

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE PROPHET OF MERCY
MUHAMMAD
Scenes From His Life

Osman Nuri Topbaş



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

When I was asked to translate this book from Turkish to English, I hesitated. Nevertheless, after reading it carefully, I became convinced that both English-speaking Muslims and non-Muslims alike would enjoy it and would benefit from it by learning an aspect of the Prophet Muhammad's life that usually has been—intentionally or unintentionally—ignored. The aspect being referred to in this work is his mercy, which is without doubt the prevailing theme of his entire life. Today, both Muslims and non-Muslims need to know that no single other figure in history can approach the mercy exemplified in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. They also need to know that his example is especially relevant in a world that has become universally more and more dominated by selfish and materialistic life styles. This book is a call to mercy both in our social relations as well as in our interactions with our natural environment through a profound reevaluation of the exemplary life of the mercy to all humanity, Prophet Muhammad.

This book is an excellent introduction to the life of Prophet Muhammad, written by a well-known Turkish



author who has dedicated his life to learning, practicing and spreading the teachings of the Prophet. The author opens a modest window for those who desire to take a look at the life of a man whose example is followed today by one-fifth of the world's population. No other historical figure has influenced humanity and human history more than Prophet Muhammad. He instructed people in one of the major world religions, and he laid the foundation of one of the brightest civilizations the world has known during his lifetime. Yet, according to the author, these are not the most important features of the Prophet's life. Rather, the book demonstrates that the greatness of the Prophet Muhammad arises from the fact that he brought the highest moral principles to every aspect of his life and social relations. Thus, he touched the hearts of the poor, the needy, and the oppressed; he was able to elevate these people to a level where they were able to be instructors for all of humanity, at that time and for all time to come. His love, his compassion, and his mercy encompassed not only humans, but also animals and even planets. He was a prophet remarkable for his humane character and for his love that encompassed all.

In the Holy Qur'an the title that given to Prophet Muhammad by Allah is "the Mercy for the Worlds". The human world is just one of the worlds created by Allah, "the Lord of the Worlds". The endless and eternal compassion of Allah, known by the names the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful, among others, manifested itself to humanity through the life of His Messenger. This compassion never decreased in the course of his conquest of Arabia and the defeat of his enemies. On the contrary,



his enemies benefited from his mercy on many occasions, as history has recorded. He never struck a child, slave or a woman, and strongly prohibited such behavior; he also never refused help to those who approached him in need.

Loving Prophet Muhammad is a part of the Islamic faith. As all Muslims are required to love Allah, so too are they required to love His Messenger. Without this love, faith is unacceptable. And their love for Allah and His Messenger must be above and beyond their love for anything else. Muslims display their love and respect for Prophet Muhammad by honoring him whenever his name is mentioned by saying: *Peace be upon him*, or in Arabic *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. This is a part of the etiquette in their relationship with the Prophet. As one learns about his life, this love naturally grows in one's heart, eventually filling it completely.

The author, Osman Nuri Topbas, currently lives in Istanbul. He has received both a traditional and a modern education. He has written many books on different aspects of Islam as a religion and as a civilization. One recurring theme in his writings bears on the importance of mercy, love, and care in our social relations as the very fabric of an authentic Islamic way of life. This book, written in a climate of love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), reflects this mercy, while discussing the most distinguished characteristics of the Prophet's way of life and his morality. It intends to guide people to kindness and a refinement of the heart, thus aiming to help them gain happiness in this world and the Hereafter.



The information presented in this book has been collected from the most reliable and earliest possible scholarly sources, which are thoroughly cited in footnotes. The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have been chosen only from authentic collections of hadiths. For those who desire to obtain further information, the Arabic sources have been provided.

I have a strong feeling that this book will fill a gap in literature about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by bringing to the fore this side of his life that has been neglected. In a world dominated by the necessity of dialogue among civilizations and religions, mercy is what we need most. The call of Allah to mercy through His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) must echo in the hearts of those who follow in his footsteps. No better source of mercy can be found than those individuals who have been chosen by Allah to guide humanity.

Abdullah Penman





THE PRIDE OF THE UNIVERSE

MAY PEACE AND GREETINGS BE UPON HIM

(Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)



“He in-de-ed shall be suc-cess-ful who pu-ri-fi-es him-self.”



Greetings to Muhammad Mustafa, mercy to the worlds of humans and jinn!

Greetings to Muhammad Mustafa, messenger to the worlds of humans and jinn!

Greetings to Muhammad Mustafa, Imam of the two holy sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina!

Greetings to Muhammad Mustafa, grandfather of Hasan and Husayn!

Allah, the Most Glorified, has embraced the world with His endless mercy. He granted the highest place in the universe to humans, who are the perfect outcome of His mercy and compassion. Allah also endowed humanity with the attributes that make it qualified to hold such a position.

Even this distinguished position has not been enough for humans to reach truth to the extent that Allah willed. So they were endowed with such divine blessings as reason and intuition. Furthermore, another gift was added to these, in the form of guidance by the messengers of Allah. Thus, the divine support extended to humans has paved the path



to Allah in the most perfect way. The absolute height of this divine help was the light of Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was the last prophet to fulfill this mission to the world, and whose physical presence in our world as the Messenger was a gift to all of humanity.

How He Honored the World

The Prophet (peace be upon him), who is the zenith of the chain of creation, came into this world on Monday, the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal, which corresponds to the 20th April of 571. He was born just before sunrise.

With his birth, divine mercy flooded into this world. The colors of morning and night changed. Feelings became deeper. Words, friendships and pleasures were opened up to infinity. Everything gained a new meaning and acquired a new joy. Idols were shaken and shattered. In Madayin, the land of the glorious kings of Iran, palaces and towers were destroyed. The water of lake Sava receded, and the whole lake dried up, as the muddy waters of oppression began to vanish.

Hearts were flooded with this showering of divine mercy and blessings.

The prophet's father had gone to Damascus for reasons of trade and on his way home he passed away in Medina, only two months before the birth of his child.

Following Arab custom, the blessed child remained in the care of his milk mother, Halima, for four years.

At the age of six, in order to visit the grave of her late husband, his mother Aminah took Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Umm Ayman, the maid of the family, to Medina. A terminal illness was awaiting Aminah on this journey. She passed away in a place called Abwa. A poet described it as follows:

*O the deceased, sleeping in Abwa!
Blossomed in your garden
The most beautiful rose in the world...*

Muhammad (peace be upon him) thus became an orphan and returned to Mecca with Umm Ayman.

At the age of eight, he lost his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib. Not long after, he also lost his uncle Abu Talib, who had defended him selflessly. Thus, all of his visible supporters had departed. After that, the sole protector and teacher he had was his Lord. In fact, these visible caretakers during the weakest period of his life had been given to him based on the Divine Wisdom that he would eventually become a perfect example for the whole of humanity to follow.

His childhood and youth as an orphan were passed in chastity and the highest morality, which indicated his prospects for a bright future.



When he reached the age of 25, Muhammad (peace be upon him) married Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her. She was a noble woman from the Quraysh, the ruling



tribe of Arabia. The noble Khadijah became a source of support for him as she put her life and wealth at his service. Khadijah, fifteen years older than Muhammad (peace be upon him), was a widow with children. The Prophet had a beautiful relationship with her, which became an example for the whole world.

When he was alone in his struggle, she was the first to support him. For instance, when the first revelation came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a cave on Mount Hira, he was shaken by the enormous responsibility he had been given by Allah. Immediately, he returned home, frightened.

“O Khadijah! Who will believe me?”

This blessed wife answered Muhammad (peace be upon him) by saying:

“By Allah! Allah will never forsake you; you care for your relatives, you shoulder the burden of those who cannot carry it themselves, you are charitable to the poor and you help them attain what others cannot. You are generous to guests. You help people in the challenges they face on the right path... O, Messenger of Allah! I will accept you and believe in you. Invite me first to the path of Allah!”¹

So she was the first to believe and she was his first supporter.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) never forgot her deep love, refined manners and kindness. Even after she died,

1 Bukhârî, *Zakât* 1; Muslim, *Îmân* 12; Nasâî, *Salât* 10; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 417, 418.

whenever a sacrifice was made, he always sent some of the meat to her relatives.² He treasured blessed memories of her.

The first twenty-four years of the Prophet's marriage, the duration of which corresponds to his youth and the period of highest energy, were spent only with Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her. Most of his later wives were older than he and were widowed. The only virgin and young woman among these later wives was Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her. Aishah grasped the religious issues of women with intelligence and foresight. After the demise of the Prophet (peace be upon him), she continued to live for an extended period of time, during which she enlightened both men and women with her broad knowledge. This body of knowledge later constituted one of the solidest foundations of Islamic thought.

The following account bears witness to how this goal was achieved: Abu Musa al-Ashari, one of the leading companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "We, as the companions of the Prophet, asked Aishah whenever we faced a question about any hadith and we always found satisfactory knowledge in her answers."³

Another reason behind this marriage was to confirm the intimacy between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), who was "the second of the two" in the cave of Thawr, as reported in the Qur'an.⁴



2 Muslim, *Fadâil al-Sahâbah* 75; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XV, 467.

3 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 62.

4 See Holy Qur'an, Tawba, 9/ 40.



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was elevated to the level of prophethood at the age of forty after leading a pure life during his youth and a sublime family life. Six months prior to the age of forty, Almighty Allah opened the cave of Hira to him, near Mecca, as a divine school.

In this spiritual classroom, where his sacred education continued in secrecy, he was given lessons about what is transient and eternal. Eventually, at the age of forty, he was endowed with the power to guide people and with the certificate of prophethood came the order: *“Read: In the name of thy Lord Who created!”* (Qur’an, Alaq, 96/1-2)

The first six months after this blessing, a blessing that can only be perceived by those whose minds are able to comprehend it, were noteworthy for their “trustworthy dreams.” In truth, Hira resembled the adventure of a seed beneath the soil, a place of spiritual formation that will remain veiled to humanity forever. Externally speaking, the factors that led Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to the cave were his all-encompassing compassion and sorrow for the people of his time because of their misery and their heresy. In reality, this was the preparatory phase for the transfer of the Qur’an from the Divine presence to human understanding through the pure heart of Muhammad (peace be upon him). It was the time for the development of his latent power to shoulder the heavy burden of revelation, a burden that would be impossible for an ordinary person to carry. This is like the transformation of raw iron into steel; it’s inner potential is released through a process. It is impossible to imagine a mind that could come close to the essence of this secret or a discourse capable of penetrating it that would not shatter into pieces when touched.

Those who could not look at this world through the window of the heart constituted the miserable mob that gathered under the black flag of Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, the two leading enemies of Islam in Mecca.

The life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is full of divine manifestations of honor, an honor that had not been bestowed on any of the previous prophets. Allah, the Most High, called him alone “my beloved” (*Habibi*). Likewise, he was the only one who was blessed with the *Miraj* (i.e., the ascension to the throne of Allah).⁵

His superiority became evident when he led all the previous prophets in prayer in Jerusalem before the *Miraj*. The secret of “*len terani*”⁶ in the life of Moses (peace be upon

5 Bukhârî, *Salât* I; Muslim, *Îmân* 259; Abû Dâwûd, *Sunnah* 23; Tirmidhî, *Tib* 12; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 224.

6 The secret of “*len terani*” (You will never see me!) was as follows; Moses (peace be upon him) was put through a stage of preparation with the purpose of becoming ready to talk to Allah. He was ordered to fast first for thirty days, a period that was later extended to forty. This period was a phase of preparation for talking to Allah, allowing Moses to be cleansed of carnal desires. Moses (peace be upon him) talked to Allah not through material means, such as language, but through the eternal divine attribute of *Kalam*, speech. No one heard or felt this dialogue, not even the angel Gabriel or the seventy witnesses who came with Moses (peace be upon him). Yet, Moses (peace be upon him) fainted under the influence of this divine manifestation. He became unaware as to whether he was in this world or in the Hereafter, and felt out of both space and time. Drowned in love and ecstasy, a strong passion was aroused in him to see the Ultimate Truth, *al-Haqq*. In response, the Divine Answer came: “*len terani*” (you will never see me!). Yet, as Moses (peace be upon him), in this semi-conscious state, continued to insist, Allah told him to look at the mountain. He told Moses that if the mountain could endure the divine manifestation, then so too could Moses. The narrative continues that a small Divine Light from behind endless veils was allowed to shine on the mountain. The mountain shattered into pieces. Moses (peace be upon him) fainted as a result of this terrifying event. When he awoke, he praised Allah and repented for trying to cross the limits.

him) showed itself as “*qaba qawsayni aw adna*”⁷ in the life of Prophet Muhammad. In his religion, Islam, *salat* (prayer), the point of union with Allah, was offered to his *Ummah* (community) as a blessing.



After thirteen years of striving to guide people, Muhammad was led to another cave. It was the *Thawr* cave on the Hijrah path. Muhammad was not led to this cave for reasons of education, but to allow him to drown in the secrets of Allah and to perfect his heart. Muhammad stayed in this cave for three days and nights. This time he was not alone. His companion was Abu Bakr, who was the highest and richest spiritually after the Prophet (peace be upon him). Abu Bakr had the honor of being with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the cave. He thus became the “second of the two.” Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said to his noble friend:

“*Have no fear, for Allah is with us.*” (Qur’an, Tawba, 9/40) In this way, he taught him how to be with Allah (*mai’yyah*). This was the first lesson in secret *dhikr* and in seeking the satisfaction of the hearts by opening them to Allah.

In other words, the *Thawr* cave served as the first place in the primary education of the heart; it is the heart that

7 “*Qaba qawsayni aw adna*” [Then he approached and came closer, and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) closer. Najm 8-9]: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken behind the *Sidra al-Muntaha*. Even Gabriel is not allowed to approach this close to Allah. The verse describes this distance as “two bow-lengths or (even) closer”. A private and sacred union between the Prophet and Allah took place at this distance, a distance that it is impossible for the human mind to comprehend. This serves as a comparison between Moses and Muhammad (peace be upon them) presented to our humble and powerless minds.

carries a servant to Allah in the boundless sky of secrets. The sojourn in this cave was also the first station on this sacred journey. It was at this time that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) first began to disclose to Abu Bakr the secrets in his heart, a heart that was a spring of light. This formed the first link in the Golden Chain, which will last until eternity. Faith takes its power from love. The fundamental motive behind all sublime journeys is love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). The only path by which one can gain the blessing of Allah is by following his example. This is because the law of love commands to love not only the beloved, but also what the beloved loves. It is not possible to comprehend such a divine love through our weak and inadequate understanding.

We believe that the following story will have an impact on every heart; the impact will change from person to person, depending on the horizons and capabilities of that heart. Abu Bakr Siddiq (the faithful) found a new and different joy and pleasure from all his conversations and from his friendship with the Prophet (peace be upon him) throughout his life. Familiar with the most intimate secrets of prophethood and blessed with many manifestations of it, he used to long for the Prophet (peace be upon him), even while they were together.

When he heard Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) say: "I have not benefited from the property of anyone more than I have benefited from the property of Abu Bakr," Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) responded in tears: "Aren't I and my property yours, O Prophet!"⁸ In this

8 Ibn Mâjah, *Fadâil Ashâb al-Nabî* 11; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II,

way, he demonstrated that he had surrendered himself, along with all of his belongings to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and became “lost” (*fani*) in him. (This state is called *fana fi al-Rasul* [being lost in the Prophet] in *tasawwuf* - Sufism). Abu Bakr spent all his wealth on the Prophet’s path. For instance, once Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said to him:

“Help the soldiers!”

Abu Bakr brought all his valuables to him. When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked him:

“What did you leave for your family and children?” He responded with great ecstasy of faith:

“Allah and His Prophet...!”⁹ Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan said about Abu Bakr: “The world did not want Abu Bakr; nor did he want the world...”¹⁰

It should be noted that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) cared about Abu Bakr’s family and did not want them to live in misery. The donation by Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) of all his wealth constituted an exceptional circumstance among the companions. This may be due to the fact that Abu Bakr and his family had enduring patience and a strong reliance on Allah.

Allah was the helper, supporter, shelter and host of these two travelers. The unbelievers who were searching

253; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XV, 273; Ibn Abî ‘Âsim, *al-Sunnah*, II, 577.

9 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 16; Abû Dâwûd, *Zakat* 40; Dârimî, *Zakât* 26; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 574; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan*, TV, 180; al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, I, 263, 394.

10 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Kitâb al-Zuhd*, p. 18.

for them saw nothing but a spider's web when they came to the entrance of the cave where they were hiding on Mount Thawr. After the Prophet and Abu Bakr entered the cave, a spider wove a web at the entrance of the cave; this misled the unbelievers into thinking that there was no one inside. As the poet Arif Nihat Asya put it:

*The spider's web was not in the air,
Neither was it in the water, nor was it on the ground;
It was before the eyes
Of those who were blind to the truth.¹¹*

These two precious travelers, under divine protection, reached Quba near Medina. The honorable travelers had been long expected with great anticipation; now they had finally arrived, so an atmosphere of joy and happiness prevailed over the entire city.

The fiery chanting of “*Tala'al-badru 'alayna*” (the full moon has risen upon us) from the hills echoed through the sky, bringing joy to the hearts of the people. The date was the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal, and a new calendar was instituted for all posterity. All events from then on were going to be dated from that day.

From that day forward, Medina became the center and the mirror for the development spread of Islam. With the *Hijrah*, the dark face of disbelief (*kufur*) paled. The Prophet's Mosque in Medina and the Mosque of Quba acquired a

11 Asya, Arif Nihat, *Dualar ve Aminler*, (Istanbul, 1973), p.122.



sublime meaning and remained sacred places and reminders of this blessed Hijrah.

The *Ansar* (the Helpers) declared their wealth to the *Muhajirun* (the Immigrants): "This is my wealth; half of it is my wealth; half of it is Yours..." The groundwork of Islamic brotherhood, which we establish with difficulty through our limited forms of charitable acts, was thus established. In this way, Medina attained an immortal place in Islamic history. It was in Medina that the Adhan, Ramadan, Eid, and Zakat became part of the Islamic life of the community and it was also in Medina that great historical battles took place. All these practices and events constituted ideal examples for the future of the entire *Ummah*.

The battle of Badr was a test of resistance of the true faith over disbelief (*kufr*), resulting in the triumph of the former over the latter. Religious solidarity replaced traditional tribal solidarity. For instance, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) encountered his son in battle, a disbeliever. Abu Ubayda ibn Jarrah (may Allah be pleased with him) similarly encountered his father, who was also a disbeliever. Finally, Hamzah (may Allah be pleased with him) came face to face in battle with his disbelieving brother. They met each other with swords in their hands to fight. Such a fight over faith between people bound by blood ties was unimaginable before Islam; prior battles had been mostly caused by tribal disputes. Also the Highest Truth (*Haqq Taala*) sent an army of angels. These angels, who joined in the flow of sublime feelings, gained greater honor than other angels. After this great event, Allah the Highest revealed the following verse to protect the believers from over confidence and arrogance: "*It is not ye who slew them; it was Allah: When thou throwest (a handful of dust),*



it was not thy act, but Allah's: In order that He might confer on the Believers a gracious benefit from Himself: for Allah is He who heareth and knoweth (all things)." (Qur'an, Anfal, 8/17)

In the Battle of Uhud, which followed the Battle of Badr, it was witnessed how the blood of Hamzah was shed. The number of martyrs, including Hamzah, reached seventy. Funeral prayers (*salat al-janazah*) were held for ten martyrs at a time. Each time nine were buried, Hamzah made up the tenth individual; thus he was included in all the funeral services. Prayers were made repeatedly for Hamzah, who in his final state epitomized martyrdom. Let us not forget the Prophet (peace him) loved his uncle with such a depth that he referred to Hamzah as a part of his heart.

The battle of Uhud was filled with frightening and sorrowful scenes such as those just cited. Through these tests, the maturity of the community evolved in terms of the believers' service to Allah and their submission to Him. The consequences of this growth resulted in the characteristic of contentment with Allah's chosen destiny that is a mark of Islamic faith at its highest degree.

In addition, during this battle an event that shook the Heavens and the Earth occurred; two rings from the shield of the Prophet (peace be upon him) pierced his cheek and broke one of his teeth. At that moment, all the companions were drowned in deep sorrow.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) wiped away the blood from his face with his hand and did not let it fall on the ground, fearing that it might bring the wrath of Allah down on the Earth. It was also for this reason that he sought refuge



in Allah, praying thus: "O Allah! My community is ignorant about you. They know not. Please give them guidance!"¹²

A hadith informs us:

"The wrath of Allah increased against those who had made the face of the Prophet bleed."¹³

The Battle of Uhud was one that provided such striking scenes.

The Companions of the Prophet (Ashab) followed him unconditionally. They said to him:

"O, Messenger of Allah! We believe in you. We have accepted with utmost sincerity the Qu'ran that you have brought to us from Allah. And we have made a covenant with you that we will obey and follow you. Act as you like, give us orders! We are always with you! By Allah who sent you to us, if you enter the sea we will also enter with you. None of us will refrain from doing so..."¹⁴ When these words were uttered by the *Ashab* they were at the zenith of their joy in their faith.

Yet, at the Battle of Uhud, a moment of disobedience to an order given by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and a slight inclination toward worldly gains altered the outcome of the war. The divine warning manifested itself and consequently the final triumph was delayed.

12 Bukhârî, *Anbiyâ* 54; Muslim, *Jihâd* 104; Ibn Mâjah, *Fitan* 23; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 380.

13 Ibn Ishâq, *Sîrah*, p. 311; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 317; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Mosesnâf*, VII, 373.

14 Bukhârî, *Magâzi*, 4; Muslim, *Jihâd* 83; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 389, 428, 457; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Mosesnâf*, VII, 6

The mountain Uhud is a place distinguished in the heart of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He continued all his life to visit Mount Uhud and the martyrs of Uhud. He used to say repeatedly: "We love Uhud and Uhud loves us!"¹⁵ These words have honored this place, which is known for its martyrs' graves and for the special place it occupied in the heart of the Prophet, reflected in his practice of periodically visiting it. This site will always remain special to all Muslims.



In the battle of *Khandaq* (the trenches) the Prophet was able to break a huge rock that the companions had been unable to remove. With the first blow he said he saw the Palace of Caesar. With the second blow, he said he saw the Palace of Kisra, the Persian king. With the third blow, he said he saw the collapse of the palaces in San'ah, Yemen. In this way he gave the glad tidings for the coming spread of Islam to these lands, thus injecting the hope of a prospective triumph into the hearts of the believers. He was giving the glad tidings that truth would prevail over falsehood and was drawing a map of the universe in which that which had been impossible would now become possible, one after another.

The battle of Khandaq was one of great pain, fatigue, hunger, cold, and darkness. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prayed:

"O my Lord! The real life is the life of the Hereafter, please help the Helpers (*Ansar*) and the Immigrants (*Muhajirun*)."¹⁶

15 Bukhârî, *I'tisâm* 16; Muslim *Fadâil* 10; Ibn Mâjah, *Manâsik* 104; Muwatta, *Madînah* 10; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 140.

16 Bukhârî, *Jihâd* 34; Abû Dâwûd, *Salât* 12; Nasâî, *Masâjîd* 12; Ahmad ibn



In these prayers he was explaining that the all pain and fatigue of this world are insignificant compared to the infinity of the Hereafter, and was thus orienting his Companions to adopt the Hereafter as their goal.



As was foretold by the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the time of the Hudaibiya Treaty, Muslims would triumph in subsequent battles and the people of Mecca would open their arms to its real owners. Mecca had been conquered spiritually by those who loved it with forgiveness, peace, security and guidance. The desire for Mecca, which was full of pain, oppression and hardship, came to an end. The many years of sorrow turned into joy. Next, as a thanksgiving to Allah, the greatest scene of forgiveness in history was demonstrated. Through this act of forgiveness, many people who had previously murdered Muslims and many people who had committed crimes were able to gain the honor of Islam.

Eventually, the final verse was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage (*Hajjat'ul-Wada'*). It was announced that the religion had been perfected. This, at the same was an implicit notice that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who had been sent as a mercy to the universe, had completed his task and that the time was approaching for him to return to his Lord. As evidence that he had taught the religion, he asked his companions to witness three times:

“O my companions! Did I convey the religion to you? Did I convey the religion to you? Did I convey the religion to you?”



Upon receiving an answer in the affirmative, again three times, he raised his hands, open towards the Heavens and asked Allah to witness this event. He said:

“Be the Witness, O Allah! Be the Witness, O Allah! Be the Witness, O Allah!”¹⁷

It was on this occasion that the sacred trust, which had been invested in the Prophet (peace be upon him) by Allah during his twenty-three years of Prophethood in Mecca and Medina, was transferred to the responsibility of the *Ummah* until the Day of Judgment.

Some of the helpers were concerned that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had finally conquered his homeland and birthplace; some of the Helpers (*Ansar*) began to voice their concern:

“Allah the Most High opened Mecca to his Prophet, from now on, he will stay in Mecca and will not return to Medina.”

Although this was an intimate conversation among themselves, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) later discussed this concern with them. They became embarrassed and confessed that they had thus spoken. *Rasulullah* (peace be upon m) said to the *Ansar*:

“I seek refuge in Allah from doing that! My life and death will be with you...”¹⁸

17 Bukhârî, *Fitan* 8; Muslim, *Îmân* 378; Abû Dâwûd, *Manâsik* 56 Nasâi, *Ihdâs* 4; Ibn Mâjah, *Fitan* 2; Dârimî, *Manâsik* 34; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 447.

18 Muslim, *Jihâd* 86; Ahmad ibn Habal, *al-Musnad*, II, 538; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XI, 75; Nasâi, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VI, 382, al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IX, 117.



He displayed an example of unparalleled loyalty and returned to Medina.



Muhammad was the final prophet, but there were many who preceded him. Below is a list of some of the most important prophets that were sent to humanity by Allah in order to guide and advise.

Adam (peace be upon him), to whom the angels were ordered to prostrate;

Elijah (peace be upon him), who beheld the secrets of the Heavens;

Noah (peace be upon him), who cleansed the Earth with the flood;

Heber (Hud) (peace be upon him), who turned the lands of disbelief upside down with storms;

Shelah (Salih) (peace be upon him), who shook the foundations the houses of disobedience and rebellion;

Abraham (peace be upon him), who turned the fire of Nimrod into a rose garden by his submission and reliance on Allah;

Ishmael (peace be upon him), who is the symbol of sincerity, loyalty, reliance and submission to Allah; the stories about Ishmael will be remembered by believers during the Pilgrimage until the Day of Judgment;

Isaac (peace be upon him), from whose progeny came from the prophets of Israel;

Lot (peace be upon him), the burdened prophet of the people of Sodom and Gomorra, a people that took its place in history's wasteland, being erased from the face of the Earth due to their excessive immorality and rebellion.

Zulkarnayn (peace be upon him), who carried the torch of Tawhid (faith in the unity of God) from the East to the West;

Jacob (peace be upon him), who was a statue of patience, love, and longing;

Joseph (peace be upon him), whose beauty made the beauty of the moon pale and who became the sultan of Egypt after living through a period of slavery and loneliness in prison, who lived as a stranger in this land, who underwent trial, pain, hardship, and struggle against the passions;

Jethro (Shuayb) (peace be upon him), who is called the orator of the prophets and who filled hearts with ecstasy by virtue of his sermons;

Khidir (peace be upon him), who taught the divine secrets to Moses;

Moses (peace be upon him), who destroyed the hegemony of the Pharaoh and who opened a path in the Red Sea with his staff;

Aaron (peace be upon him), who helped his brother Moses (peace be upon him) at all times and in all places;

David (peace be upon him), who with his prayers (*dhikr*), sent the mountains, stones and wild animals into ecstasy;

Solomon (peace be upon him), whose heart refused to assign any value to his glorious kingdom;



Uzayr (peace be upon him), who became symbolic of resurrection on the Day of Judgment, being resurrected after lying dead for a hundred years;

Job (Ayyub) (peace be upon him), who became the grindstone of patience;

Jonah (Yunus) (peace be upon him), who overcame darkness by going deeper into *dhikr*, supplication and penitence while in a state of great ecstasy;

Elias (Ilyas) (peace be upon him), who attained the divine blessings when he was greeted by Allah: "*Peace and salutation to such as Elias.*" (Qur'an, Saffat, 37/130);

Elijah (peace be upon him), who was elevated over the worlds;

The pure hearted prophet Ezekiel (Zulkifl) (peace be upon him), who was showered by divine blessings;

Lukman (peace be upon him), the leader of doctors, both of the internal and external body, who became a legendary figure with his insightful advice;

The oppressed prophet Zechariah (peace be upon him), who maintained his submission to and reliance on Allah -even when his body was divided into two pieces- without uttering a complaint;

John (peace be upon him), who, like his father, faced death as a martyr;

And the heavenly exalted Jesus (peace be upon him), whose distinct qualities included purity of soul, healing the ill and giving life to the dead all by seeking the help of Allah through sincere supplication. These are all examples

of the approximately one hundred and twenty thousand prophets who were sent to humanity with an abundance of divine manifestations and occurrences that descended on the spiritual soil of humanity like rain from saturated clouds. Those prophets who had acted as blessed sparks of Divine Guidance, who by examples and messages functioned as a chain of prophecy, served as glad tidings that foretold the emergence of Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was to be sent as a mercy to the worlds.



Our sources tell us that the lucky woman Suwayba was one of the milk mothers of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). She was the slave girl of Abu Lahab.

The lady Suwayba was also the first to give the glad tidings of the birth of his nephew to Abu Lahab. As a consequence of delivering this good news, he set her free out of his tribal spirit and happiness. This event took place on a Monday. The happiness of Abu Lahab for the birth of Muhammad (peace be upon him), even though it was mixed in a mundane way with feelings of tribal solidarity, will cause the punishment of this disbeliever in the Hellfire to decrease on Mondays.

After his death, some saw Abu Lahab in a dream where they were able to ask him about his life in the Hereafter:

“Abu Lahab! How are you?”

“I am being punished in the Hellfire! Yet my punishment lessens on Monday nights. I suck water between my fingers on that night. I feel cooler by drinking it. This is because on that day I set Suwayba free as she ran to me and gave me the



glad tidings about the birth of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). In return, Allah rewarded me by decreasing my punishment on Monday nights.”

Ibn al-Jazari said:

“A disbeliever like Abu Lahab benefited from his display of happiness on the occasion of the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) even though it was mixed with tribal feelings. Comparatively, imagine the kind of divine gifts and blessings a true believer acquires if they, out of respect for that night, open their heart to the Eternal Pride of the World (peace be upon him) and their table to guests...”

The appropriate way of celebrating the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to organize conferences and talks that rekindle the light of his heart during the month in which he was born. The purpose of these acts is so that we can benefit from the spirituality of this blessed month while giving feasts to the *Ummah*, so that we can make content the depressed hearts of the poor, the stranger, the orphan, and the helpless by aiding them in various ways and by providing them with charity, and to organize recitations of the Qur'an in public.¹⁹



This orphan was unlettered because he had never taken lessons, yet he came as the savior of all humanity, the

19 Joseph ibn Ismâil al-Nabhânî, *al-Anwâr al-Muhammadiyah min al-mawâhib al-ladunniyah*, p. 28-29. (Some part of this riwayat was narrated by al-San'ân, *al-Mosesnaf*, VII, 478; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, I, 261; al-Marwazî, *al-Sunnah*, I, 82; Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalânî, *Fath al-Bârî*, IX, 145).

interpreter of the unseen world and the teacher of the school of Truth.

Moses (peace be upon him) brought rules and regulations. David (peace be upon him) was distinguished by his ability to chant supplications and invocations. The sublime Jesus was sent to teach humanity the most beautiful manners, and to exemplify the practice of asceticism in the material world. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, (peace be upon him), nevertheless, brought all of these: he instituted the rules and taught how to purify the soul and to worship Allah with a clean heart. He instructed humanity in the best morality and represented it in every aspect of his life. He identified the ways in which one should not be misled by the false attractions of this world. In brief, he gathered in his personality and efforts the capacity and obligations of all the prophets. In his personality were found both the dignity that arose from his family genealogy and high morality, blissfulness that arose from his perfect character and physical beauty.

When he reached the age of forty, this was undoubtedly the turning point for humanity.

He had lived for forty years among his people. Most of the splendid things he was to bring were as yet unknown to them. He was not known as a statesman, or as a preacher, not even as a public speaker. Apart from not only not having the reputation at this time of being a triumphant commander, he was not even known as a regular soldier.

He had never given a speech about the history of past nations, the prophets, the Day of Judgment, or Paradise or the Hellfire. He was alone, living an exclusively sublime life



in a lofty moral state. Yet, he changed completely after he came down from the cave on the Mountain of Hira, having been entrusted with a divine commandment.

All of Arabia was shocked and frightened as he began his mission. His extraordinary speech and discourse enchanted all. Public poetry competitions, literature, rhetoric and discourse suddenly came to an end. Poets no longer dared to post their poems on the wall of the Holy Ka'bah. This tradition, centuries long, thus ended, to the extent that even the daughter of the most famous Arab poet, Imru'ul-Qays, was so thrilled after listening to a passage from the Qur'an, that she said in great surprise:

"This cannot be the word of a human being! If there is such a word in the world, my father's poems must be taken from the walls of the Ka'bah. Go and pull them down; and in their place post these verses...!"



The Prophet, and the Qur'an itself, challenged the entire world to produce chapters similar to the chapters of the Qur'an. This challenge, however, to produce an equivalent chapter to those found in the Qur'an, has found no response, even today.

Allah says:

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to our servant, then produce a chapter like thereunto; And call your witnesses or helpers (if there is any) besides Allah, if you are truthful." (Qur'an, Baqara, 2/23)



This unlettered man, who came out of an uncivilized society, left the people of his time feeling powerless as a result of the mass of knowledge and wisdom that was revealed through him, as a result of the sea of miracles that will not be surpassed until the Last Day. This fact is proven in different ways. The Holy Qur'an touches upon many academic and scientific issues, as well as predictions about future events; none of what was revealed has been contradicted by any new scientific discoveries. In contrast, respected encyclopedias feel obliged to publish a new volume to rectify their mistakes every year, updating the information of their previous edition.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told all of humanity that he was the vicegerent of the Truth (*al-Haqq*) on the Earth.

He laid down the basic principles of social, cultural, and economic organization, the basic principles of government and international relations, and did this in ways that can only be understood through life-long research on the material and immaterial worlds by the most distinguished scholars of our time. Indeed, humanity will better comprehend the reality of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as it develops in the areas of theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) - even though he had never carried a sword, had never undergone military training, and had never participated in a campaign, except once as a witness - proved to be a great soldier, who never gave up, even in the bloodiest battles during the struggle to spread faith in the oneness of God. The Prophet had to fight in these battles, despite his dislike of violence, to



ensure peace in society; this was part of his endless mercy that encompassed the whole of humanity. In nine years, he conquered all of Arabia with a comparatively weak military force. He achieved miraculous success in providing spiritual power and military training to the undisciplined and unorganized people of his time. His achievements were of such greatness that his followers were able to defeat the two most powerful empires of that time, namely the Byzantine and the Persian Empires. Thus was realized the good tidings which he had given years ago in Mecca:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had said to the people of Mecca;

“Accept the religion and follow me!” Abu Jahl had objected:

“Even if we follow you, the tribes of Mudar and Rabi’a will not obey you!”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had responded to him:

“Willingly or unwillingly, not only they, but also the Persians and the Byzantine people will follow me!”²⁰ This promise was soon realized.

Despite all the negative conditions, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) brought about the greatest world revolution in human history, silenced the oppressors, and put an end to the tears of the oppressed. He would comb the

20 Ibn Ishâq, *Sirah*, p.190 (Similar narratives are found in, Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 128; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 728; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IX, 31; Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Mosesnaf*, VI, 311; Ma’mar ibn Rashid, *al-Jâmi’*, XI, 48).

hair of orphans with his fingers. With the comfort he offered, hearts were relieved of anxiety.

Mehmed Akif, the famous Turkish poet, illustrated this scene in an excellent way:

*Suddenly the orphan grew up and reached forty.
The bloody feet stepping on the heads reached the water!
With one breath, this innocent saved humanity,
With one movement, he defeated the Caesars and Kisras,
The weak, who used to deserve only oppression, stood up,
The oppressors, who never expected defeat, vanished,
A mercy to the worlds was indeed his enlightening religion,
With his wings, he covered the country of those who asked for justice,
What the world owns are only gifts from him,
Society is indebted to him; individuals are indebted to him,
Indebted to this innocent one is the whole of humanity,
O Lord! With this confession, resurrect us on the Last Day,*

If Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who gathered in his personality all virtues, had not come to the world, humanity would have remained under oppression and in the wilderness, and the weak would have been enslaved by the powerful until the end of time. The balance of the world would have changed in favor of evil. In the event of such a circumstance, the world would have been dominated by oppressors, and it would have belonged only to the powerful few. How nicely the poet describes this situation:



*O the Messenger of Allah! If you had not come to the world,
Roses would not have bloomed, the nightingale would not
have chanted,
The names of God would have remained unknown to
humanity,
Existence would have lost its meaning and would have been
drawn into grief!*



Prophet Muhammad conducted twenty-seven battles and approximately fifty raids, known as *sariyya*. Islam was firmly established with the conquest of Mecca. Allah declared in the following verse of the Qur'an that Islam is the highest level of human perfection:

"This day, have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."
(Qur'an, Maida, 5/3)

It was time for the greatest separation and the greatest union.

The day before the start of his fatal illness, the Prophet went to the graveyard in Medina, called *Jannat'ul-Baqi'*, where he prayed for the deceased as follows:

*"O Allah, the Greatest! Please do not refrain from pardoning the people who lie here."*²¹

With this act, it was as if he was bidding farewell to them.

21 Muslim, *Janâiz* 102; Nasâi, *Janâiz* 103; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahih*, VII, 444.



After returning from the graveyard, it was time to bid farewell to his companions. He gave them the following advice:

“Allah, the Most High, gave a choice to one of his servants between this world and its attractions and the blessings in Paradise. The servant chose what is in Paradise...”

Hearing these words, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), who had a sensitive heart, realized that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was saying good-bye to them. A great grief overcame him, his heart saddened, and tears gushed from his heart and eyes. He sobbed:

“May my father and mother be sacrificed for your sake, O Messenger of Allah! Let us sacrifice for you our souls, the souls of our fathers, mothers and children, and our property...”

No one else in the congregation had been able to understand the deeply hidden message of the Prophet nor did they sense the feelings of Prophet Muhammad, peace and greetings be upon him. Abu Bakr was “the second of the two” in the cave of Thawr, a position that made him more aware than the others.²²

The Messenger of Allah said about him that:

“I put in the heart of Abu Bakr all what I have in my heart...”

The Companions, as they saw the valuable friend of Rasulullah (peace be upon him) crying, asked each other:

22 Bukhârî, *Salât* 80; Muslim, *Fadâil al-Sahâbah* 2; Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 15; Dârimî, *Muqaddimah* 14; Nasâî, *Janâiz* 69; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 18.



– “Are not you surprised by this old man who cried when the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned a person who chose to meet his Lord?!...”

The sensitive and refined heart of Abu Bakr, however, intuitively understood the holy and great farewell and began to cry like a reed flute that laments separation.

The daughter of the Prophet, our blessed Mother Fatimah, the leader of the women in Paradise, became so sad from the temporary separation from her father, the Prophet of Mercy to the worlds (peace be upon him), that she said:

“As Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) went to the Hereafter, a great grief fell upon me. It was so great that if it had fallen on daylight it would have turned it into night.”²³

He left two great guides to us, the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah.

The Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah are two eternal souvenirs of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); they are also prescriptions for happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

He returned to Medina and thereon followed a bitter illness that lasted for thirteen days; then the horizons of beauty were opened to his soul. The date was the 8th of June, 632, or the 12th of Rabi’ul-awwal in the 11th year of the Hijra calendar.

Between the two shoulder blades of the Prophet there had been a divine mark that indicated that he was the final

23 al-Nabhâni, *al-Anwâr al-Muhammadiyah min al-mawâhib al-ladunniyah*, p. 593.

Prophet. Most of the companions desired to kiss it. Imam Bayhaqi stated that:

“The Blessed companions doubted whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) had really traveled to the Hereafter as they saw no changes in his face after he emigrated to the eternal world. Asma (may Allah be pleased with her) searched for the sign of prophethood on his body. When they saw that it had disappeared, it was determined with certainty that he had passed onto the next world.”²⁴

The religion had been perfected; the approval of the companions of the transfer of the divine message to humanity was demonstrated and was presented as witness to the Most High Truth (al-Haqq). Following this, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was invited to the world of eternity.

Presently, he is waiting for his *Ummah* by the *Mahshar*, that is the square of resurrection, on the *Sirat* and the river of *Kawthar*.

Grant us your intercession, O Rasulullah!

Help us, O Rasulullah!

Welcome us, O Rasulullah!



The world was blessed by his birth on Monday the 12th of Rabi al-awwal.

It was on Monday the 12th of Rabi al-awwal that Allah gave the Prophet the task of serving as a prophet. Abu Qatada narrated as follows:

24 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabakât*, II, 271; al-Bayhaqi, *Dalâil al-nubuwwah*, VII, 219.



"Prophet Muhammad was asked about fasting on Mondays. In response he said:

"This is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was sent as a Prophet."²⁵

Likewise, it was on Monday the 12th of Rabi al-awwal, that he entered Medina and laid the ground stone for the new Islamic State, which will last forever.

And finally, again on Monday the 12th of Rabi al-awwal, he immigrated to the Hereafter.

As an exemplification of a divine manifestation, his birth, his Hijra from Mecca to Medina, and his transit from this world to the Next World, through the majesty of Allah, all took place on Monday the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal. This is a confirmation of the holiness of this month. The manifestations of Divine Beauty (*Jamal*) and Divine Glory (*Jalal*) are richly experienced at this time. In the inner worlds, the joys of a festival along with the pains of a separation are intertwined in the union of these two opposites. He is, yet again with mercy and compassion, waiting for his *Ummah* in the Hereafter.

With the journey of the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) to the World of Happiness, this world became deprived of his physical presence. Indeed, this is a disloyal world, as expressed in the poetry of the Ottoman Sufi Poet, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi:

25 Muslim, *Siyâm* 196; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 299; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahih*, VIII, 403; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IV, 286.

*Who expects loyalty from you?
Are not you the false world?
Are not you the same Earth,
That took away Muhammad Mustafa?*²⁶



26 Hudâî Mahmud, *Kulliyât-ı Hudâî*, (Istanbul, 1338), p. 109.





**HIS EXEMPLARY LIFE
AND PLACE
AMONG THE PROPHETS**



“Light upon Light.” (Qur’an, al-Nur, 24/35)



*T*he lifestyle of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the best example for each and every human being. He is the best example of a religious leader. He is the finest example of a state leader. He is the example to follow for those who enter the garden of divine love. He is the highest example of gratitude and humility for those who are showered with the gifts of God. He is the greatest example of patience and submission, in the most challenging times and places. He is the best example of generosity and of disinterest in collecting bounty. He is the finest example of compassion towards the family. His is the greatest example of mercy towards the weak, the lonely and the enslaved, and he is exemplary in pardoning the guilty.

If you are wealthy, contemplate the humility and generosity of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who gained the hearts of the leaders who controlled all of Arabia!

If you are weak, adopt the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the period he spent in Mecca under the rule of the oppressive and usurping polytheists.

If you are a triumphant conqueror, take your example from the life of the courageous Prophet (peace be upon him) who defeated his enemies in Badr and Hunayn.



If you lose a battle, may Allah protect you; remember the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who walked with dignity, courage and reliance on Allah among his martyred and wounded companions after the battle of Uhud.

If you are a teacher, contemplate the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who taught God's orders by conveying his soft and sensitive enlightenment to the people of Suffa (*Ashab al-Suffa*) in the school at his Mosque.

If you are a student, bring to mind the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who sat on his knees before the Archangel, the Trustworthy Gabriel (*Jibril al-Amin*).

If you are a preacher or a sincere spiritual guide (*murshid*) for people, listen to the voice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who spread wisdom to his companions.

If you aim to defend the truth, to convey it to others and lift it up, yet have no helper in this matter, then look at the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who proclaimed the truth in Mecca against the oppressors while inviting them to it.

If you have defeated your enemies, broken their resistance and triumphed over them, if you have destroyed the superstitions and declared the truth, then bring to your mind the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the day he conquered Mecca. He entered this holy city as a triumphant commander, yet with great humility, sitting on his camel as if he were in the state of *sajdah*; that is prostration before God, as an expression of gratitude to Allah.

If you are a farmer, take your example from the Prophet (peace be upon him), who, after conquering the lands of Bani

Nadr, Khyabar and Fadak, chose skilled people to develop and manage these lands in the most productive way.

If you are lonely, with no relatives, bring to mind the example of the orphan of Abdullah and Aminah, their most beloved and only innocent son.

If you are an adolescent, pay attention to the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who, as a young man and candidate for prophethood, served in Mecca as a shepherd, tending the sheep of his uncle Abu Talib.

If you are a businessman and travel for trade, think about the experiences of the Most Honored Person, Muhammad (peace be upon him) while leading the caravan from Mecca to Busra in Syria.

If you are a judge or a referee, bring to mind his justice and foresight when he solved the conflict among the tribes of Mecca over who should have the prestige of putting back the Black Stone (*Hagar al-Aswad*), as they were on the verge of killing each other.

Again, turn your eyes to history and consider the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as he, in his *masjid* in Medina, treated equally the poor in distress and the wealthy, and as he judged between them with utmost fairness.

If you are a husband, look carefully at the pure life style, the compassion and the deep feelings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an exemplary husband. If you are a parent, learn about the example of the father of Fatimah al-Zahra, and study the manner of the grandfather of Hasan and Husayn.



Regardless of your qualities and the state in which you find yourself, day or night, you will find him as the most perfect role model, teacher and guide.

He is so perfect a teacher that by following his example you can correct all your mistakes, eliminate chaos from your life and bring order to your life. Through his light and guidance, you can overcome the difficulties of life and attain real happiness.

As a matter of fact, his life is a bouquet composed of the most rare and elegant flowers and roses with the finest of fragrances.



If you observe justice prevailing over the world, if there is affection binding together the rich and the poor, if the wealthy in a society treat the poor compassionately by offering them timely help, if the strong protect the oppressed, if the healthy assist the ill, if the owners of wealth take good care of the orphans and feed the widows, then, be sure that all these virtuous acts have been inherited from prophets and their followers.

This fact is most easily observed in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is because he is the zenith of prophethood. Even impartial non-Muslims feel obliged to accept and appreciate his perfection. The English historian, Thomas Carlyle expressed his views about the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his book, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*,²⁷ where he chose the people of the highest caliber in various professions and analyzed

27 Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*; University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

their lives and work. For instance, Carlyle identifies those who deserve to be called the best poet, the best commander, etc. Carlyle, a Christian who confesses his faith in his book, determined, described and analyzed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the best among the prophets.

In the middle of this century in Lahey, Holland, a group of prominent scholars and thinkers choose who they thought were the hundred *greatest* people in world history, and they felt obliged to choose Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the first on this list.

True virtue is that which is held by a person who is accepted and appreciated even by their opponents. The virtue and wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is accepted even by those who do not believe in the religion he brought. This is because the exceptional personality of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gathered in itself the moral perfection that responds to various situations in different ways. Only the example of his life (*sirah*) can serve as a model to be followed by people from different stages and states of life. He constitutes the starting point for the education of humanity all over the world. He sprinkles light on the path of those who search for light. His guidance is an illuminating light for all who look for the right path; it is a light that never leads one astray. He is the sole guide of all of humanity.

The people who sat in his circle for guidance constituted a universe in which all kinds of people gathered. All nations, in spite of the differences in their languages, colors and types, as well as the diversity of their social and cultural levels, united in that circle. There was no restriction, no exclusion of any one from the circle. It was a feast of wisdom and knowledge



that was not exclusive to one race, but rather approached humanity only from the angle of their humanity. Thus, there was no difference between the weak and the strong.

Consider the followers of our master, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). You will see the following distinguished figures: Najashi, the king of Abyssinia; Farwa, the leader of Ma'an; Zulkilah, the leader of Himyar; Daylami of Firuz; Marakabud who was from the leaders of Yemen; Ubayd and Jafar from the governors of Umman.

With another glance, you will see, in addition to kings and notable leaders, slaves and the poor, people with no one, such as Bilal, Yasir, Habbab, Ammar and Abu Fukayha, as well as the slave girls and women without supporters, such as Sumayya, Lubayna, Zinnira, Nahdiyya and Umm Abis.

Among his honorable companions, there were people with superior minds, bright ideas and strong opinions, as well as people who were skilled in the most delicate works; people who had a deep understanding of the secrets of the world and who had the ability to manage countries with wisdom and power.

The followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) governed cities. They ruled provinces. People attained happiness through them. They experienced the taste of justice. His followers spread peace and tranquility. With him, human beings treated one other as brothers and sisters.

Lafayette, who laid the intellectual foundations of the 1789 French Revolution, examined all the existing legal systems before the proclamation of the Human Rights Declaration and realized the superiority of Islamic law, which he distinctly expressed as follows:

“O Muhammad! No one else has demonstrated the level you reached in establishing justice!”



The character and the spiritual strength of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were so powerful that they elevated a society that had been semi-savage, a people who were unaware of human history, to the stature of the companions; this is a stature that is beyond the reach of others. He united them under one religion, flag, law, culture, civilization and government.

He turned uncultivated and lawless people into educated human beings; he turned savages into civilized people, criminals and mean characters into the God-conscious. That is, he made them into extraordinary humans who lived in the awe and love of Allah.

A society that had not raised a notable figure for centuries produced many personalities ornamented with light and guidance. And they carried their enlightenment to the remote corners of the world; each carried a torch of faith, knowledge and wisdom. The light that had descended in the desert was distributed to all of humanity. The purpose of the creation of the world was realized.

Although he conquered the hearts of people as the ideal teacher, a position he attained in such a brief time that it cannot even be attained by the kings of this world, he continued his previous humble life, ignoring the mundane bounties that became easily available to him. As before, he lived as one of the poor in his humble dwelling built out of sun-dried bricks. He slept on a thin mattress stuffed with date leaves. He dressed modestly. He kept his standard



of living below the standard of the poorest. At times, he could not find food and he had to tie a stone to his belly to suppress gnawing hunger, while, at the same time, he showed his gratitude to Allah. He continued his supplication and worship although his past and future sins had all been forgiven. He spent the night praying to such an extent that his feet became swollen. He sent the poor assistance immediately when it was called for. He was a source of happiness for the miserable and the lonely. He personally spent time with the most helpless people, despite his greatness. Furthermore, he protected them more than others with his endless compassion and tenderness.

On the day he conquered Mecca, a city where he was regarded by the people as the most powerful man, one of his countryman approached him. He asked trembling:

“O Messenger of Allah! Teach me Islam!”

He invited the man to relax by reminding him of the weakest point in his own life:

“Relax my brother! I am not a king, nor an emperor! I am the orphan of your old neighbor (meaning his mother) who used to eat sun-dried meat!”²⁸

With these words, he endowed to history the zenith of humility, a level which has not been attained by others.

On the same day, Abu Bakr, who was his friend in the cave during the *Hijra*, brought his father on his back because he was too old to walk. He wanted his father to be directly exposed to the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

28 Ibn Majah, *At'imah* 30; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadmk*, II, 506; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, II, 64.

“O Abu Bakr! Why did you cause inconvenience to your old father? Could I not go to him?”²⁹



Many countries entered willingly under his protection. His rule spread all over Arabia. He could do whatever he wished yet he never compromised his humility. He stated that he did not have power over anything; rather that everything is controlled by the power of Allah. Occasionally, he became wealthy. Caravans of camels flooded Medina with wealth. He distributed all that wealth to the poor and continued his humble life as before. He said:

“If I owned gold equal to the mountain of Uhud, I would not keep it more than three days except to pay my debts.”³⁰

Days used to pass without a fire burning in the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for him to cook on. Many times, he went to sleep hungry.

One day, Umar came to the blessed house of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He gazed at the room. It was almost empty. There was a mattress stuffed with date leaves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was sleeping on it. The dry leaves of the mattress had left their prints on his blessed body. There was some barley flour in a corner. Next to it, there was a water container. Nothing else was in the room. His wealth consisted of these items; this was at a time when all Arabia bowed before his power. Umar sighed when he

29 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 349; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, XVI, 187; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 48.

30 Bukhari, *Tamanni* 2; Muslim, *Zakdt* 31; Ibn Majah, *Zuhd* 8; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 256



saw the situation. He could not keep himself from crying. As tears flowed from Umar's eyes, the Prophet asked:

"Why do you cry, O Umar?"

Umar replied:

"Why should I not cry? O Messenger of Allah! The emperors of Rome and Iran are luxuriating in comfort! Yet, Rasulullah is sleeping on a simple mattress filled with date leaves!"

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) comforted Umar and said to him:

"O Umar! Let Ceasar and the emperor of Iran (Kisra) enjoy this world! The enjoyment of the Hereafter is enough for us!"³¹

In a similar incident, he said:

"What has this world to do with me? My relationship to this world is analogous to a traveler who travels on a summer day, sleeps under the shadow of a tree, then wakes up and goes his way."³²

His approach to life was a perfect one.

His life is a perfect example for all his followers, be they rich or poor, strong or weak.

When he died, he did not own a single *dirham* or *dinar*, not a slave or a sheep. What he left behind consisted of a white female mule, a sword and some land in Fadak, which he had endowed as a charity. That is to say, he did not leave

31 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 298; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, X, 162.

32 Tirmidhi, *Zuhd* 44; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 3; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 301.

property. Furthermore, since he was worried that Muslims would try to give charity to those of his household, he forbade them from accepting it.

These examples exhibit that this unlettered person who was born in an uncivilized world is the true leader of all times past, present and future, and his example is beyond imitation.

He did not give any value to wealth, luxury, kingdom, fame or comfort. While he was struggling to establish faith in the One God (*tawhid*), the wealth and glory of this world appeared to him as nothing more than worthless finery.

Aishah narrated that a woman from the Ansar visited her. When she saw that the bed of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was no more than a simple mattress, which was folded and put to one side in the room, she ran to her home and came back with a comfortable mattress, stuffed with wool. Later, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw that his mattress had been changed for a more comfortable one, he expressed his dislike and said to his wife, Aishah:

“O Aishah! Return this mattress to its owner! By God, if I had wanted, God would have put under my control mountains of gold and silver able to walk with me in company.”³³

This example alone is sufficient to demonstrate that the Prophet (peace be upon him) never attached any value to this world.

In addition to these extraordinary attributes, one of his most distinguished qualities was his legendary love for his

33 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Kitâb al-Zuhd*, p. 53; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, II, 173; Ibn Abî 'Âsim, *Kitâb al-Zuhd*, I, 14.



community (*ummah*), which is suitably illustrated by the following verse:

"Now hath come unto you, a messenger from amongst yourselves; it grieves him that you should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you; to the believers is the most kind and merciful."
(Qur'an, Tawba, 9/128)

The blessed personality of the Prophet (peace be upon him), of which only a meager amount can be grasped by the human mind, is no more than the tip of the iceberg; it constitutes the zenith of the constellation of human behavior. This is because Allah the Most High created this blessed being as the "*uswa hasanah*", the most perfect example for humanity to follow. Consequently, He elevated His Prophet (peace be upon him) by carrying him through stages, beginning with being an "orphan child", considered the lowest level of power in a society, and taking him up through all stages of life, to the highest point of power and capacity; that is to prophethood and the leadership of the state. The purpose of this gradual elevation was to permit people of different levels of society to be able to see him as a perfect example of behavior and to integrate them, in accordance with their ability and power. Our people, who grasped this point very well, produced the diminutive form (*ism-i tasghir*) of the name Muhammad, and have used it as a common name for everyone. This form of the name Muhammad in Turkish is Mehmetjik, which means little Muhammad. The noun Mehmetjik (little Muhammad) brings to mind a small model of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in each human being, especially those who believe in the oneness of Allah and obey Him. At the same time, this attribution encourages

everyone to become like Muhammad (peace be upon him) within his or her own abilities.



Even as a child or young man, no imperfection was observed in the personality of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) - unlike other people who claimed to be the guides and leaders of humanity, primarily the philosophers. His personality did not develop through gradual perfection and improvement, which is the case with other leaders and guides. This was a result of divine destiny and support. He, even in childhood, displayed perfect manners, which showed his merit for the responsibility he was to be charged with in the future.

The positive or negative views of philosophers, whose minds were not guided by divine revelation, about social peace and harmony have remained for the most part on the pages of their books, while the few that were translated into action were short-lived. Beyond this, philosophers failed to act as concrete examples or models in their own lives or to find examples in the lives of others of the principles they outlined concerning the perfection of human behavior.

The behavior of the Prophet (peace be upon him), however, functions as a practical criterion of morality and constitutes a perfect constellation of models. For instance, the philosopher Nietzsche expressed his view about super humans, but he could not explicate this concept of the extraordinary human with real actions that take place in everyday life. Thus, it remained only a theory. In Islamic morality, however, the Prophet (peace be upon him) served and will continue to serve as the guide of humanity with



all his actions as a human, which constitute the zenith of perfection.

Aristotle, on the other hand, outlined the principles and the laws of ethics. Yet, we cannot find anyone who attained happiness by faithfully applying Aristotle's philosophy. This is because the hearts of philosophers do not undergo a process of purification and cleansing, as do the prophets, and their words and deeds have not been perfected by the support of revelation. For this reason, their systems remain in conference rooms and on the pages of books, not in the daily lives of humans.

Our master, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however, before he took over the task of prophethood, gained the sympathy and trust of the people who knew him as "the reliable" and "the trustworthy". He began his mission after the establishment of such an identity.

People knew his beautiful character, goodness and integrity prior to his prophethood and they loved him. His people, who gave him the nickname al-Amin (the Trustworthy), submitted to his judgment without any objection when they fell into disagreement on how to replace the Black Stone place during the renovation of the Ka'bah.

Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) strictly removed himself from all kinds of wrongdoings and from violating the rights of others. The only group he joined before his prophethood was *Hilf al-Fudul*, the Pact of the Virtuous. This was because the *Hilf al-Fudul* was a group dedicated to serving justice, and the essence of its decisions was as follows:

“If the rights of a person from Mecca or abroad are violated, the wrong-doer will be resisted immediately, and the victim’s side will be taken, until the harm has been compensated for. The distribution of the rights and justice and peace and harmony of society will be ensured.”

This pact against oppression and violation of rights attracted the Prophet (peace be upon him) so much that he said after he became a Prophet:

“I was present in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud’an along with my uncles. I would not have been happier if I had been given place red camels (meaning the wealth of this world). I would join such a group even if I was invited today.”³⁴

This and other endless examples of the manifestation of justice, mercy and compassion in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are examples for all humanity to emulate until the end of time. Just as an eye can discern a bright light, the truth of this lofty candle that shines over the world cannot be denied, at least not in the inner world. As a matter of fact, through rational evaluation, many non-Muslim scholars sincerely accepted his virtue and achievement. One of them, Thomas Carlyle, as pointed out before, stated in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*,³⁵ that his birth reflected the emergence of light from darkness.

The Encyclopedia of Britannica also confirmed his virtue by declaring that at no time has a prophet or religious reformer reached the level of success that Muhammad (peace be upon him) reached.

34 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabakât*, 1,129; Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, 1,133-134; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 190-193; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VI, 367.

35 See page 51.



Author Stanley Lane-Poole, confessed that the day Muhammad (peace be upon him) triumphed over his enemies was the same day he won the greatest battle of virtue over himself, as he freely forgave all the Qurayshites and extended his forgiveness to all Meccans.

Likewise, the author Arthur Gilman has noted his greatness during the conquering of Mecca. He said that the weight of what he had been put through by the Meccans could have easily led him to take revenge. Yet, he prohibited any kind of bloodshed by his army. He showed great mercy and remained grateful to Allah.

The Prophet as Perceived by the Polytheists

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gained the trust of the polytheist Arabs during the period of Religious Ignorance (*al-Jahliyya*). Even Abu Jahl, the fiercest enemy of Islam, once said to him: "O Muhammad! I don't call you a liar, but I do not like the religion you have brought...."³⁶

His fiercest opponents accepted the trustworthiness of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in their hearts, but externally, they rejected him solely because of their arrogance. The Qur'an illustrates this as follows:

"We know indeed the grief which their words do cause thee: It is not thee they reject; it is the signs of Allah which the wicked deny." (Qur'an, An'am, 6/33)



Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor of the time, who defeated the Persians in 628 AC, received a letter from the

36 Tirmidhi, *Tafsîr Sûrah* 6,1; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 345.

Prophet while he was in Syria. The letter invited him to Islam. Heraclius showed interest in the letter instead of anger. He wanted to inquire and to gather more information about this new religion. For this purpose, he ordered that some countrymen of the new Prophet (peace be upon him) be brought before him. At that time, Abu Sufyan, who was a merciless enemy of the Prophet, was in Syria leading a caravan of Meccan merchants. It was the sixth year of Hijrah and there was a truce between the polytheist Meccans and the Prophet. The men of Heraclius, who were in search of some Meccans to provide them with information about the new Prophet, came across Abu Sufyan and his friends and took them to the emperor.

Heraclius and his circle were at the time in Ilya or Bayt al-Maqdis. Heraclius, accompanied by Byzantine leaders, accepted them into his presence and talked to them through an interpreter. Heraclius asked:

“Who is the closest relative of this person who proclaimed prophethood?”

Abu Sufyan said:

“I am his closest relative here.” Heraclius ordered:

“Bring him and his friends closer! Let his friends stay near to him while I talk to him.”

He turned to his interpreter and said:

“Tell them that I will ask this man some questions about the new Prophet. If he lies, they should warn me that he is lying.”

When he was relating this story, Abu Sufyan said “By God, if I had not been certain that my friends would expose



my lies, I would have certainly lied about him.” Abu Sufyan narrated his dialogue with Heraclius as follows:

The first question Heraclius asked was:

“What is his lineage?”

I said:

“His lineage is highly respected amongst us!”

“Did anyone among you make similar claims before him?”

“No”, I said.

He asked:

“Was there a king among his parents and grandparents?”

I said:

“No.”

He asked:

“Are his followers from the lower or upper classes of people?”

I answered:

“From the lower classes of people.”

He asked:

“Does the number of his followers increase or decrease?”

I replied:

“Their number increases.”

He asked:

“Is there anyone among them who left the new religion because he disliked it?”

I said:

“No.”

He asked:



"Did you ever accuse him of lying before this incident?"

I said:

"No."

He queried further:

"Did he ever break his promise?"

I said:

"No, he keeps his promises but we made a truce with him for a certain time and do not know yet what he is going to do."

(Abu Sufyan said, "This is the only thing I could include in my answers to potentially discredit him.")

Heraclius asked:

"Did you engage in wars with him?"

I said:

"Yes."

Heraclius asked:

"What were the results of these wars?"

I said:

"Sometimes we triumphed over him, sometimes he triumphed over us."

He asked:

"What are the things he commands you to do?"

I replied:

"He requires us to worship one God alone, not to associate partners with Him and to leave the idols our ancestors worshipped. He orders us to make *salat*, to be

honest and chaste, to protect our honor and to maintain close and good relations with relatives.”

Then Heraclius said to the interpreter:

“Tell him that I asked about his lineage. He said that it is highly respected amongst them. Prophets come from a respected lineage in their society.

I asked if there was anyone who made similar claims, he said no. If there had been anyone before him like that I would have suspected that he was taking him as an example.

I asked whether there was a king among his ancestors; he said no. If it had been so, I would have suspected that he was trying to regain his crown.

I asked if he had ever caught him lying before he made the claim to prophethood, he said, no. I am aware that one who does not lie to people does not lie about God either.

I queried about his followers, about whether they belonged to the upper or the lower classes in the society. He said they belonged to the lower ranks of their society. It is well known that at the outset, the followers of the Prophets come from the lower ranks of society.

I wanted to know if the number of followers was increasing or decreasing. He said that they were increasing. One of the characteristics of a true religion is that their followers increase in the beginning.

I asked whether there was anyone who left this new religion after he had accepted it. He said no. This is what happiness is when the joy of faith enters the heart and grows roots in it.

I asked if he had ever broken his promise; he said no. Prophets are like that; they never break their promises.

I asked about what he requires his followers to do. He said that he commands them to worship the one God, to not associate partners with him, in addition he requires them to perform ritual prayer, to be honest, and to be chaste and to lead an honorable life.

If what he has said is true, this person will soon dominate even the land on which I now stand. I knew that the emergence of such a Prophet would occur, but I did not know that he would emerge from amongst you. If I thought that I could enter his presence, I would readily accept the difficulties I would face. If I were with him, I would wash his feet."

Then Heraclius asked for the letter that had been brought to him by the messenger Dihya. The letter was brought and read to him. In the letter, the following was written:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate.

"From Muhammad, the servant and messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the leader of the Byzantines.

"Peace be on those who follow the right path.

"I invite you to Islam. Embrace Islam, you will reach salvation and God will reward you twice. But if you refuse, you will be held responsible for your subjects as well.

"O People of the book. Come to common terms as between us and you that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among you ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." (Qur'an, Ali Imran, 3/64)



Abu Sufyan said:

“After Heraclius had said what he said and after the reading of the letter was completed, a noise was heard and voices were raised in the group. As a result, they took us out.”

I said to my friends:

“Muhammad’s work is growing. Even the kings have begun to listen to his message. Look at this, even the king of Bani Asfar (the Byzantines) is afraid of him!... Since then I retained the certainty that one day he would be successful. Eventually, Allah blessed me also with Islam.”³⁷

In our opinion, the objective attitude of the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius towards what he heard, did not only come from his personal virtue.

The distortion of the Christian faith, which was originally a true religion and based on faith in the unity of God, was at that time a new phenomenon. The fight over icons, which had lasted two centuries, had just ended and the churches were filled with pictures and statutes. Christianity had fallen away from faith in the unity of God, and had completely surrendered to the doctrine of the Trinity. As a natural outcome of the corruption of such a revealed faith, Islam was sent to renew the “true faith”. In spite of the degradation of their time, it is true that there were some people who maintained their faith in the unity of God. For instance, the emigrants who fled to Abyssinia because of the unbearable oppression in Mecca, met King Najashi there, one who was

³⁷ Bukhârî, *Jihâd* 102; Muslim, *Jihâd* 74.

similarly rightly guided. He even drew a line on the ground with his staff and said:

“The difference between my faith and what you are describing is less than the width of this line.”

King Najashi belonged to the sect of Arians who had preserved the original creed of early Christianity. It is quite possible that Heraclius also had such a faith. Yet there is no evidence that he accepted Islam. It should be mentioned once more that faith is a matter of divine blessing.

On the other hand, this incident demonstrates that even those who did not accept his message acknowledged the honesty and the perfect character of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Before the immigration to Medina, commonly known as the Hijra, Prophet Muhammad was entrusted with some valuables by the polytheists in Mecca to keep for them. When he decided to secretly leave Mecca, he assigned Ali to return them to their owners in Mecca on his behalf.



The poet Kemal Edip Kurkcuglu gives advice and warns the heedless who are distracted from following the beautiful characteristics of the Prophet - only a small number of which have been described above.

*Falling from the eye of the heart, alas, alas!
Is sufficient punishment in this world and the hereafter
for the spiritually unaware!*

May Allah make us among his followers who obey him with love and who reflect his qualities. He was a horizon of



mercy and compassion, even the most basic level of which is beyond reach.

He worked for the guidance of people with utmost sincerity. Yet they cursed and stoned him. His only response to such treatment, he prayed for them. Zayd ibn Haritha, who was surprised by this, asked him:

“O the Messenger of Allah! They subject you to torture... but you still pray for them.”

He said:

“What else can I do? I am sent for mercy, not for wrath...”³⁸

Does this not bear witness that Prophet Muhammad was at the zenith of giving, loyalty, good heartedness, mercy and compassion?

Humans who saw Krishna and Buddha as gods, Jesus as the son of God, and Pharaoh and Nimrod as lords, as well as those miserable people who worshipped animals, or such natural forces as fire, water and air, would have gladly accepted him as their “god”. Yet, he proclaimed “*As you, I am but a man. However, the inspiration has come to me that your Allah is the one Allah...*” (Qur’an, Kahf, 18/110)

He added the word *abduhu*, meaning his servant, at the beginning of the sentence (*shahadah*) uttered to announce his acceptance of his prophethood because he wanted to ensure that his Community did not go astray.

38 Muslim, *Birr* 87; Abu Ya’lâ, *al-Musnad*, XI, 35.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had always made clear that he had no superior powers. For instance, he said once:

“No one can enter Paradise only as a reward of his deeds.”

Everyone was surprised. They asked:

“Even you, O the Messenger of Allah?”

He said:

“Yes including me...! Unless the generosity of my Lord comes to my help! Unless His blessing, mercy and forgiveness cover me, I will not be allowed to go to Paradise; my deeds would not be sufficient to save me...!”³⁹

This system of principles is a divine grace that cannot be replicated by humanity.

This message is very refined, and miraculous, and is filled with honesty and loyalty. Grasping the true meaning of the Qur'an and the Sunnah is possible only by getting close to the depth of the heart and manners of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

No sentient being can successfully describe his real attributes. His high character and existence cannot be comprehended. Scholars, philosophers, sultans of the heart, even the Archangel Gabriel considered being close to him the greatest honor and source of happiness.

The missions of all the prophets were limited in time and space, except for that of Prophet Muhammad (peace

39 Bukhârî, *Riqâq* 18; Muslim, *Munâfiqûn* 71-72; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 20; Dârimi, *Riqâq* 24; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 235.



be upon him). He has been charged by Allah to be the Universal Guide of Humanity. Although a rich system of manners was not transmitted from the previous prophets to us, the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was intended to encompass all times and places from the first revelation to the last day, and as a consequence Allah guaranteed that his manners, including the smallest details, were to be transmitted to us through reliable chains of narrators. This transmission has the potential of surviving until the final day. The reason behind this is the Divine Will to ensure that all people living in the final times can take him as the best role model (*uswa hasanah*).

Arabs customarily made pledges on what they valued most. Although Allah has never done so for any other Prophet, in the Qur'an He pledged on the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him): *La a'mruk!* The Ottoman poet Shaikh Ghalib reiterated this pledge as follows:

O my leader! You are the sultan of prophets, you are the glorious king.

O my leader! You are the eternal source of joy for the helpless.

O my leader! You are the head of humanity in the divine presence.

O my leader! You are supported by Allah's pledge on your life, "la a'mruk!"

O my leader! You are Ahmad, Mahmud and Muhammad!

O my leader! You are the chosen sultan from Allah to us.

Another characteristic of the glorious Prophet (peace be upon him) is that he is addressed by Allah in the Qur'an as "O Nabi!", "O Rasul!", "O Mudhammil!", "O Muddathir!", but not by his proper name. Yet, other prophets were addressed by their proper names such as "O Adam!", "O Noah!", "O Abraham!", "O Moses!", "O David!", "O Jesus!", "O Zakariyya!", "O John!" In this distinction, we gain yet another measure of the uniqueness of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Never forget to greet and salute him with *salawat* and *salam*! You will need his intercession (*shafaah*) and mediation on the most frightening day, that is the day of reckoning.





THE CHARACTER TRAITS
OF THE
PROPHET OF MERCY



“O Lord! Grant ease in my work rather than hardship and bring it
to a blessed conclusion.”

(A classical prayer)



Throughout history, the only prophet and person whose life has been recorded in minute detail is Muhammad Mustafa (peace be upon him). His actions, words and feelings have been recorded in their entirety and they have considered as sound historical facts.

His life will be an example for generations to come, up until the final day. In the Surah al-Qalam in the Qur'an, it is said: *"And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character."* (Qur'an, Qalam, 68/4)

He was not only a teacher who taught the Qur'an verbally; he was also a living example who practiced what was written in the Qur'an. Jabir narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Allah, the Most High, sent me to perfect good morality."⁴⁰

40 Muwatta, *Husn al-khuluq* 8; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 191; al-Qudat, *Musnad al-Shihab*, II, 192; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, VII, 74.



When he met the Prophet (peace be upon him) Abdullah ibn Salam, a former Jewish scholar who had converted to Islam, was overwhelmed by the light and the deep meaning he saw in his face. Impressed, he said:

“A person who has such a face cannot be a liar.”⁴¹

With that awareness, he embraced Islam.

Purity of Soul in the Prophet of Mercy

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a divine gift and a perfect example for all of humanity. Everyone who is looking for happiness may follow his example to the extent they can. Each and every deed of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a practical example for those who truly want to live Islam. Furthermore, there are some points that must be taken into consideration relative to the benefits from the Essence of Muhammad:

1. Some deeds can be performed only by a power unique to the prophets. Others cannot imitate them regarding these points. As a matter of fact, even the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned the people around him concerning this issue. For instance, he frequently prayed at nights until his feet were swollen, and he fasted for days without a break.

2. Some of the deeds of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were for him alone: for instance, marrying more than four wives and prohibiting the receipt of charity either for himself or his progeny until the final day.

41 Tirmidhi, *Qiyamah* 42; Ibn Majah, *Iqamah* 174; Darimi, *Salat* 156; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 451.

There is a great lesson to be learned in his immediate distribution of his share from any loot attained during battle. He was careful about this for all his life, up until his last breath:

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was extremely ill and the time for his union with his Lord was approaching. Once he turned to his wife, Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and asked her to distribute to the needy the 6-7 dinar which he had with him. A little later, he asked about the dinars. When he learned that Aishah had forgotten to give them out as charity because she had been busy looking after him, he asked for the dinars, took them in his hand and said:

“Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, does not expect to meet his Lord without distributing these to the needy...”

Then he gave them to five needy families of the Helpers (Ansar) in Medina. He said:

“Now I feel comfortable.”⁴²

Afterwards, he fell into a light sleep.

Ubaydullah ibn Abbas narrates the following:

“One day, Abu Dharr told me:

‘O my nephew! I will tell you a story.’

Then he told me the following story:

‘Once I was with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) He held my hand and said:

‘O Abu Dharr! If the mountain of Uhud were to be turned into gold for me, I would spend it on the path of

42 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 49,86,182; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 491; al-Humaydî, *al-Musnad*, 1,135.



Allah and I would dislike leaving even a *qirat*⁴³ of it when I die.'

I said:

"O, Messenger of Allah! Is it a *qirat* or a *qantar*⁴⁴ that you would not like to leave behind?

He said:

'O Abu Dharr! I am decreasing, you are increasing. I want the Hereafter, you want this world! I would not leave even a *qirat*, a *qirat*, a *qirat*.' "

He repeated the word *qirat* three times.⁴⁵

The sublime state of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) represents the highest criterion. Those who are required to follow it are not obliged to reach to that level. In fact, it would be problematic if the Muslim community attempted to follow each example in an exact and strict manner. Moreover, it is beyond human power. The wisdom behind this concerns only the Prophet.

The deeds that are exclusively related to the person of the Prophet are not limited only to the examples mentioned above. Another example is the regulations concerning the distribution of his material legacy. This is also exclusive to him and does not constitute an example for others to follow.

43 The smallest measure of weight, equivalent to a gram today. A *qirat* was equal to five barley beans.

44 Another measure of weight. If we take the *qirat* as being analogous to a gram, we can take the *qantar* as being analogous to a kilogram

45 Bukhârî, *Buyû* 100; Muslim, *Zakât* 31; Abû Dâwûd, *Vitr* 23; Dârimî, *Riqâq* 53; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 467.

He said, “We are the prophet, we do not leave material legacy”⁴⁶ and he distributed everything he owned. This was not meant to serve as a rule for others to follow.

Likewise, it is known that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The gift for a believer in this world is poverty.”⁴⁷ He was proud of his poverty. This attitude was also exclusively related to his person. It should not be thought that he was encouraging poverty. On the contrary, he also said “The hand which gives is better than the hand which receives.”⁴⁸ In this principle, it can be said that he was encouraging people to gain wealth through legal means with the purpose of becoming one who can give.

Thus, the regulations concerning poverty are not to encourage poverty, but to encourage one to be content with the Divine Plan, as well teaching us to rely on and submit to the will of Allah.

3. Living in accordance with the principles of *zuhd* (divorcing the heart from this world) and *taqwa* (staying away from doubtful issues) is a virtue of a great character that brings one closer to Allah. Yet, not all members of society can be forced to lead such a life; this is dependent on inherent ability and talent. In so far as all social systems explicitly and implicitly encourage cultural growth, there is no necessary conflict between cultural dynamism and

46 Bukhârî, *Khumus* 1; Muslim, *Jihâd* 54; Abû Dâwûd, *Imârah* 19; Tirmidhî, *Siyar* 44; Nasâî, *Fay’* 9; Muwatta, *Kalâm* 27; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, 1, 4.

47 al-Daylamî, *al-Firdaws*, II, 70.

48 Bukhârî, *Vasâyâ* 9; Muslim, *Zakât* 94; Abû Dâwûd, *Zakât* 28; Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 32; Nasâî, *Zakât* 50; Muwatta, *Sadakah* 8; Dârimî, *Zakât* 22; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 67.



spiritual integrity. Consequently, although *zuhd* and *taqwa* deny the pleasures of this world, adherence to them on a communal level need not lead to a deterioration in social dynamism, where spiritually rich communities would thus be superseded by their more worldly enemies. It is a general rule that we must measure our progress on a daily basis, as is expressed in the hadith which states that “the one whose two days remain equal to each other is not of us.”⁴⁹ Here we see proof of the fact that this rule does not fall in contradiction with the principles of *zuhd* and *taqwa*, which are based on disinterest in mundane pleasures. This is because disinterest in the mundane life is not on the level of practical existence and appearance, but rather on a spiritual and mental level. As Jalaladdin Rumi, (may Allah keep his soul pure), said:

“The meaning of the mundane (*dunya*) is unawareness of divine presence! It is not about money, women, or dress. Understand this well.”⁵⁰

From this perspective, owning property and being wealthy does not contradict *zuhd* and *taqwa* as long as one does not become a spend thrift and give material things a place in the heart. On the other hand, little wealth and money may become idols if love of them enters the heart. From the prophets, the life of Solomon (peace be upon him) and those of the companions, Abu Bakr, Uthman, Talha and Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with them all, are excellent examples of this balance.

49 al-Bayhaqî, *Kitaâb al-Zuhd al-kabîr*, II, 367; al-Daylamî, *al-Firdaws*, III 611; Abû Nu’aym al-Isbahânî, *Hilyah al-Awliyâ*, VIII, 35.

50 Can, Şefik, *Mesnevi Teremesi*, (Istanbul, 1997), v.11, p. 55.

Occasionally, some appearances of *taqwa* and *zuhd* may be due to material necessity rather than a deep disinterest in this world. In such cases, *taqwa* would be accepting poverty with joy in what was predestined by Allah. However, if instead of accepting it that way, one merely denied the existence of one's true circumstance, it would be a misinterpretation of *taqwa*. For instance, although the Prophet sometimes tied a stone to his belly to suppress the feeling of inescapable hunger, his example reveals that the best way of thanksgiving is to share freely with others. This is the most fitting form of sobriety (*taqwa*) and abstention (*zuhd*). Hiding one's wealth and feigning stinginess as piety is a form of deception and thus can never be real.

Examined according to the measures of this perspective, it can be seen that the Prophet was the most pious of human beings. He was living as the poor because of his *taqwa*. Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"Prophet Muhammad passed away without filling his stomach for two consecutive days with barley bread."⁵¹

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that:

"There were times when the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted invitations to meals consisting of barley bread and fat that was on the verge of spoiling. In his humility, he freely attended such gatherings. Moreover, he pawned his shield to a Jew. But because of his donations and gifts, he was unable to redeem it."⁵²

51 Bukhârî, Aymân, *TL*; Muslim, *Zuhd* 20-25; Nasâî, *Dahâyâ* 37; Ibn Mâjah, *At'imah*, 48; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 98.

52 Bukhârî, *Jihâd* 89; Tirmidhî, *Buyû* 7; Nasâî, *Buyû* 58; Ibn Mâjah, *Ruhûn* 1; Dârimî, *Buyû* 44; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 236.

Nevertheless, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited self-deprivation from halal food and drinks on the grounds of piety. He ate and drank what was halal. Yet, at the same time, he did not fill his stomach merely because the food was halal. Furthermore, he said to a man who was belching in his presence: "Stop belching! Those who fill their stomachs excessively in this world are the ones who will suffer hunger longer."⁵³

Another hadith states that:

"No one has filled a container more risky than his stomach. Indeed, a few bites are sufficient for a person to keep himself standing. If he has to eat more, he should reserve one third for food, one third for drink and one third for easy breathing."⁵⁴

This is the middle way in eating and drinking.

This constitutes a system of extraordinary measures aimed at controlling greed in human beings. From this perspective, the school of the Prophet (peace be upon him) educated the poor and the rich alike, including statesmen from different ranks of society, in the best way, with the best content, and their hearts gained happiness to the extent that they obeyed him. In this prophetic school, there were many rich people who lived humbly as if they were poor, and many poor people who lived gratefully before Allah as if they were rich. Many wealthy people and statesmen who worked continuously for charity were educated in that

53 Tirmidhî, *Sifatu'l-qiyâmah* 37; Ibn Mâjah, *At'imah* 50; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, IV, 249; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, V, 27.

54 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 47; Ibn Mâjah, *At'imah* 50; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 132; al-Hâkim, *al Mustadrak*, IV, 135; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 449.

school. In Islamic history, the stories of caliphs who carried food on their backs to the poor, and cooked meals for them are well known.⁵⁵ The trial of Fatih Sultan Mehmed that arose from a complaint made by a Greek architect and his respect for the court's decision in favor of the *dhimmis* (non-Muslim subjects of the state) is just one of the manifestations of blessings and mercy for humanity arising from the Prophet's school of *taqwa*.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) defined *zuhd* in an excellent way:

"*Zuhd* towards this world is not making haram what is halal, nor is it abandoning wealth. But *zuhd* towards this world is reliance on what is in the hand of Allah more than relying on what is in your hand and during a time of affliction, it is to hoping for the reward of endurance."⁵⁶ In his *zuhd* and contentment, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is eternally the best example for all of humanity. *Zuhd* is what brings a splendid life and happiness to one's heart and body by controlling excessive desires towards mundane pleasures, by not being deceived by transient worldly joys, by not letting this world occupy one's heart, by not loving things other than Allah and his Prophet, by abandoning what takes away from worship and gives no benefit in the Hereafter. Conversely, loving this world is a disaster full of pain and anxiety that exhausts the energy of the heart and the body. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said,

55 Suyûtî, *Tarikh al-khulefâ*, p. 91-92.

56 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 29; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 1 ; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'iam al-Awsat*, III, 57; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, VII, 218.



"*Zuhd* towards this world brings comfort to the heart and body. Love of the world increases sorrow and pain..."⁵⁷ Another hadith expresses the following advice: "Show disinterest towards this world and Allah will like you; show disinterest in what is in the hands of people and people will like you!..."⁵⁸

Zuhd is first among the measures that are recommended to take against the dangers of this world. A hadith states that:

"White is not superior over black. No race is superior over another. Superiority is only through *taqwa*."⁵⁹

He also said:

"The revelation did not command me to accumulate wealth, nor to become a merchant. It was revealed to me 'to spread the glory of your Lord, to be among those who prostrate to Allah and serve him.'"⁶⁰

Another hadith gives the following advice:

"When you stand for salat, pray as if it is your last salat. Do not say anything you will regret tomorrow. Do not desire what people heedlessly desire."⁶¹

Once he was asked:

57 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Kitâb al-Auhd*, p. 47; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, I, 188; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, VII, 268 [Narrated also from Omar as *mawku'f* hadith]

58 Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 1; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 348 ; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, VI, 193; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, VII, 344

59 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 158; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, IV, 289.

60 Ibn Abî 'Âsim, *Kitâb al-Zuhd*, I, 391; al-Daylamî, *al-Firdaws*, IV, 95; Abû Nu'aym al-Isbahânî, *Hilyah al-Awliyâ*, II, 131; Ibn 'Adiyy, *al-Kâmil fî al-du'afâ*, III, 68.

61 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 412; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 15; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, IV, 154.

“Who is the most perfect human?”

He replied:

“The pure ones are those who clean themselves from sin, doubt, cheating, lying and jealousy.”⁶²

Prophet Muhammad was very careful about what was halal and haram. He also distanced himself from doubtful matters. Once, his grandson, Hasan, who was at that time a small child, was sitting in the masjid and watching how the dates for zakat were being distributed. Suddenly he put one of the dates in his mouth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately warned him:

“Throw it away! Throw it away! Throw the date away! Do you not know we do not eat charity?” He made his young grandchild throw the date from his mouth to the floor.⁶³

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, (may Allah keep his soul pure), says about halal food:

“Bites are like seeds. Their fruit is thought/ideas and intentions.”

“The food that brings you greater desire and motivation for, and pleasure from, worship and submission is halal; and the food that brings you laziness towards worship and submission to Allah and hardens your heart is haram.”

“Increase the number of halal bites in your life! Stay away from the haram and doubtful bites so that you can

62 Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 76; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, VI, 167; Ma'mar ibn Râshid, *al-Jâmi'*, XI, 191.

63 Bukharî, *Zakât* 60; Muslim, *Zakât* 161; Nasâî, *Tahârah* 105; Muwatta, *Sadakâh* 13; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 200.



get the taste of worship and obedience to Allah and reach contentment and concentration of heart.”⁶⁴

Allah the Most High says in the Qur’an: *“Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers.”* (Qur’an, Mu’minun, 23/1-2)



The prevailing view in our society is that religion is a system of beliefs whose only aim is to bring happiness in the Hereafter. Yet, religion is not an institution with the sole purpose of acquiring happiness in the Hereafter; it also aims at creating an environment of tranquility and security for humans by bringing order to social life.

One night, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was as usual, walking the streets of Medina. Suddenly, he stopped because he had unintentionally overheard a conversation between a mother and a daughter. The conversation attracted his attention. The mother was saying to her daughter:

“Put some water in the milk we are selling tomorrow.”

The daughter said:

“Mother! Have not you heard that the Caliph has forbidden diluting the milk?”

The mother got angry and raised her voice:

“Daughter! How do you think the Caliph will know at this hour of the night that we have diluted the milk?”

The daughter, whose heart was alive with respect for God, was not comfortable with the deception her mother had proposed. She continued to object:

64 Rûmî, Jalâladdin, *Mathnawî Ma’navî*, (Tehran, 1378) v.I, 1645-48; Can, Şefik, *Mesnevi* Tercemesi, (Istanbul, 1997), v.II, p.120.



“Mother! Let us accept that the Caliph does not see, how about Allah? Do you think He does not see either? It is easy to hide this deception from people, but it is impossible to hide it from Allah who sees and hears everything.”

Allah be pleased with her. Amir al-Mu'minin, the Leader of the Believers, realized that although she was an ordinary girl, she had an exceptional God-consciousness. He wanted her to be his daughter-in-law and married her to his son. From this pure chain came Umar ibn Abdulaziz, who is considered the fifth rightly guided caliph.

This incident demonstrates that respecting the borders of halal is sufficient to bring happiness and to elevate humans to the level of perfection. In contrast, being discontent with the halal, a boundless category and getting involved in what is haram or doubtful is not appropriate for a servant. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said about doubtful matters, which are not clearly discernable, whether they are haram or not:

“Leave what your heart doubts and adopt that about which it has no doubts.”⁶⁵

Yet, it would not be correct to misinterpret the principle by going to the extreme of staying away even from halal things, or by creating confusion about halal matters.

Islam requires balance and following the middle way in this issue, as it does in all issues. The purpose of Islam is not to impose limits on humans; on the contrary, its goal is to make them live in tranquility, happiness and stability. The secret of this is achieved by restoring the peace of the heart,

65 Bukharî, *Buyû* 3; Tirmidhî, *Qiyâmah* 60; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Mu-snad*, III, 153.



from which all beauty springs. This is possible by hearing, feeling and applying the deep and refined attributes of the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him).



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was without sin. Yet he continued to pray at night until his feet were swollen and he continued to recite the Qur'an until he became exhausted. He loved, thanked, feared and remembered Allah more than anyone else.

Salat is the union of the servant with his Lord. It is going up to the divine presence. It is a source of endless pleasure for the lovers of Allah. Servants perform voluntary worship with the purpose of maintaining the pleasure of worship.

There is submission in the salat. This is the reason why the ego dislikes it. Only this characteristic is sufficient to show that Islam is a true religion and that salat is the highest form of worship.

Those who are overcome by their ego do not approach salat, while those who cannot pass the obstacle of their ego stick to the form of salat. The real salat is a blessing given to only a few people.

The Messenger of Allah expressed this truth as follows: "Two people may make salat in the same place, but the difference between them is like the difference between the Earth and the sky."⁶⁶



66 Abu Sa'îd al-Shâshî (d. 335), *Musnad al-Shashî*, I, 86.



The fast of the Light of Existence is also an excellent example for his community, the Ummah.

Prophet Muhammad for the most part began fasting when he was hungry. Sometimes he fasted for consecutive days without a meal at night. When his companions also wanted to do the same, he said to them:

“You have no power to do it the way I do.”⁶⁷

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to spend a few consecutive nights hungry, while his household, also, could not find anything to eat. Even when they ate, their meal was only barley bread.⁶⁸

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that one day our Mother Fatimah brought some bread she had cooked to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He asked:

“What is this?”

Fatimah replied:

“A nice kind of bread I cooked, I could not eat without offering some to you.”

The Pride of the World said:

“This is the first bite your father will have had for the last three days.”

According to Abu Hurayra, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) at times, used to tie a stone to his belly to suppress the feeling of hunger.⁶⁹

67 Bukhârî, *Sawm* 20; Muslim, *Siyâm* 55; Muwatta, *Siyâm* 37; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 128.

68 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqât al-Kubra*, I, 400.

69 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqât al-Kubra*, I, 400.



The high value of fasting comes from its purpose, which is the struggle against the “*nafs*” and controlling it with a continuous feeling of worship.

The pilgrimage is, on the other hand, intended to give a lesson in *tawakkul*, reliance on the God of Abraham and Ishmael (peace be on them), to stone the internal enemy, which is called “*nafs*”, and the external enemy, which is called “*shaytan*”; to leave behind all class differences by dressing in a shroud-like cloth and seeking refuge in the Creator; to be thrilled by becoming aware of the frightful scene of the Day of Resurrection, to bring together foreign communities of Muslims from afar; and to establish a brotherhood of faith.

What an excellent example is the Farewell Pilgrimage and Sermon of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the pilgrimages his community will make up until the Last Day!

In his Last Sermon, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made a “distribution of love”. The major lines of the rights between Muslims were outlined by “the cement of love”.

The rituals of the pilgrimage turn one’s eyes to the spiritual life; this refined worship is full of manifestations of love, which is tender and merciful, such as the prohibition of hunting, of picking a green leaf or of hurting a creature of Allah.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gave up kissing the Black Stone, al-Hagar al-Aswad as he was concerned about disturbing other Muslims.

These deeds and states of mind during the pilgrimage bring one face to face with self-questioning and are reflected in the future lives of the people involved. The only goal of all these activities is to grow closer to Allah, the Most High.

The sacred places where the pilgrimage is performed are the spiritual environs of a sublime world.

Arafat is a place of forgiveness and refuge.

Muzdalifa is the place of the manifestation of mercy, a place mentioned in the Qur'an as *al-Mash'ar al-Haram*.⁷⁰

Mina is a place of submission to and reliance on Allah where Abraham, Ishmael, and our mother Hagar triumphed over *Shaytan*.

The Ka'bah is the direction in which we face for salat, which was ordered by Allah, the Most High, in the Qur'an: "*But prostrate thyself, and draw near (unto Allah).*" (Qur'an, Alaq, 96/19) At the same time, it is the point to which all Muslims around the world turn their face in salat. That is, it is the place where the pulse of the Muslim world is felt.

The City of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which we visit after Mecca, is a place where the heart reaches high levels after being ornamented with the designs of love. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is the only one who was addressed by Allah as "beloved".

According to Imam Malik, the place housing the grave of the Prophet is one of the most blessed places in the world after the Ka'bah. This is because he was the guide of all humanity.

This blessed land has been nourished by the spirituality of the faithful since the time of Adam and is watered by their tears. These places, which have been the fountains of the inspirations of the prophets, are full of invaluable memories in the history of the prophets.

70 Qur'an, Baqara, 2/198.



Briefly put, the performance of Hajj is a comprehensive worship, which as an obligation leads a person to the perfection of religion.

Hajj is a worship through which one's soul regains tranquility, original climate, color and identity. It is full of spiritual manifestations where the heart becomes cleansed and purified by the rain of spiritual blessings and reaches it's the truth.



Zakat is a religious tax imposed on those who own enough to make it necessary for them to give to the needy. This is necessary to make the remaining wealth halal for the owner. Wealth is gradually transferred in parts to the needy in society. This distribution of wealth allows for the establishment of social balance, justice and harmony.

What is taken into consideration in zakat is not one's annual income, but one's accumulated wealth. Consequently, any money or goods not used in investment will gradually vanish. In this way Islam provides an impetus for society to mobilize all the wealth from property and finance.

The wisdom behind *zakat* and charity is to provide an effective solution to the endless growth of personal wealth that may eventually become a chronic tumor. *Zakat* is a means by which the relationship of sincerity and love grows between the one who gives *zakat* and the one who receives it. In other words, *zakat* is the right of the poor on the wealthy, a situation that strengthens mutual love. In the Qur'an, this is described as follows:

"And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy,) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking)." (Qur'an, Zariyat, 51/19)

Adab (Islamic etiquette) is very important. The one who gives must feel thankful to the one who takes because the needy allow the rich to fulfill an obligatory worship and to gain rewards from Allah. Charity given for the sake of Allah is at the same time a shelter against illnesses and other troubles. The Qur'an draws our attention to the importance of giving *zakat* and charity by stating that, *"He receives their gifts of charity."* (Tawba, 104) Similarly, a hadith also declares, "Charity reaches first the hand of Allah, then the hand of the poor."⁷¹

When giving charity, it is essential to avoid arrogance, conceit, disdain, and showing off. Otherwise, what is given will not reach the hand of Allah, but instead will be wasted in the hands of transient beings and eventually nothing would reach the Next World. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) led an exemplary life with respect to abstention from worldly pleasures and with respect to giving charity. Our Mother Aishah said:

*"Two dishes never entered at the same time the stomach of the Messenger of Allah in one day. When he ate meat, he did not eat anything else. Likewise, when he ate dates or bread, he did not add anything to them."*⁷²

Abu Nadr narrates the following:

"I heard that Our Mother Aishah said:

⁷¹ al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, IX, 109; al-Harawî, *al-Arba'in fî dalâil al-Tawhîd*, I, 74; al-Daylamî, *al-Firdaws*, II, 52.

⁷² Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqât al-Kubrâ*, I, 405.



‘One day we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah. My father, Abu Bakr, offered us a leg of lamb. In the darkness of the night, we were trying to cut the meat. One said: ‘Do you not have a candle or light?’ I said: ‘If we had oil, we would have eaten it.’⁷³

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) loved very much to give charity. Once he said to Bilal:

“O Bilal! Give to charity! Do not be afraid that the owner of the Throne will decrease your wealth because of giving charity.”⁷⁴

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was never interested in accumulating wealth. This was because he had made the intention to pass his life as a “servant prophet”, as is explained in the following hadith:

“I was given the choice between being a servant prophet or a king prophet. The Archangel hinted to me to keep myself humble. Therefore, I chose to be a servant prophet and expressed my wish “to be one day satiated and one day hungry.”⁷⁵

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) refused to enter the house of his daughter Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) because she had decorated her home, and he said to her:

“It would not be appropriate for us to enter decorated places.”⁷⁶

73 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqât al-Kubrâ*, I, 405.

74 Ma’mar ibn Râshid, *al-Jâmi’*, XI, 108; al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, IV, 204; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, III, 86; al-Bayhaqî, *Shabul-Îmân*, II, 118.

75 Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahîh*, XVI, 280; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VII, 48, 49.

76 Abû Dâwûd, *At’imah* 8; Ibn Mâjah, *At’imah* 56; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 220-222.

Yet, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not praise himself because of the highly pious life he was leading. He used to count the blessings of Allah on him while showing extreme humility by saying “*la fakhrr*”⁷⁷, (no pride).

The Humility of the Prophet of Mercy

Extreme praise and appreciation by others usually leads one to arrogance. These two situations corrupt and spoil most people. Although Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the best of humanity and praised by Allah, he made the following request of his companions:

“Call me ‘the servant and messenger of Allah’.”⁷⁸

Abu Usamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that:

“The speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was derived from the Qur’an. He continuously made *dhikr* and kept his speeches short while keeping his *salat* long. He never felt ashamed of walking along with a poor or needy person; on the contrary, he took pleasure from doing so.”⁷⁹

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that:

“The Prophet (peace be upon him) made *dhikr* very often. He joked very little. He rode a donkey, wore cloth made of rough wool, accepted the invitations of the slaves, visited the ill and attended funeral services. You should have seen him on the day the castle of Khaibar was conquered,

77 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 1; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 37; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 5, 281.

78 Bukhârî, *Anbiyâ* 48; Dârimî, *Riqâq* 68; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 23.

79 Nasâî, *Jum’a* 31; Dârimî, *Muqaddimah* 13; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahîh*, XIV, 333; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 671.



when he was riding a donkey with a halter made of date leaves. The more God blessed him with triumph, the more humble and grateful he became.”⁸⁰

Jarir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated the following:

“A man came into the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the day Mecca was conquered. The man started shaking as he saw the spiritual and physical grandeur of the Prophet, (peace be upon him). When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw him in that position, he said to the man with a soft voice:

“Relax, do not feel distressed! I am not a king. I am the son of a woman from the tribe of Quraysh who used to eat sun-dried meat.”⁸¹

Amir ibn Rabi’a (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that:

“One day, I was going to the mosque with the Prophet. The lace of his shoe broke on the way. I wanted to take it to repair it. The Messenger of Allah refused to give it to me and said:

‘This is self-preference (that is keeping oneself above others), I dislike self-preference’.”⁸²

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) gave guidance to all of humanity so that they could attain eternal happiness.

80 Tirmidhî, *Janâiz* 32; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 16; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 506.

81 Ibn Mâjah, *At’imah* 30; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 506; al-Tabarânî, *Mujamu l-Awsat*, II, 64.

82 al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, IX, 263; Abû Dâwûd al-Tayâlisî, *al-Musnad*, I, 156; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, III, 174; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu’ab al-Îmân*, III, 275.

This was a gift from him, because he did not ask anything in return for the great service he had provided to others.



The purpose of religion is to raise good, refined humans, with deep understanding and feeling. This happens through developing a consciousness of the worship of Allah. This maturity is reached through the excitement that takes place in the heart as described in the following verse:

“For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His revelation rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord.” (Qur’an, Anfal, 8/2)

The Arabic word for human is *“insan”* which is related to *“nisyan”* (forgetting) and *“uns”* (friendship). The opposite of *“nisyan”* is *“dhikr”* (remembrance), which is repeated in the Qur’an more than 250 times. If the essence of *dhikr* is established at the center of the heart, this heart begins to know and worship Allah. Lovers never forget their beloveds.

They always keep them in their hearts and on their tongues. The hearts that desire to enjoy a faithful life maintain ceaseless *dhikr*. They are immersed in thoughts about the creation of the Earth and the skies by Allah while they are walking, sitting or lying down, as illustrated in the following Qur’anic verse:

“Men who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders) of creation in the heavens and the earth, (by saying): ‘Our Lord not for naught hast



thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the Chastisement of the Fire’.” (Qur’an, Ali Imran, 3/191)

A heart without such depth and refinement would not desire Allah the Most High as described in the verse below:

“Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance.” (Qur’an, Zumar, 39/22) This verse indicates that the humans who fall away from *dhikr* lose the honor of being human.

Humans carry the quality of being worshipers. So, they either worship material things and interests or their Lord. To worship the Lord protects humans from becoming slaves to personal interests and material things.

Allah, the Most High, warns against this in the following verse:

“Hast thou seen him who maketh his desire his god?” (Qur’an, Jathiya, 45/23)

Nourishing long term desires and plans in one’s mind to be realized in the distant future, plans that belong exclusively to this world and not to the next world, will lead one to a bitter end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*“Be aware! Do not let your desires and future plans increase to such a degree that they make you forget your death! Otherwise your hearts get hardened. Open your eyes! What is going to come is very near!”*⁸³

Salman al-Farisi who benefited greatly from the advice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Three things make me laugh while three things make me cry.” He explained

83 Ibn Mâjah, *Muqaddimah* 7; Ma’mar ibn Râshid, *al-Jâmi’*, XI, 116; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, II, 263; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VIII, 31.

that one of the things that surprised him and made him laugh was the person who makes long-term plans although death is awaiting him.

The Prophet (peace be upon him), also said: “Even though all the powers of an aged person weaken, his greed and desires concerning the distant future (*tul al-amal*) remain ever young.”⁸⁴ The above hadith illustrates that greed and desires for the distant future are two handicaps from which no human heart is saved. Even if bodies weaken and age, humans desire to remain young, because their souls have the quality of immortality. Consequently, humans always want to remain young and regret losing their youth as they get old. As a result, they are enslaved by an endless greed.

As is the case of dry soil soaking up the rainwater that falls on it, the human ego aims to absorb all worldly pleasures in itself. However, humans do not return the favor, as the earth does to the rain by producing fruit. In their failure to return the fruit of charity their hearts are hardened for lack of integrity and slavery to earthly interests.



The purpose of bad qualities in creation is to facilitate the testing of humans. For this reason, the verse below in the Qur'an states, *“By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its inspiration as to its wrong and its rights; truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it.”* (Qur'an, Shams, 91/7-10)

The high rank of humans, who have been created with incomprehensible complexity and immeasurable depth, is

84 Bukhârî, *Riqâq* 5; Muslim, *Zakât* 114.



realized by obeying Allah alone and by spending their lives protecting their hearts from evil.

The raid of Tabuk was full of challenges. The companions traveled hundreds of kilometers and turned back home. As they approached Medina, even their appearance began to change because of hunger; their skin stuck to their bones, their hair and beard had become unruly. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Now, we are going from a small war to a big war!.." The companions asked with great surprise: "O the Messenger of Allah! Is there a war more difficult than the one we just had?" Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Now we are returning to the Great War (the war against ego, nafs)..."⁸⁵

The war against the ego is taught through the education and the training of the heart. The purpose of this war is to elevate morality and help humans to reach the level of perfection; *al-insan al-kamil*.

This secret can only be unveiled through the truth emanating from Muhammad (peace be upon him). If a human cannot discover the reason behind the creation of this world, it will swallow him. The one who is unaware of the reason why they have come to this world leads a life without knowing the sacred structure of humans. Nor will he comprehend the divine purpose in the creation of humanity. He will fail to comprehend what it means to be a vicegerent of Allah on the Earth. Yet those who strive to become a vicegerent of Allah on the Earth will become the

85 al-Bagdâdî, *Tarîkhu Bagdâd*, XIII, 523; [Some version of this hadith was narrated from IbRahîm ibn Abi 'Abla as *maktu hadith*, See ; al-Mizzî, *Tahdhîb al-Kamâl*, II, 144; al-Zahabî, *Siyar a'lâm al-nubalâ*, VI, 325].

seeing eye of the Lord and his hearing ear.⁸⁶ Their aim in life is union with Allah.



In this world, some things may not be able to be explained completely by the human intellect alone. Even our words of explanation need to be explained by other words. While trying to explain what is inexplicable through vague means, are we not forgetting that the most inexplicable reality transcending the reach of the intellect is in fact Allah? Allah is the only and the absolute explanation of this world. We can know him only to the extent that we gain love and wisdom, and only to the extent that we submit.

The intellect is limited. We can only have access beyond the limit of the intellect, where the secrets of the world lie, through the heart. Abraham (peace be upon him) expressed this as follows. He said: *"I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds."* (Qur'an, Baqara, 2/131)

Imam Ghazzali related his experience concerning this question as follows: "I stretched my intellect to such an extent that it was about to snap. I came to realize that it is limited. It cannot go to the ultimate point alone. I experienced a kind of insanity and I almost lost my mind. Eventually, I sought refuge in the spiritual blessing of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Everything became clear. I discovered the secret and was saved."⁸⁷

86 Bukhârî, *Riqâq* 38; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 256; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahîh*, II, 58; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, III, 346.

87 Ghazali, Abû Hâmid, *al-Munqiz min al-Dalâl*, (Beirut, 1988), p. 60.



Likewise, Abraham (peace be upon him) also said: “*I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me!*” (Qur’an, Saffat, 37/99)

Similarly, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi also explained the limit of reason as follows: “Reason takes the patient to the doctor. After that, one needs to submit to the doctor.”⁸⁸

In brief, what we are saying here is that the secrets of the Prophets are beyond the comprehension of human reason.

Courtesy, Compassion and Altruism in the Life of the Prophet of Mercy

According to the reports of countless numbers of the companions, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the best of all humans in morality and courtesy. He was always smiling. There was a shining brightness and light that emanated from his face.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had such a refined heart that one day when he saw a man spit on the ground, his blessed face became red and he stooped. The companions rushed and covered the spit. Then the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) continued on his way.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that clean dress is an indication of a Muslim’s high value in the presence of Allah. He advised wearing white. He preferred a white colored shroud. This is because, he explained, it is cleaner, more beautiful and more blessed. The Messenger of Allah, who ordered tidy dress and disliked unruly clothes, did not approve of untrimmed hair and beards either. For

88 Rûmî, Jalâladdin, *Mathnawî Ma’ nawî*, (Tehran, 1378), v.IV, 3323.



instance, once a man with his hair and beard untrimmed and uncombed came to the Mosque of the Prophet. By pointing with his hand, he gave the man the message to take care of his beard and hair. The man did so and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Is not this look nicer than the look of one like the devil with messy hair and beard?"⁸⁹

One day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw another man with messy hair and beard. In surprise, he asked: "Why does this man not wash and comb his hair?"⁹⁰

Umar ibn Hattab (may Allah be pleased with him) related that:

"A rude Bedouin called on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) three times. Each time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained courteous to him despite his rudeness and responded to him by saying, 'welcome, please'."⁹¹ He was extremely disturbed by messy appearances because of the sensitiveness and depth of his soul.

Another time, he said to a man who came to him dressed untidily:

"Do you have money? What is your financial situation?" When the man told him that he was well off, he said to the man: "If Allah gave you wealth, let its signs appear on you!"⁹²

89 Muwatta, *Shar* 7; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, V, 225.

90 Abû Dâwûd, *Libas* 13; Nasâî, *Zinâh* 60; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, ID, 357

91 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 50; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 239; Nasâî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VI, 344; al-San'ânî, *al-Musannaf*, I, 206.

92 Nasâî, *Zinâh* 54; Tirmidhî, *Birr* 63; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 137; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XII, 234.



In another hadith, he said: "Allah is pleased by seeing the signs of wealth he has given to his servant."⁹³ These incidents illustrate beautifully how purity of heart and external aesthetics complement each other in Islam.

To protect oneself from arrogance and showing off, a Muslim who wears new clothes must be aware that this is a gift from Allah and pray in the manner the Prophet (peace be upon him) did:

"I thank Allah who dressed me in these clothes even though I had no power to do so. O Allah! I ask for abundant blessings through this dress and the work I do while dressed in it. I seek refuge in you from the evil of this dress and the evil work which may be done in it..."⁹⁴ By praying so, the Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed his wish to use everything in the path of Allah.

Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned against hellfire by explaining that those who dress up with an arrogant, to show off and for self-love will wear a dress of shame on the last day.

Abdullah ibn Amr, (may Allah be pleased with him), narrated that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never used the bad expressions commonly used in daily language. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "the little matters of courtesy that look easy to you, those which you take lightly, will be very important on the Day of Judgment".⁹⁵

93 Tirmidhî, *Adab* 54; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 311; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 150.

94 Abû Dâwûd, *Libas* 1; Tirmidhî, *Da'awât* 55; Ibn Mâjah, *At'imah* 16.

95 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 61; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, X, 193; Ma'mar ibn Râshid, *al-Jâmi'*, XI, 146; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, I, 274.

Once Abu Dharr al-Ghifari called Bilal “the son of a black woman.” When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard that, he said to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari: “O Abu Dharr! You are indeed someone who is still carrying traces of the time of ignorance, the *Jahliyya*.”⁹⁶

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) served his guests personally, out of courtesy. He did not violate the rules of courtesy even when he was a child. He was known for his compassion and closeness to the needy, the orphans, the widows and the people who had no relatives to assist them.⁹⁷

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “I served Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for ten years. He never reprimanded me by asking, ‘Why did you do that?’ when I made mistakes.”⁹⁸

His mercy reached even the captives of war. He ordered their good treatment.



The mercy of the Prophet (peace be upon him) encompassed all creatures. When he saw a child, happiness covered his face and he took the children of his companions in his arms and patted them. He never failed to greet the children, showed them affection and joking with them. Once he saw a group of children who were racing. He joined them and raced with them.

96 Bukhârî, *Imân* 22; Muslim, *Aymân* 38; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 124; Tirmidhî, *Tafsir Surah* 22,1; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 161.

97 Bukhârî, *Nafaqât* 1; Muslim, *Zuhd* 41-42.

98 Muslim, *Fadâil* 51; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 1; Dârimî, *Muqaddimah* 10.



He, who was sent as a mercy to the worlds, took children on his camel when he came across them on the way and paid attention to them. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) described his conduct as follows: "I have not seen anyone who respected the rights of his family and children more than the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)."⁹⁹

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that once, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was playing with his grandchildren. A Bedouin came in. The Bedouin was surprised when he saw the scene. He asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Do you kiss the children? We never kiss our children. Nor do we play with them." Our Guide (peace be upon him) said to him:

"If Allah has removed the compassion and mercy from your heart, what can I do for you?"¹⁰⁰ This expression illustrates best the position of Islam on the treatment of children.

Prophet Muhammad put Zayd's son Usamah, and his grandson, Hasan, on his knees and while hugging them, he said: "O my Lord! Give mercy and happiness to these! Because I wish happiness and mercy for them."¹⁰¹ He also prohibited cursing children. These are some of the signs of his endless mercy for children.

If a baby cried while his/her mother was praying, he permitted the mother to shorten her salat in order to prevent

99 Muslim, *Fadâil* 63; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 112; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahih*, XV, 400; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, II, 263.

100 Bukhârî, *Adab* 18; Muslim, *Fadâil* 64; Ibn Mâjah, *Adab* 3; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 56, 70.

101 Bukhârî, *Adab*, 18; Muslim, *Fadâil* 64.

the child from crying until she returned.¹⁰² He prayed all night long, shedding tears for his community, the Ummah.¹⁰³ He sacrificed all his life to save humanity from the hellfire.¹⁰⁴ These are some indications of his deep mercy.

His Exemplary Conduct with People

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the perfect example to follow, not only with his words, but more importantly, with his actions. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was a perfect example for people in all walks of life. He treated everyone with respect. His mercy, which encompassed all creatures, was endless. He did not withhold his tenderness or generous conduct, even from non-Muslims.

Jabir ibn Abdullah narrated, “One day, people were carrying a corpse. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stood up. We also did so. Later, we said:

“O Messenger of Allah! It was the corpse of a Jew!”

He responded:

“Is he not also a human?”¹⁰⁵

He had a divine mercy, a manifestation of the divine name *al-Rahman*, who embraced the whole world. His life

102 Bukhârî, *Azan* 65; Muslim, *Salât* 191; Abû Dâwûd, *Salât* 123; Tirmidhî, *Salât* 159; Nasâî, *Imamah* 35; Ibn Mâjah, *Iqamah* 49; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 109.

103 Muslim, *Îmân* 346; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 127; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XVI, 217.

104 Bukhârî, *Riqâq* 26; Muslim, *Fadâil* 17.

105 Bukhârî, *Janâiz* 50; Muslim, *Janâiz* 81.



was an embodiment of the principle “love creatures for the sake of the Creator.”

One day, the companions, as a result of pressures put on them by non-Muslims, asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to make a prayer condemning the enemies of Islam. In response, the Prophet said:

“I did not come for condemnation; I came as a mercy.”¹⁰⁶

The prayer he made against his fiercest enemies was as follows: “O my Lord! They know not! Give them guidance!”¹⁰⁷

Abdullah Ibn Ubayy was the secret chief of the hypocrites in Medina. He betrayed the Prophet (peace be upon him) on a very critical day by leaving the Muslim army with his followers on the way to the battle of Uhud. Also, he betrayed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the community of believers on many other occasions.

As a result of hidden divine wisdom, Abdullah’s son, unlike his father, was a most sincere believer. When Abdullah ibn Ubayy died, his son came to the Prophet and asked for his shirt to wrap his father’s corpse in, with the hope that he might receive some blessing from it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not break the heart of his companion and gave him his shirt to be used in covering the corpse of a hypocrite who had also been a protagonist in the incident of *Ifk* where the blessed wife of the Prophet, Aishah was slandered.¹⁰⁸

106 Muslim, *Jihād* 104; Abu Yaia, *al-Musnad*, XI, 35; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubrd*, III, 352; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, III, 223.

107 Bukhârî, *Anbiyâ* 54; Muslim, *Jihād* 104; Ibn Mâjah, *Fitan* 33; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, III, 254.

108 Bukhârî, *Janâiz* 23; Muslim, *Munafiqun* 4; Abû Dâwûd, *Janâiz* 1; Nasâi, *Janâiz* 40; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* II, 18.

Is it possible to find a parallel example of humanity and kindness in world history?

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the most excellent example of mercy. Once in *salat*, he heard a Bedouin praying, "O my Lord! Bless Muhammad and me alone, but not others!" After the *salat*, the Prophet said to him: "You are narrowing that which is great."¹⁰⁹

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was not a human being who belonged exclusively to his time and the people living around him. He stood at a point where he could unite all of humanity under the banner of love, mercy and happiness, by merging them in the light of Islam and by transforming the environment of hardened hearts, of bigotry and of racism. The success he showed in this regard is the brightest page of human history.

From this perspective, he became the best educator for all of humanity as a consequence of the blessed divine education he had received. The oppressors, who buried their daughters alive and treated their slaves in a merciless way, found guidance under the dome of his mercy. This education was so effective that some of these people gained enough integrity and virtue to become the most distinguished people in the world.



Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) assisted all people without discrimination and according to their needs. The following incident reflects this.

109 Bukhârî, *Adab* 27; Ibn Majah, *Taharah* 78; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 239.



One day a Bedouin came to him for help. He gave him everything he had with him, and asked: "Does this satisfy you?"

The Bedouin, who had little courtesy, said: "No! You did not give me enough!"

Then, some of the companions got angry with him because of his rudeness and wanted to reprimand him. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, stopped them from doing so. He took the Bedouin with him and went to his home. He gave some more charity to the Bedouin and asked:

"Could this please you?"

The Bedouin was happy this time. He said: "Yes! May Allah give you abundant blessings on behalf of me, my family and my relatives!"

Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him), wanting to remove the negative feeling between the Bedouin and his companions, said to him:

"You said what you said in the beginning because you thought what we gave was too little for you. For this reason, my companions may have developed some negative feelings towards you. When we return to them, repeat what you just said so that the negative feelings in their hearts will vanish."

When they came back to the place where the companions were, the Bedouin turned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him: "May Allah give you abundant blessings on behalf of me, my family and my relatives!"

After the Bedouin left, the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned to his companions and said to them: "The

incident which has taken place between me and this Bedouin resembles that of the person who had a camel that escaped. When a crowd of people ran after the camel to catch it, it became more frightened. Then the owner of the camel called the crowd: "Please leave me and my camel alone! I know it better than you and I treat it better than you do." He walked alone towards his camel. He collected some dates from the ground and gave them to the camel. The camel came to him and followed him. He put the packsaddle on the camel, mounted it and left riding it. Similarly, if I had listened to you when the Bedouin said what he said, the miserable Bedouin would have gone to the hellfire."¹¹⁰

This statement is important with respect to the messages it contains regarding human education. It is necessary to take the psychology of human beings into consideration. Then the paths leading to the heart of the person can be discovered.

One should try to reach his goal by proceeding along these paths. Otherwise, one's attempt to educate will be counterproductive and increase any pre-existing adversity.

Another lesson we may learn from this incident is as follows: humans are overcome by kindness and generosity because they have been created weak. The person who is treated generously becomes less of an enemy if they are already an enemy; if they are neither an enemy or a friend then they become a friend; if they are already a friend, then they become a closer friend.

110 al-Marwazî (d.294), *Ta'zîm qadr al-salât*, II, 931; al-Haythamî, *Majma' al-zawâid*, IX, 160.



Our ancestors said: "The hospitality of even a cup of coffee is remembered with gratitude for forty years."

The Courtesy of the Prophet of Mercy towards the Needy

The Prophet (peace be upon him) behaved with compassion towards the needy in order to compensate for their shortage of material wealth. Abdullah ibn Amr narrated the following story:

"One day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to the masjid. The poor were sitting to one side. He went and sat among them to honor them. He chatted with them and said: 'Good tidings to the poor Immigrants! They will enter the gardens of Paradise forty years earlier than the rich. The reckoning of the poor on the Day of Judgment will end sooner than that of the rich because they do not have money and property'."¹¹¹

Frequently, The Prophet (peace be upon him) made the following prayer because of his concern about the heavy responsibility of reckoning in the Hereafter:

"O my Lord! Make me live as the poor. Let me die as the poor. Resurrect me among the poor."¹¹²

All Prophets will go the Paradise. Yet, each one will be questioned about the bountiful blessings given to them and the message they were entrusted to convey to their communities. The following verse from the Qur'an explains

111 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 37; Dârimî, *Riqâq* 118; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 63; Nasâî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, III, 443; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VII, 12.

112 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 37; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 7; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 358; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VII, 12

that everyone, including the Prophets, will be questioned: *"Then shall we question those to whom Our Message was sent and those to whom we sent it."* (Qur'an, Araf, 7/6)

For instance, the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) will enter Paradise after all the other Prophets because he was given wealth and kingship; as a consequence his questioning will be longer.

There were the rich among the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well. They gained the praise of the Prophet by not sparing their wealth or lives in the path of Allah. Furthermore, Allah also gave them good tidings in the following verse: *"Allah hath purchased of the Believers their person and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): They fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: A promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an: And who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded; that is the achievement supreme."* (Qur'an, Tawba, 9/111)



One of the wealthy was the closest friend of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, who, despite his wealth, led a most humble life. He was described by Allah in the Qur'an as the "second of the two." He occupied a respected place among the tradesmen of the Quraysh. According to Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), he also did not leave a *dirham* (silver money) nor a *dinar* (gold money) when he passed away. He bequeathed only a camel and a slave who knew how to make swords. In his will to his daughter, he stressed that this slave was to be given to Umar, the next Caliph after him. He used his wealth in the most beneficial way, by putting it in the service



of the Messenger of Allah, spending his money in the Cause of Truth. Particularly, in the first years of Islam, which was the most challenging time, he purchased and freed Muslim slaves who were being tortured by their disbelieving owners for accepting Islam.

His wealth did not prevent him from abstention, or *zuhd*, from worldly pleasures. On the contrary, by using his wealth appropriately, he became one of the prime examples of how to lead a life of abstention in spite of one's wealth. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah showed regard for his wealth and said about him:

"We paid back all the favors we received from the people except those from Abu Bakr. The place of his favor to us is so huge that Allah will reward him for that on the Day of Judgment. I did not benefit from the wealth of anyone more than the wealth of Abu Bakr. If I were to choose an intimate friend, I would choose Abu Bakr."¹¹³



The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Humans are equal like the teeth of a comb with the exception of piety, where they differ."¹¹⁴

The blessed companions once had been divided along tribal lines, for racial reasons, as master and slave, and as rich and poor. They had been fragmented into classes and had been ready to shed each other's blood. Yet, after they

113 Tirmidhi *Manâqib* 15; Ibn Mâjah, *Muqaddimah* 11; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 253, 366; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XV, 273.

114 âl-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, I, 145; al-Hatib al-Bagdadi, *Tdrikhu Bagdad*, VII, 57; Ibn 'Adiyy, *al-Kamilfi al-du'afa*, III, 248; Ibn Hibban, *al-Majrrlhin*, I, 198; Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalani, *Lisdn al-mizdn*, II, 42.

were honored by accepting Islam, they lived in a climate of legendary brotherhood under the abundant blessing of the sublime principle stated in this hadith.

The following incident will make this situation clearer. After conquering Mecca, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) decided to attack Byzantium for a second time. He assigned Zayd's son, Usamah, as the commander of the army. Usamah was only twenty-one years old and the son of a freed slave. The departure of the army was delayed because of the demise of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Yet the new Caliph, Abu Bakr, ordered the army to proceed as planned by the Prophet before his departure from this world. Some of the great companions of the Prophet and some of the nobility of the Quraysh walked behind this young commander, a twenty-year boy. Even Abu Bakr, in spite of being the Caliph, accompanied him until the end of Medina, and strikingly, on foot. Usamah got off his horse and invited Abu Bakr to ride it. Yet, he responded as follows:

"O Usamah! The Messenger of Allah assigned you. Let my feet gain some dust in the path of Allah!"¹¹⁵

As we see, those who were gifted by the divine honor of being raised at the blessed hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were never discriminated against with such titles as slave, poor, rich, master, young, old, etc. These terms were rejected and instead any believer was free to ascend to a high level, dependent only on his sincerity and spiritual merit.

Ma'rur ibn Suwayd told the following story:

115 Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah van-nihâyah*, III, 309.

"I saw Abu Dharr with a new garment. His slave was also dressed the same way. I asked him the reason. He related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said:

'Slaves are your brothers entrusted by Allah to your service. If one of you has his brother under his service, let him feed his brother from his own food, and dress him from his own kind. Do not give him responsibility for things beyond his power. If you do so, help them.' "¹¹⁶

One day, the Messenger of Allah, remembered a black slave and asked about him:

"What has happened to that person? I have not seen him for a while."

"He died, O Messenger of Allah," they responded. The Prophet (peace be upon him) reprimanded them: "Why didn't you let me know?"

The companions then told him what had happened to that slave. They had not considered the incident very important and thought it was a usual event. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Show me his grave!"

Then he went to his grave and prayed the funeral prayer.¹¹⁷

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took a special pleasure from freeing slaves and elevating them to the level of other people. The best example of this was his relationship with Zayd ibn Haritha, who was a gift to him from our blessed mother, Khadija. He freed Zayd and

116 Bukhârî, *Imân* 22; Muslim, *Aymân* 40; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 124; Tirmidhî, *Birr* 29; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 58, 161.

117 Bukhârî, *Salât* 72; Muslim, *Janâiz* 71; Abû Dâwûd, *Janâiz* 57; Ibn Mâjah, *Janâiz* 32; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 353, 388.

gave him the right to choose between him and his parents. Zayd chose the Prophet (peace be upon him) though he was passing through a difficult time, facing torture and negative propaganda of the Quraysh against him. Later, this companion reached so high a level among the companions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) assigned him as the commander of the army in the war of Tabuk against the Byzantines. He reached the level of martyr in this war and bequeathed to the following generations a brilliant life, like a star.¹¹⁸ Briefly put, his life was like the life of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) who was elevated from slavery to kingship.

The Messenger of Allah never agreed with the abuse of slaves. He said that:

“Those who abuse their slaves cannot enter Paradise.”¹¹⁹

The mercy of the Prophet (peace be upon him) toward the slaves reached such a level that he refused to refer to them as “slave” or “maid”, instead he advised and commanded Muslims to refer to them as “my son” or “my daughter”.¹²⁰

He himself used to go among the slaves, talk to them, visit those who were ill among them, accept their invitations, and attend their funeral services.

Abu Davud relates that the following were the last words of the Prophet (peace be upon him): “Pay great

118 Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalâni, *al-Îsâbah fi tamyîz al-sahâbah*, II, 598-601; Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Îstî'âb fi ma'rifatil-ashâb*, II, 542-546.

119 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 29; Ibn Mâjah, *Adab* 10; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 7; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, IX, 124; Abû Ya'lâ, *al-Musnad*, I, 94.

120 Bukhârî, *Itk* 17; Muslim, *Alfaz* 13,15; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 75; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 316, 423.

attention to salat! Fear Allah for the slaves you own!" (Abu Davud, Adab, 124)



All of the companions aimed to completely internalize the perfect manners of the Prophet. The following incident reflects the feelings of loyalty and generosity Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had. Aslam, one of the companions, related:

"One day, I went to the market place with Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). A young woman approached Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) from behind and said to him:

'Oh, *Amir* of the Believers! My husband died and left some children. By God, they cannot do anything. They cannot even take care of themselves. They have no land to cultivate, nor an animal to milk. I am afraid that poverty and hunger will finish their life like a wild animal. I am the daughter of Huffaf ibn Ayma al-Ghifari. My father was present at the Hudaybiya Agreement...'

When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) heard these words, he said: 'Such a great honor!'

Then he went to the place where the animals donated as *zakat* were kept. He loaded two huge sacks of food onto a sturdy camel. Between these two sacks, he put more food and some clothes. He put the halter of the camel in the woman's hand and said to her:

'Take the camel. Before you finish all this, Allah will open a door of blessing for you.' He prayed for her.

One of the people near him said:



‘Oh, Amir of Believers! You gave too much to that woman!’

Umar responded by saying:

‘Her father was present at the Hudaibiya with the Prophet (peace be upon him). By God, I witnessed myself that the father and brother of this woman laid siege to a castle and conquered it. When they conquered the castle, we also got our share from the bounty.’¹²¹

The following incident is a ray of light reflecting the nature of the heart of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

From the companions, Aslam narrated that “One night we were walking for inspection on the hill of *Waqim* in Medina. We saw a woman with children in a house. The children were crying. There was a bowl filled with water in the fireplace. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the woman why the children were crying. She said: ‘Out of hunger’.

Umar’s eyes became full of tears when he learned that instead of soup there was nothing boiling in the water except stones. This was a trick the woman had devised to cheat the children so they would sleep. He immediately went to the storage house where the charity was stored. He personally filled a big sack with flour and carried it on his own shoulders to the family. I wanted to shoulder the sack, but he refused by saying,

‘Oh, Aslam! I will carry it. I will be asked about these children in the Hereafter.’

121 Bukhari, *Magâzî* 35.



When we went to the home of the woman, he also undertook the cooking. He was on the one hand blowing the fire and on the other stirring the soup. I even saw that the smoke reached to his beard. This way, he cooked the food. Then he served the food to children. When the children became full he sat across from them. He was awesome, like a lion. I was afraid to say anything. He stayed until the children started laughing and playing.

Then he stood up and said:

‘Oh, Aslam! Do you know why I sat across from them? When I saw them they were crying. I did not want to leave them before seeing them laugh. When I saw them laugh, I felt comfortable.’ We should remember that grateful, humble, and generous rich people, who act in accordance with the needs of humanity, are honored equally by Allah as the patient poor people, who act with dignity. Generosity and mercy lead people to happiness in the Hereafter by protecting them from the difficulties of this world. Likewise, good tidings are awaiting those who spiritually carry the pain of patience.

The following hadith illustrates very well how to practice gratefulness and patience; these must be applied in various arenas of life in order to reach perfection of heart.

“I admire a believer whose entire activity consists of good behavior. Such a quality does not exist except with the Believer. He shows gratefulness when he receives a blessing from Allah, which is good for him. Likewise, if a difficulty reaches him, he shows patience, which is also good for him.”¹²²

122 Muslim, *Zuhd* 64; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 16; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, VII, 155.

One day, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting in Medina, members of a miserable tribe came. They had no shoes. Their skin stuck to their bones because of hunger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) became very sad upon seeing their condition and his color changed. He had Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) call the adhan and gathered his companions. From his companions, he took up a collection for the tribe, generously helping them.¹²³

In a society one will intrinsically find poor, rich and middle class people. Both in the verses of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), one may find Islamic principles concerning the relationship of these groups. The patient poor and the grateful rich are two groups praised by Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The purpose of the rich is to give in charity of what Allah has given to them and, for the poor, to show patience in the best way for what Allah has deprived them of. Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Abu Bakr and people like them serve as the best examples of the grateful rich. Likewise, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Abu al-Darda and people like them are the examples of the patient poor. The life styles of both groups were more or less the same because their views of life were defined by the principle that "all property belongs to Allah."

For this reason, Islam does not criticize the righteous poor nor the rich, but it gives good tidings of gaining paradise by remaining thankful to Allah.

Because there are the disadvantaged, Allah provides sustenance and blessings to His community. For the sake of the

123 Muslim, *Zakât* 69, 70; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 358, 361.



poor, Allah helps the community in abundance. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said regarding this issue:

“Allah helps this community for the sake of the prayers of the weak, their *salat* and their sincerity.”¹²⁴

Based on this reality, the Messenger of Allah began wars with the prayers of poor Muslims because he expected triumph as a result of their sincerity. When he saw the needy situation of the People of Suffa, he said:

“If you had known what is prepared in the presence of Allah for you, you would wish for the increase of your deprivation.”¹²⁵ He praised them and demonstrated the importance he assigned to poverty.

Similarly, taking into consideration the financial hardship Muslims were in, he said: “A human has no right to more than a house to give him shelter, bread to feed himself, a cloth to cover his private parts and some water to drink.”¹²⁶

He also stated that the first to drink from the river of Kawthar in the Hereafter will be the poor and Allah loves those who exercise patience and who have reliance on Allah, despite their poverty.¹²⁷

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad stated, “There are many people among you with untidy hair and beards and poor appearance. Yet, if they pray, Allah accepts their

124 Bukhârî, *Jihâd* 76; Abû Dâwûd, *Jihâd* 70; Tirmidhî, *Jihâd* 24; Nasâî, *Jihâd* 43; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 173.

125 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 39; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 502; al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, IX, 205; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, XVIII, 310.

126 Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 30; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 62; al-Kissî, *Musnad 'Abd ibn Humayd*, I, 46; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 347; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, V, 157.

127 Tirmidhî, *Qiyâmah* 15.

prayers and will not turn them down. Bara ibn Malik is one of them.”¹²⁸

Bara, who was the brother of Anas, had no place to stay, nor any food to eat. His food was barely sufficient to keep him alive. Those people who accept poverty with happiness are among those whose prayers Allah accepts. The companions who knew what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said about Bara, asked Bara to make a special prayer for them as they were about to lose a war during the reign of Umar. He made a prayer and said:

“By God! Tomorrow you will be given triumph and I will be martyred!...”

Indeed, the next day Muslims triumphed and Bara received the mercy of the Most Merciful Allah, al-Rahman, by becoming a martyr, something for which he had longed for a long time. Thus, we can see yet one more miracle of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹²⁹



The life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is full of miracles, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, tenderness, compassion and courtesy. He said to his wife Aishah:

“O Aishah! Show compassion to the poor! Keep them near to you so that Allah also keeps you near to him on the Day of Judgment!...”

He advised her as follows:

128 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 54; Ma'mar ibn Râshid, *al-Jâmi'*, XI, 306; al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, V, 404; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, I, 264.

129 Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Isfî'âb*, 1,154; Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalânî, *al-Isâbah*, I, 281.



“O Aishah! Never turn away a beggar empty-handed from your door; protect yourself from the Hellfire even with half a date!”¹³⁰

The Gradual Education of the People by the Prophet

Islam is an evolving system. Consequently, it does not require rejection of previous good institutional examples; instead it develops their positive aspects and reforms their negative aspects. It sees no harm in preserving positive aspects of the past based on clearly set criteria. Using these criteria, it tries to revive an institution rather than throwing it away.

Only those who are confident in themselves and their cause can gradually implement changes that will be rapidly integrated and which usually transform the social order. This type of gradual approach does not immediately overburden societies. As a result, possible negative reactions are forestalled. The best example of this approach is the way Islam reformed slavery. Islam transformed the institution of slavery and made it only a nominal identity. Islam had framed the institution of slavery within virtuous principles in such a way that would eventually lead to its annihilation.

Islam preserved slavery in name only and only for a temporary period of time, with an aim to ending it. Thus, to accuse Islam of defending slavery is a result of ignorance and bigotry. In classical Islamic law, for the atonement of some sins, freeing a slave was required. Having set this principle, Islam elevated the slaves from being mere tools

¹³⁰ Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 37; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VII, 12.

in the hands of their owners. There was left little difference between a free man and a slave. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the first to apply the principle of sharing the same food and the same cloth with one's slave. The institution of slavery, which used to be an institution of oppression, lost this quality as Islam emphasized respect for the rights of all people.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the owner of the slaves to educate them and to help them get married after freeing them. He warned that those who mistreated their slaves would not be able to enter Paradise.

He encouraged the freeing of slaves and said that this was a great form of worship. One day, he witnessed that Abu Dharr had treated his slave harshly without being aware of it. He became very sad and asked Abu Dharr:

“O Abu Dharr! Do you still carry the traces of the time of ignorance before the coming of true religion?” He continued by saying: “Don’t treat the creatures of Allah harshly! If they do not fit your temperament, free them. Do not overburden them! If you overburden them, then, help them.”¹³¹

A man married his slave to his slave girl. Yet, later he wanted them to divorce. The slave complained to the Prophet, who said to the owner of the slave:

“The rights of marriage and divorce are not yours; do not interfere!”¹³²

131 Bukhârî, *Îmân* 22; Muslim, *Aymân* 38; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 124; Tirmidhî, *Birr* 29; Ibn Mâjah, *Adab* 10; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 36.

132 Ibn Mâjah, *Talak* 31; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VII, 360, 370; al-Daraqutni, *al-Sunan*, TV, 37; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, XI, 300.

The Messenger of Allah repeatedly asked his companions to forgive the mistakes of their slaves. Once a slave girl lost the money her owner gave her to buy flour. She could not return home because she was afraid of getting punished. She was crying on the road. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) had listened to her story, he gave her the same amount of money she had lost and took her back home because he was not sure about the treatment she would receive from her owners. He gave them advice about being compassionate. The companions, as a result of the advice they received, forgave the slave girl.

Another point that needs to be noted is that the reason Islam accepted the legitimacy of slavery was because of the existence of wars that were impossible to quell. One of the expected outcomes of wars was that there would be captives and slaves. Since Islam is distinguished by mercy and compassion, it encourages equal treatment of slaves and free people. Zayd, in spite of the fact that he was set free by the Prophet (peace be upon him), preferred to stay with the Prophet until his death and he refused to return home to his parents.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said,

“Give the person who is cooking for you his share! Let him sit next to you! Eat with him! If you cannot do that, take a piece of bread, dunk it in the plate and put it in his mouth and offer him food. Allah, the Most High, assigned them as servants and slaves for you. If he wished he could have made you their servants!”¹³³

133 For similar hadith See, Bukhârî, *Îmân* 22; Muslim, *Aymân* 38; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 124; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VIII, 36.

Since they were so afraid of violating human rights, most of the companions freed their slaves. Such actions exemplify how Islam provided humanity with a matchless standard of virtue.

The Conduct of the Prophet of Mercy with Women

In the pre-Islamic era, women had been treated in such a way that their womanly pride was offended. Concubines were seen as an instrument of amusement and were treated in a very degrading way. Fearing that they would grow up to become prostitutes, little girls were buried alive by their parents, without any mercy. With petrified hearts, even worse crimes were committed in order to protect them from calamity; all of this was the result of ignorance. Allah describes their behavior as follows:

“When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief. With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had received! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on.” (Qur’an, Nahl, 16/58-59)

By the order of Prophet Muhammad, women’s rights were established. Women became examples of modesty and virtue in society. The institution of motherhood gained honor. With the hadith that says “Paradise lies under the feet of the mothers,”¹³⁴ mothers earned the status they deserved by the courtesy of Prophet Muhammad.

134 Nasâi, *Jihâd* 6; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 429; Ibn Mâjah, *Jihâd* 12; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, 1,102; al-Daylami, *al-Firdaws*, II, 116.



The following example of the kindness extended by the Prophet to women is a beautiful one. "During a journey, a slave named Anjasha caused the camels to run by singing.¹³⁵ Prophet Muhammad, thinking of the possibility that the delicate bodies of the ladies on the camels might get hurt, said: O Anjasha! Mind the crystals! Mind the crystals!"¹³⁶

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in another hadith said; "In this world, women and nice fragrances are made pleasant for me while salat is made the light of my eyes."¹³⁷ Women and nice fragrances are important blessings of Allah in this world.

The importance of a righteous woman in a happy and peaceful religious household is clear. Although today's world has changed, traditionally she protected the family's wealth, organized the house, protected the progeny and protected the family's honor. It was principally the mother of the house who filled the family with happiness. The atmosphere of happiness was dependent on her smile. All worries of the children ended with a compassionate look from the mother. Is there a place more compassionate than the heart of the mother?

Mothers are the creatures who have been granted the highest amount of divine mercy from the Creator. The sovereignty of women begins when they become virtuous mothers. The hadith that states "Paradise lies under the feet

135 Camels like beautiful voices and singing. The herdsmen for the camels sing to race the camels.

136 Bukhârî *Adab* 95; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 117.

137 Nasai, *'Ishratu'n-nisa* 10; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 128,199.

of the mothers” is the highest compliment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to mothers.

Pleasant fragrance revives the soul with its delicacy. This is a pleasure even the angels enjoy. Salat is the divine union between the servant and the Lord. It is the ascension (*miraj*) for the soul.

In another hadith, The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; “The best among you is the one who treats his family the best.”¹³⁸ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, “Whatever a person spends for himself, his wife and his children is rewarded by Allah as his charity.”¹³⁹ The Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated in the above teachings that a healthy family can only be based on a foundation of love.

The Conduct of the Prophet of Mercy with Animals

The people of the pre-Islamic era treated animals without any pity or mercy. While still alive they used to cut off pieces of their flesh or their tails. They used to organize brutal animal fights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) put an end to these cruel scenes. The traditions prevalent today of cockfights, camel fights or bull fights originated in the pre-Islamic era.

One day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a donkey on the road whose face had been branded. He became very sorry and said; “May God’s punishment be upon the person

138 Tirmidhî, *Rada* 11; Ibn Mâjah, *Nikah* 50; Dârimî, *Nikah* 55; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 472.

139 Ibn Mâjah, *Ticârât* 1; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 279; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, X, 242; Al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr*, VIII, 239.



who branded it!"¹⁴⁰ He recommended that branding for the purpose of marking should be done in a place on an animal's body where it would not hurt the animal too much.

Once he saw a camel that was just skin and bones. He said to the owner of that camel; "Fear Allah for these speechless animals! Do not let them stay hungry!"¹⁴¹

Abdullah ibn Ja'far (may Allah be pleased with him) stated, "One day, The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to the garden of a companion. The camel in that garden moaned and tears began to fall from its eyes when it saw the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) approached the camel and patted its head. The camel stopped moaning. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) met the owner of the garden and asked him, 'Are you not afraid of Allah who entrusted you with this camel? It complained to me that you beat and torture it.' "



The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the difference between the states of the merciful and the states of merciless as follows:

"A sinful woman saw a dog in the desert which was licking the sand with its tongue out of thirst. She had pity on it and pulled some water from a well with her shoe and gave it to the dog. Allah forgave her sins because of that. Another woman did not care about her cat and left it hungry for a long time. She did not even let the cat eat the bugs on the

¹⁴⁰ Bukhârî, *Zabâih* 25.

¹⁴¹ Abû Dâwûd, *Jihâd* 47; Ibn Khuzaymah, *al-Sahih*, IV, 143.

soil. Finally, the cat died of hunger. This woman became one of the people of the Hellfire because of her cruelty!"¹⁴²

The Prophet (peace be upon him) transformed an ignorant society into a community that became part of the Age of Happiness (asr al-sa'adah). The people who treated their fellow human beings badly and who buried their daughters alive were becoming merciful and this extended to the animals as well. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) respected even the rights of little sparrows.

Abdurrahman, the son of Abdullah, reports,

"While we were on a journey with The Prophet (peace be upon him), we saw a sand grouse with its two chicks. We took the chicks and the bird began to fly over our heads. The Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately came and said: "Who has upset this bird by taking its chicks? Return them to their nest!"¹⁴³

Hunting is permissible in Islamic law. Nonetheless, the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned hunters that they should be careful about the breeding and the reproduction times of animals for the purpose of maintaining ecological balance. Hunting randomly, saddening the young by the death of their mothers or saddening the mothers by the loss of their young disturbs a compassionate and merciful heart.

These hadiths bring to light the fact that the mercy of a perfect believer must be expansive enough to encompass even the wild animals. Therefore, it is commanded in Islam that even harmful animals, like snakes and scorpions should

142 Bukhârî, *Anbiyâ* 54; Muslim, *Salâm* 151,154; *Birr* 133; Nasâi, *Kusuf* 14.

143 Abû Dâwûd, *Jihâd*, 122; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 404; Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 267; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, IV, 261.



be killed in one shot, with the express purpose of saving them from prolonged suffering. Is not the advice to be merciful even in the killing of harmful animals an example of peerless mercy?

In addition to ordering the Believers to be merciful towards animals, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not like animals to be cursed. For example, on the way to Batnubuwat for a military engagement, a man from the *Ansar* (Helpers) cursed a camel for going too slowly while riding a camel he shared with a friend. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told the *Ansari* to get off the camel and said to him, "Do not accompany us with the cursed camel any longer! Do not curse yourselves, your children or your property!"¹⁴⁴

This hadith exemplifies his boundlessness mercy in Islam.¹⁴⁵ Bayezid-i Bistami, who was known as the "Sultan of the Saints", became so sensitive and refined through practicing the principle of love for creatures for the sake of the Creator, that he felt their pain in his heart. The following story illustrates how deep his feelings were.

During a trip, he rested under a tree and after some time he stood up and went on his way. After having departed, he noticed that some ants from the place where he had rested

144 Muslim, *Zuhd* 74, Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XIII, 52.

145 Claude Farer wrote about the implications of Islamic morality which commands mercy and compassion to all creatures: "You can understand whether the neighborhood you are passing through is Muslim or Christian by looking at the attitude of the local dogs and cats. If the dogs and cats want to play with you and show closeness to you, you can say with confidence that it is a Muslim neighborhood; if they take a defensive position against you, it must be a non-Muslim neighborhood." This picture, which was provided by a Christian tourist, is an obvious reflection of love, mercy and compassion to creatures for the sake of the Creator.

were still on his bag. He returned to the same place and dropped the ants at the same point because he hated to take them away from their homes.

This exemplifies an internalization of the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are full of statements that include warnings and provide guidance on this issue. He said: "One who is deprived of mercy is deprived of all sorts of goodness."¹⁴⁶

The most distinctive quality of a Muslim is mercy. In the "basmalah", (Bismillahi'r-Rahmani'r-Rahim, which means, in the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate) which we repeat before any deed, Allah reminds us that He is the Most Merciful. Mercy is a deep personality trait of a true Muslim.

In the following incident, Fudayl ibn Iyad, who was one of the Friends of Allah, set an example of how a Muslim should feel in his heart.

They saw him crying and asked: "Why do you cry?" He responded:

"I cry because I feel sorry on behalf of a Muslim who wronged me! My sorrow comes from my concern that he will go to the Hellfire because of me."

These incidents are extremely refined manifestations of the inner manners of a heart that follows the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Show mercy to

146 Muslim, *Birr* 75; Abû Dâwûd, *Adah* 11; Ibn Mâjah, *Adah* 9; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 362; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 308.



those on the Earth so that those in the Heavens will show mercy to you!"¹⁴⁷

The Conduct of the Prophet of Mercy with Orphans

In one Hadith it is stated, "The best home is a home in which an orphan is well treated and the worst home is a home in which an orphan is mistreated."¹⁴⁸ In the Qur'an there are many verses concerning the good treatment of orphans. Allah, the Most High, commands us to be very sensitive towards the orphans.

"Treat not the orphan with harshness!" (Qur'an, Duha, 93/9)

"Whoever pats an orphan's head will be rewarded for every hair his hand touches."¹⁴⁹ The Prophet repeatedly emphasized the importance of our fulfillment of these important social responsibilities.

It is stated in another hadith, "I and those who treat their daughters and sons who are under their care well, will be together in Paradise."¹⁵⁰ While saying this, he put together his two fingers.

A complaint reached the Prophet (peace be upon him) about a certain person's harshness. As a cure, he recommended the following deed to that person:

147 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 16; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 277; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IX, 41.

148 Ibn Mâjah, *Adab* 6; al-Kissî, *Musnad Abd ibn Humayd*, I, 427; Bukhârî, *al-Ababul-murfa'd*, I, 61.

149 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 250, 265; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, III, 285, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, VIII, 202; Ibn Abî 'Âsim, *Kitab al-zuhd*, I, 21; Ibn al-Mubâarak, *Kitab al-zuhd*, I, 229, 230.

150 Bukhârî, *Adab* 24; Tirmidhî, *Birr* 15; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 265.

“Let him pat the head of the orphans and feed the poor!”¹⁵¹

Since Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was raised as an orphan, having been an orphan gained him status and honor in this world and the next. The poet, Mehmed Aslan, describes nicely the feeling of an orphan:

*The owner of the orphan is Allah,
So it is a sin to hurt the orphans.
Do not think that an orphan is weak;
His tears are his weapon!*

The Prophet’s Advice about the Rights of Neighbors

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) urged in his teachings to respect the rights of one’s neighbors. In a hadith he has said, “Gabriel repeatedly gave me advice about the rights of the neighbors to such an extent that I was led to conjecture that they will take a share from my legacy when I die.”¹⁵²

In another hadith, it is stated that, “Non-Muslim neighbors have one right. Muslim neighbors have two rights. The neighbor who is both a Muslim and a relative has three rights.”¹⁵³ The rights of the neighbors include not looking at their windows, not disturbing them with the smell of cooking, nor performing an action that they may dislike.

151 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, II, 263, 387; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IV, 60.

152 Bukhari, *Adah* 28; Muslim, *Birr* 140; Abu Dawud, *Adah* 123; Ibn Majah, *Adah* 4; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 85, 160, 259.

153 Abu Bakr al-Qurashi, *Makarim al-akhlaq*, I, 105; Hannad al-Kufi, *al-Zuhd*, II, 504; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, VII, 84.



Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, who was from among the poor of the companions said, "The Prophet ordered me to put more water in my food so that I could offer some to my neighbor."¹⁵⁴ Abu Dharr was among the needy of the companions. Since he did not have extra food, the only way he could increase his meal was by adding extra water to it. This hadith demonstrates that even poverty is not an excuse for not respecting the rights of neighbors.

The following hadith is yet another example of how careful the companions were in respecting the rights of neighbors. Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated the following event. "There were seven households, all of which were poor. One sent a sheep's head as food to one of the families. The chief of the household thought that his neighbor needed it more and sent it to them. The second neighbor thought the same way and sent it to the third neighbor. The other neighbors also thought the same way and sent the sheep's head to the next neighbor until it eventually returned to the first household."¹⁵⁵



The mercy of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) extended even to those who had passed away. The most important concern in reference to those who had passed away is the rights of those whom the deceased were unable to pay while they were still alive. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) always asked before funeral prayers if the deceased had debts. If he or she had unpaid

154 Ibn Majah, *At'imah* 58 ; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, IV, 54.

155 al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 526; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Musanaf*, VII, 214; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, III, 259 (See also interpret of ayah in the Sûrah of al-Hashr, 59/9).

debts, he postponed the funeral prayers until these debts were paid off.¹⁵⁶

Because he was the prophet of mercy and compassion, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was extremely concerned about preventing a person from entering his grave with debts.

The Prophet's Conduct with Criminals and Captives of War

In Islam, the cause of a crime is first sought and an extreme effort is made to reform the criminal's personality. Punishment in Islamic law is like the punishment parents give to their children. The purpose of punishing the criminal is not to isolate him but rather to assist him in returning to society.

A poor man called Abbad ibn Shurahbil stole some dates from a garden, putting some of the dates in his pocket. At that time, the owner of the garden caught him and beat him. Abbad, who was very much hurt by the incident, went to the Prophet to complain. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) called the owner of the garden and said to him;

"Do not you know he is uneducated? He does not know what he is doing. Did you give him advice? Moreover, he was hungry; you should have fed him."¹⁵⁷ The owner of the garden became so upset with what he did that he gave dates to Abbad along with two sacks of wheat.

156 Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XI, 192; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 29.

157 Nasâi, *Adab al-qadâ* 21: Abû Dâwûd, *Jihâd* 85.



These statements are not intended to protect robbers, but rather to cure the social problems that give rise to theft. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated clearly that he would cut off the hand of his daughter as a punishment if she were to commit burglary.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was particularly compassionate with captives of war. He said to his companions:

“They are your brothers, offer them what you eat and drink!”¹⁵⁸

His Behavior towards Enemies and non-Muslims

Abu Basra al-Ghifari, when describing his life prior to entering Islam, commented, “I came to Medina and was hosted by the Prophet (peace be upon him). On that evening, I drank the milk of seven goats. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not say anything about my roughness. On that night he went to sleep hungry without showing any sign of displeasure or anger. Witnessing this high morality, I acted more intelligently and embraced Islam...”

Since Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a mercy to the world, his compassion and care encompass all creatures. One day, he was asked to pray to condemn some enemies. In response, he said, “I was not sent to this world for condemnation; I have been sent as a Prophet of Mercy.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Muslim, *Aymân* 36-38.

¹⁵⁹ Muslim, *Fadâil* 126; Tirmidhî, *Da'awat* 118.

When he went to Taif, the ignorant polytheists and arrogant people of the city stoned him. The Archangel Gabriel (peace be upon him) came to him and asked, "Shall I bring together these two mountains and destroy the people of Taif who are living in between?" He was not pleased by this suggestion and made a special prayer for this society who stoned him: "O my Lord! Please give right guidance to these people! I ask for a Muslim progeny from their lineage."¹⁶⁰ As a result of his prayer, the people of Taif ultimately accepted Islam.

The Forgiveness of the Prophet

Allah likes to forgive. He has promised to forgive the sins of humans if they sincerely repent. In the Qur'an, he has also asked his servants to be forgiving because He is oft-forgiving.

The condition for Allah's forgiveness is to feel remorse, to obey the orders of Allah, and to stay away from what He has prohibited. The best examples of forgiveness are found in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He forgave Hind, who bit the liver of his uncle Hamza at the Battle of Uhud. During the conquering of Mecca after she became a Muslim, Hind came from behind the Prophet and asked,

"O Messenger of Allah, do you recognize me?"

Prophet Muhammad, five years after Uhud, indicated that he still remembered her shout of joy after Hamza was martyred.

"How can I forget that shout?"

160 Bukhârî, *Badul-khalq* 7; Muslim, *Jihâd* 111; Nasâî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IV, 405; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, XIV, 516.



Yet, he forgave her for the sake of the *Kalima-i Tawhid*, which she uttered on entering Islam.

On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad said to the people of Mecca who were waiting with great anxiety after being conquered:

“O, Community of Quraysh! What do you expect that I will do to you?”

The Qurayshites said,

“We expect that you will forgive us. You are a brother filled with kindness and mercy. You are also the son of a brother who had kindness and mercy...”

Thereupon, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“I say to you what Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) said to his brothers: This day, no reproach be cast on you. May Allah forgive you. You may go. You are free.”¹⁶¹

In another address, he said, “Today is the day of mercy. Today is the day Allah increased the power of Islam by the Qurayshites.”

One of the fiercest enemies of Islam in Mecca was Abu Jahl, which literally means “father of ignorance.” His son Ikrima was also a leading enemy of Islam. Ikrima escaped to Yemen when Mecca was conquered. His wife became a Muslim and later brought him to the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who met him with pleasure and said to him:

161 Nasâi, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, VI, 382; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IX, 118; al-Rabi' ibn Habîb, *Musnad al Rabi'*, I, 170; Tahâwî, *Shark Ma'ânî al-Âthâr*, III, 325.

“O the running cavalry! Welcome!” He forgave him without even reminding him of his wrongdoings against Muslims.¹⁶²

Habir ibn Aswad was yet another enemy of Islam. During the migration of the Prophet’s daughter Zainab from Mecca to Medina, he intentionally kicked her while she was riding a camel and caused her to fall to the ground. She was pregnant at the time. She was heavily injured and lost the baby. Habir ibn Aswad committed many other crimes like that. After Mecca was conquered he wanted to escape but could not. He accepted Islam and came to the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who then forgave him.¹⁶³

The Prophet (peace be upon him) frequently said, “O my Lord! Forgive my people for they know not!”¹⁶⁴

A man called Hamamah accepted Islam and cut his relations with the polytheist Meccans. The Meccans were shocked by his decision and approached the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask the man to maintain his trade with them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Hamamah a letter and asked him to continue his trade with the Quraysh. Although the polytheists had held the Muslims under siege for three years and had tortured them by letting them remain hungry, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) nevertheless forgave them. They all became Muslims when confronted with such endless forgiveness.

One day, a group of eighty people came to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him), but all of them were caught.

162 Ibn Hagar al-‘Asqalânî, *al-Isâbah*, IV, 538.

163 Ibn Hagar al-‘Asqalânî, *al-Isâbah*, VI, 524-527; Ibn AbdilBarr, *al-Isî‘ab*, IV, 1536.

164 Ibn Mâjah, *Manâsik* 56; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 14.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), forgave each of them as well.

After Khaybar was conquered, a woman offered some food that was poisoned to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who noticed the poison after the first bite. The Jewish woman confessed her plot, but the Prophet forgave her.¹⁶⁵ In the Qur'an, it is stated that one should *"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant."* (Qur'an, Araf, 7/199)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) represented to perfection the best behavior for humans with his sincere, simple and humble conduct with people. His conduct did not emanate from him superficially or unintentionally, but rather emerged from the depth of his soul.

Adiyy ibn Khatim told the following story:

There was a time, when I had not embraced Islam. I went to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him). He invited me to his home. On the way, an old woman stopped him. The Messenger of Allah waited for a long time until the woman had finished what she had to say. I said to myself, 'By God! He is not a king.' "

Then we went to his home. He gave me a mat made from skin filled with dry leaves and said to me:

"Please sit on this." I insisted:

"Please you sit on it." But he repeated: "You sit!"

165 Bukhârî, *Tibb* 55; Muslim, *Salam* 43; Abû Dâwûd, *Diyyat* 6; Ibn Mâjah, *Tibb* 45; Dârimî, *Muqaddimah* 11; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 451.

I sat on the mat because I did not want to refuse his offer. He sat on the ground. This time, I said to myself:

“By God! This is not something a king can do.” Then we started conversing. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told me that I belonged to the Rakusi¹⁶⁶ sect, and although it was forbidden according to my faith, I collected one fourth of the people’s income as taxes. I was shocked. Immediately, I realized that he was a Prophet because he knew hidden secrets.¹⁶⁷

All these incidents display with extreme clarity the high character of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a living example of the moral principles expressed in the Qur’an. He forgave all the wrong done against him. Yet, as far as the crimes committed against the members of public were concerned, he acted with utmost objectivity and care to fulfill the orders of Allah. Usamah, an outstanding companion, interceded on behalf of a woman who committed theft. The woman was from a noble family. Usamah asked him to forgive her. The color of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) face faded with sadness and he responded with a dire voice, “I would cut off the hand of even my own daughter Fatima in order to punish her if she became involved in theft.”¹⁶⁸

166 A sect which was composed of elements from Christianity and the Sabii religion.

167 Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyahh*, II, 580; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 379; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VI, 360; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, VII, 342.

168 Bukhârî, *Hudûd* 12; Muslim, *Hudûd* 9; Nasâî, *Kat’us-sariq* 12; Abû Dâwûd, *Hudûd* 4; Ibn Mâjah, *Hudûd* 6; Dârimî, *Hudûd* 5; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 162



The Generosity of the Prophet

Ibn Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with him), related the generosity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as follows: "The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of all people. His generosity increased more in Ramadan. He never said "no" to someone who asked for something from him!"¹⁶⁹

One of the most beautiful characteristics of the Prophet was to refrain from denying someone who asked for something. If there were nothing to offer, he would smile in order to bring pleasure. The following incident is an excellent example:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) described himself only as an officer of distribution and he stressed that everything was provided by Allah. One day a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him). When he saw the goats of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he asked for a goat. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) gave him all his goats. When the man returned to his tribe he told them the following: "Muhammad is so generous that he is not afraid of poverty!"¹⁷⁰

Another person came to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked for something. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not have anything to give to him. He suggested that the man get a loan and promised him that he would pay the loan on the man's behalf.

169 Bukhârî, *Bad' al-wahy* 5-6; Nasâî, *Siyâm* 2; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 288, 363; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, VIII, 225.

170 Muslim, *Fadâil* 57; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, III, 107, 259; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, X, 354; Ibn Khuzaymah, *al-Sahîh*, IV, 70.

Similar to his ancestor Abraham (peace be upon him), he never had a meal by himself without guests. He used to pay the debts of the dead or had others pay. He did not offer funeral prayers before closing the debt. He said:

“A generous person is close to Allah, to Paradise and to the people; but he is far from the Hellfire. On the contrary, a stingy person is far from Allah, from Paradise and from the people, while he is close to the Hellfire.”¹⁷¹

In another hadith, he is reported to have said, “A true Believer is never characterized by the following two qualities: stinginess or immorality.”¹⁷²

The Generosity of the Companions

The companions competed with each other to emulate the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The following examples illustrate this race for virtue.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) told the following story.

“One day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded us to give charity. At that time, I had some money with me. I thought to myself that this was the day to surpass Abu Bakr in good deeds and presented half of my money to the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked me:

‘What did you leave to your family?’

I answered:

171 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 40; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, III, 27; al-Ismaîlî, *Mu'jam*, III, 733; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Imân*, VII, 428, 429.

172 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 41; al-Tayalisi, *al-Musnad*, I, 293; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, I, 211.



‘The same amount I brought to you.’

Then, Abu Bakr came. He brought all his money. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him, “O Abu Bakr! What did you leave for your family?”

He responded by saying, “I left them Allah and the Prophet!”

After hearing his answer, I said to myself, “I will never be able to surpass Abu Bakr, (may Allah be pleased with him), in any matter.”¹⁷³

Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) were perfect heirs to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in refusing to incline towards luxury and the splendor of this world. Their life style surprised the emperors of Iran and Byzantium.

No doubt, their good conduct was also reflected in the life of other companions as well. For instance, one day, a beggar came to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked for something. Ali said to his sons Hasan and Husayn;

“Go to your mother and bring the six dirhams we have.” They went home and brought the six dirhams they had and gave them to their father who in turn gave them to the beggar. Yet, at the time, they needed that money. Fatima had been planning to buy flour with that money.

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) returned home. Immediately after he stepped into his house, a man who had wanted to sell his camel arrived. He said he would sell

173 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 16; Abû Dâwûd, *Zakat* 40; Dârimî, *Zakât* 26; Al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1,574; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan*, TV, 180; al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, I, 263, 394.

it for forty dirhams and was ready to receive the payment later. He tied the camel in the garden and went on. Soon after, a man appeared and expressed his willingness to buy the camel for two hundred dirhams. He instantly paid the money and left with the camel.

Ali gave forty dirhams to the first owner of the camel and the rest of the money to Fatima. He also said to her, "This is the promise of Allah through his Prophet: 'Whoever does a good deed, he will receive ten times its value as reward.' We gave ten dirhams and Allah gave us back ten times more."

The following incident, related by Huzayfa, is significant, for it reflects the altruism of the companions:

"During the battle of Yarmuk, after the intensity of the conflict had subsided, and the injured Muslims were dying on the extremely hot sand, I summoned my energy and started to look for Harith, my uncle's son. After walking among the wounded soldiers who were taking their last breaths, I found him. Unfortunately, Harith was in a sea of blood and could barely speak even with the movement of his eyes. I showed him the leather water-bottle which I carried and asked him, "Do you want some water?"

His lips were dry from the hot weather and probably he wished to have some water. It seemed as if he was trying to tell me his painful situation by the movement of his eyes. I opened the leather water bottle and was ready to give him some water. Suddenly Ikrima's voice was heard in the distance. "Water!... Water!... Please a drop of water!"

When the son of my uncle heard this cry, he indicated with the movements of his eyes to take the water to him.



I rushed to Ikrima, bypassing the martyrs who were lying in the hot sand. Finally, I reached Ikrima and was ready to place the bottle of water in his hand. Suddenly, we heard the moaning of Iyash:

“Please give me a drop of water! For God’s sake, a drop of water!”

When Ikrima heard his cry for water, he indicated with the movement of his hand to take the water to Iyash. Like Harith, he had refused to drink. When I found Iyash after searching for him among the wounded martyrs, I heard his last words. He was saying,

“O Allah! We have not spared our lives in the cause of faith. Do not spare from us the level of martyrdom. Forgive our mistakes!”

He was about to become a martyr. He saw the water bottle I brought but he did not have time to drink because he could barely finish uttering the *Kalima-i Shadah* (The formula which states: I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah; I also bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger).

I ran back immediately to Ikrima and while trying to offer him water, I realized that he had become a martyr. I ran to the son of my uncle, Harith. Unfortunately, his soul had also returned to Allah. Painfully, a bottle of water had been left full among the three martyrs.”

Huzayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) related his state of mind at the time as follows: “I came across many incidents in my life, but none of them influenced me as much as this event. Their extremely altruistic, caring and compassionate relationship, although they were not the

relatives of each other, left deep traces of admiration in my memory.”¹⁷⁴

The Prophet’s Sincerity, Honesty and Integrity

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) felt extreme pity for people who did not know what was right from what was wrong, who were not familiar with the orders and prohibitions of Allah. As he went from door to door to teach the religion of Allah, at times, the doors were shut in his face. Yet he did not resent this misbehavior against him as much as he felt sorrow for people’s ignorance.

To these people, he said, “*No reward do I ask of you for this (Qur’an); Nor am I a pretender!*” (Qur’an, Sad, 38/86)

No one reached the level of honesty and integrity practiced by the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was an orphan. He was introduced to trade by his uncle Abu Talib. His honesty and integrity were acknowledged by everyone, which earned him the honorary title, al-Amin, the trustworthy. Everyone in the community, both poor and rich alike called him al-Amin. The noble woman of Mecca, Khadija, admired his honesty and asked his hand in marriage. Our mother Khadija later served as his most vital supporter. When the first revelation came, she offered moral support to the Prophet (peace be upon him). She always stood at his side and comforted him during dangerous times.

174 al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 270; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr*, III, 259; al-Mizzî, *Tahthîb al-Kamâl*, V, 301; Ibn al-Mubâarak, *al-Zuhd*, 1,185; al-Qurtubî, *Tafsîr*, XVIII, 28.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) led a pure life. Even those who refused to accept his message out of arrogance, acknowledged his good qualities.

Since Islam first emerged fourteen centuries ago, there is no one who has not acknowledged his integrity and his heart. Even those in the Jewish community, who had been the enemies of Islam, came to him when they had a disagreement among themselves. Rasullullah (peace be upon him) solved their conflicts. He was just and fair towards Christians and Jews, alike.

He gave the following advice to Ali about justice:

“Never judge before you listen to both parties! You can give a correct judgment only after listening to both sides!”¹⁷⁵

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) decided to emigrate from Mecca to Medina, he made Ali his deputy to return the jewelry that had been entrusted to him.¹⁷⁶

The Bashfulness of the Prophet

According to the description of his companions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was more bashful than a young girl who covered herself from unwanted eyes. He never spoke with a loud voice. When he passed by others, he used to do so slowly and with a smile on his face. When he heard displeasing talk, he never said anything in front of the people. Nevertheless, his face reflected his feelings and his thoughts. Thus, people around him were very careful about their conduct when they were near him. He never laughed

¹⁷⁵ Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 90.

¹⁷⁶ Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, I, 482; Ibn al-Kathir, *al-Bidâyah van-nihâyah*, II, 176.

loudly because of his modesty. The most he did was only to smile. In a hadith it is stated that,

“Bashfulness is from faith. Bashful people will be in Paradise! Shamelessness arises from the hardness of heart. Those with hardened hearts will go to the Hellfire.”¹⁷⁷

Another hadith states:

“Faith and modesty are together. When one leaves, the other departs, too.”¹⁷⁸

“Rude talk does not bring anything except shame! Modesty and decency decorate wherever they may be.”¹⁷⁹

Real modesty is gained by “remembering death”, which is a means for the removal from the heart of love for this world. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) continuously advised his companions to extend to Allah the profound respect He deserves. Once, they said that they thanked Allah modestly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that real modesty involves cleaning all one’s organs from prohibited actions and remembering death. Next, he stated that only those who truly desire the next world abandon their love for this world. And, only they show true modesty of conduct towards Allah.¹⁸⁰

177 Bukhârî, *Îmân* 16; Muslim, *Îmân* 57-59; Abû Dâwûd, *Sunnah* 14; Tirmidhî, *Îmân* 7; Nasâî, *Îmân* 16; Ibn Mâjah, *Zuhd* 17; Muwatta, *Husn al-Khuluq* 10; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 56, 147.

178 al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VIII, 174 and same book IV, 374; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu’ab al-Îmân*, VI, 140.

179 Muslim, *Birr* 78; Abû Dâwûd, *Jihâd* 1.

180 Tirmidhî, *Sifatu’l-Qiyamah* 24; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 387; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 359; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, VII, 77; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VII, 226.



The Altruism of the Prophet

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not only felt sorry for the suffering of the people, but he painstakingly worked for their success. This quality is mentioned in the Qur'an.

"Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves; it grieves him that you should suffer; ardently anxious is he over you; to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." (Qur'an, Tawba, 9/128) In this verse, Allah the Most High honored his Messenger by assigning him two of His own attributes, *Rauf* and *Rahim*, meaning most kind and merciful, respectively.

He always struggled for the success of his people and he was happy and tranquil whenever he saw them making progress towards their own self-improvement and integrity.



He was not like any other leader who wished good for his community. On the contrary, he was a guide who supported his community with all the means at his disposal. Once a companion asked how to decide whether his situation was good or bad. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) told him the following:

*"Whoever aims to gain worldly profit through worship, which is normally performed for reward in Paradise, will achieve nothing in the Hereafter."*¹⁸¹

He was a mercy, embracing all of humanity with his actions, speeches and morality. He was their guide. He faced the most challenging difficulties and trials in the cause of

181 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 134; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 32; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 346; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, V, 334.

true religion. He fulfilled the divine task he was assigned in a perfect way. He was so anxious and patient in doing so, that at times, revelation came to warn him not to let himself perish on this path.

The high level of virtue displayed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the happiness of humanity is expressed in the following verse in the Qur'an. *"It may be you will kill yourself with grief, that they do not become Believers."* (Qur'an, Shu'ara, 42/3)

This verse demonstrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted, out of his mercy and compassion, for all of humanity to believe in Allah, and thus save themselves from the Hellfire.

When Hamza heard that Abu Jahl had attacked the Prophet (peace be upon him), he also attacked Abu Jahl, and said to the Prophet, "O Muhammad! Be happy! I took your revenge from Abu Jahl..." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him:

"I have nothing to do with revenge! I will be happy if you accept Islam." Hamza realized the wisdom in the answer and embraced Islam.¹⁸²

His noble conduct and sublime morality had nothing to do with personal gain, materialistic motives or with feelings of revenge. On examination we may see that the Prophet (peace be upon him) never sought revenge throughout his life.¹⁸³

182 Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, I, 292; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 213; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, III, 139; Ibn al-Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah van-nihâyah*, II, 32.

183 al-Bukhârî, *Manâqib* 23; Muslim, *Fadâil* 77; Abû Dâwûd, *Adab* 4; Muwatta, *Husnul-khuluq* 2; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 130,223.



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never openly corrected a companion for a mistake he made. Instead he used to say, "What is happening to me that is causing me to see you doing this."¹⁸⁴

He attributed errors of vision to himself without attributing the mistake to the person he was talking to. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who took extraordinary measures to avoid breaking the heart of his companions, was a monument of mercy. These qualities were reflected both in his deeds and in his speeches. As an example, let us contemplate on the following speech:

"O Believers! May Allah keep you secure! May He watch after you! May He protect you! May He help you! May He elevate you! May He guide you! May He keep you under His own guard! May He keep you away from all sorts of bad luck! And May He protect your religion for you!"¹⁸⁵

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent as a mercy to the worlds. He was a manifestation of the Divine Names, *al-Ghafur* and *al-Rahman* that is the Most Forgiving and the Most Compassionate. He felt sorry for people who denied his message and prayed that they would be saved from the Hellfire. As a result, a divine warning came:

"Yet it may be, if they believe not in this statement, that thou (Muhammad) wilt torment thy soul with grief over their footsteps." (Qur'an, Kahf, 18/6)

184 Bukhârî, *Aymân* 3; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, IV, 534; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 515.

185 al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad*, V, 395; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, IV, 208; Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahânî, *Hilyah ai-Awliyâ*, IV, 168; al-Bağdâdî, *Muwaddih*, II, 147.

His companions spread with love and joy to remote areas the knowledge, blessings, virtue and spiritual qualities gained through association with him. This was an example of the principle of “love the creature for the sake of the Creator.”

Everyone was granted a share of his high character and generosity. His benevolence and mercy were like a great river that spread over and fed all lands without discrimination. No one was left hungry, thirsty or alone while around him.

His Loyalty

Keeping a promise is a means for the attainment of salvation from the Hellfire; it is also a quality of prophets and virtuous people. With this quality, life acquires direction and order. It is a measure of humanity and a criterion for judging individuals and nations. People attain happiness to the extent that they respect it.

Living at the zenith of loyalty, the Prophet (peace be upon him) served in this regard as a perfect example for humanity. Regarding this, Aishah reiterated the following story.

“Once an old woman came to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him). They had a warm conversation. After the old woman left, I asked him:

“O Prophet! You showed so much interest in that old woman! I am curious, who was she?” He said, “She is someone who used to visit us when Khadija was alive. Know that “loyalty comes from faith.”¹⁸⁶

186 al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 62; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, II, 102; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu'ab al-Îmân*, VI, 517.



A group came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the incident of Hunayn. They wanted freedom for the captives of war. One of them said, "O Muhammad! Our tribe has your milk-mothers and milk-sisters!"

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) responded with great loyalty, "I free all the captives that belong to me and the sons of Abdulmuttalib."

The Immigrants and the Helpers who saw this refined behavior followed his action by saying, "We also free our captives for the sake of the Prophet!"

As a result, on that day, thousands of captives were freed without any ransom.¹⁸⁷ This was a gesture of gratitude and the loyalty to the milk he had been given as a child. It is an excellent lesson for an oppressive nation. Unfortunately, humans quickly forget the favors whose traces fade in the memory. Usually, "LOYALTY" exists only as a word in the dictionary.

During his final illness, the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to the Masjid, went up to the pulpit, and said, "O Immigrants! Treat the Helpers kindly because the population is increasing, but their number is still the same: They have served as a shelter for me. Treat the good ones among them with goodness, and forgive the mistakes of the wrongdoers."

The loyalty the Prophet (peace be upon him) displayed to the Helpers for the favors he received is an excellent example for all of us. His life is full of many examples of loyalty. For instance, before the Hijrah, while his enemies

187 Bukhârî, *al-Târikh al-sagîr*, I, 5; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, V, 271; Abû Bakr al-Qurashî, *Makârim al-akhilâq*, 1, 116.

were planning how to kill him, he was planning how to return the jewelry entrusted to him.

On the day of Uhud, he had two companions who were good friends in life buried in the same grave and then said, "This is because they were sincere friends in this world."¹⁸⁸

The matchless morality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reflected in the lives and relations of his companions, based on the love they had for one another. Uthman was sent to Mecca on the day of Hudaybiya. He told the polytheists in Mecca that the Prophet (peace be upon him) came only to make pilgrimage to the Kaba. They refused this appeal, but agreed to allow Uthman to make the pilgrimage. However, Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) rejected this offer and said:

"I cannot perform the pilgrimage if the Prophet is not allowed to do so!.. I cannot stay where the Prophet is not accepted..."

Exactly at this time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was accepting the bay'ah of the companions. Since Uthman was not there, in his place, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put one of his hands over the other and said:

"O my Lord! This bay'ah is for Uthman! Verily, he is a servant of your Messenger."¹⁸⁹

188 Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, VII, 367; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, V, 299; Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, II, 98.

189 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 324; Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Tamhîd*, XII, 148; Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, II, 315; Ibnul-Kathîr, *al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, II, 169.



In essence, becoming a true believer is a function of the degree to which we are able to emulate the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a vehicle for many miracles. Also, he assisted humans in the cultivation of their personalities. New qualities were thus infused into the community, qualities that would bring beauty and honor to culture and civilization. This revolutionary change in the character of humans under the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is an immense miracle. Good words, refined behavior and exemplary actions served as causes for this enrichment of civilization. At the origin of all stands the exemplary actions, speeches and practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In the balance he established between opposite aspects of life, no shortcoming remained. For instance, he balanced work for this world with work for the Hereafter. Likewise, he balanced ascetic tendencies with those directed toward the satisfaction of desires. It is impossible to find another personality, in all of human history, which is comparable to him.

In social history, it is possible to encounter great figures who had outstanding abilities in different fields of life. Generally, their abilities are only limited to one field. The personality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) however, included outstanding qualities in all realms of life.

The following moral principles, which were set by the Prophet (peace be upon him), express the higher standard of his life. According to the Prophet (peace be upon him),

“My Lord commanded nine things:

1. Fear Allah whether you are alone or in the crowd.
2. Be just and fair whether you are pleased or angry.
3. Live moderately whether you are rich or poor.
4. Maintain your relations with your relatives even if they do not do the same.
5. Give to he who deprives you.
6. Forgive he who wrongs you.
7. Contemplate while you are silent.
8. Mention Allah when you speak.
9. Take lessons when you look.”¹⁹⁰

On his sword, the following was written: “Forgive the one who wronged you; help your relatives even if they do not care about you; respond with goodness to the one who harmed you; say the truth even if it is against your interest.”¹⁹¹

Huzayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“None of you should be a parasite. One type of individual says, “My reactions depend on those around me. If they treat me nicely, I also treat them nicely; if they mistreat me, I mistreat them as well.” Instead, you should take the following as your principle. When they treat you

190 Nasâi, *Sahw* 62; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 148; Ibn Abî Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, VI, 45; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, V, 328.

191 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 148; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 563; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, XVII, 269; al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, X, 235.



nicely, you also treat them nicely; when they mistreat you, you do not act as they have.”¹⁹²

He also said, “Allah dislikes three things for you:

1. Gossiping,
2. Being a spendthrift,
3. Questioning unnecessarily.”¹⁹³

Other advice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) includes, “Do not laugh at your brother’s trouble because Allah, the Most High, may save him from that trouble and put you in his place.”¹⁹⁴

Those who study the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will see that he has always been the Prophet of mercy and compassion. He never condemned anyone and he raised excellent people in an oppressive society. For example, the only thing he did, when he was stoned in Taif, was to ask Allah to give them guidance.¹⁹⁵ When he entered the Ka’bah, after ten years of adversity from the people of Mecca, he showed humility and tolerance. He did not even take the key of the Ka’bah from Uthman ibn Talha, who had had it for a long time. He said, “Today is the day of kindness and loyalty.”¹⁹⁶

192 Tirmidhî, *Birr* 62; (Some version of this hadith was narrated from Abdullah ibn Mas’ûd as *mawkûf* hadith for example; al-Tabaranî, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr*, IX, 152; Abû Nu’aym al-Isbahânî, *Hilyah al-Awliyâ*, I, 137; Ibn al-Jawzî, *Safwat-us-safwah*, 1,421)

193 Bukhârî, *Zakât* 53; Muslim, *Akdiyah* 12, 13; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 327, 360; Ibn Khuzaymah, *al-Sahih*, I, 10.

194 Tirmidhî, *Qiyamah* 54; al-Tabarânî, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, IV, 111; al-Qudâi, *Musnad al-Shihâb*, II, 77; al-Bayhaqî, *Shu’ab al-Îmân*, V, 315.

195 Bukhârî, *Bad al-khalq* 7; Muslim, *Jihâd* 111; Nasâi, *al-Sunan al-Kubrâ*, IV, 405; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, XIV, 516.

196 Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, II, 412; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, II, 300.

He is the only sultan who did not leave an heir in his place. He said, “We, the Prophets, do not bequeath; whatever we leave is charity for all Muslims.”¹⁹⁷ The only legacy he left for his Ummah was his perfect example.



197 Bukhârî, *Khumus* 1; Muslim, *Jihâd* 54; Abû Dâwûd, *Îmârah* 19; Tirmidhî, *Siyar* 44; Nasâî, *Fay'* 9; Muwatta, *Kalâm* 27; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 4.





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“Piety is kindness.” (Hadith, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi)



In creation, only humans have a share in all the attributes of Allah - with the exception of eternity. Along with this, as a result of His wisdom, Allah has equipped humans with the potential for righteousness as well as corruption. He thus has made humans capable of benevolence and evil.

From this perspective, the purpose of religion is to restrain the animal desires of the human soul, while raising to perfection the good qualities. Yet, for this goal to be realized, humanity needs a perfect as well as a concrete example to emulate. One of the reasons prophets have been sent is to meet this need for a perfect example follow.

Allah, the Most High, says in the Qur'an: *"We sent not a Messenger but to be obeyed, in accordance with the leave of Allah..."* (Qur'an, Nisa, 4/64)

This quality reached its peak in Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him), which is well illustrated in the following verse of the Qur'an: *"You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah*



an excellent example for those whose hope is in Allah and in the Final Day, and who frequently remember Him.” (Qur’an, Ahzab, 33/21)

The only prophet in history whose life is recorded in the most minute detail is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). His words, deeds and feelings, which have been ceaselessly recorded, have taken their place in history as pages of great honor and significance. His life will serve as an example to humanity until the last day. The following verse bears witness to this fact: *“And surely you have sublime morals.”* (Qur’an, Qalam, 68/4)

The blessed personality and life of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) constitute that matchless zenith of perfect human conduct needed for the spiritual fulfillment of humanity. Allah, the Most High, created him for this purpose for all people. For this reason, He had him pass through all situations in life, from being a powerless orphan to being prophet and president of state. The wisdom behind this life path is that all people, regardless of their place in life, can find for themselves an ideal example of conduct for application in their lives to the extent of their ability and power.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), with his outstanding personality, was chosen as the last prophet for all humanity. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) might come from his progeny. Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) gave good tidings of his coming, and the Prophet’s mother, Aminah, saw him in a dream before his birth. He was raised directly under the supervision of Allah, ornamented by the

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most beautiful traits of high character and chosen as the most trustworthy guide for humanity.

It is thus necessary for humanity in these times to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to obtain happiness in this world and the Hereafter. Even attaining the love of Allah depends on following him, as Allah the Most High has explained in the following verse: *"Say, 'if you do love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'*" (Qur'an, Al-i Imran, 3/31)

Based on this fact, only those fortunate souls who adopt and internalize the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) can earn the sublime love of Allah.

The first and the most important outcome of loyalty to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), is to learn the love of Allah. Furthermore, following in the footsteps of the best example of morality and conduct results in sharing in his perfection. Since his is the best morality and conduct, those who follow him and love him will also become excellent. The inner worlds of those who love him reach higher levels, higher even than the angels. Their family lives reflect life in Paradise. A society based on the Prophet's example gains peace and tranquility with breezes blowing through it from the Age of Happiness (*asr al-sa'adah*). They taste the authentic joy of closeness to Allah in their worship. If everyone, whether rich or poor, supervisor or subordinate, ruler or ruled, strong or weak, were to live as a servant of Allah implementing His orders, this would eventually bring about an exceptional balance in society.

For instance, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), was given the duty of guiding humanity,



many who had led immoral and shameful lives became outstandingly virtuous and exceptional personalities through their new education. Consequently, an evil period ended and a new righteous period began. Slaves gained the dignity and honor of being human and many rulers became just and virtuous through learning about how to be a servant of Allah. The words of Najashi, then the Christian king of Abyssinia, are significant:

“I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is the one whose coming had been foretold by Jesus (peace be upon him). I would go and carry his shoes if I did not have the responsibilities I currently have towards my people.”¹⁹⁸

As people saw the happiness and salvation in both worlds offered to them, they rushed to him as a river rushes to the sea. This was a gift from Allah, as explained in the following verse of the Qur'an:

“When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory, And thou dost see the people enter Allah’s Religion in crowds, Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: For He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy).” (Qur'an, Nasr, 110/1-3)

Those who followed his path led righteous, decent, peaceful and blessed lives, even when facing challenges and difficulties. They became like roses growing among countless wild bushes. Their happiness in the Hereafter is to be even greater. This is because there the Great Intercession (*Shafa'ah 'Uzmaa*) of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) will take place on behalf of the sinners from the followers of the

198 Abû Dâwûd, *Janâiz* 62; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 461; Abu 'Uthman al-Khorasânî, *Kitâb al-Sunan*, II, 228.

previous prophets as well as those sinners from his own community, the Ummah. The following hadith explains how this event is to unfold:

“I will be the first one to be resurrected among people. When humanity comes to the Divine presence, I will be their spokesman. As they lose hope of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, I will give them good tidings. I will carry the Banner of Praise (*liva al-hamd*). I am the most blessed human to approach Allah, yet I do not express this out of self-pride.”¹⁹⁹

The Prophet of Mercy will intercede for the sinners on the Day of Judgment and his intercession will be accepted by Allah. The following Qur’anic verse demonstrates that his intercession on behalf of believers is to be accepted by Allah:

“If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah’s forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an, Nisa, 4/64)

This verse is a divine statement carrying the promise and good tidings that the intercession of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for his community (the Ummah) will be accepted by Allah.

The following is another exceptionally glad tidings from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him):

“On the Day of Judgment, all of humanity will be in a state of shock. They will go to Adam (peace be upon him) to seek help and will say to him,

‘Please intercede on our behalf in the Divine Presence!’

199 Tirmidhî, *Manâqib* 1; Ibn Mace, *Zuhd* 37; Dârimî, *Muqaddimah* 8; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, I, 281; al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 83; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, *al-Sahîh*, XIV, 398.



He will tell them:

‘I am not in a position to intercede; you should go to Abraham! He is a close friend of the Most Merciful (*Khalil al-Rahman*).’

People will proceed to Abraham (peace be upon him) and will request him to intercede, but he will respond:

‘I am not in a position to intercede, but you should go to Moses! He is the one who has spoken with Allah.’

When they come to Moses (peace be upon him) and express to him their need for intercession, he will in turn tell them:

‘I am not in a position to intercede! You should go to Jesus (peace be upon him). He is called the Word and the Soul of Allah.

They will finally make their way to Jesus (peace be upon him), but he will tell them:

‘I am not in a position to intercede! You should go to Muhammad (peace be upon him).’

They ultimately will come to me and I will say:

‘Yes, this privilege has been given to me.’

Then I will request permission to go before my Lord. This permission will be granted. At that moment, some words of praise, which I do not know now, will be revealed to me. I will praise my Lord with these words and will prostrate before him. At that moment, Allah will say to me:

‘O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

Then I will say,



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‘O my Lord! I request for my Community, I request for my Community!’

Allah, the Most High, will say,

‘O Muhammad! Walk and bring out those whose faith is as light as a grain of barley.’

I will do as I have been told. Then, I will return back and will repeat the same words of praise and afterwards will prostrate. Again, I will be told.

‘O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

Again, I will say,

‘O my Lord! I seek for my Community! I seek for my Community!’

Allah will say:

‘Walk and bring out those whose faith is as light as an atom or as a mustard seed!’

I will go and will do as I have been told. Thereafter, I will return again. Using the same words of praise, I will praise my Lord and will prostrate. Allah will tell me:

‘O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

I will say,

‘O my Lord! I petition for my community! I petition for my community!’

Allah, the Most High, will say,

‘Walk and bring out those whose faith is much, much lighter, lighter even than a mustard seed!’



I will proceed to do as I have been told and will come back for the fourth time. I will praise Allah with the same words of praise and will prostrate once again.

Allah, the Most High will say,

‘O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

This time, I will say:

‘O my Lord! Grant me my wish for every one who has said ‘La ilaha illallah’ (there is no god but God!)

Allah, the Most High says:

‘By My Power, Glory, Highness and Majesty! I will surely bring out those who have said ‘La ilaha illallah!’’²⁰⁰

Being able to attain these blessings requires staying away from passions and from animal desires through the internalization of the example of Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him).

It is related that there was a man who was a Muslim but he did not adopt the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One day he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his dream, yet the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated no affection towards him. The man became upset and asked:

“O, Messenger of Allah! Are you unhappy with me?”

“No!” he replied.

“But why don’t you show me any interest?”

“Because I do not know you!”

200 Bukhârî, *Tawhîd* 36; Muslim, *Îmân* 322; Tirmidhî, *Qiyâmah* 11.

“How is this possible, Messenger of Allah? I am one of your community. I have heard from scholars that you recognize every one from your community as a mother recognizes her child.”

“Yes, this is true. However, I do not see any signs on you from my example (i.e. *sunnah*). Besides, no praise (i.e. *salawat*) has reached me from you. You should know that I recognize one from my Ummah to the extent that he adopts my *sunnah*.”

The man woke up with great sorrow and repented for his sins. He adopted the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his life and sent praises to the soul of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One night, he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his dream again. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him:

“I now recognize you and I will intercede for you.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had an exceptional nature, worthy of love in all its dimensions. He is the most virtuous and most beautiful being ever to have lived. He is the most compassionate of those who have cried for humanity. He is the only true guide and only true teacher. He is the one who has transformed into loving and compassionate people those whose hearts were so hardened that they were able to bury their daughters alive. He has taught them a holy book and has given them wisdom. To hold him above all else and to love him with boundless passion are signs of the perfection of faith. The apex of such love is illustrated in the following hadith: “No one among you will have perfect



faith until he loves me more than his parents, more than his children and more than any other human.”²⁰¹

This hadith is an excellent warning and a reminder that one can attain perfection in faith only through total love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). The doors of spiritual progress and enlightenment are closed to those who are removed from this love. The seed of divine love can grow only in a soil fertile with his love. He is the spring of divine blessings that nurtures hearts. A heart which loves him compared to a heart which does not is like a piece of gold among crude stones.

The Moon, which reflects light from the Sun, is a sign of the existence of the Sun. In the same way, those saints who have been illuminated with the light of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are witnesses for him. For this reason, whoever says the following words with love in his heart feels a divine spark in his soul:

*Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah,
Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasuluhu.*

That is to say: I bear witness that there is no god but God and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.

Sometimes spiritual passion becomes so overwhelming that the soul feels the pleasure of the indescribable taste of faith. The story of Bilal of Abyssinia (may Allah be pleased with him) is full of lessons.

²⁰¹ Bukhari, *Îmân* 8; Muslim, *Îmân* 70; Nasâi, *Îmân* 19.

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Bilal was lonely because he had no one to support him; he had no friend to share in his sorrow. He was a simple slave. Yet, one day he was honored with faith. Afterwards, his faith and his struggle to protect his faith became an outstanding example for future generations of believers.

He met the Prophet (peace be upon him) and entered the garden of his love. It was as if, with his entire existence, he had become part of the Prophet. But his owner who was far removed from the divine light of guidance tied him down on fiery sand and tortured him. His owner mercilessly whipped his naked body. His skin bled. The ignorant crowd around him screamed,

“You dirty slave! Come back to our way and save yourself!”

Yet, Bilal roared like a wounded lion in the sea of the fiery sand and proclaimed over and over again with all his power “God is one, God is one.”

This increased the anger of the uncontrollable crowd and they began beating him more and more... This was not enough to calm them down. So, they tied his neck with a rope and pulled his body around. Against all this, Bilal sought refuge in the love of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was as if he did not feel what was happening to him, as his heart was flooded with the love of Allah and His Messenger. His heart was so happy. Yet, in the physical world he was in a painful situation. He did not even have a hut of his own to sleep in.

Thus, Bilal’s love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) elevated him from slavery to the station of a sultan in the hearts of the believers. He became the muaddhin (i.e. the



caller to prayer) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and called people to prayer five times a day. He loved the Prophet (peace be upon him) so much that in his last breath he was saying:

“Be happy! Be happy! I am returning to the Prophet!”²⁰²
These were his last words before he departed to the other world.

Therefore, as the hadith that states “one is with the ones he loves”,²⁰³ our principle of action on the path to eternity is to follow the Qur’anic verse below:

“So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment. ” (Qur’an, Hashr, 59/7)

O Allah! Please make this humble work, which is so limited in its eloquence, a cause for your mercy and your forgiveness and bless us with the truth your Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) has conveyed to humanity. Bless us with the love of your last Messenger (peace be upon him). Bless us with his intercession.



We are aware that our limited words of description about this personality who represents the zenith of what it means to be a human are without doubt far from conveying the fullness of his being. We even feel embarrassed to claim we have introduced him. Our words represent only our powerlessness before such a vast task. What we have humbly

202 Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Istî’âb*, 1,178.

203 Bukhârî, *Adab* 96; Muslim, *Birr* 165; Tirmidhî, *Zuhd* 50; Dârimî, *Riqâq* 71; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 395; Ibn Hibbân, *al-Sahîh*, II, 316; al-Humaydî, *al-Musnad*, II, 389.

CONCLUSION

aimed for is nothing other than the honor of having made such an intention and of having made such an attempt. He is an infinite world that can be penetrated only to the extent of one's love and one's sincerity towards him.

May Allah bless us by opening our wings in the skies of this spiritual world.

Amin.





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