance are among the key features of effective management. Throughout history, all the divine prophets, relying on these principles, have been able to withstand cultural challenges, and by successfully controlling, managing, and containing crises, have paved the way for the continuity and progress of society; this shows that maintaining firmness and stability plays a vital role in confronting cultural threats.

At the time a crisis breaks out, maintaining stability and steadfastness, as well as spiritual readiness, are fundamental principles for its containment. The loss of spiritual and intellectual equilibrium by managers and those involved in a crisis prevents its control, and as a result, the crisis expands and its destructive effects become more evident; this situation can lead to a weakening of morale among those affected and reduce their capacity to contain or confront the crisis: *“When they came at you from above and below you, and when the eyes rolled [with fear] and the hearts leapt to the throats, and you entertained misgivings about Allah, it was there that the faithful were tested and jolted with a severe agitation”*⁷ (Quran 33:10-11). Exegetes describe how, overwhelmed by the size and intimidating presence of the enemy army, the hearts of the weaker Muslims wavered as the Confederate tribes advanced from the upper and lower reaches of the valley, and the believers’ hearts and minds were seized by fear and uncertainty even as the sincere and steadfast remained convinced that God would fulfill His promise, while the hypocrites assumed that the Muslim army would be annihilated (Kāshānī 1961, 7:259).

Faith in victory and in the truth of the divine promise was the driving force behind the believers’ steadfastness in the Battle of the Confederates; while the hypocrites displayed their fear and weakness and surrendered before the enemy’s strength, the believers, with firm resolve and reliance on the truthfulness of God’s and His Messenger’s promise, went into the field and displayed their firmness and faith: *“But when the faithful saw the confederates, they said, ‘This is what Allah and His Apostle had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger were true.’ And it only increased them in faith and submission”*⁸ (Quran 33:22). Thus, containment plays a prominent role in the managerial model of the Messenger of God (s); through containment, the Prophet (s) not only prevented the spread of despair and hopelessness but also

⁷. *﴿إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا﴾ هُنَالِكَ*

ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زَلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا﴾ (الأحزاب/١٠-١١)

⁸. *﴿وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا﴾*

(الأحزاب/٢٢)

laid the groundwork for the mobilization of forces and effective confrontation with cultural threats. This measure reflects the Prophet's profound understanding of the importance of maintaining spiritual and intellectual stability in difficult crisis conditions.

3. After the Crisis

After the subsidence of the cultural crisis, the Prophet (s) engaged in the reconstruction and repair of the damage sustained; this stage included the healing of spiritual and intellectual wounds, the strengthening of authentic cultural values, and the creation of appropriate mechanisms to prevent the recurrence of crisis in the future. The purpose of this stage is to create a society that is stronger and more resilient against cultural threats, and some examples of this will be examined below.

3.1. Reconstruction

For a return to the normal course of life after a crisis, the continuity of social existence is essential, and the managers of society strive, by eliminating the effects and consequences of the crisis, to restore conditions to normal and to carry forward the flow of social life in a natural and continuous manner. Post-crisis reconstruction, in fact, "includes all the necessary measures required after the occurrence of a crisis, carried out to restore normal conditions to affected areas, taking into account the principles of sustainable development, safety standards, public participation, and the cultural, historical, and social issues of the affected region" (Iskandarī 2012, 119). During the Battle of the Confederates, Almighty God praises and commends the Muslims and believers who, despite hardships and pressures, stood firm on the front and supported the religion and the Noble Prophet (s), and as a reward for their steadfastness and self-sacrifice, He strengthens and rebuilds the strength of the army of Islam: *"that Allah may reward the true for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, if He wishes, or accept their repentance. Indeed Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful"*⁹ (Quran 33:24).

⁹. ﴿لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾ (الأحزاب/ ٢٤)

Cultural crisis management during the era of the Prophet of Islam (s) is one of the most important dimensions of his mission, since pre-Islamic society was immersed in a whirlpool of ignorance, superstition, and idol worship, as well as social discrimination and tribal wars (see Farjāmī 2024, 165). Under such conditions, the Prophet (s), with wisdom, forbearance, and prudence, not only confronted these cultural deviations but also sought to “reconstruct” the values and norms of society; this reconstruction was carried out through the introduction of a new value system based on monotheism, justice, ethics, and humanity. Rather than completely eliminating past traditions, the Prophet (s) sought to purify and refine them, preserving and elevating those that were compatible with Islamic principles. The Prophet’s method of managing cultural crises was a combination of exhortation, counsel, clarification, and, when necessary, firmness and legal action, and he was able to penetrate the hearts of the people and invite them toward the lofty values of Islam; likewise, through the establishment of social and political institutions such as mosques, a suitable ground was provided for the promotion of Islamic culture and values (see Ṭabarī 1993, 2:397), and ultimately, the Prophet (s) succeeded in containing the cultural crisis and building a new society founded on Islamic values.

3.2. Purification (Cleansing)

After a crisis occurs, the cleansing, collection, and, in some cases, the destruction of the remaining traces and instruments of the crisis is among the necessary measures; on the other hand, the eradication of the factors and causes that give rise to a crisis is a logical step toward increasing the safety of society and preventing renewed harm from similar factors. In this regard, the Holy Quran identifies the elimination of the factors that generate crisis as one of the fundamental principles of cultural crisis management and emphasizes the necessity of dealing firmly and without leniency with the factors of deviation and crisis-generation within society.

Following the victory in the Battle of the Confederates and the neutralization of the primary threat posed by the polytheists, the Noble Prophet (s) and the Muslim community turned their attention to the

Jews of *Banū Qurayzah*: “And He dragged down those who had backed them from among the People of the Book from their strongholds, and He cast terror into their hearts, [so that] you killed a part of them, and took captive [another] part of them”¹⁰ (Quran 33:26). This group, by breaking their covenant and cooperating with the polytheists during the Battle of the Confederates, had become one of the factors of the crisis. According to the biographical sources, at midday Gabriel descended and conveyed God’s command that the Prophet (s) march against *Banū Qurayzah*, and the Prophet accordingly ordered that the afternoon prayer be observed only upon arrival among *Banū Qurayzah*, then set out with three thousand Muslims and thirty-seven horses, with ‘Alī (a) carrying the banner at the fore (Āyatī 1999, 129).

Another example of purification occurred in 630 CE: after the conquest of Mecca and the victory of Islam, the “purification” (cleansing) of the sacred sites from the traces of polytheism and idol worship became one of the Prophet’s priorities; this purification was not merely an outward, physical act but represented a profound inward and doctrinal transformation within society. The Prophet (s), present at the Ka‘bah, removed all the idols and symbols of polytheism from it and turned the Ka‘bah into a site of monotheism and the sole worship of God. This extensive purification also extended to other sacred sites, and the Prophet ordered that all traces of polytheism be removed from mosques, idol-temples, and the surrounding areas.

In this regard, it should be noted that this purification was not accompanied by violence or extremism, and the Prophet (s), while respecting the sentiments of the people and avoiding any conflict or sedition, carried out this task calmly and with prudence. The main purpose of this purification was to create a pure and unadulterated spiritual atmosphere for worship and devotion, not vengeance or the imposition of beliefs. This act was a symbol of society’s liberation from the chains of ignorance and superstition and the beginning of a new era founded on faith and monotheism.

¹⁰. ﴿وَأَنزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَافِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا﴾

(الأحزاب/ ٢٦)

3.3. Learning

A wise and just person does not simply pass over the experiences and events of life but strives, through the careful analysis and examination of their causes and factors, to draw a roadmap for the future; when “the members of any society, organization, or group strive to adapt to the external environment and resolve internal problems, they have unknowingly engaged in learning” (Qalāvandī et al. 2013, 106). The study and analysis of crises and events after their conclusion — including an examination of their causes, factors, instruments, and consequences — is highly effective in managing future crises and constitutes a valuable legacy for future generations. Almighty God is aware of the importance of these events, and for this reason recounts their stories repeatedly in the Holy Quran for the Prophet (s), since these stories contain lessons and instructive teachings for everyone.

The verses revealed in *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* concerning the Battle of the Confederates, after the conclusion of this important battle, emphasize the importance of remembering and carefully analyzing the conditions and the conduct of each of the parties involved. These verses invite the believers to draw lessons from this fateful event: “*O you who have faith! Remember Allah’s blessing upon you when the hosts came at you, and We sent against them a gale and hosts whom you did not see. And Allah sees best what you do*”¹¹ (Quran 33:9). What is meant by “armies” in the verse are “the groups that formed a confederacy against the Prophet” (Tabarsī 1992, 3:302) and sought to diminish the strengths of the believers and highlight their hardships and difficulties, but the Noble Messenger’s managerial approach neutralized their efforts. Because of this blessing, believers must not “forget God’s assistance in battles; God shatters great armies with a weak wind, and He has armies that you do not see” (Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī 2008, 16:319).

The Prophet (s) always encouraged his followers to acquire knowledge and learning and presented it as one of the most important duties of Muslims; during the era of his mission, despite the low level

¹¹. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

بَصِيرًا﴾ (الأحزاب/٩)

of literacy in society, the Prophet (s) himself promoted learning and literacy and ordered that the captives of the Battle of Badr, instead of paying ransom, teach Muslims to read and write. The method of learning in Islam is not confined merely to the acquisition of theoretical and book-based knowledge but also includes the acquisition of practical skills, critical thinking, reflection on the verses of the Quran, and following the example of the conduct and character of the Prophet (s) and the Infallibles (a). Furthermore, learning in Islam is a lifelong process, and Muslims are obligated to continue acquiring knowledge and perfection until the end of their lives; this approach to learning not only helps raise the scientific and cultural level of society but also leads to individual and social growth and excellence.



Diagram of the Prophetic Principles Governing Cultural Crisis Management from the Perspective of the Quran

Conclusion

The Prophet's approach to managing cultural crises is rooted in the teachings of the Holy Quran, and by presenting an active and dynamic set of principles and a model, it transforms crisis into an opportunity for the evolution and flourishing of society. Based on the Prophet's managerial conduct in *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*, this approach precludes a passive stance toward challenges and emphasizes timely action and the creation of constructive change. The Messenger of God (s), as the

supreme model of management in human societies, represents an outstanding example of prudent leadership and a capable mentor in the field of cultural crisis management, and a careful examination of his cultural managerial conduct reveals a set of key principles governing crisis management, including: the precise identification of the roots and origins of crisis, a deep understanding of the needs and concerns of society, the employment of effective and persuasive communicative tools and methods, and the maximal utilization of internal and external capacities to resolve problems. Furthermore, the Prophet (s), by relying on fixed religious principles and presenting pure ethical and behavioral values across the three stages of before, during, and after the crisis, was able to win the trust, cooperation, and social capital of the people and pave the way for the transformation and cultural advancement of society. Therefore, the Prophetic model of cultural crisis management is derived from the Holy Quran and can be relied upon and employed as an enduring and inspiring framework for the constructive confrontation of cultural challenges in any era and society.

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