

ISLAM

THROUGH HADITHS

4



PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS





ISLAM THROUGH HADITHS 4

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE HADITHS THROUGH HADITHS

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 A square logo with a gold background and a dark red, stylized letter 'C' inside. The 'C' is elegant and cursive, with a small flourish at the top.

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SECTION 6



SOCIAL LIFE -I-





THE FAMILY PARADISE ON EARTH



عَنْ عَامِرِ بْنِ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَعُودُنِي عَامَ حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ مِنْ وَجَعٍ اشْتَدَّ بِي... ثُمَّ قَالَ: "... وَإِنَّكَ لَنْ تُنْفِقَ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا أُجِرْتَ بِهَا، حَتَّى مَا تَجْعَلُ فِي فِي امْرَأَتِكَ."

‘Amir b. Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (ra) reported the following from his father:
“In the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (saw) came to visit me when my illness had intensified. (When I told him that I wanted to distribute my wealth as *ṣadaqa*), the Prophet (saw) said: ‘. . . You will surely be rewarded for everything you spend on your family hoping to please Allah, even for a morsel that you put in your wife’s mouth . . .’”

(B1295, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 36)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ نَفَرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ سَأَلُوا أَزْوَاجَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ عَنْ عَمَلِهِ فِي السَّرِّ؟ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: لَا أَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: لَا أَكُلُ اللَّحْمَ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: لَا أَنَامُ عَلَى فِرَاشٍ. فَحَمِدَ اللَّهُ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ فَقَالَ: «مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ قَالُوا كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ لَكِنِّي أُصَلِّي وَأَنَامُ، وَأَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.»



عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ قَالَ: ... سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: «فِتْنَةُ الرَّجُلِ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَمَالِهِ وَنَفْسِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَجَارِهِ يُكْفَرُهَا الصِّيَامُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالصَّدَقَةُ وَالْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي...»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: «كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ فِي أَهْلِهِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهَا، وَالْخَادِمُ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهِ.»



As reported from Anas b. Malik (ra) (ra), some of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) went to the Prophet's wives and asked how he worshiped while he was alone. (Thinking that their own acts of worship were insufficient), some of them said, "I will not marry a women;" others said, "I will not eat meat;" and others said, "I will not sleep in bed." (When these words were reported to Allah's Messenger), he first praised Allah and declared his exaltedness and then said, "*Why is it that people say such things! I pray, yet I also sleep; I fast, and yet sometimes I do not; and I marry women. So he who does not follow my Sunna (tradition in religion), is not from me.*"

(M3403, Muslim, al-Nikah, 5)



As Hudhayfa (ra) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, '*Family, wealth, ego, children, and neighbors are tests for a man. Fasting, praying, charity, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil expiate sins emerging from of those tests.*'"

(M7268, Muslim, al-Fitan, 26; B525, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 4)



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*The most benevolent among you is the one who is benevolent to his family. I am the most benevolent to my family among you...*"

(T3895, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63)



'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) said he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, "*Everyone of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it.*"

(B2409, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqradi, 20)



“And, He Himself created the two sexes, male and female.”¹

Our Lord, who created every living thing on earth, plants and animals, in two forms, male and female,² also created the most precious creature, the human being, as male and female. He sent humans into this world as a male and female.³ He bestowed on them a strong love and compassion for each other.⁴ In the words of our Prophet, they are similar to each other.⁵ Allah the Exalted, by stating, “*They are [close] as garments to you as you are to them,*”⁶ reminds us that man and woman are meant to protect each other.

Our Lord recommends that men and women marry and share a home.⁷ Our prophet, by saying, “*I pray, yet I also sleep; I fast, and yet sometimes I do not; and I marry women. So he who does not follow my Sunna (tradition in religion), is not from me,*” insists that being married is part of his Sunna, and reinforces this advice and warns those who reject his way of life.⁸

Marriage is undoubtedly a blessing which provides people with tranquility.⁹ Only a spouse can make the lonely soul in a crowd happy. Only a spouse can provide one with a most special love; a warm, affectionate, and friendly hand; and a sharing which makes life livable.

Furthermore, marriage is a shelter which protects the body from religiously forbidden things. It is for this reason that our Master the Prophet (saw) gives us the good news that Allah (swt) would certainly help those who intend to live together honorably and establish a family.¹⁰ For, thanks to marriage, not only are two bodies redeemed but all of society also obtains a pure generation.

In the Noble Qur’an, Allah the Exalted advises people on to how to keep pace with the flow of life after establishing the family unit. He shows people why having a family is cause for having confidence in life, and shaping the future. Above all, He wants people to understand what it means to be a family. He gives examples of several families which were able to strike a balance between reason and emotion. While reminding those who are

¹ Al-Najm, 53:45.

² Ya Sin, 36:36; al-Shura, 42:11; al-Dhariyat, 51:49; al-Naba’, 78:8.

³ Al-Araf, 7:189.

⁴ Rum, 30:21.

⁵ D236, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 94; T113, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 82.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:3, 25; al-Nur, 24:32

⁸ M3403, Muslim, Ibn Maja, 5; B5063, al-Bukhari, Ibn Maja, 1.

⁹ Rum, 30:21.

¹⁰ T1655, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Ijtihad, 20; N3122, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 12.



like each other and work together in performing bad deeds, and who are oblivious of Allah (of the punishment to be expected in the next life),¹¹ He mentions with praise and joy men and women who become friends and help each other in performing good deeds.¹² While recalling with pleasure the family of 'Imran,¹³ He describes how He is going to punish the family of Abu Lahab with the fire of Hell.¹⁴

The family is a home in need of good children. The family is needed so that the human race can be transported to a pure and bright future.

Having a baby turns a woman into a “mother.” The moment when she hugs her baby is so full of compassion that it reminds our Prophet of the Lord’s mercy towards his servants.¹⁵ She prefers this little soul whom she has carried, borne, and nourished, over herself and she cannot bear to be separated from the baby.¹⁶ There is such a bond between them that the Prophet (saw) strongly warns against those who would break this bond: “*Whoever separates a mother from her child, will be separated from his/her loved one by Allah in the Day of Judgement.*”¹⁷ A mother who instantly would divide the date that she was about to put in her mouth and share it among her children who asked for it will gain Paradise with this behavior.¹⁸

A mother is devoted and does not keep account of her labor. She is full of love and does not close the gate of her heart. She is a forgiver. She does not turn away her children from her embrace. A mother’s steps are so close to Paradise that¹⁹ our Master the Prophet (saw) does not hesitate to designate service to mothers as *jihād*.²⁰ Even if they do not share the same religion, he expects a believing child not to turn away from his/her mother, and not to neglect to show her kindness and respect.²¹ This is because a mother is, in the words of our Prophet, in the position of being “*the most deserving person with whom an excellent relationship is established.*”²² When our beloved Prophet says that Allah (swt) forbids one to rebel against his mother,²³ he wants to protect mothers from pointless arguments and endless enmity.

Having a child turns a man into a “father.” He will be named after him,²⁴ and will be a person belonging to him,²⁵ until the Day of Judgement. He strives to fulfill the burden of the responsibility that the Prophet (saw) placed on him when he cautioned, “*Your family has a right over you.*”²⁶ On the one hand, he should share whatever blessing he has obtained with his family after benefitting from it himself,²⁷ and bring goodness to his

¹¹ Al-Tawba, 9:67-68.

¹² Al-Tawba, 9:71-72.

¹³ Al 'Imran, 3:33-34.

¹⁴ Al-Tabbat, 111:1-5.

¹⁵ B5999, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6978, Muslim, al-Tawba, 22.

¹⁶ D2276, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 34-35

¹⁷ T1283, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 52; DM2507 al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 39.

¹⁸ M6694, Muslim, al-Birr, 148.

¹⁹ N3106, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 6

²⁰ T1671, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 2; D2529, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 31.

²¹ B2620, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 29; M2325, Muslim, al-Zakat, 50

²² B5971, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 2; M6500, Muslim, al-Birr, 1.

²³ B5975, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; M4483, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 12.

²⁴ B5088, al-Bukhari, Ibn Maja, 16; M6262, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 62.

²⁵ D3530, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', 77.

²⁶ B6139, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 86; M2734, Muslim, al-Siyam, 186.

²⁷ M4711, Muslim, al-Imara, 10; D3957, Abu Da'ud, al-'Itq, 9.

home. On the other hand, he should strive to keep all evil away from his home, and even if he gives his life to this end he should not turn a deaf ear to the good news that he will be a martyr.²⁸

The efforts of a father who holds the affairs of his family above himself and who takes the Prophet (saw) as an example will surely not go unrewarded.²⁹ The following words of the most noble Messenger, “*You will certainly receive a reward for everything you spend for your family in the hope of pleasing Allah, even for a morsel that you put in your wife’s mouth,*”³⁰ are good news that a father will be rewarded for his efforts. However, his responsibility is not just limited to feeding and clothing the people in his household. When he dies, a father should not leave his children in a miserable state so that they go open handed to others.³¹ Instead, he should raise his children and present them to society as good individuals who nurture peace. As our Master said, “*There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.*”³²

At the same time, the father represents respect, security and compassion for the family. On the advice of our Prophet, the politeness of a father who greets everyone and calls blessings upon them as he enters the home³³ is the first step in compassion. In addition, Allah (swt) will seat on a throne of light on the Day of Judgement the father who dispenses justice equitably among family members.³⁴ Our Master stated that the prayers of fathers will surely be accepted.³⁵

A child is a precious trust in his parents’ hands. Although he seems to belong to the present, he is in fact a trust which must be prepared for the future. He is a precious soul who is sensitive, fragile, and in endless need of attention and love. A child is a test.³⁶ It is a test which requires the one who wishes to win the great reward at the end to spend a great deal of labor.

It is noteworthy that the care that parents need to give to their children starts even before the first cells of a child are formed when the parents pray that Satan stays away from him.³⁷ Therefore, when they have a baby, the parents should think of it is a divine gift. They should stay away from such customs of the Jahiliyya (the pre-Islamic period) as discriminating between baby boys and girls, and should not be among those whose faces were blackened in anger at the birth of a daughter but who celebrated at the birth of a son.³⁸ As a sign of their gratitude to Allah, who created this blessing, the parents could make the sacrifice of ‘*aqīqa* (the sacrifice on the seventh

²⁸ D4772, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 28-29; N4099, al-Nasa’i, al-Muharaba, 23.

²⁹ B676, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 44; B6039, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 40.

³⁰ B1295, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 36; M2322, Muslim, al-Zakat, 48.

³¹ B1295, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 36; M4215, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 8

³² T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33.

³³ T2698, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 10.

³⁴ M4721, Muslim, al-Imara, 18; N5381, al-Nasa’i, Adab al-Qudat, 1.

³⁵ D1536, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 29; T3448, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 47.

³⁶ Al-Taghabun, 64 :15; al-Anfal, 8:28.

³⁷ B141, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 8; M3533, Muslim, Ibn Maja, 116.

³⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:58-59; al-Zukhruf, 43:17.



day of the birth of a child),³⁹ give the child a beautiful name,⁴⁰ and make sure that he begins the first days of his life with prayers full of blessings.⁴¹

The statement of our Master the Prophet (saw), “*Everyone is born in a natural state of being. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a fire worshipper (Zoroastrian)*,”⁴² clearly sums up the lasting impression parents have on their children. A baby, a gem ready to be polished, has a natural disposition to accept the good and adopt the beautiful from birth. The formation of a virtuous personality who could develop healthy relations with the new world to which he has opened his eyes will take place in his parents’ embrace. At the same time, the basis of his religious preference which will lead him to the right way and the straight path will be formed at the family hearth.

Our Prophet recommends that a child, who was raised with compassion as a baby,⁴³ with love as a child,⁴⁴ and with understanding as a youth,⁴⁵ be married after making a decision based on respect and mutual consent.⁴⁶

To divorce is of course an undesirable act.⁴⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave glad tidings to those parents who would embrace and support their divorced daughter who would be left vulnerable, and said that whatever they spent for her was the most auspicious of spending, “*Should I mention the most valuable charity? The money you spend for your daughter who was divorced from her husband, and did not have anywhere else to go except your house, is the most virtuous charity.*”⁴⁸

Our Prophet said, “*Whoever claims to be the son of a person other than his father, and he knows that person is not his father, then Paradise will be forbidden to him.*”⁴⁹ Therefore a son has no right to reject his father or to claim descent from another blood line.⁵⁰ The same thing applies to a father who would reject his son. This is because family relations are permanent. Even if one dies, and, as our Prophet said, even if the family which followed the funeral ceremony right up to the grave is then forced to return and draw away,⁵¹ there is hope that they will meet again in the Hereafter, the good with the good and the bad with the bad. Family life, like every blessing that Allah has granted us, is laden with certain burdens. Because it is absorbing and attractive, preoccupation with the family is such a challenging test that it may lead a person to forget his essential duty: “*Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: Those who do so will be the ones who lose.*”⁵²

³⁹ B5472, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqiqa, 2; D2842 Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 20-21.

⁴⁰ D4948, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 61.

⁴¹ B5467, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqiqa, 1; B6198, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109.

⁴² B4775, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir 2; M6755, Muslim, al-Qadar, 22.

⁴³ HM27416, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 340.

⁴⁴ M6027, Muslim, Fada’il, 64.

⁴⁵ M6013, Muslim, Fada’il, 52.

⁴⁶ T1107, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, 18.

⁴⁷ D2178, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 3.

⁴⁸ IM3667, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 3.

⁴⁹ B6766, al-Bukhari, al-Fara’id, 29.

⁵⁰ M217, Muslim, al-Iman, 112; M3327, Muslim, al-Hajj, 467.

⁵¹ B6514, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 42; M7424, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 5.

⁵² Al-Munafiqun, 69:9.

Sometimes those who take pride in the large size of their family⁵³ forget that not their wife and children but their good deeds⁵⁴ will make them closer to the Lord. Whereas, if one's heart is not filled with the light of faith, a magnificent life full of wealth and children will not help save him from the fire.⁵⁵ On the contrary it may become a factor in increasing his misfortune and fanning the flames of the fire.⁵⁶

In the following *ḥadīth* the Messenger of Allah (saw) defined the family as a way of “testing”: “Family, wealth, ego, and neighbors are tests for a man. Fasting, praying, charity, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil expiate sins emerging from those tests.”⁵⁷ It is a network, a delicate balance founded on the triangle of mother, father and child. Sharing the same house increases responsibilities as well as rights and, as the family members get closer to each other, the great care needed to keep tranquility at home is doubled. On this point therefore, while putting the relations between spouses in order, our Prophet avoided insisting that one party be burdened with responsibilities or have unlimited freedom: “Be mindful! Just as you have rights over women (wives), they also have rights over you.”⁵⁸

For a woman, the family is one of the most difficult tests in life. A woman, being characterized as “virtuous,” strives hard to deserve what is meant by this characterization.⁵⁹ Sometimes she is without a husband, and by taking on the burden of supporting her family and, by the labor that she devotes to it, will be on the way towards becoming the neighbor of the Prophet (saw) (in the Hereafter).⁶⁰ She deserves reward for each step she takes in order to raise a virtuous child, and sometimes she may even reach a happy ending by being patient with the burning pain suffered at the death of a child.⁶¹

For the father who is burdened with responsibility for the family, the warning, “Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is people and stones,”⁶² is without doubt quite striking. In addition to the fact that every penny he spends for his family is added to the list of his good deeds as the most valuable money that he spent,⁶³ making investments to meet the annual needs of his household⁶⁴ is also considered part of his maintenance.

Our Prophet, by saying, “The most benevolent among you is the one who is benevolent to his family. I am the most benevolent to my family among you,”⁶⁵ calls upon believing men to treat their families benevolently. The elder of

⁵³ Saba', 34:35.

⁵⁴ Saba', 34:37; al-Kahf, 18:46.

⁵⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:10, 116.

⁵⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:85; al-Mu'minun, 23:55-56.

⁵⁷ M7268, Muslim, al-Fitan, 26; B525, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 4.

⁵⁸ T3087, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 9; IM1851, Ibn Maja, 3.

⁵⁹ M3649, Muslim, al-Rada', 64; D1664, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 32.

⁶⁰ D5149, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 120-121.

⁶¹ M6698, Muslim, al-Birr, 151.

⁶² Al-Tahrim 66:6

⁶³ M2311, Muslim, al-Zakat, 39.

⁶⁴ B5357, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 3; M4575, Muslim, al-Jihad, 48

⁶⁵ T3895, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63.



the family, the father, should have a smiling face and nice words for his family. He should not hide any positive emotions that he has and should not hesitate to appreciate anything meritorious that he sees. The behavior of the Prophet (saw), who laughed and played with his grandchildren,⁶⁶ gave them a hug and kiss,⁶⁷ performed a sermon while they were in his arms,⁶⁸ and prayed while they were on his back,⁶⁹ should be an example for all fathers.

The Prophet (saw) absolutely rejected injustice within the family.⁷⁰ Parents who fail to keep equal distance to their children in their love can be forgiven because they cannot control their feelings. But they must maintain justice by not reflecting this in their behavior and without gender discrimination.⁷¹ This is because every adult in the family whose word is law is the object of the command, “*Be afraid of Allah and be just among your children.*”⁷²

Believing mothers and fathers tremble inside when they read the verse, “*The true losers are the ones who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.*”⁷³ They work hand in hand to establish a spiritual climate at home and to attain Allah’s approval.⁷⁴ They entreat Allah (swt) to forgive their families and grant them health,⁷⁵ and place them among those who are sincerely bound to Him in this world and the Hereafter.⁷⁶

Our beloved Prophet reminded everyone to be responsible when he said, “*Everyone of you is a guardian and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a wife is a guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it; and a servant is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible for it.*”⁷⁷ As mothers and fathers, we believers always have the following prayer on our tongue: “*Our Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring. Make us good examples to those who are aware of You.*”⁷⁸

⁶⁶ T3784, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 30; IM144, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11.

⁶⁷ B2122, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 49.

⁶⁸ D1109, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 225, 227.

⁶⁹ N712, al-Nasa’i, al-Masajid, 19.

⁷⁰ M4182, Muslim, al-Hiba, 14.

⁷¹ D5146, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 120-121.

⁷² B2587, al-Bukhari, al-Hibe, 13; M4181, Muslim, al-Hibe, 13.

⁷³ Al-Zumar 39:15

⁷⁴ Ta Ha, 20:132; M2787, Muslim, al-I’tikaf, 7.

⁷⁵ D5074, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 100-101.

⁷⁶ D1508, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 25.

⁷⁷ B2409 al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrar, 20; M4724 Muslim, al-Imara, 20.

⁷⁸ Furqan, 25:74



BUILDING A FAMILY ESTABLISHING A HOME



فَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ شَبَابًا لَا نَجِدُ شَيْئًا، فَقَالَ لَنَا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ! مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمْ الْبَاءَةَ
فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ...”

‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud) (ra) said,

“We were with the Prophet (saw) when we were young and had no wealth whatever. So Allah’s Messenger said to us, ‘O company of youth! Whoever among you is able to get marry, he should marry, because it is the best thing to make him lower his gaze (from what is forbidden) and to guard his dignity.’”

(B5066, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 3; M3398, Muslim, al-Nikah, 1)



عَنْ أَبِي مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا أَنْفَقَ الرَّجُلُ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَحْتَسِبُهَا فَهُوَ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ مَنْ يُقَاتُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ. وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي.“



As reported by Abu Mas'ud (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If a man spends on his family (with the hope of reward from Allah) then it is an act of charity for him.”*

(B55, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 41; M2322, Muslim, al-Zakat, 48)



As reported by 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“It is sufficient sin for a man that he neglects those whom he maintains.”*

(D1692, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 45)



As reported by Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“The most benevolent among you is the one who is benevolent to his family. I am the most benevolent to my family among you.”*

(IM1977, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50)



Allah's Messenger came to the house of his daughter, Fatima (ra). He looked for 'Ali (ra) (her husband). The merciful Prophet must have immediately sensed that something was wrong, because he had not asked his daughter, "Where is 'Ali?" or "Where is your husband?" In the same tone of voice that Aaron had used when he said, "*Son of my mother*"¹ to his brother Moses who had returned from Mt. Sinai and was angry and disappointed by what he had seen, the Prophet (saw) asked Fatima, "*Where is the son of your uncle?*"²

Fatima had a quarrel with her husband. Now, 'Ali (ra) was greatly in love with his wife. Had he not once described Fatima's problems to the Prophet? Well, they had gone together to Allah's Messenger, but Fatima (ra) could not bring herself to speak because of shyness. 'Ali immediately stepped in on her behalf and said, "O Allah's Messenger! I'll relate to you (what she was not able to say). Your daughter Fatima's hands became coarse while she was grinding wheat in the mill; her neck was scratched by the bucket rope while she was drawing water from the well with a goat skin; her skirt got dusty while she was sweeping and cleaning her house; and her clothes got covered with soot from the fire of the food pan."³

Her father questioned her and she replied, "Something came up between us. He got angry at me and left. He did not take an afternoon nap with me." Allah's Messenger (saw) had people look for 'Ali. 'Ali (ra) must have been sorry too. "Ali is in the mosque," they said, "stretched out and sleeping in one corner of the mosque." When the Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived at the mosque, he saw that 'Ali's clothes were about to come off of his back and his back was covered with dust.⁴ The Messenger of Allah (saw) approached him and, while shaking the dust from him, said jokingly, "*Get up Abu Turab* (lit. father of dust, that is, "Dusty")."⁵ Since then 'Ali (ra) has been called by this nickname.

¹ Ta Ha, 20:94.

² B3703, al-Bukhari, Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 9.

³ D5063, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 99, 100.

⁴ B441, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 58.

⁵ M6229, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 38.



With the loving and merciful hand of the Prophet (saw), disquiet turned to tranquility and cheerfulness. Allah's Messenger, who made peace without taking sides and who united the couple without hurting anyone, covered the sulking with love, and washed away the resentment, which had arisen in a moment of anger, with mercy. He reminded 'Ali and Fatima (ra) once again that they were a family.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) has more than a hundred statements about the family. They all describe the importance of the family.

The family is certainly very important. In Anatolia and the Indian sub-continent, there is a time-honored wedding prayer that goes, "O Allah! Bless and make fruitful this contract. Bond this newly-wed couple with feelings of affection, love, and devotion. Don't let hate, dissension, and differences come between them. Just as you bonded Adam and Eve, Muhammad and Khadija, and 'Ali and Fatima..." In this prayer we witness 'Ali's love for Fatima (ra) and we hear Fatima's love for her husband. In every wedding, our prayer commemorates the happy homes of Adam and Eve, the Messenger of Allah (saw) and our mother Khadija, and 'Ali and Fatima (ra).

All the prophets were fully part of their families. The Prophet Abraham's gathering, with fatherly affection, of his family and guests around his blessed table and his calling of his father Azar before everyone else to the message of Allah's unity;⁶ the Prophet Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers despite everything they had done to him;⁷ the Prophet Jacob's struggle with, and tears for, his sons, Joseph and Benjamin;⁸ and Noah's plea for his son are all stories,⁹ are they not, showing the inexplicable hidden power of family ties. Where does the power of being family come from?

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who said that Allah the Exalted stated, "I am Allah, and I am al-Rahmān (the Compassionate One). I created the (mother's) *rahim* (womb), and named it after My name. So whoever guards his kinship ties, I will guard him, and whoever severs his kinship ties, I will sever my tie with him,"¹⁰ seems to indicate the spiritual power behind this tie. This power is from the grace of Allah the Merciful.

The expression *ṣilat al-rahim* (the connection of the womb) reveals to us a sublime truth, the binding of the family bond to the rope of Allah's mercy.

The Arabic word *usra* also mean family. Etymologically *usra* means "armor."¹¹ This should be a name for family because it is exactly like a pro-

⁶ Al-An'am, 6:74.

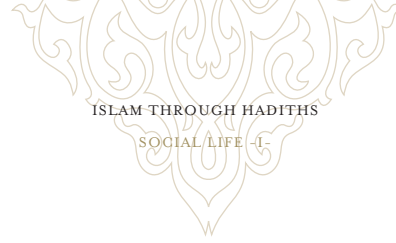
⁷ Yusuf, 12:92.

⁸ Yusuf, 12:84, 87.

⁹ Hud, 11:42.

¹⁰ T1907, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 9.

¹¹ LA2:77, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, II, 77.



protective armor. For it protects people, materially and spiritually, from the negative things coming from the outside world. Our Master the Prophet's *ḥadīth*, "O company of youth! Whoever among you is able to have sexual intercourse, he should marry, because it is the best thing to make him lower his gaze (from what is forbidden) and to guard his dignity," clearly indicates to us that marriage guards one's honor and respectability, and gives protection for a virtuous life.

Another Arabic word for family, *ʿāʾila* (which comes from the root meaning "to provide sustenance"), is one that reminds us that we are in constant need of support. One of the connotations of the verse, "And (did He not) find you in need and satisfy your need?"¹² is to indicate the warmth and protectiveness of the family. It explains the richness that is concealed within the family. The Holy Qur'an states, "Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility; He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect."¹³ The family is the most striking sign of Allah's existence.

The family is a sacred human institution which is supported by the mercy of Allah and beautified with children and honorable sustenance.

The first family, that of Adam and Eve, reminds us that human existence found value in the family from the very first moment. By not taking revenge on his brother, Cain, who wanted to harm him, and by taking heed of his father's advice, and by valuing family ties, Abel gained Allah's approval and his prayer and sacrificial offering were accepted by Allah at once. Similarly, Joseph's brothers said to him, "By Allah! Allah really did favor you over all of us and we were in the wrong!"¹⁴ To strengthen the *ṣilat al-rahim* is to acquire Allah's support. To break family bonds is to drift step by step toward disaster, like Cain.

History has sometimes borne witness to the breaking of family ties. In the pre-Islamic period, in addition to regular marriages, fornication (*zināʾ*) was practiced, people engaged in perverted sexual relations, people contracted temporary marriages, wives were offered to noble men in order to have children, and there were even those who married their stepmothers after the death of their fathers. All of these things left black stains on the history of mankind.¹⁵ Indeed, in social circles where family life is forgotten, one encounters sexual perversion and deviance. Islam forbids all illicit relations which threaten the existence of the family.¹⁶ Allah (swt) has

¹² Al-Duha 93:8

¹³ Rum, 30:21.

¹⁴ Yusuf, 12:91.

¹⁵ "Aile," *DIA*, II, 198.

¹⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:15-16; al-Isra', 17:32; Nur, 24:2-3, 30-31; Furqan, 25:68.



forbidden all such illicit unions and, in order to create a tranquil society composed of happy individuals, advised people to establish families in the verse, “*Marry off the single among you.*”¹⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw), by saying, “*O company of youth! Whoever among you is able to get marry, he should marry, because it is the best thing to make him lower his gaze (from what is forbidden) and to guard his dignity,*”¹⁸ put a barrier against all carnal and empty relations outside marriage.

Being a family means to complete a whole. In the vocabulary of the Holy Qur’an, it means that spouses are garments for each other.¹⁹ Being a spouse means to accept one’s own deficiencies and complete them with one’s partner; to take steps toward perfection; and to cover one’s partner carefully as with a cloth. The family is one of the greatest blessings of Allah. It is the place where love, happiness, and pleasure gain value by being shared.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) appreciated the family as both a source of blessing and great richness. When the Prophet (saw) congratulated newly-wed couples, he used to pray saying, “*May Allah sanctify your wedding, may He grant you blessings, and make you and your wife be partners in goodness and kindness.*”²⁰ For a believing person, the family is, in fact, a door which is never closed to blessings. One should enter this door with prayer, and enrich the home with love, compassion, and mercy.

The most important sustenance of the family is the children, who are fruit from Paradise. Do not prayerful parents of children know the value of this fruit from Paradise? This is because children are entrusted to the parents. From the very first moment, the parents wholeheartedly welcome their children to their home. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*if anyone of you, on having sexual relations with his wife, said (and he must say it before starting) ‘In the name of Allah. O Allah! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you bestow upon us (i.e., the coming offspring) from Satan, and if it is destined that they should have a child, then Satan will never be able to harm it.*”²¹

Our Master the Prophet (saw) once explained to ‘Umar (ra) that real treasure should not be sought in gold or silver saying, “*O ‘Umar! Should I tell you the most important treasure for a man? It is a virtuous woman. When her husband looks at her, he is filled with joy, when her husband asks her something to do, she does it, when her husband is not present, she upholds her husband’s rights and dignity.*”²²

¹⁷ Al-Nur, 24:32.

¹⁸ B5066, al-Bukhari, Ibn Maja, 3; M3398, Muslim, Ibn Maja, 1.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

²⁰ D2130, Abu Da’ud, Ibn Maja, 35-36.

²¹ B141, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 8.

²² D1664, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 32.

In the words of the Messenger of Allah (saw), a virtuous spouse is one of the three greatest happinesses for a person. An unfit spouse is the source of unhappiness.²³ Many people are attached to pursuing temporary desires and try to build their marriages on meaningless things. Our Prophet, while keeping the sensitivities of his community in mind, told his companions the following: *“A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman so that you will receive blessings all the time.”*²⁴

Furthermore, Allah’s Messenger asks spouses not to exaggerate each other’s faults. He gives the following warning: *“A believer should not hate his believing wife, because, even if he does not like one of her habits, there is surely another of her habits that he will like.”*²⁵

The Messenger of Allah (saw) makes the following statement about relations with relatives: *“Learn enough about your lineage to facilitate keeping your ties of kinship. For indeed keeping the ties of kinship encourages affection among the relatives, increases the wealth, and increases the lifespan.”*²⁶ The important thing is that the head of the family should first take care of the needs of his own family. Our beloved Prophet’s statement, *“If a man spends on his family (with the hope of reward from Allah) then it is an act of charity for him,”*²⁷ encourages the head of the family to give priority to the maintenance of his family and meet its needs. He should first spend what he earns on himself and his family. Then, he should meet the needs of his relatives and, after that, others if he has the resources.²⁸

As much as the family is an economic unit, it is also a place where things are shared fairly. Here, one can share love, opinions, food, happiness, and sorrow without distinction. In this respect, parents should behave with a manner appropriate to their responsibilities and should not neglect their children. Because of this our Prophet said, *“It is sufficient sin for a man that he neglects those whom he maintains.”*²⁹

The family is also the place where ethics are instilled in children. *“There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.”*³⁰ Modesty and good manners are the most important virtues that can be given to children. When someone loses his belief in Allah (swt), he can fall into a pitiful state. In the pre-Islamic period, there were some fathers who pushed their daughters and slave girls into the wrong path. Allah said, *“And do not force your slave girls into prostitution, when they themselves wish to*

²³ TM207, al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, I, 114.

²⁴ M3635, Muslim, al-Rada’, 53.

²⁵ M3645, Muslim, al-Rada’, 61.

²⁶ T1979, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 49.

²⁷ B55, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 41; M2322, Muslim, al-Zakat, 48.

²⁸ M2313, Muslim, al-Zakat, 41.

²⁹ D1692, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 45.

³⁰ T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33.



*remain honorable, in your quest for the short-term gains of this world.*³¹

Everyone in the family makes a contribution to the home according to his ability. Children are their parents' helpers. Spouses look after each other. Parents protect their children. If there are elders in the family, they are given respect. As experienced mothers or fathers, the family elders constitute a strong pillar of the family. In our traditional family life, the elders used to live with their children and grandchildren. Although this tradition is changing somewhat as a result of industrialization and urbanization, the verse, *"If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully,"*³² strongly encourages us to be good to our parents throughout life.

There is no room for selfishness in the family. It is a place of continuous mutual help. Al-Aswad (ra) relates the following: "I asked 'A'isha (ra), the wife of the Messenger of Allah (saw), 'What did our Master the Prophet (saw) used to do at home?' 'A'isha (ra) stated, 'Allah's Messenger used to be interested in the matters of his family, that is, he used to be at the service of his family. And when prayer time came, he used to leave for prayer.'" Our Master was an exemplary spouse who never begrudged helping his wife.³³ He himself said this as follows: *"The most benevolent among you is the one who is benevolent to his family. I am the most benevolent to my family among you."*³⁴ According to Allah's Messenger, one cannot do enough for the family, *"Whoever dies while defending the family is a martyr."*³⁵ If necessary, one should be able to sacrifice his life for his family. The family is where loyalty is blended with self-sacrifice, faith with kindness, knowledge with wisdom, and love with respect. Blessings automatically follow from all of this. A society which has a healthy family structure is a strong society. The Prophet (saw), by saying, *"Anyone who incites a woman against her husband or a slave against his master is not one of us,"*³⁶ indicates the danger to the family from outside interference. Once the Prophet (saw) heard someone who was talking to his brother-in-law about a women in a manner that called forth her sexuality. Upon hearing this, our Prophet said, *"Let him no longer come near us."*³⁷ Thus, he wanted to prevent those who would destroy the tranquility of the family from coming to it.

If problems persist between spouses and cannot be resolved, despite the necessary commitment being shown, then, in order to bring happiness to the family, this matter should fall to fair-minded and clear-sighted

³¹ Al-Nur, 24:33

³² Al-Isra', 17:23

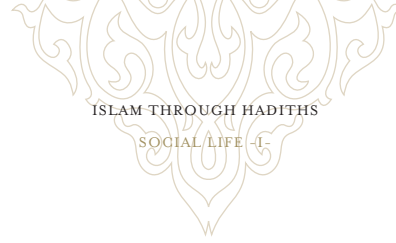
³³ B676, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 44.

³⁴ IM1977, Ibn Maja, 50.

³⁵ N4099, al-Nasa'i, al-Muharaba, 23.

³⁶ D2175, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 1; D5170, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 125-126.

³⁷ B5235, al-Bukhari, Ibn Maja, 114.



people from both sides of the family who would restore love and devotion from the ashes.³⁸ Divorce is the last resort after everything has been done to save the family. Perhaps it is an expression of despair. In any case, although it is religiously permitted, it is never a step that pleases Allah.³⁹

Our family is our warm home where the bases of the ethics, reason, and sensibilities that we will have throughout life are established and where our spirits are nourished with moral values. In the family, we acquire the taste for prayer; discover the meaning of being a sibling, the dignity of being a parent, and the security of being a child. In the family, we reap meaning for our existence, our surroundings and the whole world. In the family, we learn to share, to sustain our lives, to overcome problems, and to experience happiness together.

³⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:35.

³⁹ D2177, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 3.



GETTING MARRIED SHARING LIFE



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”النِّكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي . فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي ، وَتَزَوَّجُوا ،
فَإِنِّي مُكَاتِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ ...“

As reported by ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger said,
“Marriage is my custom (sunna). Whoever does not follow my custom is not
from me. Marry. Because (on the Day of Judgement) I am going take pride in
the size of my umma against the other nations (umam).

(IM1846, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 1)



فَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ شَبَابًا لَا نَجِدُ شَيْئًا، فَقَالَ لَنَا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ،
فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصْرِ، وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ،
فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ.»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
«أَنْكُحُوا الصَّالِحِينَ وَالصَّالِحَاتِ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «تُنكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا
وَجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرِبَتْ يَدَاكَ.»



‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud) (ra) said, “We were with the Prophet (saw) when we were young and had no wealth whatever. So Allah’s Messenger said, *‘O company of youth! Whoever among you is able to get marry, he should marry, because it is the best thing to make him lower his gaze (from what is forbidden) and to guard his dignity; and whoever is not able to marry should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual desire.’*”

(B5066, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 3)



According to ‘Aisha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*Marry virtuous men to virtuous women!*”

(DM2212, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 10)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*A woman is married for four things: Her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman so that you will receive blessings all the time.*”

(B5090, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16)



Anas b. Malik (ra), who was raised at the hearth of the Prophet (saw), tells us that three Companions (ra), who were very diligent in performing prayers, came to the house of the Prophet (saw) in order to learn the supererogatory prayers that he performed day and night. It is apparent that they were curious as to how our Prophet showed his servitude to Allah while at home in addition to the obligatory prayers that he performed together with other Muslims. When they learned about the life of prayer of our Prophet from his wives, who did not hide their family lives because they wanted to provide good examples for believers, they thought that what they did was insufficient. And they said to themselves, “Look at us, and look at the Prophet! Doubtless, Allah forgave his past and future sins entirely.” Because of this, one of them said, “From now on, I will pray all night long.” Another said, “I will fast all the time, without skipping a day.” And the third one said, “I will live apart from women. I will not marry.” While they are talking, the Messenger of Allah (saw) appeared and said, *“Are you the same people who said such-and-such? By Allah, I am more fearful of Allah and more careful of Him than you; yet sometimes I fast and sometimes I break my fast. I do supererogatory prayers (during part of the night) and I sleep (part of the night). I also marry women. So he who does not follow my sunna is not from me.”*¹

‘Uthman b. Maz’un (ra), the foster brother of our Prophet, was suffused with the same spirit, and decided to seclude himself from the world. Indeed, he devoted himself to prayer so much that he began not to see even his wife Hawla (ra), who was a well-kept lady. When our Master the Prophet (saw) noticed Hawla’s unkempt and unhappy appearance, he asked ‘A’isha (ra) the reason for it. ‘A’isha explained to him that it was because her husband had been fasting all day and praying all night and had left her as if she had no husband. Thereupon our Master the Prophet (saw)

¹ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.



called ‘Uthman, and scolded him, saying, “*Did you turn away from my way of life?*” Then he made the following statement calling on believers to strike a balance in life: “*I both sleep and pray. I sometimes fast, and sometimes I do not fast. I also marry women. Fear Allah, ‘Uthman! Know that your family has rights over you, your guests have rights over you, your body has rights over you. Sometimes fast and sometimes do not. Sometimes pray and sometimes sleep.*”²

According to Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, there was a group of ascetic Companions (ra) who followed the example of ‘Uthman b. Maz’un and, indulging themselves completely in prayer, stayed away from women to the extent that they thought they would castrate themselves. However, when they learned of Allah’s Messenger’s warning to ‘Uthman, they gave up on this idea.³ This was because the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s message does not consider natural and innate needs to be non-existent. What is important is to meet the needs in a legitimate way which a spouse feels in the framework of a virtuous life. Since the beginning of mankind, the way to live a pure and virtuous life has been through the family. For this reason, marriage is encouraged in Islam,⁴ and bachelor life, which is a kind of self-castration to the extent that it could prevent one from ever getting married, is forbidden.⁵ One is not allowed to forego family life or turn a blind eye to sexual feelings in order to worship Allah (swt) excessively.

From the very beginning, the Messenger of Allah (saw), with his warnings intended for those who ignored marriage and spouse, blocked the way to excesses that could arise in the religion in the future. He stated that avoiding worldly pleasures and needs, such as eating, drinking, relaxing, marrying, and socializing was not an act of piety. He equated cutting oneself off from contact with the world and occupying oneself exclusively with worship with being a monk and he forbade it.⁶ Marriage was one of the unchanging *sunnas* of the prophets,⁷ and they had wives and children.⁸ Our beloved Prophet, who married Khadija (ra) before he began to receive revelations and did not marry other women until after she died, said, “*Marriage is my custom (sunna). Whoever does not follow my custom is not from me. Marry! Because (on the Day of Judgement) I am going to take pride in the size of my umma against the other religious nations (umam). Whoever has the means, let him get married, and whoever does not, then he should fast for it will diminish his desire.*”⁹ This warning from Allah’s Messenger should be understood not as a form of exclusion but as an encouragement for marriage.

² HM26839, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 267; D1369, Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu’, 27; DM2200, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 3.

³ B5073, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 8.

⁴ M3398, Muslim, al-Nikah, 1.

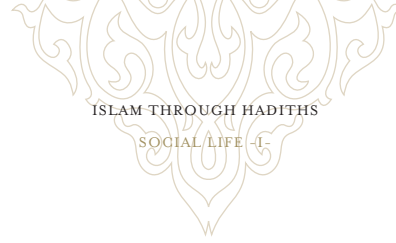
⁵ B5075, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 8.

⁶ DM2200, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 3.

⁷ T1080, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 1.

⁸ Al-Ra’d, 13:38.

⁹ IM1846, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 1.



Marriage, which is the foundation for the family, has many advantages for the individual and society. Above all, marriage is the source of tranquility and love for the opposite sexes. Through marriage, men and women attain peace and happiness. It is a sign of Allah's existence that through marriage, He created feelings of love, affection, compassion, bonding, and intimacy between couples.¹⁰

Marriage keeps a person away from sin and various bad things. This protection, also called "virtue," is considered in the Holy Qur'an as one of the characteristics of the believers who have been saved.¹¹ Furthermore, being virtuous is not limited to protecting one's private parts from what is forbidden. Remaining virtuous also means to stay away from ways and conditions that would lead someone to sin. Because of this, Allah on High orders believing men and women to keep their eyes away from religiously forbidden things.¹² In the Holy Qur'an, men and women are each likened to a cloth that would cover, protect, and complete the other.¹³ This means that by covering each other, couples put their sexual desires under control, avoid falling into the wrong paths, and, by protecting each other's virtue, create an ethical universe. The Holy Qur'an uses the term *muḥṣan*, having the connotation of "protected" and "unblemished," for marriage. This indicates that, by marriage, spouses will be protected from sin, the pressure of sexual desire, and other dangers of life. Fittingly, in some Prophetic traditions, it is said, "When a person marries, he completes half of his religion. The other half is to fear Allah!"¹⁴

Our beloved Prophet paid very close attention to the married life of young people in particular and helped them spiritually and materially. He strongly recommended that able people get married without delay, because marriage is the foundation of a virtuous, tranquil, and secure life. Only through marriage can the safety of future generations and a clean and healthy society be secured. According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), in this connection the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to the young people around him one day, "O company of youth! Whoever among you is able to have sexual intercourse, he should marry, because it is the best thing to make him lower his gaze (from what is forbidden) and to guard his dignity; and whoever is not able to marry should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual desire."¹⁵

Allah on High, who made all believers responsible for marrying off young people, says, "Marry off the single among you, and those of your male

¹⁰ Rum, 30:21

¹¹ Al-Mu'minun, 23:6.

¹² Al-Nur, 24:30-31.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

¹⁴ BSh5486, al-Bayhaqi, *Sha'ba 'l-Iman*, IV, 382.

¹⁵ B5066, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 3.



slaves and female slaves who are fit [for marriage]. If they are poor, Allah will provide for them from His bounty: Allah's bounty is infinite and He is all knowing."¹⁶

Our Master the Prophet (saw) reemphasized the divine order once again by saying, "Marry virtuous men to virtuous women!"¹⁷ According to another statement of our Prophet, Allah on High will help those who are getting married in order to protect their virtue.¹⁸ The Messenger of Allah (saw) personally monitored the family life of people closely, and tried to implement this divine order. The Companions (ra) who followed his path were also very sensitive to helping young people marry. Just as the wealthy youth among the Companions (ra) did not remain unmarried, it seems that those who had lost their spouses or got divorced did not stay unmarried for long and tried to get married as soon as possible. Because they knew how important marriage was, they always helped each other on this issue.

For example, 'Uthman b. 'Affan drew aside 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), who was still young, and told him that, if he wished, he would marry him off.¹⁹ Likewise, Ibn al-'Abbas advised Sa'id b. al-Jubayr (ra) to get married.²⁰

While remaining unmarried (celibacy and monastic life) is seen as the sign of a certain kind of religiosity according to the followers of some religious beliefs, it is not welcome in Islam.²¹ Our Prophet, who corrected certain mistaken assumptions and practices about marriage, was opposed to avoiding marriage because of religious concerns. His warnings to his prominent companion 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr who, exactly like 'Uthman b. Maz'un (ra), had disregarded his family in order to perform more prayers, are clear examples of his attitude on this issue.²² Throughout history, there were Muslim scholars, albeit few, who did not marry for various reasons, such as financial hardship and busy scholarly schedule. In different periods, we encounter unmarried scholars, such as al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, al-Nawawi, Ibn Taymiyya, and the late Muhammad Hamidullah, who devoted themselves entirely to scholarship. Without doubt, the ideal and common conduct is to follow the Prophet's example.

In marriage, most of the time wealth, nobility, beauty, and religiosity are the main factors taken into account in choosing a partner. In general, many people give importance to wealth, nobility—today replaced by career-oriented marriages—and physical beauty, which are transient features, and disregard moral integrity and religiosity, which are permanent. Our Master

¹⁶ Al-Nur, 24:32

¹⁷ DM2212, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 10.

¹⁸ T1655, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 20; N3122, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 12.

¹⁹ B5065, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 2.

²⁰ B5069, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 4.

²¹ Al-Hadid, 57:27; B5073, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 8; T1082, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 2.

²² M2730, Muslim, al-Siyam, 182.

the Prophet (saw), by saying, “A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman so that you will receive blessings all the time,”²³ warns those who are going to marry not to be overcome by transient enthusiasm and pleasure. Instead, he wanted them to value above all religiosity and temperamental beauty, so that they would receive blessings forever. That which insures spiritual bonding with a woman and makes the formal and outward union sincere is her virtue, that is, her avoidance of bad temperament, her purity, and her being cleansed of unpleasant things. The same is true for a man. Therefore, love of a spouse should not depend upon transient physical beauty alone. With the fading of physical beauty over time, one can lose interest and love when he or she needs them the most. The most attractive aspect of a woman and her true beauty is her behavior with respect to the grace and kindness unique to her femininity. Her most valuable feature is her sincere and luminous compassion. This beauty of hers continues to increase until the end of her life. Thanks to this enduring beauty, the love for her is maintained. Nevertheless, as he said to the young Companion, Jabir (ra),²⁴ it is known that our Prophet, in his advice to young people concerning marriage, also gave importance to emotional intimacy and physical beauty.

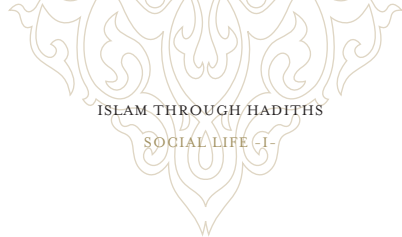
Couples who are getting married should not forget that Allah is the ultimate provider of livelihood, and they should not let economic concerns harm their marriage. Families should act considerately in this matter and should do their best to make the wedding process go smoothly. The *hadith*, “The most blessed wedding is the one which is performed in the easiest manner,”²⁵ should be the guiding principle for both the couples to be married and their families. Otherwise, the route to marriage will be impeded and the deterioration and moral collapse of society will begin. Today, there are many young Muslims who would like to get married, but cannot do so because of the high cost of wedding ceremonies. In some countries this is considered one of the most important social problems. Expectations, hopes, dreams, and plans of those who reach middle age without establishing a warm family home because of financial difficulties can come to naught. These circumstances can sometimes lead them to psychological disorders, depression, and even suicide. Sometimes they follow their carnal desires and indulge in non-marital relations.

In sum, in order to create a virtuous society, Islam strongly forbids

²³ B5090, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16.

²⁴ B5079, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 10.

²⁵ D2117, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 30-31.



extramarital or non-marital affairs and encourages and facilitates marriage. According to Islam, marriage, which is a natural and innate necessity, is both a source of peace and tranquility for men and women and the most suitable environment in which to raise new generations in a healthy manner. An ideal marriage protects the religious life of the spouses as well as their honor and offspring. The happiness of a Muslim will be assured by a proper marriage and a peaceful society will be assured by family homes based on solid foundations. In other words, protecting the family means protecting society and being able to look at the future with hope.

Without doubt, everyone would like to have a happy marriage. After making the necessary efforts and fulfilling the conditions for this purpose, one should also pray in order to maintain family tranquility. On this point, it is beneficial for the following prayer, which is taught to Muslims from the mouths of Allah's servants in the Holy Qur'an, to be recited: *"Our Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring. Make us good examples to those who are aware of You."*²⁶

²⁶ Al-Furqan, 25:74.



SPOUSE SELECTION IDEAL SPOUSE, IDEAL CHOICE

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”تَخَيَّرُوا لِنُطْفِكُمْ وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَكْفَاءَ وَأَنْكِحُوا إِلَيْهِمْ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Choose [the best] for your sperm, and marry compatible women; and marry
[your daughters] to compatible ones.”

(IM1968, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 46)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”تُنكحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاظْفِرْ
بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ الْمُزَنِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
”إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ فَأَنْكِحُوهُ، إِلَّا تَفَعَّلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادًا...“



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَهُ:
يَا عَلِيُّ، ثَلَاثٌ لَا تُؤَخَّرُهَا: الصَّلَاةُ إِذَا آتَتْ، وَالْجَنَازَةُ إِذَا حَضَرْتَ، وَالْأَيْمُ إِذَا
وَجَدْتَ لَهَا كُفْوًا.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman so that you will receive blessings all the time.”

(B5090, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16)



According to Abu Hatim al-Muzani (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “When someone whose religion and character you are pleased with comes to you, then marry (her to) him. If you do not do so, then there will be turmoil (fitna) in the land and discord (fasād) . . .”

(T1085, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 3)



According to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Prophet (saw) said to him, “O ‘Ali! Three are not to be delayed: Prayer when its time comes, a funeral when it (a prepared body) is present, and the (marriage of a) single woman when there is an equal for her.”

(T171, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 13; T1075, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana’iz, 73)



While returning from a military campaign, Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) was left somewhat behind the caravan by his weak and tired camel. Noticing this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to Jabir, helped him out and put his camel on the road. They travelled together in the remaining part of the trip. At some point during the conversation, the Messenger of Allah (saw) began talking about marriage, and asked: “*Have you ever married?*” Jabir replied, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet, who learned that Jabir was married to a widow and a woman older than him, was a little surprised by this situation. Because Jabir was much younger. Jabir (ra) explained his situation as follows: “O Messenger of Allah, my father was killed during the Battle of Uhud. He left nine daughters behind him. In other words, I have nine sisters. I wanted to marry someone who could keep my sisters together, take a good care of them, and keep an eye on them.” Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*You did the right thing. Now, you are arriving at Medina. Be mindful of your wife (don’t disregard your duties towards her).*” When they arrived at Medina, the Prophet (saw) gave him some money.”¹

The Blessed Prophet (saw) would closely attend to his companions, chat and give advices to guide them in their family life. In order for marriages to be more harmonious and permanent, it was necessary to choose a spouse in the most appropriate way possible. Our Prophet (saw) would guide his companions on this issue as well. His emphasis on virginity in some of his recommendations² was not an indication of superiority, but an assessment of generational reproduction and society building. As a matter of fact, he himself married widows, including his first wife Khadija (ra), to whom he had a lifelong affection and loyalty.

While compassion, being a friendly and sincere wife mentioned in some hadiths is preferred to ensure peace in the family, fertility is also

¹ B2097, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 34; B4052, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 18.

² B5077, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 9; IM1861, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 7.



considered important for the continuation of Muslim generations.³ However, after listening to the reason of the marriage of Jabir in the incident described above, the fact that the Prophet approved Jabir's reasoning for marriage, by saying, "You did it right," and that he never married a virgin girl except 'A'isha (ra),⁴ show that this could change depending on people's special circumstances. Our Prophet frowned upon those who would marry women who had been living an illicit life. Marsad b. Abi Marsad (ra), a big and strong man, who participated in the Battles of Badr and Uhud, where he was given the responsibility of transporting prisoners of war from Mecca to Medina, had an affair with an immoral woman from Mecca, Anaq.⁵ One day he asked the Prophet (saw) about a woman who was known as an immoral one, "O the Messenger of Allah (saw), may I marry Anaq?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) said nothing and remained silent. In a while the verse, "The adulterer is only [fit] to marry an adulteress,"⁶ was revealed. Upon this the Messenger of Allah (saw) called Marsad and after reciting this verse, he said "Don't marry her."⁷ Along this line, by saying, "Those men who were subjected to punishment for adultery could marry those women who were similar to him,"⁸ he indicated that adulterous men and women deserve to marry each other. With these words, our Prophet showed us that marriage provides not only legitimacy but also dignity while adultery brings degeneration and sedition to the society.

Our Prophet by saying, "Choose [the best] for your sperm, and marry compatible women; and marry [your daughters] to compatible ones,"⁹ indicated that compatibility and harmony between spouses were important factors for sustaining a marriage. Compatibility can depend on the level of social status, family, education, and financial well-being of the spouses. Compatibility in marriage is recommended, assuming that it provides the necessary background for a tranquil and harmonious family environment. For example, if one of the spouses had grown up in an affluent family and obtained a good education, and the other partner had grown up in a poor family, did not receive a good education and began to work for a livelihood at an early age, that might create some resentment among the couple. The marriage of our Prophet's aunt's daughter, Zaynab bint Jahsh and Zayd b. Haritha (ra) is mentioned in the Holy Quran in the following manner: "When you [Prophet] said to the man who had been favored by Allah and by you, 'Keep your wife and be mindful of Allah,' you hid in your heart what Allah

³ D2050, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 3; HM12640, Ibn Hanbal, III, 159.

⁴ B5077, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 9.

⁵ "Enes b. Ebū Mersed," *DIA*, XI, 233.

⁶ Al-Nur, 24:3

⁷ D2051, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 4.

⁸ D2052, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 4.

⁹ IM1968, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 46.

would later reveal: *you were afraid of people, but it is more fitting that you fear Allah. When Zayd no longer wanted her, We gave her to you in marriage so that there might be no fault in believers marrying the wives of their adopted sons after they no longer wanted them. Allah's command must be carried out.*¹⁰ Zaynab who is referred to in this verse came from a rich and notable family, and Zayd was an emancipated slave. The Prophet (saw) had Zaynab marry his adopted son, Zayd. In time, however, they could not get along well. Zayd went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and complained about his marriage, and the Prophet (saw) advised him to be afraid of Allah and continue his marriage.¹¹ In the end, however, they could not fix their problems and got divorced.

In order to have respect, trust, and acceptance in marriage, it is necessary to take the compatibility and equality of the spouses into consideration. However, if comparisons turn into a humiliating and offensive situation among Muslims, equivalence debate should be ended immediately. Because our Prophet, in his Farewell Pilgrimage, said, *“O people! Be mindful! Your Allah is one. Your father is one. There is no superiority of Arabs to non-Arabs, whites to blacks, or blacks to white. The superiority is about piety.”*¹²

It is a well-known fact that equality in various matters including education, culture, and social status can help to sustain a harmonious relationship between the spouses. However, this does not mean that equality is the only determinant for family tranquility. Our prophets' advice to Zayd and Zaynab (ra), or his advice to those who educated their concubines, then manumitted them and married them off, that they would get double rewards,¹³ shows that the importance of equality may change based on circumstances. In like manner, Abu Hudhayfa b. 'Utba (ra), a member of a notable family in Mecca during the time of our Prophet, married off his adopted son and manumitted slave, Salim, to Hind, the daughter of his brother, Walid (ra).¹⁴

Miqdad b. Aswad (ra), who was an adopted son of a Meccan family, proposed to the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf (ra), but he did not accept this, and even scolded him in return. Our Master the Prophet (saw), in order to console Miqdad, married off him to Duba'a, the daughter of his uncle Zubayr (ra).¹⁵

Our Prophet (saw), by saying, *“A woman is married for four things: Her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So you should marry the*

¹⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:37.

¹¹ B7420, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22; TT20:274, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XX, 274.

¹² HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

¹³ B5083, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 13.

¹⁴ B5088, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16; “Ebû Hüzeyfe,” *D'IA*, X, 159.

¹⁵ B5089, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16.



*religious woman so that you will receive blessings all the time,*¹⁶ refers to the main qualification that needs to be taken into consideration for marriage. It is just natural to want to have a spouse who belongs to a rich, well-known and respected family, and has a certain physical beauty. Once, a Companion (ra) went to our generous Prophet, asking his permission to marry a woman from the Medinan Muslims. Our Prophet asked him, “*Have you seen her?*” and the Companion said, “No.” Upon hearing this, our Master the Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Then, you go to see her. Because the eyes of the Medina Muslims are a bit different (small and blue).*”¹⁷ When al-Mughira b. Su’ba (ra), who was the protector of our Master the Prophet (saw) during the al-Hudaybiyya Peace Treaty, said that he was going to marry a woman, the Prophet (saw) gave him the same advice that he needed to go to have a look at her, and that this would increase love and compassion between them.¹⁸

It is understood that religiosity and good morality are the most important criteria for both man and woman in choosing a spouse, which is one of the most critical decisions in one’s life. The last part of the previously mentioned ḥadīth, “*You prefer the religious one so that you will receive blessing (in this world and the Hereafter),*” clearly refers to this fact.¹⁹ The wish and prayer of our Prophet about receiving a blessing indicates the hope to attain happiness both in this world and Hereafter. Although its foundation is set here, marriage is a union which continues to exist in Hereafter. The secret which provides continuity and gives meaning to marriage is the piety and good morality of the spouses. Wealth, nobility, and beauty are transient features. The sustainability of peace and tranquility at home and the family’s capacity to endure challenges is possible through having two essential values: religious sensitivity and moral maturity.

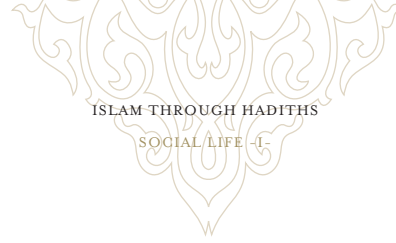
One day, a rich man passed by while our Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) were sitting together. The Prophet of Allah asked, “*What do you think about this man?*” Those who were present, said, “This man deserves to be married if he asks to marry a woman; to be accepted as an intercessor if he intercedes; and to be listened to if talks.” The Prophet of Allah kept silent for a while. In the meantime, a poor Muslim man passed by. He asked, “*What do you think about this man?*” Those who were present said, “When this man desires a woman, it is appropriate not to marry him, his intervention is not accepted when he intervenes, and his word is not

¹⁶ B5090, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16; M3635, Muslim, al-Rada’, 53.

¹⁷ M3485, Muslim, al-Nikah, 74; N3248, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 23.

¹⁸ IM1866, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 9; N3237, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 17.

¹⁹ B5090, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16; M3635, Muslim, al-Rada’, 53.



respected when he speaks.” Upon this the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “This (poor) man is much more virtuous than a world full of men similar to the other (rich) man.”²⁰

Our beloved Prophet warned those who leave aside essential values and are attracted by transient features in choosing a spouse as follows: “Don’t marry women due to their beauty. Their beauty could be the reason of their destruction (may lead them to go astray). Don’t marry them due their wealth either. Their wealth may lead them to commit sin. But marry them because of their piety. A pious black concubine whose nose is cut and ear is pierced, for example, can be more virtuous than the others.”²¹ The same is true for male piety. One day, our Prophet said to the same Companions (ra), “When someone whose piety and morality you like comes to ask the hand of your daughter for marriage, marry her to him. If you do not do so, sedition and corruption would prevail on the earth.” When those who were present said, “O the Prophet of Allah! What if that person is not equal to the girl? Our Prophet repeated three times, “When someone whose piety and morality you like come to ask the hand of your daughter for marriage, marry her to him,”²² and indicated that the criterion of piety was essential and the other characteristics could become significant with piety.

The verse of the Noble Qur’an, “Corrupt women are for corrupt men, and corrupt men are for corrupt women; good women are for good men and good men are for good women,”²³ indicates that good morality and clean life are essential in marriage, and that people could be equal on those grounds. In like manner, the verse “The adulterer is only [fit] to marry an adulteress or an idolatress, and the adulteress is only [fit] to marry an adulterer or an idolater: such behavior is forbidden to believers,”²⁴ emphasizes that dignity and morality are essentials of marriage.

In the verse, “Do not marry idolatresses until they believe: a believing slave woman is certainly better than an idolatress, even though she may please you. And do not give your women in marriage to idolaters until they believe: a believing slave is certainly better than an idolater, even though he may please you. Such people call [you] to the Fire, while Allah calls [you] to the Garden and forgiveness by His leave. He makes His messages clear to people, so that they may bear them in mind,”²⁵ it is repeated that as long they do not have belief in Allah (swt), it is not permissible to marry them even if they have a very high social status or great wealth or extraordinary beauty. On the question of marry-

²⁰ B5091, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16.

²¹ IM1859, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 6.

²² T1085, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 3.

²³ Al-Nur, 24:26.

²⁴ Al-Nur, 24:3.

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:221.



ing women of the People of the Book, the Holy Qur'an says, *"Today all good things have been made lawful for you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful for you as your food is lawful for them. So are chaste believing women as well as chaste women of the people who were given the Scripture before you, as long as you have given them their bride-gifts and married them, not taking them as lovers or secret mistresses."*²⁶ Therefore as with Muslim women, it is obvious that dignity is also the most important criterion for Jewish and Christian women.

Allah the Exalted, with the verse, *"Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility: He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect,"*²⁷ states that having a spouse is a natural need, and a marriage which satisfies this need in a legitimate way should be built upon love and compassion. Our Prophet encouraged marriage as reflected in his statements to 'Ali, *"O 'Ali! Don't postpone three things: prayer when the time comes; burial of the death when the corpse is ready; and marriage of a woman when he finds her a good fit."*²⁸

Everyone is in need of compassion and love and wants to have a wife with whom he wants to overcome the challenges of life and share its beauties. Sometimes one chooses a wife for her beauty, sometimes for her career, sometimes for her fame, and sometimes for her piety and good morality. Of course, all these are important, should be taken into consideration, due to human nature. Everyone has his own taste, preference, ideals, and makes his decisions accordingly, in different stages of his life. However, in choosing a spouse, which is one of most critical decisions in one's life, one needs to prioritize piety and moral virtue. Because a marriage which prioritizes piety and good morality will bring peace and tranquility to the couple not only in this life but also in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an refers to those who are happy in Paradise as follows: *"They and their spouses —seated on couches in the shade."*²⁹

²⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5:5.

²⁷ Al-Rum, 30:21.

²⁸ T1075, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana'iz, 73.

²⁹ Ya Sin, 36:56.



MARRIAGE CONTRACT AN ONEROUS AGREEMENT



أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ حَدَّثَهُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تُنْكَحُ الْأَيُّمُ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْمَرَ، وَلَا تُنْكَحُ الْبِكْرُ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ“، قَالُوا:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ إِذْنُهَا؟ قَالَ: ”أَنَّ تَسْكُتَ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“A widow should not be given in marriage without her approval; and a virgin
should not be given in marriage without her permission.”

The people asked, “O Allah’s Messenger! How can we know we have
her (the virgin’s) permission?” He said, “Her silence (indicates her
permission).”

(B5136, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 42)



عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَاطِبِ الْجُمَحِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”فَصَلُّ مَا بَيْنَ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحَلَالِ الدُّفُّ وَالصَّوْتُ.“



عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ أَحَقَّ الشَّرْطِ أَنْ يُوفَى بِهِ، مَا اسْتَحَلَّتُمْ بِهِ الْفُرُوجَ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”لَمْ يَرِ لِلْمُتَحَابِّينِ مِثْلَ النِّكَاحِ.“



According to Muhammad b. Hatib al-Jumahi (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following: *“The thing that differentiates lawful (marriage) from unlawful (relations) is announcing it by beating the tambourine and singing.”*

(T1088, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6)



According to ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Surely, the most worthy condition which must be fulfilled is the bride price (mahr), which makes sexual intercourse lawful.”*

(M3472, Muslim, al-Nikah, 63)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“There is nothing better than a marriage contract for two people who love one another.”*

(IM1847, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah)



A young girl came to the house of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to air a grievance. She told 'A'isha (ra), "Against my will, my father married me off to his brother's son just for his prestige." 'A'isha (ra) said, "Let's sit and wait for the Prophet (saw)." When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came home, 'A'isha (ra) told him what the girl had said. The Prophet (saw) then sent word to the girl's father, asking him to come to visit. The Prophet (saw) wanted to investigate the issue and if the girl was married against her will, he wanted to recognize her right to choose. Then the girl said, "Oh Messenger of Allah! In fact, I approved my father's action. But I wanted to learn whether or not women had a say (about marriage)."¹ Eventually, the issue between the father and daughter was resolved and both left the Prophet's house contented.

Wanting to establish an exemplary family structure, the Prophet (saw) valued women, who did not have many rights in those days, and indicated that in regards to marriage one must consult with a woman and gain her consent in the most important decision of her life. On another occasion, the Prophet (saw) remarked that one must gain the consents to marriage of virgin girls and widows and said, "*A widow should not be given in marriage without her approval; and a virgin should not be given in marriage without her permission.*" The People asked, "O Allah's Messenger! How can we know we have her (the virgin's) permission?" He said, "*Her silence (indicates her permission).*"²

While he valued the consent of women to marry, the Prophet (saw) also pointed out the importance of considering the views of guardians (father, grandfather, and brother), by saying, "*Marriage cannot be valid without (the consent of) a guardian,*"³ and, "*The marriage of a woman who lacks the consent of her guardians is void. If there is cohabitation, she gets her mihr for the intercourse her husband has had. If there is a dispute, the sultan (man in*

¹ N3271, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 36; HM 2557, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 135.

² B5136, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 42.

³ T1101, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 14; D2085, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 18-19.



authority) is the guardian of one who has none.”⁴ These *ḥadīths* were a precaution against marriages performed in secret without the knowledge of guardians or the permission of family elders or necessary authorities. The Messenger of Mercy was concerned that marriage without consent could lead to all sorts of exploitation of young people, who had been raised by their families with such care and compassion. Accordingly, the Prophet (saw) expressed his concerns. When all the *ḥadīths* on this subject are read together, it is clear that the Prophet (saw) did not approve of marrying off girls without their consent as well as girls getting married without the consent of their parents.

In order to guard against possible abuse, the Prophet (saw) stated that guardians responsible for making decisions needed to be sane and rational people⁵ and declared that the decisions of incompetent guardians were invalid.⁶ Thus, in cases where guardians are incompetent, absent or abusive, the authorities can intervene and handle the situation.

If guardianship is understood not as a form of repression and usurpation of women’s rights, but rather as a form of guidance and sharing responsibility, then it can be seen as in the best interests of women and their children. During the Prophet’s time, the purpose of sharing this responsibility was to prevent possible injustices while protecting the rights of women. Otherwise, it would have been easy to exploit the rights of solitary women. Therefore, the Prophet’s emphasis on guardianship and consent was in order to establish a solid family structure, avoid irreversible mistakes, and blend the families of brides and grooms.

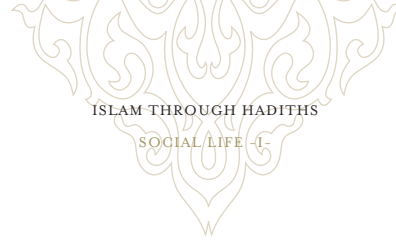
So as not to provide any opportunity for secret marriage, the Prophet (saw) put the greatest importance on marrying openly and announcing the marriage to the community. To him, “*The thing that differentiates lawful (marriage) from unlawful (relations) is announcing it by beating the tambourine and singing.*”⁷ The holy Prophet was building a society upon the foundation of marriage. In this society there was no room for unruliness and debauchery. He wanted the sacred family institution to be founded in a festive atmosphere, with the participation of friends and family. The formation of the family, the bedrock of society, was to have been a sacred ceremony witnessed in joy and excitement by others in the community. Marriages hidden from view have always been suspect. That’s why the Prophet (saw) said, “*Announce this marriage, hold it in the mosque, and beat the tambourine*

⁴D2083, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 18-19.

⁵BS14012, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 192.

⁶BS14015, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 192.

⁷T1088, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6.



for it.”⁸ In those days, mosques were the most suitable places for such announcements. Once when the Prophet (saw) smelled on ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra) a perfume called *şufra*, used specifically for weddings, he asked, “What was it?” He replied, “O Messenger of Allah, I married a woman with a mihr of as much gold as a date pit.” The Prophet (saw) asked Allah (swt) to bless the marriage and congratulated the groom. Then he asked him to offer a wedding banquet, even if with just one sheep.⁹

The marriage, crowned with a feast to which everyone had been invited, was accepted as legitimate and the people were asked to follow this example. In another *ḥadīth* it was mentioned that at least two witnesses must be present during the wedding ceremony.¹⁰ In fact, having the wedding ceremony in a mosque or in another public place with music and a banquet assured that there would be not just two witnesses but many witnesses for the marriage.

About marriage, Allah Almighty says, “Give women their bridal gift upon marriage.”¹¹ The word “*şaduqāt*” (bridal gift) in the verse, stems from the same root of the word “loyalty.” It means that Allah asks men to show their love, compassion, and loyalty by giving gifts to women. Men, by giving this gift, establish spiritual affinity with women, and express their sincere intentions about loyalty and marriage. This is an importance practice that offers the first symbol of loyalty in a lifelong union.

The mihr that the husband pays throughout the marriage is an expression of his loyalty, while providing financial security for his wife. Because of that, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Surely, the most worthy condition which must be fulfilled is the mihr, which makes sexual intercourse lawful.”¹² On another occasion, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that women had a right to the mihr.¹³ When the Prophet (saw) asked one of the Companions (ra), who had little money, to at least give his bride a ring made of iron,¹⁴ he showed that giving a woman the mihr was required by the marriage contract. But the amount of the mihr would be determined by the groom’s financial situation and local customs. Guarding against extreme bride prices (mihrs), the Prophet (saw) recommended moderation, saying, “The best marriage is the easiest marriage,”¹⁵ and, “The most blessed woman is the one who is most agreeable on the topic of mihr.”¹⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) also took people’s financial difficulties into consideration. He made various suggestions to those who had no pos-

⁸ T1089, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6; IM1895 Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 20.

⁹ M3490, Muslim, al-Nikah, 79.

¹⁰ MA10473, ‘Abd Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VI, 196.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:4

¹² M3472, Muslim, al-Nikah, 63.

¹³ D2129, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 34-35; N3355, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 67.

¹⁴ B5135, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 52.

¹⁵ D2117, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 30-31.

¹⁶ NM2732, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, II, 194.



sessions to offer a wife. In such cases, the Prophet (saw) declared that not just material possessions could be offered as a mihr. For example, he married off a Companion having no possessions on the condition that he taught his wife what he knew from the Holy Qur'an.¹⁷

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who saw the mihr as the natural right of women, abolished "shigār" marriage, which was practiced in the Jahiliyya (the pre-Islamic "Days of Ignorance"). In this marriage, men traded off their daughters or sisters without paying any mihr.¹⁸ Thus, the people of that time freed themselves of the responsibility of paying mihr. But the Prophet (saw) banned marriage without the mihr, including the "berdel" marriage, in which a man lacking property might swap his sister for a bride.¹⁹

Aiming to create a tranquil society, Islam established some boundaries to create peace and harmony in the family. These boundaries, which even prevent some marriages, are meant to be for the happiness of individuals and society. Almighty Allah said this about women with whom marriage is prohibited: "*You are forbidden to take as wives your mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal and maternal aunts, the daughters of your brothers and the daughters of your sisters, your milk-mothers and milk-sisters, your wives' mothers, the stepdaughters in your care—those born of women with whom you have consummated marriage; if you have not consummated the marriage, then you will not be blamed—wives of your begotten sons, two sisters at the same time. But exceptions are made for such marriages in the past: Allah is most forgiving and merciful.*"²⁰ The Holy Qur'an forbade marrying women already married,²¹

and the Messenger of Allah (saw) forbade marrying a woman and her aunt at the same time.²² When Fayruz al-Daylami (ra), who had married two sisters, converted to Islam, the Prophet (saw) asked him to divorce one of the sisters.²³ Probably because of the influence of the Jahiliyya period, one of the wives of our Master the Prophet (saw), Umm Habiba, offered her sister, 'Azza (ra), to the Prophet (saw) so that her sister might also have the honor of being married to him. The Prophet (saw) said that would not be lawful.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) said, "*Things that are unlawful between blood relatives are unlawful between milk-siblings as well.*"²⁵ By this he meant that those who were nursed by the same mother were considered siblings, and marriage between siblings was strictly forbidden. The Prophet (saw) was once offered

¹⁷ B5135, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 41.

¹⁸ M3469, Muslim, al-Nikah, 61.

¹⁹ B5112, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 29.

²⁰ Al-Nisa', 4:23

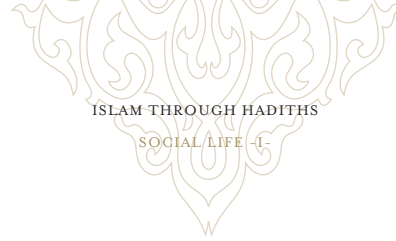
²¹ Al-Nisa', 4:24

²² B5109, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 28; M3436, Muslim, al-Nikah, 33.

²³ D2243, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 24-25; IM1951, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 39.

²⁴ B5101, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 21.

²⁵ M3579, Muslim, al-Rada', 9.



a woman in marriage, but upon learning that she was his milk-sibling, he refused.²⁶

Almighty Allah also set certain conditions for the marriage of divorced or widowed women. If a woman were divorced and was not pregnant, she must wait for three menstrual periods to pass before remarrying.²⁷ If a non-pregnant woman's husband died, she must wait four months and ten days before remarrying.²⁸ If a pregnant woman were divorced or widowed, her waiting period for remarriage ended with the birth of her baby.²⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said as well that a pregnant woman in this situation may remarry after giving birth.³⁰

Believers are not allowed to marry women who are nonbelievers, with the exception of People of the Book. Muslim women are not allowed to marry nonbelievers.³¹ The Prophet (saw) answered questions about marrying women of the People of the Book with the following verse: “. . . it is lawful with those who are chaste, believing women as well as chaste women of the people who were given the Scripture before you, as long as you have given them their *mahr* and married them, not committing adultery with them or taking them as secret mistresses.”³² This verse permits Muslim men to marry women of the People of the Book, but it does not mention Muslim women marrying men from the People of Book. One of the Companions, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), also tells us that Muslim men were allowed to marry women from the People of the Book, but Muslim women were not allowed to do the same.³³

Among the marriages prohibited by our Master the Prophet (saw) was *mut'a* (temporary) marriage. Although some accounts state that owing to some necessities the Prophet (saw) allowed it, the following *hadith* makes clear that this kind of marriage was unequivocally prohibited: “O People, I permitted you to marry women in a *mut'a* marriage. But Allah has prohibited it until Judgement Day.”³⁴ Knowing this ban, 'Ali (ra) objected to a man who wanted to practice *mut'a*, saying, “You are mistaken. For sure, the Messenger of Allah (saw) prohibited the *mut'a* marriage, as well as eating domesticated donkey meat on the day of the Battle of Khaybar.”³⁵

It is plain to see that all the pronouncements of the Prophet (saw) on the topic of marriage were meant to establish healthy steps towards creating family unity; to eradicate malpractices harming social structures; and to form an institutional tradition that combines dignity, mutual devotion,

²⁶ B5101, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 21.

²⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:228

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:234; B5336, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 46.

²⁹ Al-Talaq, 65:4

³⁰ B5319, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 39.

³¹ Al-Mumtahina, 60:10

³² Al-Ma'ida, 5:5

³³ MA10082, 'Abd Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VI, 83.

³⁴ M3422, Muslim, al-Nikah, 21; DM2226, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 16.

³⁵ N3367, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 71.

³⁶IM1847, Ibn Maja,
al-Nikah, 1; BS3737, al-
Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*,
VII, 120.

loyalty, respect, and love. These measures aim to keep couples and their children happy, serene, and secure within the framework of Islamic family tradition. As the Prophet (saw) pointed out, “*There is nothing better than a marriage contract for two people who love one another.*”³⁶



A TRUE MARRIAGE CONTRACT FOR A SOLID FAMILY



عَنْ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي عُرْوَةُ بِنْتُ الزُّبَيْرِ أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ
أَخْبَرَتْهُ: ... فَلَمَّا بُعِثَ مُحَمَّدٌ ﷺ بِالْحَقِّ هَدَمَ نِكَاحَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ كُلَّهُ إِلَّا
نِكَاحَ النَّاسِ الْيَوْمِ.

Ibn Shihab said, “Urwa b. al-Zubayr reported that ‘A’isha (ra), who was the wife of the Prophet (saw) and his aunt, told him, ‘[. . .] Muhammad (saw), when he was sent with the [true] religion, annulled all types of Jahiliyya marriage, except the one that is practiced today.’”

(B5127, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 37; D2272, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 32-33)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا شِغَارَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ.“



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ نَهَى عَنْ مُتَعَةِ النِّسَاءِ
يَوْمَ خَيْبَرَ...



حَدَّثَنِي الرَّبِيعُ بْنُ سَبْرَةَ الْجُهَنِيُّ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ حَدَّثَهُ، أَنَّهُ كَانَ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ
فَقَالَ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنِّي قَدْ كُنْتُ أَذْنُتُ لَكُمْ فِي الْإِسْتِمْتَاعِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ، وَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ ذَلِكَ إِلَيَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَمَنْ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْهُنَّ شَيْءٌ فَلْيُخَلِّ سَبِيلَهُ،
وَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا.“



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*There is no such thing as shigar marriage in Islam.*”

(M3468, Muslim, al-Nikah, 60)



According to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Prophet (saw) prohibited *mut‘a*
marriage on the day of the Battle of Khaybar.

(M5005, Muslim, al-Sayd, 22; B5115, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 32)



According to al-Rabi‘ b. Sabra al-Juhani’s father (ra), while he was with
the Prophet (saw), he said, “*O People, I allowed mut‘a marriage. But Allah
has forbidden it until the Day of Judgement. Whoever has a wife from a mut‘a
marriage, he should let her go. And do not take back anything that you gave
her.*”

(M3422, Muslim, al-Nikah, 21)



Our mother ‘A’isha (ra) thus explained the types of marriage that were prevalent before Islam: “Marriage in Jahiliyya times was of four kinds. In the most prevalent type, which is practiced today, the marriage takes place after getting the consent of the family elders and learning the amount of the bride price (mihr). In a second type, which had the objective of profiting from a noble lineage, a man’s wife was sent to a more distinguished man and compelled to be with him and, until the pregnancy was confirmed, not with her husband. This was called *istibḍā’* marriage. There was a third kind of marriage in which a woman who had given birth to a child named one of the men with whom she’d had sex as the father and thus, her husband. In another type of marriage, women who had invited many men to sleep with them, hanging flags in front of their homes to indicate their willingness, after giving birth to a child could marry one of the men. An expert in determining patronage from appearance would identify the man who would be her husband by naming which man the child resembled. When Allah sent Muhammad (saw) as a Prophet, he annulled all marriages of the Jahiliyya period except for the kind of marriage Muslims practice today.”¹

One of the other types of marriage of the Jahiliyya period was the “*shighār*” marriage, in which men forced their daughters or sisters to marry men they didn’t want in order for their father or brother to make the marriage he desired. In this marriage, women did not have any right to choose their husbands and ask for the mihr (bride price). In order to marry whom he liked, a man would offer his own daughter to the father of the girl he wished to marry.²

Our Master the Prophet (saw), in the same way that he forbade all types of marriage that put women at a disadvantage, abolished this false marriage that victimized girls, by saying, “*There is no such things as shighār*

¹ B5127, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 37; D2272, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 32-33.

² B5112, al-Bukhari, Nikah, 29; D2074, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 14; M3465, al-Muslim, al-Nikah, 57.



(marriage) in Islam.”³ As such, the practice of forcing women to marry people whom they did not like, or pressuring them to marry against their will, came to an end. The Companions (ra), showing sensitivity in respecting the Prophet’s Sunna, approached such marriages with caution, and tried to avoid them.⁴

Today, the “*bardal*” or “exchange” type of marriage, which is similar to *shighār* marriage, is seen to create a lot of problems. Without any reason, a problem in one of these “*bardal*” families can easily be transferred to the other family. For example, one side may get a legitimate divorce that leads in turn to a divorce between the other side, a couple who loves and understands each other, and this results in major family dramas.

Another type of marriage that the Prophet (saw) annulled was the *mut’a* marriage. Arabs, who were away from their hometowns for such reasons as trade and war, would make temporary marriages in the places they went. Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) explained the history and rationale of this marriage as follows: “*Mut’a* existed in the early days of Islam. When a man went to another place, he would marry, depending on how long he stayed there. This woman would keep the man’s belongings safe and cook food for him.”⁵

All of the common practices of that time that were wrong were abolished, parallel to changes in early Islamic society. In fact, some were replaced gradually. Correcting mistakes pertaining to marriage contracts and family life also occurred over time in this way. Changes in *mut’a* marriage took place in the same manner. In the early days, the young Companions (ra) went off to war with the Prophet (saw) and lived away from their wives for long periods. They wanted to remain longer in military campaigns in the name of Allah (swt), to wage additional *jihād*. There were some who even considered castrating themselves for this purpose. They presented this idea to the Prophet (saw) and asked his permission to perform this act, but he emphatically opposed it. Instead, he permitted them to engage in *mut’a* marriage, under certain conditions.⁶

Thus, *mut’a* was permitted as a temporary solution to difficult circumstances.⁷ According to ‘Ali (ra), who since childhood had grown up next to the Prophet (saw) and was never apart from him, the Prophet (saw) forbade *mut’a* marriage on the day of the Battle of Khaybar.⁸ This practice was abolished at that point in time. Although the ban on *mut’a* was tem-

³ M2075, Muslim, al-Nikah, 60; IM1885, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 16.

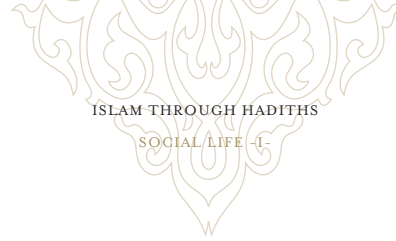
⁴ D2075, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 14; B514476, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 311.

⁵ T1122, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 29.

⁶ M3410, Muslim, al-Nikah, 11; B5717, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 32.

⁷ M3429, Muslim, al-Nikah, 27.

⁸ M5005, Muslim, al-Sayd, 22; B5115, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 32.



porarily lifted sometime later, ‘Ali (ra) believed that the ban, which was established on the day of the Battle of Khaybar, continued to be upheld.⁹ For example, it was temporarily allowed the last time during the conquest of Mecca in the eighth year of the Hijra, but then was abolished again by the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw), when abolishing the *mut’a*, stated, “O People, I allowed *mut’a* marriage. But Allah has forbidden it until the Day of Judgement. Whoever has a wife from a *mut’a* marriage, he should let her go. And do not take back anything that you gave her.”¹⁰

During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah (saw) delivered several speeches reminding Muslims of some key issues. Among them, he referred to *mut’a* marriage and stressed that it was irreversibly banned. Those who heard the issue mentioned for the first time there, such as Rabi‘ b. Sabra (ra), thought that the Prophet (saw) had prohibited *mut’a* marriage during the Farewell Pilgrimage.¹¹ However, considering the importance of this prohibition, the Prophet’s mention of it was nothing more than a reminder that this was already a prohibited practice. Those Companions (ra) who knew the stages of the abolition of *mut’a* marriage and were well aware of what the Prophet (saw) wanted to do in this matter, stated that *mut’a* should be considered under the category of adultery.¹² ‘A’isha (ra), addressing the people who consider the *mut’a* marriage lawful, said, “Between me and them stands the book of Allah.” With this, she indicated that this marriage was against the basic Qur’anic principles of marriage and she recited the following verse:¹³ “[they] protect their honor, except with their wives and their concubines. They are not condemned for their relationships with them, but anyone who seeks more than this is exceeding the limits.”¹⁴

In the Jahiliyya period, there was another practice called “*maqt* marriage,” by which one of the deceased’s close relatives could throw a dress to the widow (as the bride price / *mahr*), and claim that he had inherited her, and owned her without recognizing her right to speak and leaving her with no choice in the matter. Brothers or even sons of the deceased could follow this practice. The basis of this practice was the view that women were property. After a man died everything he left behind was inherited by his close relatives. The widow was considered part of a man’s estate and thus could be inherited. When his father died, Qays b. Aslat the Companion (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) for permission to marry the his father’s widow. The following verse was then revealed: “Do not marry

⁹ B6961, al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 4; N3367, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 71.

¹⁰ M3422, Muslim, al-Nikah, 21; DM2226, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 16.

¹¹ D2072, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 13; BS14496, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 318.

¹² M2947, Muslim, al-Hajj, 145; M3429, al-Muslim, al-Nikah, 27.

¹³ BS14510, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 323.

¹⁴ Al-Mu’minun, 23:5-7.



anymore women whom your fathers married—those who did so in the past are exempt—because this is indeed a shameful thing to do, loathsome and leading to evil.”¹⁵

Concerning the spread of secret marriages among today’s youth, even if they meet the conditions of having a proposal, acceptance, and witnesses, they do not meet the basic principle of the Prophetic tradition,¹⁶ which is the stipulation of publicly announcing the marriage. Therefore, it is a harmful practice for society. The basic purpose of marriage is to announce the legitimate union of two people, avoid all kinds of conjecture and rumors about them, and make the family accepted by society.

Only in this way is it possible to sustain love and trust in a family, to raise healthy children, and to prevent abuses. Today, practicing *mut’a* marriage would mean to use it as an instrument of personal desires, without an understanding its original reason and context.

In the Jahiliyya period, a man could marry two sisters at the same time. The Holy Qur’an forbade this practice,¹⁷ and our Master the Prophet (saw) refused such an offer made to himself.¹⁸ Most probably inspired by this verse, our Prophet said, “A man should not marry a woman and her aunt at the same time,”¹⁹ while explaining which relatives could not be included in a marriage.

In that period one man, depending on his social and financial status, could marry several women. There was no limit to this practice. The Qur’anic command limited the number of wives to four.²⁰ The Prophet (saw) asked the Companions, who had more than for wives such as the new convert, Ghaylan b. Salama (ra),²¹ to obey the Qur’anic command.²²

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) said in reference to a man who had committed adultery with a woman and then married her: “Its beginning was immoral (*sifah*), but its end was a legitimate marriage (*nikāh*).”²³ In other words, the beginning of the relationship was unlawful, but its end was lawful. Our Master the Prophet (saw), by saying, “I was born of a marriage that was not tainted by adultery and immorality,”²⁴ indicated that he was the child of legitimately married parents.

While the marriage that the Messenger of Allah (saw) refers to contains a certain order and principle, immoral marriage (*sifah*) contains arbitrariness and chaos. Islam created a “marriage society” that answered the desire of human nature to marry in a legitimate way, and stated the need to

¹⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:22; BS14246, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 256.

¹⁶ T1089, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6.

¹⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:23

¹⁸ B5107, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 27.

¹⁹ B5109, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 28.

²⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:3.

²¹ IM1953, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 40.

²² D2441, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 24-25.

²³ BS14191, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 242.

²⁴ BS14413, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 294.

stay away from all forms of debauchery. As mentioned in a *ḥadīth*, related by ‘A’isha, the Messenger of Allah (saw) rejected all kinds of Jahiliyya marriages, and aimed to create a society consisting of couples whose lives were united in marriage based on purity and modesty.

In the Holy Qur’an, marriage was referred as a “*mīthāq ghalīz*” (serious contract),²⁵ in which couples needed to wrap and protect each other like a robe.²⁶ Here the aim was to create a healthy and harmonious society, a warm abode where couples could unite in love and affection; where children, who were the most beautiful fruits of worldly blessings, could be raised in tranquility and security; and where family members could take refuge from the affairs of the world. Forming unions based on ephemeral desires would hinder the establishment of genuine homes and not provide true security and tranquility. Today, we see some couples say, “We are not planning to get married,” despite the fact that they live in the same house. This would undermine the family, which is the most important element sustaining society and even nations. This disruption of the family would eventually drag individuals and societies to destruction.

Likewise, it is not legitimate to attempt to marry by way of “girl abduction,” using brute force without getting her and her family’s consent. Marriage should be based on mutual consent and acceptance, but when it’s brought about in this way, it dishonors the girl and her family. If a marriage, which is supposed to bring trust and love, is carried out through force and violence, it brings not happiness, but unhappiness, quarrels, and even murder. When Khansa’ bint Khidam (ra), a widow from Medina, complained that her father made her marry against her will, the Messenger of Allah (saw) announced that this marriage was illegitimate,²⁷ but later Khansa’ withdrew her complaint and the marriage continued.²⁸ It is impossible to imagine that the holy Messenger, who opposed the idea that a father would marry off his daughter without her consent, would not be against kidnapping a girl with violence and deception and forcing her into marriage. The Prophet (saw) not only abolished types of marriage of the Jahiliyya period that harmed women both spiritually and physically, but also eliminated types of marriage that violated social and economic right, and declared as illegitimate all marriages in which there was no intention to create a home, based on purity, modesty, mutual consent, affection, and compassion.

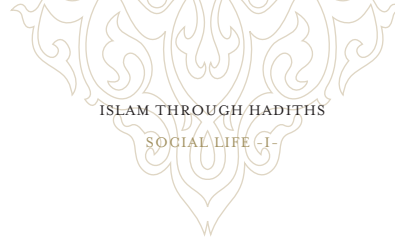
If marriage, which is the most important element for human and so-

²⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:21.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

²⁷ B5138, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 43.

²⁸ N3271, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 36.



cial salvation, is based on unlimited and unbridled personal desires, then it would lead to numerous unwanted consequences. Therefore, Islam by encouraging marriage with a contract with set conditions, aims at creating a system at both the individual and societal levels. Then it is possible to keep the social structure sound and healthy by protecting mental and physical health of individuals. Protecting the individual is possible by taking the necessary social, moral, and legal measures. This is true in marriage, as in all areas of life. Therefore, acceptable marriage in Islam is performed with the mutual consent of the partners, testimonies of the witnesses, the approval of family elders and the announcement of the marriage to everyone. The marriage also carries conditions such as the mihr for the woman.



WEDDING MARRIAGE CEREMONY



عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَاطِبِ الْجُمَحِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”فَضْلُ مَا بَيْنَ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحَلَالِ الدُّفُّ وَالصَّوْتُ.“

According to Muhammad b. Hatib al-Jumahi (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The thing that differentiates lawful (marriage) from unlawful (relations) is announcing it by beating the tambourine and singing.*”

(T1088, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَعْلِنُوا هَذَا النِّكَاحَ وَاجْعَلُوهُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَاضْرِبُوا عَلَيْهِ بِالذُّفُوفِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”الْوَلِيمَةُ أَوْلَ يَوْمٍ حَقٌّ. وَالثَّانِي مَعْرُوفٌ. وَالثَّلَاثُ رِيَاءٌ وَسُمْعَةٌ.“



قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : ... فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”أَوْلِمَ وَلَوْ بِشَاةٍ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”فُكُّوا الْعَانِي، وَاجِيبُوا الدَّاعِي، وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ.“



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Publicize this marriage and hold it in the mosque and beat the tambourine for it.”*

(T1089, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“On the first day, the wedding feast is an obligation, on the second day it is a custom, and on the third day it is showing off.”*

(IM1915, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 25)



According to 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf (ra), when the Prophet (saw) learned that he had married, said, *“Give a wedding feast, even if with just one sheep.”*

(B2048, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 1)



According to Abu Musa (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Set the captives free, accept the invitation, and visit the sick.”*

(B5147, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 72)



In the second year of the Hijra to Medina, a short time after the Battle of Badr, our Master the Prophet (saw) married off his beloved daughter, Fatima, to his uncle's son, 'Ali (ra). Fatima was at the time around sixteen¹ or eighteen² years old. The wedding preparations were begun. The Prophet (saw) called 'A'isha and Umm Salama (ra), and asked them to prepare Fatima to be a bride and take her to 'Ali's bedroom. They went to 'Ali's bedroom and spread on the floor the soft earth brought from al-Batha', a place between Mecca and Medina. The rest of the wedding preparations were described by the two mothers: "Then we stuffed by hand two pillows and fluffed them to make them soft. Then for guests we offered dates, raisins and sherbet to drink. Then we brought a piece of wood and put it in the corner, for hanging clothes and water skins."³ On this day, Fatima's dowry consisted of a piece of velvet, a water skin and one pillow stuffed with a sweet-smelling herb.⁴

Fatima's wedding was simple and humble. Her mihr, dowry, and wedding feast were quite simple. Her wedding ceremony was also simple. Nevertheless, the mothers, 'A'isha and Umm Salama (ra), who witnessed the wedding said, "We never saw a more beautiful wedding than Fatima's."⁵

Although it varies from society to society and from culture to culture, the wedding is one of the most important days and turning points in one's life. The wedding ceremony is important because it announces that family union is established not in secret but publicly and legitimately. Throughout history the wedding has been valued by people and performed in the best possible way.

In the early days of Islam, people used to celebrate their marriage ceremonies according to their own cultures. Following the customs of the day, drinking alcohol and men and women carelessly enjoying themselves together were very common. Before he was charged with the mission of the

¹ N6/365, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, VI, 365.

² ST8/22, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 22.

³ IM1911, Ibn Maja, *al-Nikah*, 24.

⁴ N3384, al-Nasa'i, *al-Nikah*, 81.

⁵ IM1911, Ibn Maja, *al-Nikah*, 24.



Messenger, the Prophet (saw) considered attending one of these wedding in Mecca. But when he got to the point where he could hear music, he fell asleep. In this way, Allah (swt) protected him.⁶

The Prophet (saw) wanted to see weddings performed in an atmosphere of celebration and joy, and permitted people to entertain themselves by beating the tambourine, singing, presenting a feast, and showering the bride and groom with candy, dates, and fruit. What is more, he admonished those who had neglected to celebrate their weddings and encouraged them to do whatever necessary to make that right.⁷ But he abolished incorrect practices that originated in Jahiliyya times. For example, at weddings he prohibited drinking alcohol, immoderate entertainment, and the mingling of men and women beyond the bounds of modesty.

Marriage begins the moment that two people meet and decide to marry. Our Master the Prophet (saw) said that the parties in a marriage needed to meet each other, know each other, and accept each other, and that this was the way to a long and happy marriage. Al-Mughira b. Sh'uba (ra), who was known for his great intelligent and abilities, tells the story of his own marriage: "One day I came up to the Prophet (saw) and told him I wanted to get married. He said, 'Go take a look at the girl you want to marry, because you see her, you get used to her and that will help the marriage last.' So I went to the mother and father of the girl from the Ansar and asked for her hand in marriage. I told them what the Prophet (saw) had advised, and it seemed they didn't like the idea of me looking at their daughter. But then the girl I wanted to marry, having heard us talking about her, said to me, 'If this is what the Messenger of Allah (saw) has told you to do, then do it. If that is not the case, then don't do it.' She seemed to be quite concerned about the matter. So I looked at her and after that I married her."⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) advised other Companions (ra) in the same way,⁹ encouraging people to see and appreciate each other before marrying. Based on this *ḥadīth*, couples planning to marry can, within certain limits, talk to each other about some issues. Because it would be very beneficial for the welfare of the marriage if the couples talk and listen to each other before marrying .

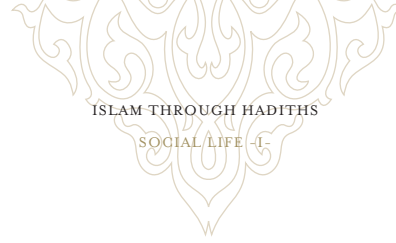
There are also some family practices related to proposing marriage to a girl. In the Jahiliyya period, competition was the custom in this matter. A girl could receive proposals from more than one suitor. The Prophet

⁶ NW7619, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VII, 2715 (4/245); S1672, Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, XIV, 169-170.

⁷ MZ7542, al-Haythami, *Majmau al-Zavaid*, IV, 290.

⁸ IM1866, Ibn Maja, *al-Nikah*, 9.

⁹ M3485, Muslim, *al-Nikah*, 74.



(saw) did not consider it proper for a woman to have two sets of potential in-laws. By saying, “Do not ask the hand of a girl before the first suitor gives up, or permits (you to do so),”¹⁰ he asked the believers to keep their respect and love for each other in this matter.

In such instances when the hands of girls were asked from their families, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would deliver a speech, beginning with a prayer. In his speech, which came to be known as “Khutba al-Khaja,” he would say, “Praise belongs to Allah. We thank Him, and ask His help and forgiveness. Seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls. There is no one who could lead astray someone Allah guided on the straight path, and there is no one who could guide to the straight path someone whom Allah had led astray. I testify that there is no god but Allah. And I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.”

After this prayer, the Prophet (saw) would recite the following the verses: “You who believe, be mindful of Allah, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying day.”¹¹ “O People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide; be mindful of Allah, in whose name you make requests of one another. Beware of severing the ties of kinship. Allah is always watching over you.”¹² “Believers, be mindful of Allah, speak in a direct fashion and for a good purpose.”¹³ And then he would deliver his speech on a particular subject.¹⁴

In Turkey, the custom of starting the ceremony with the statement of “With the command of Allah, and the words of the Prophet (saw),” is a manifestation of this Sunna. In addition, a small ceremony called *nişan* (betrothal) takes place in the engagement. During this ceremony, gifts are presented to each other, engagement rings are worn, and sometimes speeches are given about the significance of the day.

Although not common as today, in the Prophet’s day there was a preliminary decision and a meeting was held for the purpose of declaring, “We are going to get together and marry sometime in the future.” In the Age of Felicity, the engagement period was the time between the engagement ceremony and the wedding night. For example, the Prophet (saw) was engaged to ‘A’isha (ra) and married her three years later.¹⁵

Engagement is not a union in the way that marriage is. It is an opportunity for the couple to get to know each other and each other’s family and to prepare for marriage. The engagement period is a promise of marriage.

¹⁰ B5142, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 46.

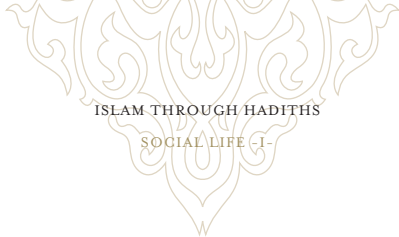
¹¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:102

¹² Al-Nisa’, 4:1

¹³ Al-Ahzab, 33:70

¹⁴ DM2233, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 20; AV6/108, ‘Awn al-Ma’bud, VI, 108.

¹⁵ B3896, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 44.



The engagement does not recognize the same right to live together that marriage does. Therefore, the engaged couple is not entitled to have a private life or to behave like a married couple. There are times when couples have a religious wedding ceremony before the civil marriage in order to avoid the religious privacy prohibition and thus to act freely in the relationship. This, however, would raise various social and moral issues.

There is not a specific day when a marriage should or should not be performed. Anytime that is suitable for both parties can be chosen for the wedding day. ‘A’isha (ra) reported that she married our Master the Prophet (saw) in the month of Shawwal, and recommended to women close to her to marry in that month.¹⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) married Umm Salama (ra) on the month of Shawwal as well.¹⁷ It seems that these marriages were performed with the intention of changing the superstitious belief that marriages should not occur between the two major holidays, i.e., during the month of Shawwal. This belief, which was widespread back then, still exists today.

In the pre-Islamic Hijaz tradition, there were women who were adept at adorning and preparing the bride for the wedding. There were also other people who were in charge of educating grooms and brides about married life before the wedding night. Today, this tradition of having for the woman the “bride’s auntie” and for the man a groomsman still exists, and most of the time these tasks are performed by married relatives. All of these things are to establish a family home envisioned by religion and morality, and to be instructive guidelines for lawful and unlawful practices in marriage. The fact that Asma’ bint ‘Umays acted as a bride’s auntie for Fatima (ra)¹⁸ shows that this tradition was inspired by the Sunna.

Islamic sources tell us that when our mothers married the Prophet (saw) they were adorned according to the customs of the day. For example, Umm Zufar was the one who combed the hair of Khadija (ra), the Prophet’s first wife, and adorned her.¹⁹ As for ‘A’isha (ra), her mother, along with some women from the Ansar, tidied up her costume and adorned her before bringing her to the Prophet (saw).²⁰ The one who beautified Safiyya on her wedding day was Anas’ mother, Umm Sulaym bint Milhan (ra).²¹ According to a Hijaz tradition, a special bridal chamber was furnished with a decorated divan²² while the groom was preparing for the ceremony by dressing up and applying perfume.²³

¹⁶ M3483, Muslim, al-Nikah, 73; IM1990, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 53.

¹⁷ IM1991, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 53.

¹⁸ Ma9782, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 486; MK22192, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXV, 307.

¹⁹ IF1/328, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, I, 328.

²⁰ B3894, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 44.

²¹ HS4/311, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, IV, 311.

²² EM1165, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, II, 552.

²³ IF9/235, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, IX, 236.

Our religion prohibits wasting money in every sector of life.²⁴ It is important to avoid wasting money in the establishment of a new family. In some traditions, people tend to spend too much money on the dowery, wedding presents, and household items, and this spending puts family happiness in danger right at the beginning and lands families in financial trouble. The newlyweds are in debt from their wedding for a long time, commencing their union under a financial burden, and not finding the happiness they have been longing for. Because of that, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, *“The most fruitful marriage is the one with the least burdens,”*²⁵ and, *“The happiest marriage is the easiest one.”*²⁶ Being careful with wedding expenses and not exceeding limits would pave the way for young people who wish to marry, and also would increase opportunities for the underprivileged to marry. We should not forget that our Lord said, *“Marry off the bachelors among you and those of your slaves and concubines who are fit (for marriage). If they are poor, Allah will provide for them from His bounty. Allah’s bounty is infinite and He is all knowing.”*²⁷

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who recommended meeting people’s needs and helping each other, offered his help to those who said they could not marry because of the lack of material means, and helped them marry. One day, his nephews, ‘Abd al-Muttalib b. Rabi’a and Fadl b. ‘Abbas (ra), came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said they wanted to marry but did not have anything to offer for the mihr. They said they wanted to be appointed as alms collectors, so they could marry with the money earned from this job. The Prophet (saw) did not accept this proposal, but instead helped his nephews by paying the mihr expenses from his own pocket.²⁸

In history, specific charity foundations and well-intentioned philanthropists whose purpose was to offer help to the needy who wished to marry followed the example of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in this matter. Helping the needy who wish to marry and assisting in establishing beautiful and happy families and therefore a peaceful society are great opportunities for those who wish to follow the way of our Master the Prophet (saw).

Mentioning weddings brings games and entertainment to mind. Through these activities, the marriage is not only welcomed with happiness and joy, but is also made public. Our Master the Prophet (saw), by saying, *“The thing that differentiates lawful (marriage) from unlawful (relations) is announcing it by beating the tambourine and singing”*²⁹ and *“Publicize this*

²⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:31.

²⁵ HM25034, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 83.

²⁶ D2117, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 30-31.

²⁷ Al-Nur, 24:32.

²⁸ D2985, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 19-20.

²⁹ T1088, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6.



marriage and hold it in the Masjid and beat the tambourine for it,”³⁰ recommended having fun at wedding ceremonies within reasonable bounds. From these *ḥadīths* we understand that holding wedding ceremonies in open spaces and announcing the marriage of two people during the entertainment provides legitimacy to the marriage. Our Master the Prophet (saw) married off Farigha, one of the daughters entrusted to him by Abu Umama Asad b. Zurara, who was the first person in Medina to die after the Hijra, to Nubayt b. Jabir (ra). During the wedding ceremony, the Prophet (saw) told ‘A’isha (ra) that the Medina Muslims were fond of entertainment, and he asked her if a singer had been sent to the women’s section.³¹ Upon learning that there was no such provision for the women, the Prophet (saw) asked to send sweet-voiced Zaynab, the singer, to the bride’s house.³²

As the Prophet (saw) recommended, the wedding is performed with smiling faces in a manner that expresses happiness and hope. Weddings are not occasions for mourning, lamentation, and sorrow. However, as in all matters, we can say the Prophet (saw) has commanded behavior at the wedding entertainment that is decent, balanced, and respectful to Allah’s boundaries.

An indispensable part of the wedding is the wedding feast. Our Master the Prophet (saw) offered feasts to the guests at his weddings,³³ and encouraged the Companions (ra) to do the same, by saying, “*On the first day the wedding feast is an obligation, on the second day it is a custom, and on the third day it is showing off.*”³⁴ By saying, “*Give a wedding feast, even if with just one sheep,*”³⁵ to newly married ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra), he also remarked that it was wrong to disregard an invitation to a humble wedding feast.

On the other hand, for a Muslim to accept an invitation to a wedding feast and thus honor his brother who gave the feast is Prophetic moral behavior. Thus, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Set the captives free, accept the invitation, and visit the sick.*”³⁶ Also, he asked people not to classify people according to their financial means, and called wedding feasts to which only the rich were invited while the poor were forgotten “the worst food ever.”³⁷

The food that the Prophet (saw) offered in his weddings varied according to the day of the feast and the environment. Sometimes he offered *ḥays*, a dish made from dates, oil, and roasted wheat,³⁸ sometimes a dish made from barley flour,³⁹ and other times, meat and bread.⁴⁰ At the wedding feast of a Companion, date syrup was offered to the guests.⁴¹

³⁰ T1089, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 6.

³¹ B5162, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 64.

³² H17/682, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, VII, 682.

³³ M3507, Muslim, al-Nikah, 94; M3508, Muslim, al-Nikah, 95.

³⁴ IM1915, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 25.

³⁵ B2048 al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 1.

³⁶ B5147, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 72.

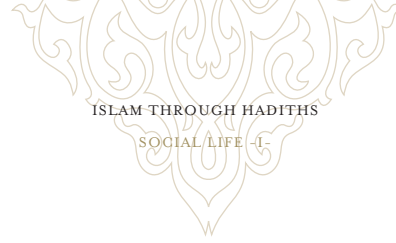
³⁷ B5177, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 73.

³⁸ B371 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 12.

³⁹ BB5172, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 71.

⁴⁰ M3504, Muslim, al-Nikah, 91.

⁴¹ B5591, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 7.



In pre-Islamic Arab society, it was customary when congratulating newlyweds to say, “Be prosperous,” and, “Have children soon.” Rather than such material wishes, our Lord Prophet asked people to pray for long life and abundance for the couple and say, “May Allah bless you both.”⁴² When he heard that ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Awf (ra) got married, the Prophet (saw) said, “May Allah bless this wedding for you.”⁴³ Today, we congratulate new couples by saying, “May Allah bless you!” “Good luck!” “May Allah let you get old on the same pillow!” These are reflections of our culture that have the same meaning.

Performance of the wedding ceremony, which is partly a religious obligation and partly an entertainment, differs from society to society. Each society performs their ceremony in accordance with established customs and traditions. As a principle, however, it is important to realize that the participants in weddings should stay within the bounds of religion and propriety in their behavior and enjoyment. By the same token, it is important not to turn the wedding atmosphere into a mourning ceremony. We must not forget that the wedding is the declaration of marriage as a sacred union, and therefore it should be performed in a worthy manner.

⁴² HM1738, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

⁴³ M3490, Muslim, al-Nikah, 79.



THE PRIVACY OF THE FAMILY PRIVATE SPHERE



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيَّ يَقُولُ: قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْأَمَانَةِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، الرَّجُلَ
يُفْضِي إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ وَتُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَنْشُرُ سِرَّهَا.»

‘Abd al-Rahman b. Sa’d related what he heard from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) as follows: “The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgement is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him (they have intercourse) and then he divulges her secret.’”

(M3543, Muslim, al-Nikah, 124; D4870, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 32)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا،
وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا.“



عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَحِلُّ لِأَمْرِي أَنْ يَنْظُرَ فِي جَوْفِ بَيْتِ أَمْرِي حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنَ،
فَإِنْ نَظَرَ فَقَدْ دَخَلَ...“



عَنْ أَبِي بَرزَةَ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ قَلْبَهُ لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ
عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”...وَمَنْ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى حَدِيثِ قَوْمٍ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ أَوْ يَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ
صُبَّ فِي أُذُنِهِ الْأَنْكُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ...“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is a lie in itself; and do not look for others’ faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut off your relationship with) one another, and do not hate one another; and O worshipers of Allah! Be brothers (as Allah has ordered you!)”

(B6064, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6536, Muslim, al-Birr, 28)



According to Thawban (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“It is not allowed for a man to look inside another man’s house until he has been given permission, for if he looks, then he has entered.”

(T357, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 148; HM22779, Ibn Hanbal, V, 280)



According to Abu Barza al-Aslami (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“O community of people, who believed by their tongue and belief did not enter their hearts, do not back-bite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house.”

(D4880, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“. . . and if somebody listens in on a group’s conversation when they do not like him to do so or if they get away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection . . .”

(B7042, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 45)



The Messenger of Allah (saw) invited his Companions (ra) to the wedding feast of his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra), the daughter of his aunt. Although most of the guests left after eating, a few people remained. The Prophet (saw) was not happy with their long stay, but out of courtesy he said nothing and went to visit and chat with his other wives. During that time, the wives congratulated him on his marriage.

The Prophet (saw) returned after a while, but seeing that those guests were still there, he went to 'A'isha's room. After learning that the guests had gone, the Prophet (saw) went to his room. When he was finally at the threshold, with one foot in and one foot out, he received this revelation about the propriety of being a guest at the Prophet's house and making requests of his wives: *"O believers, do not come to the Prophet's house expecting a meal without an invitation; come at the time you're invited. Leave as soon as you've finished eating. Do not stay on and talk, for that would offend the Prophet (saw), though he would shrink from asking you to leave. Allah does not shrink from the truth. When you ask his wives for something, do so from behind a screen: this is purer both for your hearts and for theirs. It is not right for you to offend Allah's Messenger, just as you should never marry his wives after him; that would be grievous in Allah's eyes."*¹

In pre-Islamic Arab society, because private life was not given much importance, people sometimes went into each other's homes without permission and didn't see their invasion of privacy as a problem. This attitude of having no respect for family privacy continued until the above-mentioned revelation.

Known also as the "*hijāb* (shame)" verse, this verse deals with the importance for believers to take care in invitations and acceptance of invitations, and stresses the importance of not entering a home without permission and not interrupting someone's private life. Both for the people

¹ Al-Ahzab, 33:53; B4793, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir (al-Ahzab), 8; M3500, Muslim, al-Nikah, 87.



coming from the outside and for those inside, such behavior was more proper. One can guess how uncomfortable it was for family members wanting to relax in privacy when someone entered their house without permission, especially during the Prophet's time when there were curtains instead of doors. Allah Almighty, through this warning concerning the Prophet's home privacy, warns all believers to show respect for private life. Our Master the Prophet (saw) emphasized the need to ask permission before entering someone's home, by saying, *"If anyone of you asks three times for permission to enter, and permission is not given, then he should go back."*²

However, the disrespect for privacy in the Jahiliyya period continued even after this revelation, as illustrated by the complaint made to the Prophet (saw) by a woman from the Ansar: "O Prophet of Allah! Sometimes at home I don't want anyone to see me in the state I am, including my child and my father. But sometimes a member of my family will show up unannounced."³

After an increase in such complaints, the verses of the *sūra* of al-Nur regarding this issue were revealed. The verses contained the following principles which regulated the privacy of domestic life:

1- No one is allowed to enter someone else's house unless he makes his presence known and greets the host.⁴

2- If no one is at home, entering the house without permission is not allowed. If "Go away!" is said, then they will leave.⁵

3- Both male and female believers are to avoid looking at what is forbidden, and to protect their dignity.⁶

Respecting privacy is not limited to outsiders; Allah Almighty also warns family members on this issue with the following verse: *"Believers, your slaves and any who have not yet reached puberty should ask your permission to come in at three times a day: before fajr prayer; when you lay your garments aside in the midday heat; and after maghrib prayer. These are your three times for privacy; at other times, there is no blame on you or them if you move around each other freely. In this way Allah makes messages clear: Allah is all knowing, all wise."*⁷

Given the fact that the family is the first place in the community where one receives education, respecting privacy within the family would be a sure sign that a society made up of those families respects privacy.

Islam, on the one hand, encourages people to build an ideal family

² B6245, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 13.

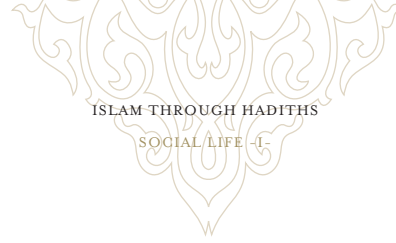
³ TT19/147, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XIX, 147.

⁴ Al-Nur, 24:27.

⁵ Al-Nur, 24:28.

⁶ Al-Nur, 24:30-31.

⁷ Al-Nur, 24:58.



environment by establishing a happy marriage, and, on the other hand, emphasizes the necessity of protecting this family from all kinds of dangers in order to sustain happiness and raise healthy generations. At the top of these dangers is intrusion into a family's private life.

The personal life of an individual and a family is private, that is to say, respected and confidential. Inquiring into an individual or a family's private matters is not right from a religious point of view, legally or morally. Acquiring knowledge on things which are related to the private lives of individuals or families and sharing it with others is a clear invasion of privacy and violation of personal rights.

Protecting family privacy and following Islamic principles about it are the responsibility of the whole family and principally of the spouses. Allah Almighty likens the couples to garments, covering each other's secrets and flaws: ". . . *they are as garments to you, as you are to them.*"⁸ Our Prophet emphasized the importance of protecting this privacy, saying, "*The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgement is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him and then he divulges her secret.*"⁹

Following an incident between the Prophet (saw) and his wives, Allah Almighty banned believers from disclosing their family secrets. As detailed in the *sūra* of al-Tahrim, it was indicated that disclosing a secret between two people was not correct behavior.¹⁰ In this instance, the Prophet (saw) shared a secret with one of his wives, who in turn related it to another wife. The issue surfaced when Allah Almighty informed the Prophet (saw) and asked the two wives to repent.¹¹

Islam's emphasis on privacy shows us that there are some subtle rules to follow, even between intimate couples. Spouses monitoring each other secretly based on some unfounded suspicion and harming their mutual trust could be an example of this undesirable behavior. Our beloved Prophet banned men returning from a long trip from entering the house secretly and suddenly for the purpose of learning if his wife was cheating on him.¹² He also said the following: "*Beware of suspicion (about others), as suspicion is a lie in itself, and do not spy upon each other, and do not listen to the evil talk of the people about others' affairs, and do not have enmity with one another, but be brothers.*"¹³

The main reason for investigating others' private lives and disclosing information is innate human curiosity. However, when this curiosity

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

⁹ M3543, Muslim, al-Nikah, 124; D4870, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 32.

¹⁰ Al-Tahrim, 66:1-4.

¹¹ Al-Tahrim, 66/4.

¹² B5143, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 121; M4969, Muslim, al-Imara, 184.

¹³ B6064, al-Bukhari, Adab, 57; M6536, al-Birr, 28.



extends to the private lives of individuals, it turns hurtful if it affects other people's personality and dignity. The abuse of this sense of curiosity is called "prying," and Allah Almighty bans prying with the following verse: "*Do not spy on one another.*"¹⁴ Immediately after this, He shows us that there is a connection between prying and backbiting, by saying, "*Do not speak ill of people behind their backs.*" The *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (saw), "*Indeed among the excellence of a person's Islam is that he leaves what does not concern him,*" can be seen an interpretation of these verses.¹⁵

Our beloved Prophet showed the importance he gave to personal privacy not only thorough his words but also his actions. As related by Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) was at home one day when he noticed a man secretly spying on his house, and he became incensed. When the Prophet (saw) attacked the man with the iron pick with which he had been combing his hair, the man ran away.¹⁶ The man who had invaded his privacy made the Prophet (saw) very angry. When some of the Companions (ra) came to visit him, the Prophet (saw) was still cursing in anger the man who had spied on him, whose name was al-Hakam b. Abi al-'As. The Companions (ra), who rarely witnessed the Prophet (saw) cursing anyone, wanted to curse the man as well. But the Prophet (saw) did not allow them to do so.¹⁷

In *Ḥadīth* and *fiqh* books, the parts concerning punishment of those who spy on someone else's home are actually related to this incident. During the Mecca period, al-Hakam b. Abi al-'As was someone who did not believe in the Prophet's message and caused a lot of problems. When he accepted Islam in later years, he was someone who could not grasp the real meaning of being a Muslim.

As understood from the Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīths* on this topic, it is not acceptable to peek inside or enter someone's house without permission. For example, the Prophet (saw) said, "*It is not allowed for a man to look inside another man's house until he has been given permission, for if he looks, then he has entered.*"¹⁸ That's why the Prophet (saw) always greeted and asked permission before entering someone else's house in a time when houses had curtains rather than doors. While asking permission, he did not stand just before the door, but always to the right or left side.¹⁹ Otherwise it would have been meaningless to ask permission after invading someone's privacy by looking inside their house.²⁰ The purpose of asking

¹⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49:12.

¹⁵ MU1618, *Muwatta'*, Husn al-Khalq, 1; T2317, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11.

¹⁶ B6900, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 23.

¹⁷ HI12/104, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, II, 1-4.

¹⁸ T357, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 148; HM22779, Ibn Hanbal, V, 280.

¹⁹ D5186, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 127-128.

²⁰ D5173, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 126-127.

permission is to avoid being exposed to that private life.²¹ If one accidentally sees certain things, he should avert his eyes.²²

The Prophet (saw) reminds us that those who invaded the privacy of other people were not true believers but at best were hypocrites. And emphasizing that the punishment of those who secretly snoop around other people's houses would be disgraced by Allah, he said, "*O community of people, who believed by their tongue and belief did not enter their hearts, do not back-bite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house.*"²³

Likewise, trying to overhear the private conversations of other people would bring bitter retribution in the Hereafter. Our Master the Prophet (saw) describes the severity of this punishment as follows: ". . . *and if somebody listens in on a group's conversation when they do not like him to do so or if they get away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection . . .*"²⁴ Investigating other people's private lives and disclosing their secrets would lead to society's moral degeneration. Our Master, by saying, "*If you search for people's deficits and faults, you stir up trouble and foment malice among them,*"²⁵ makes it forbidden in society to dig up dirt about other people. Because of that, when a man said to have wine dripping from his beard was brought to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), he said, "*We are forbidden to inquire into the faults of others. But if we have clear knowledge of an offense, then we can punish him.*"²⁶

It is important to notice that the things that don't require inquiry and disclosure are personal matters which could bring no harm to others. It is one of the requirements of our religion that one needs to cover the socially harmless mistakes of others, and, if possible, warn them in accordance with the principle of "commend the good and refrain from evil." However, in order to prosecute those crimes, the violation of family privacy and household immunity was not seen as correct. Therefore, as seen in the above narration, someone who violated a religious prohibition in his own home without harming anyone is respected and his privacy is protected by our religion. However, if the crime is of public concern, and poses a threat to others, then attempting to prevent it and reporting it to the authorities as soon as possible is a religious duty. In such cases, privacy or household immunity are not in question. Also in cases of theft or fire, immediate

²¹ D5174, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 126-127.

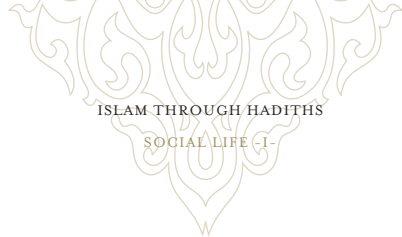
²² M5644, Muslim, al-Adab, 45; T2776, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 28.

²³ D4880, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35.

²⁴ B7042, al-Bukhari, al-Ta'bir, 45; D5024, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 88.

²⁵ D888, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 37.

²⁶ D4890, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 37.



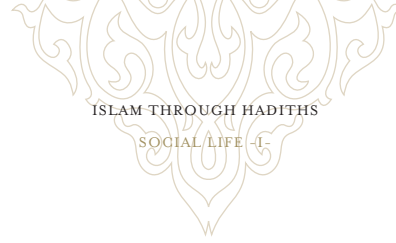
intervention is necessary without having to wait for permission to enter a stranger's house.

The subject of this *hadith* is not limited to respecting privacy by not entering someone's house without permission or secretly observing them. For example, reading someone else's book/letter without permission falls in this category too.²⁷ Based on this, it is also possible to say that secretly taking pictures of others, or listening to, and recording, their voices, or acquiring documents and information via the internet and other methods, could also be included in this category. Unfortunately, all the secret information and images obtained by these methods, which violate personal privacy, have these days become indispensable material for magazine-type programs that are a product of popular culture. Such transgressions that could produce disastrous results, such as dismantled families, orphaned children, and even murder, demonstrate the importance of respecting the private lives of others and prove how right our religion was to establish rules regulating these issues.

In conclusion, no one should concern himself with someone else's private life and try to gain knowledge of him through unlawful means. By learning about the secret and private lives of other people, a Muslim would commit a double sin because not only is he doing something unlawful, but he also might develop false assumptions about the things that he witnesses. Having been affected by what he saw might open the door to other sins. As a result, mutual respect among people is harmed and neighborly relations are damaged. An atmosphere of distrust arises in which everyone is suspicious of each other. Married or single, male or female, all Muslims have a great responsibility to protect private life and family privacy. That's why couples and children are to keep family news and secrets to themselves and not tell others. Likewise, they should respect the privacy of other people and other families, and avoid making false assumptions and being curious about them. In short, everyone should respect other people's privacy as much as they would want others to respect theirs. It should not be forgotten that the purpose of divine and prophetic teaching on the issue of protecting the privacy of individuals and families is to establish a healthy society which is dominated by peace, security, and morality.

In the violation of privacy, there is a dual responsibility. First is for the individual or family to take measures to protect their own privacy. In

²⁷ D1485, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23.



this respect, one needs to keep the doors and curtains shut at home, and not to attract curious attention with certain things such as sound, conflict, and uproar. And second, everyone must avoid behavior prohibited in Islam such as monitoring, observing, and investigating other people's private lives.

Some professionals such as security people and health personnel, who have access to the private information of individuals and families, need to keep this information to themselves, and not leak it to others. In accordance with their professional ethics, they need to consider this information as a "trust" given to them, and they must never betray that trust.



THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SPOUSES THE MOST SACRED UNION



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ، إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَهْلَهُ، قَالَ: بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ! جَنِّبْنَا
الشَّيْطَانَ؛ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا، فَإِنَّهُ، إِنْ يُقَدَّرَ بَيْنَهُمَا وَلَدٌ فِي ذَلِكَ،
لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ شَيْطَانٌ أَبَدًا.“

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“If anyone of you, when having sexual relations with his wife, says,
‘In the name of Allah, O Allah, protect us from Satan and keep Satan away
from our offspring that you have bestowed upon us.’ And if he begets a child (as
a result), Satan will not harm it.”

(M3533, Muslim, al-Nikah, 116) (or M3361, al-Nikah, 136)



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيَّ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْأَمَانَةِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، الرَّجُلَ يُفْضِي إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ وَتُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَنْشُرُ سِرَّهَا.»



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فِي الَّذِي يَأْتِي امْرَأَتَهُ وَهِيَ حَائِضٌ قَالَ: «يَتَصَدَّقُ بِدِينَارٍ أَوْ نِصْفِ دِينَارٍ.»



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِذَا أَتَى أَحَدُكُمْ أَهْلَهُ، ثُمَّ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَعُودَ، فَلْيَتَوَضَّأْ.»



'Abd al-Rahman b. Sa'd reported what heard from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), "The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *'The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgement is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him (they have intercourse) and then he divulges her secret.'*"

(M3543, Muslim, al-Nikah, 124) (or M3370, al-Nikah, 146?)



As related from Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said the following about someone who had sexual intercourse with his wife while she was menstruating: *"He must give one dinar or half a dinar in alms."*

(D264, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 105)



According to Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"If one of you had sexual relations with his wife, he should perform a wudu' before having relations a second time."*

(M707, Muslim, al-Haidh, 27)



She married ‘Uthman b. Ma‘zun (ra), who was one of the most upright, trustworthy, and sober young men of Mecca. She and her husband had the honor of being among the first Muslims. She was happily married and had a peaceful home. She was close to the Prophet (saw) and his family. That lady was none other than Khawla bint Hakim (ra). Khawla was a well-groomed woman. She would get dressed up, adorn herself with henna, and wear perfume. One day, she came to ‘A’isha (ra) in disarray, looking slipshod and messy. Knowing her well, ‘A’isha was surprised to see her in this state, and asked, “What is wrong with you?” and Khawla replied, “‘Uthman neither wants the world nor sees his wife. He prays all night and fasts all day.”

When ‘A’isha (ra) related this to the Prophet (saw) after he got home, the Prophet (saw) sent someone to summon ‘Uthman. When ‘Uthman (ra) came, the Prophet (saw) said, “O ‘Uthman! *There is no priesthood in Islam. Am I not a good example for you?*”¹ Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) continued, “O ‘Uthman! *Do you deny my Sunna?*” ‘Uthman b. Ma‘zun answered, “No, O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, I aspire to your Sunna.” Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained the principle in this matter as follows: “*I sleep a bit, I pray a bit. Sometimes I keep the fast, sometimes I don’t. And I sleep with my wife. Fear Allah, ‘Uthman, your wife has rights, your guest has rights and even your own self has rights. In this case, keep the fast sometimes and sometimes don’t! Sometimes pray and sometimes sleep.*”²

‘Uthman b. Ma‘zun was one of the righteous Companions (ra) who thought that he needed to pray more, and for that he needed to withdraw from worldly affairs and his wife. Being a role model in every aspect, the Prophet (saw) reminded him of his own practices. Because marriage was a lawful union, there were certain rights and responsibilities for couples. The rights of women are not to be neglected while being pious to the extreme.

¹ MA12591, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 150; HM26418, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226.

² D1369, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Tatawwu‘*, 27.



Allah (swt), who created man perfectly in His own image, also created ways to meet material and spiritual needs. One of those needs is sexuality. It is a natural and innate need of humans. Procreation of mankind can be possible only through this need. But this need should be satisfied within lawful boundaries. If it is satisfied through marriage, it is considered a good deed in Islam. But if it is satisfied through unlawful methods, namely, adultery, it is considered a major sin in Islam and is forbidden.³

In Islam, marriage is considered a legitimate way of satisfying the needs of human nature, and husbands and wives are seen as complementing each other. Thus Allah Almighty says of spouses, *“They are covers for you and you are covers for them.”*⁴ Allah Almighty presents marriage as a sign of His existence as well as a source of peace and happiness for couples: *“Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility: He ordained love and kindness between you.”*⁵ Our supreme Creator grants couples love, compassion, and desire for each other more than they would know. The desire for peace and tranquility given to men and women impels them to build a home together.

Relations between spouses in their private life is a topic never to be taken lightly. For a smoothly running marriage, a healthy sex life is vital for the couple to reach physical, spiritual, and emotional satisfaction. Because of that, the Messenger of Allah (saw) never refrained from answering very personal questions, whether from a man or from a woman, about couples’ sexual relations. He answered the female Companions’ questions related to sexuality by way of his wives.

There is a certain propriety regarding the sexual relations of couples. This relationship is not only about physical and biological contact between the couple. First of all, this is one of the most effective ways to nurture and soothe the soul. The Messenger of Allah (saw) had some advice about how this intimate life would influence Muslims’ life of worship.

One of the most important matters in this propriety of private life is for each spouse to look good and dress up for each other. The Prophet (saw) wanted couples to take care in choosing their clothing, as much as circumstances and surroundings allowed, and to be well groomed and clean inside and outside the house. In that regard, the Prophet (saw) permitted the use of personal care products such as perfume and henna.⁶ He also asked his religious community to maintain their hair and beards,⁷ to

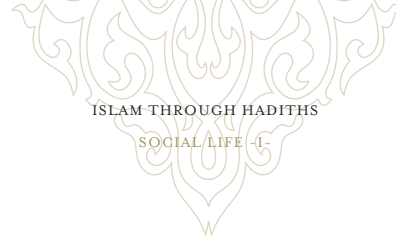
³ Al-Isra’, 17:32.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

⁵ Al-Rum, 30:21.

⁶ T1080, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 1; D4166, Abu Da’ud, al-Tarajjul, 4; N5244 al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 64.

⁷ D4163, Abu Da’ud, al-Tarajjul, 3.



apply eyeliner,⁸ and attend to all sorts of personal hygiene, including oral hygiene,⁹ and keep the body and clothing clean.¹⁰

Our mother 'A'isha related that the Messenger of Allah (saw) put on perfume before visiting his wives.¹¹ Recognizing the importance of this for the private life of couples, the Prophet (saw) asked his daughter, Fatima, to buy perfume with some of her mihr when she married 'Ali (ra).¹² Ibn 'Abbas (ra), knowing the sensitivity of the subject, but himself enjoying fixing himself up for his wife, and she for him, recited the verse¹³ about the mutual rights and responsibilities of couples.¹⁴ But our Master thought that women were supposed to fix themselves up for their husbands only, and not for other men. He likened the woman who got all dressed up for other men and went out, to someone who was without light in the Doomsday darkness.¹⁵

An important courtesy before having relations is to prepare for the romantic union by chatting together. Some people see the second half of the verse, "*Your wives are your fields, so go into your fields whichever way you like, and prepare [with appropriate behavior] in advance for yourself,*"¹⁶ as a reference to this preparation before sexual intercourse. The Prophet (saw) pointed out that joking and enjoying light banter would increase mutual love and intimacy between couples.¹⁷ Our beloved Prophet never considered it a waste of time to give attention to his wife and spend some pleasant time with her. On the contrary, he said, "*A man's training of his horse, pleasantly passing time with his wife, and shooting his bow and arrow are not wasteful activities.*"¹⁸

Thus, couples who are ready to have sex first recite the *basmala* and say a prayer, just as they do before any important and meaningful event, in order to take refuge in Allah from Satan. That's why the Prophet (saw) said, "*If anyone of you has sexual relations with his wife, he should say, 'In the name of Allah, O Allah protect us from Satan and keep Satan away from our offspring that you have bestowed upon us.' And if he begets a child (as a result), Satan will not harm it.*"¹⁹

Freedom is a consideration in the manner of sexual relations in a couple's private life. Jews used to claim that a child born as the result of different sexual positions would be cross-eyed. This became an issue after the Hijra, when Meccan men married women in Medina who were neighbors of the Jews, whereupon this verse, "*Your wives are your fields, so*

⁸ D3878, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 14; T1757, al-Libas, 23.

⁹ M589, Muslim, al-Tahara, 42; B887, al-Bukhari, al-Jum'a, 9.

¹⁰ M1963, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 9; B897, al-Bukhari, al-Jum'a, 12.

¹¹ B267, al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 12; M2826, Muslim, al-Haj, 33.

¹² ST8/19, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 19.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:228.

¹⁴ MS19256, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Talaq, 272.

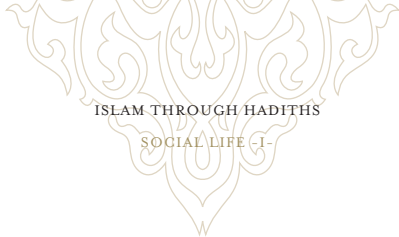
¹⁵ T1167, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 13; MK21748, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXV, 38.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:223.

¹⁷ B5367, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 12; M3638, Muslim, al-Rada', 56; IF9/122 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, IX, 122.

¹⁸ N3608, al-Nasa'i, al-Khayl wa 'l-sabq, 8; D2513, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 23; T1637, Fada'il al-Jihad, 11.

¹⁹ M3533, Muslim, al-Nikah, 116; B3271, al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-Khalq*, 11.



go into your fields whichever way you like,²⁰ was revealed by Allah (swt).²¹ In this verse Allah revealed that the Jewish claims were false and permitted sexual relations in every position as long as it was performed in the normal way. However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) strictly forbade a man to approach his wife from behind, that is, to have anal sex, and he said that behavior was cursed.²²

Couples' sexual relations must be in private where no one, including small children, sees or hears the activity.²³ It is natural for couples to see each other's body.²⁴ Widely held opinions and rumors regarding seeing the spouse's private parts during sex²⁵ are either insubstantial or fabricated.²⁶ During sexual contact, it is recommended that the couple be covered by something.²⁷

The basis of the private lives of couples is secrecy. The Prophet (saw) said, "*The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgment is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him (they have intercourse) and then he divulges her secret,*"²⁸ and he likened the man who disclosed details of his relations with his wife to "one of the worst persons in the eyes of Allah."²⁹ Disclosing the secrets of a partner is obscene before everything, is against the standards of decency, and puts him at risk of sinful desires. The same is true for a woman. Asma' bint Yazid (ra),³⁰ who acted as a spokesperson for female Companions (ra) on many topics, said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) forbade disclosing details of one's sexual life to others. According to her, the Prophet (saw) said, "Anyone openly discussing their sex lives is like people watching a male Satan having sex with a female Satan."³¹

The time to have sexual relations is up to the couple. What is ideal in sexual relations is for the spouses to satisfy each other. A man must look after his wife as much as himself and must not force his wife into sex while thinking only of himself.³² Sexual intercourse is prohibited only in some situations and women's special conditions. For example, it is not allowed while fasting, on Hajj, while on religious retreat ('itikaf),³³ and when women are menstruating or after having given birth.³⁴

It is permissible to have physical intimacy outside of sexual intercourse with a woman who is menstruating or has recently given birth.³⁵ In *hadiths*, having sex with a menstruating woman or having anal sex is prohibited in strong language.³⁶ In terms of cleanliness and health, it is

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:223.

²¹ B4528, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 39; M3535, Muslim, al-Nikah, 117.

²² HM6706, Ibn Hanbal, II, 182; DM1668, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 113; D2162, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 44-45.

²³ MS17618, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Nikah, 248; MK10433, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 83.

²⁴ D4017, Abu Da'ud, al-Hammam, 2; IM1920, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 28; T2769, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 22.

²⁵ GI2/20, al-Gazzali, *Ihya'*, II, 20; FK1/419, al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadr*, I, 419-420.

²⁶ CM2/271, Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mawduat*, II, 271-272.

²⁷ IM1921, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 28.

²⁸ M3543, Muslim, al-Nikah, 124.

²⁹ M3542, Muslim, al-Nikah, 123.

³⁰ HI7/498, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, VII, 498.

³¹ HM28135, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 457; D2174, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 48-49.

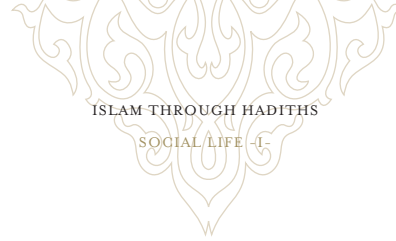
³² MA10468, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, VI, 194.

³³ Al-Baqara, 2:187, 197; MU773, *al-Muwatta'*, al-Hajj, 21.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:222; MA1200, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, I, 313; DM990, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 98.

³⁵ MU126, al-Muwatta', al-Tahara, 26; B300, al-Bukhari, al-Haidh, 5; M679, Muslim, al-Haidh, 1.

³⁶ D3904, Abu Da'ud, al-Tib, 21; IM639, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 122; T135, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 102.



certain that such objectionable relations are forbidden and unwelcome. Our Master the prophetsaid that it was appropriate for those who violated the ban on sexual relations in these conditions to give one dinar (4.25 gr gold) or half a dinar to charity.³⁷

Some scholars are of the opinion that one should not have sex with a woman whose menstrual bleeding does not stop,³⁸ while others saw no objection, holding that it would be considered a disability that didn't prevent a person from worship.³⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted to forbid sexual relations with a breastfeeding mother for fear that it could harm the baby. He even said that it was a form of "secretly killing children."⁴⁰ When he learned that no harm had come to Greek and Persian children because of this, he changed his mind on this prohibition.⁴¹

After sexual intercourse, the best thing is for couples to bathe. If they postpone washing to eat something or to sleep, they should at least clean their private parts and perform the wudu'.⁴² Indeed, after our beloved Prophet had sexual relations, he either took a ritual bath and slept, or, without taking a full wudu' he went to bed after washing his private parts.⁴³ Our Prophet has recommended that couples wanting to have sex a second time first perform the wudu's.⁴⁴

When the husband ejaculates outside his wife during sexual intercourse, that is called "azl," or "discharge" (*coitus interruptus*). The Messenger of Allah (saw) was opposed to the Jewish belief that this was an effective birth control method.⁴⁵ If Allah wants to create a child, no one would want to prevent this. Jabir b. 'Abd Allah, a young Companion (ra), reported that they practiced *coitus interruptus* in the time of the Prophet (saw) and of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Neither the Holy Qur'an nor the Prophet (saw) banned this practice.⁴⁶ When the Prophet (saw) was asked about *coitus interruptus*, he replied, "There is no objection to you doing this because every living thing ordained by Allah will come into existence."⁴⁷ After all, a child is not produced from every sperm, but nothing can prevent the birth of a baby whom Allah has willed into being.⁴⁸ However, it appears that the Prophet (saw) prohibited *coitus interruptus* when it was without the consent of the woman,⁴⁹ and in any case it would be more appropriate for the man and woman to decide together on a birth control method.

Our Master, the Glory of the Universe, stated that our actions gain value in accordance with our intentions.⁵⁰ In that respect, he even said that

³⁷ D264, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 105; IM640, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 123; N290, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 182.

³⁸ MA1172, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, I, 305; DM857, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 86.

³⁹ D309, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 118.

⁴⁰ D3881, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 16, IM2012, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 61.

⁴¹ M3564, Muslim, al-Nikah, 140; D3882, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 16.

⁴² M700, Muslim, al-Haidh, 22.

⁴³ B288, al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 27; M705, Muslim, al-Haidh, 27.

⁴⁴ M707, Muslim, al-Haidh, 27; T141, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 107.

⁴⁵ D2171, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 47-48; T1136, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 39.

⁴⁶ B5209, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 97; M3559, Muslim, al-Nikah, 136.

⁴⁷ M3544, Muslim, al-Nikah, 125; B5210, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 97.

⁴⁸ B5209, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 97; M3559, Muslim, al-Nikah, 136.

⁴⁹ HM212, Ibn Hanbal, I, 31; IM1928, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 30.

⁵⁰ B1, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.



having sex could be considered a good deed when done in a lawful way for pleasure, and thus would prevent oneself and one's wife from doing forbidden acts. When he said, "*Having sexual relations with your partner is a charitable act,*" the Companions (ra) asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Is there any reward for one of us who satisfies his sexual desire?" And the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked, "*Had he satisfied his sexual desire through unlawful means, would he have sinned?*" When the Companions (ra) replied, "Yes!" the Prophet (saw) said, "*Similarly, had he satisfied his desire through lawful means, there would be a reward for him.*"⁵¹

Therefore, intimate relations between spouses are charitable acts in the form of faithfulness. In fact, this relationship is a clear indication of the couple's faithfulness to Allah and to each other. Then they satisfy their natural needs within the lawful boundaries Allah set for them. And due to the "serious contract"⁵² between them, they are faithful to each other. They satisfy and soothe each other within the lawful boundaries and they never cheat on each other. As the Messenger of Mercy asserted, they could even turn their intimate life into a source of bliss and blessing.

Sharing a special partnership and sexuality requires showing each other respect. A person should be grateful to his spouse that she didn't leave him to fend for himself in such an intimate matter. One should not forget that one's partner is human and therefore occasional shortcomings should be tolerated. One should value beyond any kind of material gift the treat of having the partner close by. It is not possible for a private life in which there is bullying, hurting, offending and shaming to make people happy and productive. In making possible a relationship between two people, it must be borne in mind how important each partner's rightful share is; therefore, sex life must be based on love and mutual respect.

⁵¹ M2329, Muslim, al-Zakat, 53; HM21814, Ibn Hanbal, V, 169.

⁵² Al-Nisa', 4:21.



CHILDREN FRUITS OF LOVE AND COMPASSION



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى قَالَ: وُلِدَ لِي غُلَامٌ، فَأَتَيْتُ بِهِ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَسَمَّاهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
فَحَنَّكَهُ بِتَمْرَةٍ وَدَعَا لَهُ بِالْبَرَكَاتِ وَدَفَعَهُ إِلَيَّ...

Abu Musa (ra) said, “I had a son and I took him to the Prophet (saw), who named him Ibrahim, and put in his mouth the juice of a date fruit, and invoked for Allah’s blessing upon him, and then gave him back to me.”

(B6198, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109)



عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّكُمْ تُدْعَوْنَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِأَسْمَائِكُمْ وَأَسْمَاءِ آبَائِكُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا أَسْمَاءَكُمْ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي رَافِعٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَذَّنَ فِي أُذُنِ
الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ -حِينَ وَلَدَتْهُ فَاطِمَةُ- بِالصَّلَاةِ.



حَدَّثَنَا سَلْمَانُ بْنُ عَامِرٍ الضَّبِّيُّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَعَ الْغُلَامِ عَقِيقَةٌ، فَأَهْرِيقُوا عَنْهُ دَمًا وَأَمِيطُوا عَنْهُ الْأَذَى.“



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ قَالَ: عَقَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بِشَاةٍ وَقَالَ:
”يَا فَاطِمَةُ احْلِقِي رَأْسَهُ وَتَصَدَّقِي بِزَنَةِ شَعْرِهِ فَضَّةً.“



According to Abu al-Darda' (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your
father’s names, so give yourselves good names.*”

(D4948, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 61)



According to ‘Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi‘, his father (ra) said,
“I saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) say the *adhān of salat* in the ear of
Hasan b. ‘Ali when he was born to Fatima.”

(T1514, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 16)



Salman b. ‘Amir al-Dabbi (ra) said,
“I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “*Aqīqa is to be offered for a
(newly born) boy, so slaughter (an animal) for him, and relieve him of his
suffering.*”

(B5472, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqīqa, 2)



Ali b. Abi Talib (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) had the ‘*aqīqa*
for Hasan with one sheep, and said, ‘*O Fatima! Shave his head and give the
weight of his hair in silver as charity.*”

(T1519, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 19)



One of the travelers on the long road of Hijra between Mecca and Medina was a pregnant mother. Our beloved Prophet and his faithful friend, Abu Bakr (ra), had passed that way two years earlier. Now it was Asma' (ra),¹ secretly carrying provisions for the travelers on their sacred journeys and tying shut the mouths of the food bag and the water skin, who scrambled up the now familiar sand dunes. But this time her labor was of a different kind. Her baby's due date was just few days away and she was feeling very tired. The journey seemed like it would never end. At last, Quba', a village near Medina, appeared from a distance. Finally, the difficult journey that would unite her with her father, Abu Bakr, and the Messenger of Allah (saw), was coming to an end. But there was another surprise waiting for her at Quba'. The baby's journey in his mother's womb came to an end as well, and the moment had come for the baby to meet his family.

Asma's giving birth in Quba' not only filled her with joy but also all the Muslims who had emigrated earlier. This little boy was the first emigrant child born in Medina. The birth ended a deeply seated fear among the Muslims because it disproved a wide-spread rumor that Jews had cast a magic spell on Muslims who had emigrated, and that no more children would be born to them.²

It was a precious baby. His grandfather was Abu Bakr, and his father was al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam, one the ten Companions (ra) who were rewarded with Paradise in their lifetimes. When his mother placed him in the Prophet's arms, the baby had neither a name nor familiarity with the blessings of the world. The Messenger of Allah (saw) tenderly held the baby in his arms and asked for a date from those who were present. He chewed and softened the date and then rubbed the baby's palate with this date. Then the Prophet (saw) prayed, asking for a good and blessed life for the baby. And he named the baby 'Abd Allah.³ He was the future caliph, the brave and devoted commander, 'Abd Allah b. Zubayr (ra).

¹ B2979, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 123.

² B5469, al-Bukhari, al-'Aqiqa,

³ B3909, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45; M5616, Muslim, al-Adab, 25.



Difficult or easy, happy or sad, hopeful or hopeless . . . in whatever condition he comes to this world, every baby deserves a fitting welcome with Allah’s blessing. Our Almighty Allah introduced the baby to this world after learning if it was a boy or girl,⁴ determining its livelihood, and its time of death.⁵ Despite the fact it was a difficult test for the parents,⁶ it was Allah’s gift that will bring blessing and abundance to homes⁷ and add joy to their lives. This labor will be given to a new soul and will last a lifetime. A child needs the care, love, compassion, and support of his parents throughout his life. The parents are aware of their responsibilities for material and spiritual assistance, which start before the birth of the baby. Birth is just one stage of the baby’s life. It is the first step on the ladder he will climb throughout his life, and the first station on the way to his final destination.

The birth of a baby, adding a new member to the family, reinforces feelings of responsibility while generating excitement. Although the other family members share some of the new responsibilities according to their age, the real burden is on the parents’ shoulders. The parents should not be like the mother and father who first pray, “If you give us a good and healthy baby we will certainly be grateful,” and then, after the baby comes into the world, would ascribe Allah’s goodness to a partner.⁸ They should wholeheartedly embrace the baby regardless of its sex, and be not like Jahiliyya people, who would be happy when they had a boy, but be upset when they had a girl.⁹ They should not forget how precious are the children—who are the adornments of worldly life—¹⁰and remember that Allah (swt) tests them through children.¹¹ From day one, parents should provide their children with the deepest compassion and purest love.

When we look at the life of our Prophet, we see that his first offering to a guest, who was an innocent baby, was a date. When a softened bite from the date, accompanied by prayers, was given to the baby, a sweet start to life was made. Of course, this bite is not enough to satisfy a suckling baby who shortly thereafter will meet his mother’s milk and be nurtured by her in a process lasting for two years.¹² Stating that the date was a blessed fruit,¹³ the Messenger of Allah (saw) welcomed the newborn brother of his little helper, Anas (ra), with this tradition, called “*tahnīk*.”¹⁴

Explaining that his mother, Umm Sulaym (ra), sent her baby to the Prophet (saw) without nursing him, Anas said, “When we found the Mes-

⁴ Al-Shura, 42:49-50.

⁵ B6595, al-Bukhari, al-Qadar, 1.

⁶ Al-Taghabun, 64:15.

⁷ Al-Isra’, 17:31.

⁸ Al-A’raf, 7:189-191.

⁹ Al-Nahl, 16:58-59; al-Zukhruf, 43:17.

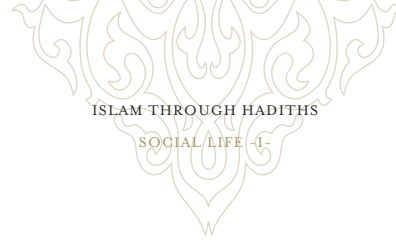
¹⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:46.

¹¹ Al-Anfal, 8:28.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:233.

¹³ T658, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 26.

¹⁴ M6322, al-Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 107; B5824, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 22.



senger of Allah (saw), he was busy branding animals for ritual slaughter. When he saw me, he said, 'I suspect that Umm Sulaym gave birth,' and put down the branding iron. I put the baby in his lap. The Prophet (saw) asked for a Medina date, chewed it until it was soft, and put it in the baby's mouth. Tasting the date, the baby began licking. At this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'Look how he loved the date!' He stroked the baby's face and gave him the name 'Abd Allah.'¹⁵

Welcoming babies with prayers for prosperity and blessing is our Prophet's tradition. The Companions (ra) brought their newborn babies to the Prophet (saw) without delay, and the Prophet (saw) chewed a date for them, while at the same time saying prayers for them. What a great blessing it was for a baby whose soul was soothed by prayers pouring from a worthy mouth and to hear a voice beseeching Allah (swt) on his behalf! Abu Musa (ra), who did not want to deprive his son of this opportunity, tells of bringing his baby to the Prophet (saw), who along with prayers gave him the name Ibrahim, and put a softened date into the baby's mouth.¹⁶

Giving a name is in itself a ceremony. Since ancient times it was believed that children would live up to their names, so people were very particular in choosing names. Those ceremonies, during which the name was whispered in the baby's ear, are still performed today. As a link in this chain, our Prophet gave importance to this practice of giving a child his name. By saying, "*On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father's names, so give yourselves good names,*"¹⁷ the Prophet (saw) reminded mothers and fathers of their responsibilities in this matter.

The Prophet (saw) asked that names be chosen that were as beautiful in their meaning as in their utterance. He did not allow 'Ali to name his children with names that were associated with "*ḥarb*" (war). Instead he named his grandchildren Hasan and Husayn (ra), names associated with goodness and beauty.¹⁸

It is not difficult to understand the Prophet's sensitivity to this subject when we consider that a child identifies with the meaning of his name and acts accordingly whenever he hears it. Because of its importance, the Prophet (saw) opposed naming children with names connected to polytheism or names which had bad associations. He even changed such names that belonged to older people.¹⁹ He preferred names that would guide their

¹⁵ B6198, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109.

¹⁶ D4948, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 61.

¹⁷ EM823, al-Bukari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 286.

¹⁸ M4628, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 89; D4955, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 62.

¹⁹ T2833, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 64.



owners to righteousness and goodness, and he said that Allah (swt) would love the names ‘Abd Allah and ‘Abd al-Rahman, which mean “the servant of Allah.”²⁰ By the same reasoning, he also recommended naming children with the names of the prophets.²¹ When a son was born to him, he lived up to his own recommendation, saying, “My son was born last night and I gave him the name of my grandfather, Ibrahim.”²²

Introducing the baby to the *adhān*, the call to prayer, is an integral part of the naming ceremony. The Prophet (saw) recited the *adhān* in the ear of his grandson, Hasan, when he was born, just as it was recited at prayer times.²³ With the *adhān* recited in a low voice in his right ear, and the *iqāma* (also a call to prayer) into his left ear, the baby heard for the first time the three essential principles of Islam. In other words, the *adhān* to him speaks of Allah’s existence and oneness, and of the Prophet’s role as the Messenger of Allah (saw) and also explains that worship is the way to salvation and to attaining happiness in the Hereafter.

Having a beautiful name himself, our Prophet said to parents who wondered what the best time to name a child was, “Every newborn baby is like a security deposit until an *aqīqa* sacrifice is performed for them on the seventh day after birth. On the same day, the baby’s head is shaven, and a name is given to him.”²⁴ It seems that the Prophet (saw), who named his son on the night he was born,²⁵ didn’t wish to put off this ritual for seven days.

Another request from our Master the Prophet (saw) was for the parents to make a sacrificial offering as an expression of gratitude to Allah (swt), who granted them a child.²⁶ Known as ‘*aqīqa*, this offering could be seen as compensation for the soul of a healthy-born baby. This is like the ram that was sent by Allah to Abraham to compensate for his son, whom he had offered to sacrifice.²⁷ To commemorate this great reward that compensated for Isma’il’s soul, the Prophet (saw) recommended that fathers perform an ‘*aqīqa* sacrifice to liberate their children. In fact, this custom existed in pre-Islamic Arab society, and we know that the Prophet’s beloved wife, Khadija, sacrificed animals for her newborn sons and daughters.²⁸ One of the Companions (ra), Abu Burayda, describes this custom as follows: “When a child was born to one of us in the pre-Islamic period, we sacrificed a sheep and smeared the child’s head with its blood; but after Allah sent Islam, we continued to sacrifice a sheep, but we shaved the child’s head and for a lovely fragrance smeared his head with saffron.”²⁹

²⁰ N3595, al-Nasa’i, al-Khayl, 3.

²¹ D3126, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 23-24.

²² T1514, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 16; HM24371, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 10.

²³ D2838, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 20, 21; N4225, al-Nasa’i, al-Aqīqa, 5.

²⁴ D3126, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 23-24.

²⁵ T2832, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 63.

²⁶ Al-Saffat, 37:101-111.

²⁷ ST1/133, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 133-134.

²⁸ D2843, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 20-21.

²⁹ D2842, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 20-21.

After the commencement of the prophethood, our Master continued this meaningful tradition and sacrificed rams for his grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn,³⁰ and recommended the ‘*aqīqa* sacrifice for newborn children.³¹ Indeed, smearing the blood of the ‘*aqīqa* on the child’s head continues today, although it is against the Sunna of the Prophet (saw). Instead of doing that, the Prophet (saw) recommended shaving babies’ heads to keep them clean.³² In addition, when his grandson was born, he wanted to shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver to charity.³³ Fatima (ra) followed this tradition for all her children, whether girls or boys.³⁴ It means that, after being shaved, cleaned and perfumed, a pristine and clear existence for the baby begins, unlike the dark and murky life in his mother’s womb.

After tasting worldly blessings with his mother’s milk; finding an identity by getting a name; learning the divine message by listening to the *adhān*; paying a debt of gratitude for his soul through sacrifice; and cleaning up by having his hair shaved, there is one more service to be offered the child: circumcision. A male child’s circumcision is not only a religious duty but also a very important step in terms of health.

In our culture, which is shaped by Islamic belief, the circumcision of a man is seen as a sign of being a Muslim. Of course, this belief was established after our Prophet told the new Muslims, “*Get circumcised!*”³⁵ In this way, a Muslim who does not hesitate to apply one of the requirements of his faith to his body will protect himself from many ailments that would cause him distress. By saying, “*There are five natural things a man should do: Get circumcised, shave his private parts, clip his nails, clean his armpits, and trim his moustache,*”³⁶ our Master the Prophet (saw) taught that such a practice, going on for generations, was indeed a natural requirement.

Although there was no circumcision ceremony or celebratory banquet during the Prophet’s time, we see that the Companions (ra) started this tradition shortly after his death. For example, when his son was circumcised, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) sacrificed a ram and invited guests.³⁷ And the Caliph ‘Umar, upon hearing the sound of entertainment accompanied by tambourine, asked, “What is this?” He was told, “It’s a wedding or a circumcision ceremony.”³⁸ In such celebrations, one needs to pay attention to our Prophet’s warnings regarding wedding feasts, namely, to invite to the table not only rich and notable friends, but also poor and needy families,

³⁰ DM1999, al-Darimi, al-Adahi, 9.

³¹ B5472, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqīqa, 2; N4219, al-Nasa’i, al-‘Aqīqa, 2.

³² T1519, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 19.

³³ MU1071, *Muwatta’*, al-‘Aqīqa, 1.

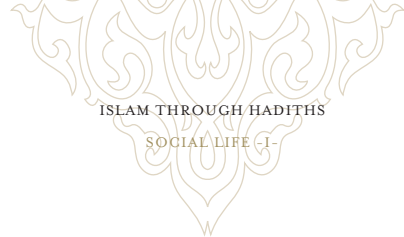
³⁴ D356, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 129.

³⁵ B5889, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 63; M597, Muslim, al-Tahara, 49

³⁶ EM1246, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 426.

³⁷ MA19738, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 5.

³⁸ B5177, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 73; M3521, Muslim, al-Nikah, 107.



and to avoid waste and showiness. Perhaps most importantly, for the child who follows the Prophet Abraham's Sunna, prayers must be made for a proper life in accordance with the Messenger of Allah (saw)'s Sunna.



NAMING A CHILD CHILDREN'S RIGHTS OVER THEIR PARENTS

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ أَحَبَّ أَسْمَائِكُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ.“

According to Ibn 'Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“The most beautiful names in the eyes of Allah are 'Abd Allah
and 'Abd al-Rahman.”

(M5587, Muslim, al-Adab, 2)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ يُغَيِّرُ الْإِسْمَ الْقَبِيحَ.



عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ أَمَرَ بِتَسْمِيَةِ الْمَوْلُودِ يَوْمَ سَابِعِهِ وَوَضَعَ الْأَذَى عَنْهُ وَالْعَقَّ.



عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّكُمْ تُدْعَوْنَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِأَسْمَائِكُمْ وَأَسْمَاءِ آبَائِكُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا أَسْمَاءَكُمْ.“



As ‘A’isha (ra) relates, the Prophet (saw) used to change unpleasant names.

(T2839, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 66)



‘Amr b. Shu’ayb related from his father, by way of his grandfather (ra), that the Prophet (saw) ordered naming the child on the seventh day, cleaning him (by shaving his head), and *al-‘aqq* (removing the hair and slaughtering the animal for *‘aqīqa*).

(T2832, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 63)



According to Abu al-Darda’ (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father’s names, so give yourselves good names.*”

(D4948, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 61)



It was about four months before the Messenger of Allah (saw) passed into the next world. Our beloved Prophet sent Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) with a group of Muslims to the children of Harith b. Ka'b from Najran in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal in the tenth year of the Hijra, and invited them to Islam. They accepted the invitation, and became Muslims. They came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and attested once again that, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his Messenger."¹ Among these visitors was Abu Shurayh al-Harithi (ra). The Prophet (saw) heard that Abu Shurayh was called "Abu al-Hakam," (the possessor of Judgement), but he did not like this name. Our beloved Prophet called him over, told him of his discomfort with this situation, and said, "*Allah is the judge (al-Hakam), and to Him Judgement belongs. Why are you called Abu al-Hakam?*" He replied, "When my people disagree on an issue, they bring it to me, and I resolve it. And both parties are satisfied with my decision. The Prophet (saw) said, "*How good this is!*" The Prophet (saw) was pleased by his problem solving. But he could not accept the fact that one of the names of Allah was used in this manner. He asked Abu Shurayh how many children he had. Upon hearing that he had three sons named Shurayh, Muslim, and 'Abd Allah, the Prophet (saw) asked the name of the eldest one. After learning it, the Prophet (saw) said, "*Then you are Abu Shurayh from now on,*" and he prayed for them.²

When the Prophet (saw) was beginning to disseminate his divine message, names were used in Arab society that reflected their culture and lifestyle. Next to their actual names, there was generally a "tag" beginning with the words "Abu" (father of) and "Ummu" (mother of); second there was a nickname in the form of praise or a lampoon, or related to character or physical features. And there was a lineage component of the naming format, for recognizing ties to tribe and country.

¹ EU6/161, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, VI, 161-162; ST1/338, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 339.

² D4955, Abu Da'ud, *al-Adab*, 62; N5839, *al-Nasa'i*, *Adab al-Qudat*, 7.



As the Holy Qur'an clearly states, it was Allah (swt) who personally taught the first man, Adam, names.³ Thanks to the names and concepts taught to them, mankind, starting with Adam, began to transform the world into a livable place. In time, men continued to give names to their children and to all of existence, based on religion, culture, or geography.

Language, as the main element constituting culture, has been since the time of Adam a means of common thinking. The main factor that keeps a society intact is that community members possess common values and thinking. The concepts and names that form a language are the products of their surrounding culture. However, this effect is mutual. While names contain elements from culture, in return culture creates new names and concepts. Names are conduits by which culture is transmitted over generations. That's why the Prophet (saw) preserved some naming practices and names, such as titles, nicknames, and lineage. However, instead of using names that reflected the Jahiliyya traditions, he used names that were a reflection of monotheism and its moral framework. He directed his Companions (ra) to do the same thing.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) also recommended using names that recall our servanthood to Allah. That's why he said, "*The most beautiful names in the eyes of Allah are 'Abd Allah and 'Abd al-Rahman.*"⁴ He named the first child who was born after the Hijra to Medina⁵ 'Abd Allah.⁶ In time, the name 'Abd Allah became one of the most common names among the Companions (ra). Referring to names beginning with "Abd" (servant), the Prophet (saw) said, "*The names associated with servanthood are the most pleasing ones in the eyes of Allah.*"⁷ The Prophet (saw) changed the name of a man from Qayyum to 'Abd al-Qayyum, because Qayyum was one of the names of Allah, meaning to shelter and protect.⁸ He changed the name of another Companion from 'Abd al-'Amr to 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf (ra), after he converted to Islam.⁹ It is important to note that the names "'Abd Allah"¹⁰ and "'Abd al-Rahman"¹¹ are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as well.

The Prophet (saw) also preferred the names of the prophets sent to spread truth and justice, as well as names beginning with "Abd." When a son was born to him, he said, "*A son was born to me tonight, and I named him after my ancestor, Abraham.*"¹² He held the son of 'Abd Allah b. Salam (ra) in his lap, stroked his head, prayed for his blessing, and gave him the beautiful name of Joseph.¹³

³ Al-Baqara, 2:31.

⁴ M5587, Muslim, al-Adab, 2; T2833, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 64.

⁵ B3910, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45; M5617, Muslim, al-Adab, 26.

⁶ NM6327, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, VI, 2267 (3/548).

⁷ ME694, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, I, 214.

⁸ BM3372, Abu Nu'aym, Ma'rifat al-Sahaba, V, 2980.

⁹ NM5336, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, V, 1976 (3/306).

¹⁰ Al-Jinn, 72:19.

¹¹ Al-Furqan, 25:63.

¹² M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62; D3126, Abu Da'ud, al-Jana'iz, 23-24.

¹³ MK19251, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, XXII, 285; HM16521, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 35.

Muhammad and Ahmad were the most important prophetic names for children. the Prophet (saw), by saying “*Name yourselves by my name, but do not call yourselves by my nickname,*”¹⁴ allowed Muslims to use his name. The reason he did not allow the use of his nickname was to prevent confusion. On one occasion a man called to his friend, “Abu al-Qasim!” When the Prophet (saw) heard his nickname, he turned and looked at him. When he realized it wasn’t he who was being addressed, he said that it was fine to use his name for children, but not his nickname.¹⁵ On another occasion, he asked those who used his name not to use his nickname, and those who used his nickname not to use his name.¹⁶ However, ‘Ali (ra) said, “I said to the Prophet (saw), ‘If I have a child that comes into this world after you, I will give him both your name and your nickname.’ And the Prophet (saw) said, ‘Yes, (you could).’”¹⁷ Based on ‘Ali’s report, it is understood that after a while the Prophet (saw) allowed Muslims to use both his name and nickname. It is also reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) named the son of Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah (ra) with one of his nicknames, Abu al-Qasim.¹⁸

It seems that the Prophet (saw) approved the practice of giving children the names of virtuous people, as well as names of the prophets. Al-Mughira b. Shu‘ba (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) sent him to the Najran region. The Najran people told him, “Don’t you recite a passage from the Holy Qur’an, reading, ‘O sister of Aaron?’¹⁹ Is it not so that much time has passed between the time of Moses and the time of Jesus?” Al-Mughira could not answer this question and related it to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) told him, “*Why did you not tell them that they used the names of the previous prophets and virtuous people?*”²⁰ Using the names of the previous prophets and virtuous people was a common practice among the Companions (ra). For example, Zubayr b. ‘Awwam said, “Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah gave his children names of the prophets. With the hope that they might be martyred, I will name my children after martyrs.” And he named his nine children after the martyred Companions (ra), such as ‘Abd Allah, Mundhir, ‘Urwa, Hamza, Ja’far, Mus’ab, ‘Ubayda, Khalid, and ‘Amr.²¹

Our Master the Prophet (saw) suggested the use of names which had beautiful meanings and positive associations. For example, he reported that “Harith,” meaning one who works in this world and the next, and “Hammam,” meaning sensitive and thoughtful, were among the most appropriate names in the sight of Allah (swt).²²

¹⁴ B6188, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 106.

¹⁵ B2121, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 49; M5586, Muslim, al-Adab, 1.

¹⁶ D4966, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 67.

¹⁷ D4967, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 68.

¹⁸ MK22137, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXV, 187; IF10/573, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 573.

¹⁹ Maryam, 19:28

²⁰ T3155, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 19; M5598, Muslim, al-Adab, 9.

²¹ BE9/423, al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, IX, 423.

²² D4950, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 61; HM19241, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 345.

Personal names have various functions, such as introducing oneself to others, creating opportunities to initiate good relations with others,²³ and differentiating oneself from others. The Messenger of Allah (saw) preferred to have natural names that fit the characteristics and qualities of that person. For example, he called “Fatih,” one of the Companions (ra) who helped illuminate the Mosque of the Prophet (saw), by the name “Sarraj,” meaning the one who illuminates.²⁴

There were names that the Prophet (saw) wanted changed and names that he did not want to be used because he wanted to encourage people along the right path. The main names that he disliked were those that were contrary to monotheism. For example, he changed names such as “Abd al-Ka‘ba” (the servant of the Ka‘ba)²⁵ and “Abd al-Hajar” (the servant of stone),²⁶ because only a man could be the servant of Allah.

The Prophet (saw), by saying, “*On the Day of Judgement, the most awful name in the sight of Allah is the name of a man calling himself the king of kings,*”²⁷ affirmed that it was forbidden for this name to be used by anyone, regardless of his status. It is an attribute that in real terms is an attribute of Allah only. No one but Allah (swt), who is the ruler of the rulers, is entitled to have that name.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not want to give names to newborn babies that meant anything related to rebellion against Allah. If such names were given to someone during childhood, the Prophet (saw) would change them. For example, he replaced the female name “Asiyya” (the one who rebels) with “Jamila” (beautiful),²⁸ and replaced the male name “Asi” (the one who rebels) with “Muti” (the one who obeys).²⁹ In the same way “al-Ajda”³⁰ and “Hubab,” which were known as the names of Satan, were among the names not seen as acceptable by the Prophet (saw).³¹

According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) changed names that had negative connotations.³² For example he replaced “Asram” (cut, pruned, and expired) with “Zur‘a” (green and fertile);³³ “Shihab” (flame) with “Hisham” (generous);³⁴ and “Ghurab” (crow) with “Muslim.”³⁵

Similarly, ‘Umar (ra) asked the name of a man who visited him, and the man said his name was Masruq b. al-Ajda’. Thereupon, according to ‘Umar, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Al-Ajda’ is one of the names of Satan.*” ‘Umar said to that man, “Your name is Masruq b. ‘Abd al-Rahman from now on.”³⁶

²³ T2392, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.

²⁴ H13/38, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, III, 38.

²⁵ MK253, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, I, 126.

²⁶ MŞ25892, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Adab, 90.

²⁷ B6205, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 114; 5610, Muslim, al-Adab, 20.

²⁸ M5605, Muslim, al-Adab, 15.

²⁹ M4628, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 89.

³⁰ D4957, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 62; IM3731, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 31.

³¹ MA19849, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, XI, 40.

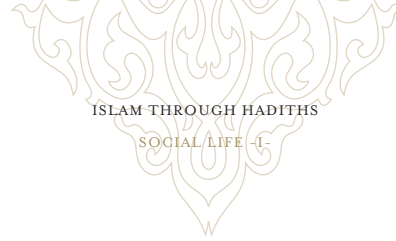
³² T2839, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 66.

³³ D4954, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 62.

³⁴ D4956, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 62.

³⁵ NM7727, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VII, 2756 (4/276).

³⁶ HM211, Ibn Hanbal, I, 31.



The Prophet (saw) changed arrogant names, such as “al-Akbar” (the greatest),³⁷ and “Barra” (infallible), because they could harm human relations. When he changed the name of Zaynab bint Abu Salama (ra) from “Barra,” the Prophet (saw) said, “Do not try make yourself be seen as good. Allah surely knows who is good among you,”³⁸ and reminded us that we needed to pay attention to this matter when naming children.

The Prophet (saw) insisted on changing all names that were in conflict with monotheism, but he didn’t insist on not changing other names of those who wanted to do so. One day the grandfather of Sa’id b. al-Musayyab came to visit the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) asked his name. He said that it was “Hazn” (crooked, uneven). The Prophet (saw) replied, “You are not ‘Hazn’ but ‘Sahl’ (straight and smooth).” But the man did not accept the Prophet’s suggestion, saying, “I’m not going to change the name my father gave me.”³⁹ In relating the rest of this story, Sa’id b. al-Musayyab said that after this there was no lack of trouble in the families.

The Prophet (saw), while preserving cultural elements of society that did not conflict with the unity of Allah, took advantage of the power of the new names that reflected belief, morality, and culture. The Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered that a newborn child be given a name on the seventh day, that he be cleaned by having his head shaved, and that a sacrifice be performed for him.⁴⁰ The Companions (ra) brought their children to the Prophet (saw) for him to name and bless.⁴¹ He first recited the *adhān* in the child’s ear,⁴² then thoroughly chewed a sweet morsel, such as a date, put it in his mouth, and named him.⁴³ By reciting the *adhān*, he wished for his life to stay always in the right direction; and by putting the date in his mouth, he wished that the child should have a sweet life. By giving him a beautiful name, he was praying for him to have an abundant life.⁴⁴

In this way a newborn baby meets for the first time the culture in which he will live. The name that is given to the child is an instrument that binds the child to the past and the present context in which he lives. It is also believed that constant repetition of the name will shape the character of the child or grant him blessings. Based on this belief, one can say that the Prophet (saw) picked names or changed names with the expectation of seeing those qualities in the person who was named. The example of ‘Ali, who wanted to name his children with names associated with war, is an instructive one. In place of those names, the Prophet (saw) gave his

³⁷ H11/106, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, I, 106

³⁸ M5609, Muslim, *al-Adab*, 19.

³⁹ B6193, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Adab*, 108.

⁴⁰ T2832, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Adab*, 63; D2838, Abu Da’ud, *al-Dahaya*, 20-21.

⁴¹ B5467, *al-Bukhari*, *al-‘Aqiqa*, 1; M5613, Muslim, *al-Adab*, 23.

⁴² D5105, Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 106-107; T1514, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Adab*, 16.

⁴³ M5612, Muslim, *al-Adab*, 22; D4951, Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 61.

⁴⁴ MK19251, *al-Tabarani*, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 285.



grandchildren the names “Hasan” and “Husayn,” meaning “goodness” and “beauty.”⁴⁵

The Prophet (saw) had the same attitude when choosing names for people as he did for tribes and places: he changed the name of a place called “Afira” (dusty, dirty) with “Khadira” (greenery). He replaced names with negative meanings with names that were the opposite and positive. For example, he replaced the names of “Shi‘b al-Dalala (Perversion Valley) with “Shi‘b al-Hidaya” (Salvation Valley),⁴⁶ and “Baqiyya al-Dalala” (Perversion Ruins) with “Baqiyya al-Huda” (Salvation Ruins).⁴⁷ He changed the names of two families from “Banu Mughwiya” (Sons of the Unruly) and “Banu al-Zanya” (Sons of Adultery) to “Banu al-Rishda” (Sons of Piety).⁴⁸ “Baghd,” meaning angry in his language was turned into “Habib” (beloved),⁴⁹ and “Qalil” (scarcity) into “Kathir” (abundance).⁵⁰

The Companions (ra), who were aware that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was producing a new culture a stitch at a time, were not surprised by these name changes. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, in order to call attention to the importance of not shedding blood during the sacred months, the Prophet (saw) asked such questions as, “*Do you know which day is today? Which month is this month? Which place is this?*” Although the Companions (ra) knew the answers, they said, “Allah and his Prophet are the ones who know best.” When the Prophet (saw) again kept his silence, the Companions (ra) thought that he was going to give them all new names.⁵¹

All of these examples show us that name changes played a great role in the transformation of the early Islamic society. Perhaps because of that, the Prophet (saw) changed the name of the city that would be the cradle of Islamic civilization from Yathrib to Medina, a name referring to urbanization. Regarding the city to which he had recently emigrated, the Prophet (saw) said, “*People call it Yathrib, but its name is Medina. As a furnace removes impurities from iron, Medina throws out the bad people.*”⁵² With these words, the Prophet (saw) gave notice of the building of a civilized society, and with this new name revealed the goal of the transformation. The city of Medina as created by the Messenger of Allah (saw) became a city of virtue and integrity. Upon returning from the Tabuk expedition, the Prophet (saw) pointed out the city’s beauty by saying, “*This is Taba (the city of goodness and beauty),*” and in this way gave the city a second name. In fact, as he continued to speak, he expressed his love not only for Medina but also for

⁴⁵ HM953, Ibn Hanbal, I, 119; EM823, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 286.

⁴⁶ D4956, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Adab*, 62.

⁴⁷ MA19862, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Mussannaf*, XI, 43.

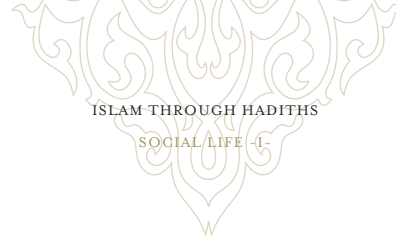
⁴⁸ D4956, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Adab*, 62.

⁴⁹ H11/320, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, I, 320.

⁵⁰ BM2527, Abu Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifat al-Sahaba*, V, 2393.

⁵¹ B1741, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 132; M4384, Muslim, *al-Qasama*, 30.

⁵² B1871, al-Bukhari, *Fada’il al-Madina*, 2; M3353, Muslim, *al-Hajj*, 488.



Uhud, and said, “*This is Uhud. It is such a mountain that we love it and it loves us.*”⁵³ Since the Supreme Creator is beautiful and loves beauty,⁵⁴ shouldn’t His creation be called by beautiful names? The statement of the Messenger of Allah (saw), “*On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father’s names, so give yourselves good names,*”⁵⁵ reflects the basic spirit of choosing names.

Not only human beings but all living creatures acquired beautiful names in the Prophet’s language. He was opposed to giving good names to bad things. For example, grapes and grapevines used to make wine were called “*karm*” (dignified and generous), due to the grapes’ fruitful nature. With his words, “*Don’t call grapes ‘karm!’ Only a Muslim can be karm,*”⁵⁶ the Prophet (saw) expressed his disapproval. In the Jahiliyya, the Arabs called both grapevines and wine grapes “*karm,*” meaning generous, since one produced abundant grapes and the other produced wine, which made those who drank it more kind and generous. After banning the drinking of wine and alcohol, the Prophet (saw) also banned the use of the name “*karm*” for raw materials used in making forbidden drinks because this word could remind people of wine, and perhaps would direct someone towards drinking.⁵⁷

He was at peace with all creation. His relationship with every animate and inanimate thing took place at this level in which he saw the blessings and value in everything granted to him by the Supreme Creator, and treated each as a living object. The Messenger of Allah (saw) looked with beauty at creation and saw beautiful things. When he was getting dressed, he counted off the names of his clothes one by one, thanked Allah (swt) for each one, and prayed that they would be used for good and blessed causes.⁵⁸ He gave beautiful names to his possessions and his animals. He called his sword “Zulfikar,”⁵⁹ one of his horses “Murtajaz,” his donkey “Ufayr,” and his camels “Kaswa” and “Baydha.”⁶⁰

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) was careful to choose names that would protect human dignity. He wanted to protect people’s feelings from being hurt because of their names, and he wanted human relations to be established on a peaceful, secure, and healthy foundation. He also wanted to avoid the perpetuation of negative and superstitious beliefs related to names that had a negative impact on individual and social relations. He took pleasure in good omens and in seeing the good in all things, and

⁵³ B4422, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 82; M3371, Muslim, al-Hajj, 503.

⁵⁴ M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

⁵⁵ D4948, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 61; DM2722, al-Darimi, al-Isti’dhan, 59.

⁵⁶ M5871, Muslim, al-Alfaz, 10.

⁵⁷ ŞN15/4, al-Nawawi, *Sharh ‘ala al-Muslim*, XV, 4-5.

⁵⁸ D4020, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 1; T1767, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 29.

⁵⁹ IM2808, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 18; HM2445, Ibn Hanbal, I, 270.

⁶⁰ BN6/10, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, VI, 10.



he didn't like to take evil into account.⁶¹ He discouraged the use of such names as "Yasar" (easiness), "Rabah" (profit), "Najih" (successful), and "Aflah" (discarded). His fear was that if someone called out for a person not present who had that name, then others would have responded, "Easiness is absent," or "Profit is absent." And as a result they would unwittingly become pessimistic.⁶² In this regard, it can be said that the Prophet's main concern was not with the names themselves but rather with how they were being perceived by others. And later he gave up the need to change names whose meanings were beautiful.⁶³

Once the Prophet (saw) asked two men to milk their camels, and asked the camels' names. When he learned that their names were "Murra" (bitter) and "Harb" (War), he refused to give the men permission to milk the camels. Instead he allowed another person, called "Ya'ish" (Alive), to milk a camel.⁶⁴ In addition, he used to ask the name of the person he was sending out as a tax collector, or asked the name of a village when he entered it. Whether he liked or disliked a name could be understood from his facial expressions.⁶⁵

The Messenger of Allah (saw) knew that Allah is as the servants think He is,⁶⁶ so he always had a positive approach to events. He named the newborn Sahl bint 'Asim b. 'Adi from Medina "Sahl" (easiness) before the Battle of Hunayn, and prayed, "*May Allah make your work easy.*"⁶⁷ By this, he wanted to turn a difficult job into an easy one by invoking a positive name. In like manner, when he saw that Suhayl b. 'Amr was representing the polytheists during negotiations for the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, he was pleased to realize that "Suhayl" meant "easiness," and thus he said, "*May Allah make your work easy.*"⁶⁸ This shows that the Prophet (saw) expected good to come from names.

To give a name is to have the owner of that name pleased with its meaning. Giving nicknames to people who do not like them, or calling them by these names would adversely affect the relationship. During the time of the Prophet (saw), one person could have two or three names, but that person might not have liked one of those names. That's why Allah, after emphasizing the brotherhood of believers, said, "*Do not insult one another and do not call each other [offensive] nicknames,*"⁶⁹ and forbade calling people names they didn't like. It pleased the Prophet (saw) when people called each other by the most agreeable names and nicknames.⁷⁰

⁶¹ IM3536, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 43.

⁶² M5601, al-Muslim, al-Adab, 12.

⁶³ M5603, Muslim, al-Adab, 13.

⁶⁴ MU1789, al-Muwatta', al-Isti'dhan, 9.

⁶⁵ D3920, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 24.

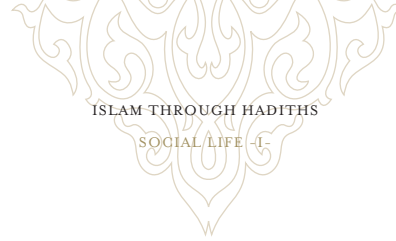
⁶⁶ B7405, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 15; M6805, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 2.

⁶⁷ MK21331, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, XXIV, 292

⁶⁸ S14872, Ibn Hibban, al-Sahih, XI, 216.

⁶⁹ Al-Hujurat, 49:11; T3268, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49.

⁷⁰ EM819, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 285.



One day, Allah’s Messenger went to the house of his daughter, Fatima, to see ‘Ali (ra), but ‘Ali was not home. He asked his daughter where he was. Fatima replied, “Something happened between us. He got mad at me and left.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) sent someone to find him. Later ‘Ali was found in the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived at the mosque and went to ‘Ali, whose cloak had fallen to the ground. While shaking the dirt from ‘Ali, he said, “*Get up, O Abu Turab! Get up, O Abu Turab (dusty).*” Ali said that “Abu Turab” was the nickname that he liked the most.⁷¹ Abu Hurayra (ra) (father of kittens) was the nickname that came from his love for cats.⁷²

Our beloved Prophet’s practice of giving beautiful names to everything positive, extended to polytheists as well. For example, by addressing the polytheist Safwan b. Umayya with the title “Abu Wahb” (generous),⁷³ he wanted to reinforce his positive behavior and invite him to the goodness of Allah (swt).

While names reflect the beliefs, morality, and culture of a person, they also create positive or negative associations in the mind of the person who hears them. Because of that the Prophet (saw) changed names that bore traces of the Jahiliyya and carried associations of arrogance, excessive pride, and negativity. He preferred to use names that called to mind Allah’s servants, prophets, and virtuous people, and names that had beautiful and blessed meanings. In this way, the Prophet (saw) wanted to make sure that correct belief, culture, and morality were remembered, and goodness and beauty were established in the minds of people.

⁷¹ M6229, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 38.

⁷² T3840, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 46.

⁷³ MA19852, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 41.



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS TOO



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ... :
”... أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ جَحَدَ وَلَدَهُ وَهُوَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ اِحْتَجَبَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَفَضَّحَهُ عَلَى رُءُوسِ
الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Any man who disowns his child publicly and consciously, Allah the Exalted will
veil Himself from him and disgrace him in the presence of all creatures, first and
last.”

(D2263, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 28-29)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الذَّنْبِ أَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: «أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدًّا وَهُوَ خَلْقُكَ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: «أَنْ تَقْتُلَ وَلَدَكَ خَشْيَةً أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مَعَكَ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: «أَنْ تُزَانِيَ حَلِيلَةَ جَارِكَ».



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: دَخَلَتْ امْرَأَةً مَعَهَا ابْنَتَانِ لَهَا تَسْأَلُ، فَلَمْ تَجِدْ عِنْدِي شَيْئًا غَيْرَ تَمْرَةٍ فَأَعْطَيْتُهَا إِيَّاهَا، فَسَمَّمَتْهَا بَيْنَ ابْنَتَيْهَا، وَلَمْ تَأْكُلْ مِنْهَا، ثُمَّ قَامَتْ فَخَرَجَتْ، فَدَخَلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَلَيْنَا فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «مَنْ ابْتَلَى مِنْ هَذِهِ الْبَنَاتِ بِشَيْءٍ كُنَّ لَهُ سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ».



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَ[لَمْ] يَعْرِفْ شَرَفَ كَبِيرِنَا».



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: وَجَدَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مَقْتُولَةً فِي بَعْضِ تِلْكَ الْمَغَارِي، فَنَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنْ قَتْلِ النِّسَاءِ وَالصَّبِيَّانِ.



عَنْ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: تَصَدَّقَ عَلَيَّ أَبِي بِبَعْضِ مَالِهِ فَقَالَتْ أُمِّي عَمْرَةٌ بِنْتُ رَوَاحَةَ: لَا أَرْضَى حَتَّى تُشْهَدَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَانْطَلَقَ أَبِي إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ لِيُشْهَدَهُ عَلَى صَدَقَتِي، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «أَفَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِوَلَدِكَ كُلِّهِمْ؟» قَالَ: لَا، قَالَ: «اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْدِلُوا فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ» فَرَجَعَ أَبِي فَرَدَّ تِلْكَ الصَّدَقَةَ.



'Abd Alla (b. Mas'ud) (ra) recounted,

"I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Which sin is the greatest?' He said, '*To set up a rival to Allah, though He alone created you.*' I said, 'What next?' He said, '*To kill your son lest he should share your food with you.*' I further asked, 'What next?' He said, '*To commit illegal sexual intercourse with the wife of your neighbor.*'"

(B6001, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 20)



'A'isha (ra) reported, "A lady, along with her two daughters, came to me asking (for some alms), but she found nothing with me except one date, which I gave to her and she divided it between her two daughters and did not eat anything herself, and then she got up and went away. Then the Prophet (saw) came in and I informed him of this. The Prophet (saw) said, '*Whoever is put to trial by the daughters and he treats them generously (with benevolence), then these daughters will act as a shield for him from Hellfire.*'"

(B1418, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 10)



'Amr b. Shu'ayb said that his father said that his grandfather (ra) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, or knows the honor of our elders.*"

(T1920, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15)



Ibn 'Umar (ra) reported, "In one of the wars, the dead body of a woman was discovered. Upon this, the Prophet (saw) banned killing women and children in war."

(M4548, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 25)



Al-Nu'man b. Bashir (ra) said, "My father donated to me some of his property. My mother, 'Amra bint Rawaha, said, 'I shall not be pleased until you make the Messenger of Allah (saw) a witness to it.' My father went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) in order make him the witness of the donation given to me. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him, 'Have you done the same with every son of yours?' He said, 'No.' Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, '*Fear Allah and observe justice among your children.*' My father returned and took back the gift."

(M4181, Muslim, al-Hiba, 13)



When the two boys, one year apart in age, entered the Medina mosque, everyone was listening attentively to the sermon. The little ones, dressed in red shirts, were toddling with baby steps but seemed determined to reach their grandfather, who was at the pulpit. The affection felt by the Prophet (saw) for his grandchildren was so strong that he could not simply have ignored Hasan and Husayn (ra) and continued his sermon. To the astonished looks of the congregation, the Messenger of Allah (saw) took the three steps down from the pulpit and picked up the two toddlers, who, in the future, would be heralded as the young lords of Paradise.¹ When he climbed up the steps with his grandsons in order to finish his sermon, he said, *“Allah spoke the Truth: Indeed, your wealth and your children are a trial.² I looked at these two children walking and falling down, and I could not stand by patiently anymore until I had interrupted my talk and picked them up.”*³

The Prophet (saw) was not angry. On the contrary, he was happy and perhaps so excited that he interrupted his flowing sentences to unhesitatingly and openly show his love for his grandchildren. This love was imprinted on our hearts during the creation of mankind. Allah Almighty granted us the desire to have children and to continue our lineage,⁴ and He never denied the prayers and requests of those who genuinely wanted to have children.⁵

It is extremely meaningful that while our Master the Prophet (saw) expressed his love for his grandchildren, he also warned us that this love could be turned into a weakness. He told us that our interest in our children was one of life’s most important tests. By this, it was as if our Lord was warning his servants by reading one of his revelations as an example, saying, “Don’t be like those who failed this test because they succumbed to love.” Likewise, Almighty Allah repeatedly reminded us that a child, who could latch onto people with his cuteness, and was so favored and was one

¹ T3768, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 30.

² Al-Anfal, 8:28

³ T3774, al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30; N1414, al-Nasa’i, al-Jum’a, 30.

⁴ Al-Araf, 7:189.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:128; Al ‘Imran, 3:35, 38; Maryam, 19:5-6.

⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3:14; al-Kahf, 18:46.



of the blessings of this world,⁶ was, in reality, a major test for us: *“Know that your possessions and your children are only a test, but the reward is great in the sight of Allah.”*⁷

Parents are not the owners but the custodians of their children.⁸ Allah wished to send a new life to earth and put the parents in charge of making, birthing, and raising this being. Therefore, the parents, who take on a serious responsibility on Allah’s behalf, are obliged to properly raise the little person that He turned over to them. They must take care of what Allah (swt) has entrusted to them, and not betray Him. This means that they don’t have the freedom to do what they want in regards to the child. Because the day will come when they will be held accountable by Allah as to how they treated this child with whom they’d been entrusted, how they fed him, and how they protected him.

That a child, who is an ornament of this worldly life,⁹ would be a test has something to do with the fact that he keeps his parents busy all the time. For parents who have to take care of their children day and night, it’s as if life revolves around the children’s development. As soon as one need is met another arises and as soon as one problem is solved another appears. However, while bonding to their child with love and compassion, and striving to teach him to stand on his own feet, people must not forget about the main purpose of their own life. While busy with children, one must not neglect one’s principal duty, and fail to live in the consciousness of one’s servitude to Allah. A child should not be the only concern and the main purpose of human existence, and above all, this should not be a source of unruliness and arrogance.¹⁰ And one should bear in mind that those who failed to heed the warning, *“O Believers! Do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah,”*¹¹ were deceived and suffered a loss.

A child is a matchless blessing, but like every blessing, it brings troubles into our lives. A child brings us many tests that he wants us to deal with and endure. We prefer him to ourselves; we don’t eat, and let him eat; we don’t dress, and let him dress. With the hope of getting the same reward, we remember the example of a mother who was about to pop into her mouth a date that had been given to her, but instead shared it with her children who wanted some. About this mother, the Prophet (saw) said, *“Just because of this date, Allah ensured that she would enter Paradise, and*

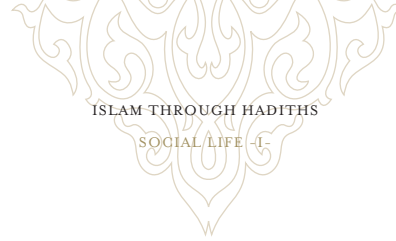
⁷ Al-Anfal, 8:28; Also see al-Mu’minun, 23:55-56.

⁸ M6322, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 107.

⁹ Al-Kahf, 18:46.

¹⁰ Al-Hadid, 57:20; al-Qalam, 68:14.

¹¹ Al-Munafiqun, 63:9; Also see al-Saba’, 34:37.



*thanks to this date He released her from hell.*¹² Some of us who lose a spouse and bear the burden alone of raising a child, become both mother and father to him. By saying the following, the Prophet (saw) expressed his desires for his neighborhood: *“I and a woman whose cheeks have become black (due to hardships) shall on the Day of Resurrection be (together) like these two (pointing to the middle and forefinger). She who is a woman of rank and beauty who has been bereft of her husband devotes herself (without getting married) to her fatherless children until they go their separate ways or die.”*¹³

Sometimes with our children’s sickness or health, their very existence is a test. Even when they’re grown up and married, we’re not spared from getting upset. This is like when Abu Bakr heard that his beloved daughter ‘A’isha (ra) was ill and he ran to her side, and after kissing and hugging her, asked how she was.¹⁴ Sometimes the child’s absence through death and loss is a test. No matter how sad we are, we try to be patient and we do not turn our sorrow into rebellion, just like the Messenger of Allah (saw), who wept when his little son, Ibrahim, was dying in his arms.¹⁵ With the Prophet’s glad tidings there is hope that our burning hearts will find relief and children who die young will protect us from the fires of hell.¹⁶ According to the testimony of the Messenger of Allah (saw), the day will come when these children who have gone before their parents will prevent them from going to Hell,¹⁷ open the gates of Paradise to them,¹⁸ and holding their hands will bring them to Paradise.¹⁹

All of these tests and efforts bring compensation and we establish a friendship that lasts until we are together with our child in Paradise.²⁰ But sometimes our efforts are fruitless and our child turns hostile.²¹ Although we can’t know whether in the future a child will be a valuable person or not, ultimately it falls upon the parents to fulfill their responsibilities to him.

Certainly, a sense of responsibility is required to look after the rights of others as well as one’s own interests. Especially when the other person is a delicate child who is too weak to protect his own rights, it becomes even more important not to violate his rights. Because the downtrodden child who has no rights will not be able to taste confidence, the value of fairness, or the joy of togetherness that he deserves. Even worse, that child in the future would learn to oppress those weaker than himself, and as an irresponsible parent would raise problem children. It is obvious what a bad effect such a vicious cycle would have on the future of society. Therefore it

¹² M6694, Muslim, al-Birr, 148.

¹³ D5149, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 120-121; HM24507, Ibn Hanbal, VI/28.

¹⁴ D5222, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 146-147.

¹⁵ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 62.

¹⁶ B6656, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-Nuzur, 9; M6696, Muslim, al-Birr, 150.

¹⁷ M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152.

¹⁸ N2090, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 120.

¹⁹ HM10336, Ibn Hanbal, II, 488.

²⁰ Al-Ra’d, 13:23.

²¹ Al-Taghabun, 64:14.



is important to respect children's innate rights as human beings and make them feel that they are valued.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As (ra) by saying,²² *"Your child has rights over you!"*²³ At the beginning of those rights is for him to be welcomed with prayers even before he enters his mother's womb. The parents must pray to Allah (swt), asking to keep themselves and their children away from Satan, even before they come together to conceive their children.²⁴ After learning that they are going to have a child, they must accept this with an open heart.

The owner of the universe, our Lord Almighty says, *"Allah has control of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He will. He grants female offspring to whomever He will, male to whomever He will, or both male and female, including twins, and He makes whomever He will barren: He is all knowing and all powerful."*²⁵ In short, it is Allah's decision to create a new human being, and no one has a right to deny it. Throughout history, however, people destroyed many unborn babies or killed them as soon as they were born, taking away their right to life.

Although the desire to have a child is a natural instinct, sometimes a child can be an unexpected and even unwanted surprise for the parents. However, the innocent child must not pay the price of unfavorable conditions or the unwillingness of his parents. Concerning that our Prophet said, *"Allah the Exalted will veil Himself from any man who disowns his child when he looks at him, and disgrace him in the presence of all creatures, first and last."*²⁶

A family living in hardship, when they hear they'll have another mouth to feed, should remember the following verse: *"Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them and for you. Killing them is a great sin."*²⁷ Our Prophet considered killing a child out of fear of poverty as one of the biggest sins.²⁸ When the Muslims from Medina met him for the first time in 'Aqaba and gave their pledges of loyalty to him, the Prophet (saw) obtained a promise from them not to kill their children.²⁹ It is clear that there is no difference in the eyes of Allah and His Messenger between preventing a child from coming into the world and an adult unjustly taking his own life.

Killing a child just because it is a girl is a criminal and huge sin.³⁰ If the face of a father, like the polytheists in the Jahiliyya period, turns black from anger when he hears that he has a baby girl and he looks for ways to get rid of her,³¹ then how is he going to explain this shame to Allah (swt),

²² M2730, Muslim, al-Siyam, 182.

²³ M2731, Muslim, al-Siyam, 183.

²⁴ B141, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 8; M3533, Muslim, al-Nikah, 116.

²⁵ Al-Shura, 42:49-50.

²⁶ D2263, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 28-29; HM4795, Ibn Hanbal, II/26.

²⁷ Al-Isra', 17:31; also see al-An'am, 6:140, 151.

²⁸ B6001, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 20; M257, Muslim, al-Iman, 141.

²⁹ B18, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 11; B7468, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 31.

³⁰ B5975, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; B7292, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 3.

³¹ Al-Nahl, 16:58-59; al-Zukhruf, 43:17.

who reminds him that He created both man and woman?³² How will this little girl answer, on the Day of Judgement, when she is asked for what sins she was buried alive,³³ or why her life was ended with abortion? Our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever is put to trial by the daughters and he treats them generously (with benevolence), then these daughters will act as a shield for him from Hellfire.”³⁴ With this statement, the Prophet (saw) pointed out that raising a daughter was a difficult but rewarding job. He also gave the good news that those parents who raised their daughters well would gain Paradise.³⁵

A child still in his mother’s womb needs to be protected by his parents. His parents should keep him away from violent, stressful, and unpleasant environments; feed him with permissible and healthy food; and do not let harmful substances like cigarettes and alcohol taint his blood. Every child born, whether a boy or a girl, is entitled from the first day to be well cared for by his parents. Duties performed right after birth are the first links of a chain of kindnesses that last a lifetime. Allah’s beloved Messenger created a tradition of giving to a newborn a name that was pleasing to the ear;³⁶ sweetening the baby’s palate by putting a softened piece of date into its mouth, and with benevolent prayers asking that he be blessed in his future.³⁷ In this little ceremony, which the Prophet (saw) recommended holding on the seventh day after birth,³⁸ the child would gain his name and hear the *adhān*,³⁹ an amount of silver which was equal to the weight of the hair shaven from his head was given to charity,⁴⁰ and an *‘aqīqa* sacrifice was performed.⁴¹ By saving their children’s souls with these practices, the parents give thanks to Allah, who sent them a healthy baby, and the first gifts worthy of their children.

It is the natural right of a child to be fed and clothed.⁴² For babies to be breastfed by their mothers is of the utmost importance. Moses, even in the Pharaoh’s palace, grew up at his mother’s breast.⁴³ Our Prophet did not permit separating mothers from their children when selling prisoners of war, and said, “He who separates a mother from her child will by Allah be separated from his loved ones on the Day of Judgement.”⁴⁴ What a strong threat! The Messenger of Allah (saw), who declared that a child has the right to grow up in the mother’s embrace,⁴⁵ desired to have a generation that was protected from all kinds of material and unearthly threats.

It is the natural right of a child to grow up, seeing love and com-

³² Al-Najm, 53:45-46.

³³ Al-Taqwīr, 81:8-9.

³⁴ B1418, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 10; M6693, Muslim, al-Birr, 147.

³⁵ D5147, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 120-121; HM3424, Ibn Hanbal, 1/363.

³⁶ M5601, al-Muslim, al-Adab, 12.

³⁷ B5467, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqīqa, 1; M5616, Muslim, al-Adab, 25.

³⁸ N4225, al-Nasa’i, al-‘Aqīqa, 5; T2832, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 63.

³⁹ T1514, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 16; D5105, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 106-107

⁴⁰ T1519, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 19; MU1071, *Muwatta’*, al-‘Aqīqa, 1.

⁴¹ T2832, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 63; N4225, al-Nasa’i, al-‘Aqīqa, 5.

⁴² Al-Baqara, 2:233; Luqman, 31:14, al-Ahqaf, 46:15.

⁴³ Al-Qasas, 28:12-13.

⁴⁴ T1283, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 52; DM2507, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 39.

⁴⁵ D2276, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 34-35.



passion not only from his mother, but also from his father. Inasmuch as mothers and their children are described in the Holy Qur'an, it is very interesting to note the inclusion of the loving and yearning statements of a father such as Jacob, who was very fond of Joseph.⁴⁶ Likewise, it's worth considering for a long time the verses describing Abraham as a father who would not go back on his promise to Allah (swt), but could not sacrifice his son, Isma'il.⁴⁷ Is it not the continuation of the prophetic tradition that the Prophet (saw) was not simply a father and grandfather, but, as the Prophet of the Muslim community, he opened his arms to all the children around him?

Children sprout with love, bloom with kindness, and grow with compassion. At every age they have the right to see unconditional and inestimable love from their parents. Because of this, our beloved Prophet never hesitated to show love towards children. He sometimes tightly embraced children and gave them a kiss,⁴⁸ and sometimes he patted them with his fragrant hands.⁴⁹ Since he knew that a child needed jesting and play at least as much as discipline and seriousness, he would fill his mouth with water and squirt it at children,⁵⁰ and play horsy with his grandchildren on his back.⁵¹ While he spoke highly of those who showed affection to their children,⁵² he reproached with regret those who withheld love from their child,⁵³ saying, "*He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, or knows the honor of our elders.*"⁵⁴

As a manifestation of love and compassion, a child has a right to receive blessings from his elders. With the example of Abraham, who prayed, "O Lord, make this town safe! Preserve me and my offspring from idolatry,"⁵⁵ parents should support their children's well-being with their prayers. Thus our Prophet had numerous prayers for the well-being, prosperity, forgiveness, and health of the children he held in his lap.⁵⁶ Because of that, the Sunna of the Prophet is meant to meet the material needs of a child and support his spiritual direction.

We see the same dual principle when it comes to the need to protect our children. By saying, "*When night falls (or when it is evening), stop your children from going out,*"⁵⁷ the Messenger of Allah (saw) tried to protect children from the evil that was quickly spreading through the darkness and the streets. When he banned killing women and children in war,⁵⁸ he intended to ensure their safety; when he prevented youngsters from joining

⁴⁶ Yusuf, 12:84, 94.

⁴⁷ Al-Saffat, 37:100-107.

⁴⁸ B2122, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 49.

⁴⁹ M6052, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 80

⁵⁰ B77, al-Bukhari, al-'ilm, 18.

⁵¹ T3784, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 30.

⁵² M6458, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 201.

⁵³ B5998, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6027, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 64.

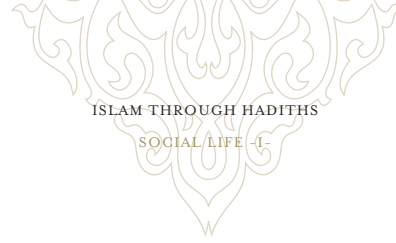
⁵⁴ T1920, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15.

⁵⁵ Ibrahim, 14:35.

⁵⁶ M6376, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 143; M6414, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 172; B6003, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 22; B3749, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 22.

⁵⁷ B5623, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 22; M5250, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 97.

⁵⁸ M4548, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 25; T1569, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 19.



the army,⁵⁹ he protected them from possible physical and psychological injury. The Messenger of Mercy was so loving that he couldn't bear tormenting a child, even for the purpose of medical treatment, and if possible, he wanted painless methods to be tried.⁶⁰

The Prophet (saw) points out that a child also has a right to be protected from wounds it's possible to receive from spiritual hunger. He warns parents not to curse their children. Because if the curse happens at a moment when prayers are not refused, then the child will pay the price of the curse.⁶¹ Also, because a child is severely emotionally damaged by suffering injustice, being despised and belittled, such behavior was strictly forbidden by our Master the Prophet (saw). Parents discriminating against or favoring one of their children can result in painful consequences, as shown by Joseph and his brothers.⁶² Therefore, our Prophet would never forgive someone who tolerated and favored one of his children over another for any reason. For example, by saying, *"Don't count on me as a witness. Because I would not be a witness to what is unjust,"*⁶³ he expressed disapproval of Bashir, who intended to donate his property to his son, Nu'man, while giving nothing to his other children. The immutable commandment that children have the right to be treated fairly and equitably is very clear: *"Fear Allah and be fair to your children."*⁶⁴

In fact, when we follow step by step the teachings of our beloved Prophet on the rights of children, it's impossible not to see that he treated them as adults. Perhaps this was the crux of the matter. If one were to see a child as a future adult, and treat him not according to his small physical stature, but to his honorable and lofty spirit, then concerns about children's rights would be obsolete. That is precisely the point at which the example of the Messenger of Allah (saw) is effective enough to silence all tongues.

The supreme Messenger could not ignore the existence of a child. He greeted children as he passed by them,⁶⁵ as if to say, "I noticed you." He was concerned with their problems, and asked little Abu 'Umayr (ra) about his sparrow,⁶⁶ as if to say, "Whatever concerns you concerns me." He valued children's health; when a Jewish child became ill he did not hesitate to visit him and invite him to Islam, as if saying, "In my eyes you are an independent individual."⁶⁷ When his daughter Fatima came to see him, he liked to stand up and greet her, take her by the hand, and let her

⁵⁹ B2664, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 18; M4837, Muslim, al-Imara, 91.
⁶⁰ B5696, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 13.

⁶¹ M7515, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 74.

⁶² Yusuf, 12:8-9.

⁶³ M4182, Muslim, al-Hiba, 14.

⁶⁴ M4181, Muslim, al-Hiba, 13; B2587, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 13.

⁶⁵ M5663, Muslim, al-Salam, 14.

⁶⁶ B6129, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 81.

⁶⁷ B5657, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 11.



sit in his own seat,⁶⁸ as if to say, “Greetings to the one who resembles me the most.” He took the preferences of children into account, and let them choose which parent they preferred in the case of divorce,⁶⁹ as if he were saying, “We respect your decision.”

One day, when our Prophet wanted to share his drink with his Companions (ra), he intended to offer it starting from the people to his right, as was his custom. When he turned to the right, he noticed that a child was sitting next to him. And the elderly Companions (ra) were sitting to his left. The Prophet (saw) did not dismiss the child. He asked him, “*Would you allow me to offer the drink to the elders first?*” And he received a smart answer: “No. By Allah, I would not prefer anyone over me for the offer that came from you.” This clever child was the son of the Prophet’s uncle, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra).⁷⁰ And the Prophet (saw) began serving the child,⁷¹ as if he were saying, “Here you go, little man!”

As the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught us, our children have rights to engage in life and to learn social life under the supervision of their elders. In that regard, we see that the Prophet (saw) did not keep children away from a life of worship, and he even allocated a place in the mosque at prayer times for children.⁷² Whenever he returned from travel or war, he showed special interest in the children in the crowd who came to meet him, and took pleasure in entering the city while lifting them onto his horse and hugging them.⁷³ He did not prevent the presence of children at the council; moreover, he first offered to the children next to him fresh fruit of the season which he had brought for himself.⁷⁴

All rights granted to a little person are valid for every child regardless of religion, language, race, and gender. A needy and downtrodden child comes into the world with the same rights as a lucky child growing up with opportunities offered from a warm family environment. One should not forget the statement of our Master the Prophet (saw), “*You should give the rights of all those who have a right on you.*”⁷⁵ The first order of the Holy Qur’an, to help needy and orphaned children, should not be forgotten.⁷⁶ We have such a Prophet who, even while performing divine worship and leading the prayer as *imām* to the Companions (ra), was mindful of the little children in the congregation: “*When I start the prayer I intend to prolong it, but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut short the prayer because I know that the cries of the child will incite its mother’s passions.*”⁷⁷

⁶⁸ D5217, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 143-144.

⁶⁹ T1357, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 21.

⁷⁰ IF1/328, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, I, 328.

⁷¹ M5292, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 127.

⁷² D677, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 96.

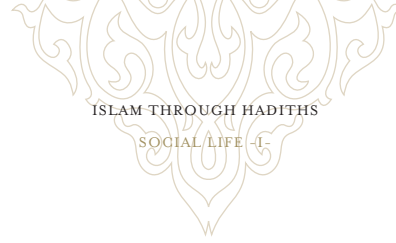
⁷³ B5965, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 99; M6268, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 66.

⁷⁴ M3335, Muslim, al-Hajj, 474.

⁷⁵ B1968, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 51; B6139, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 86.

⁷⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:127.

⁷⁷ B709, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 65; M1056, Muslim, al-Salat, 192.



Every child is innocent enough not to be held accountable for his actions until he enters adolescence; and sinless enough that his mistakes will not be recorded by the recording angels.⁷⁸ One day he will be an adult, and then the effect of his actions from childhood will carry over a lifetime. If parents give children the gift of life and respect their rights, then they will be fully compensated for their efforts. Our Prophet gives the glad tiding to parents that as a result of the beautiful work they left behind as a gift to life, the books of their good deeds will not be closed even after they die.⁷⁹ When parents ask in Paradise, “O Lord, how did we attain such a high station here?” the answer they will receive is priceless: “With the prayers of your children who asked forgiveness for you!”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ D4398, Abu Da’ud, al-Hudud, 17.

⁷⁹ M4223 Muslim, al-wasiyya, 14; D2880, Abu Da’ud, al-wasaya, 14.

⁸⁰ IM3660, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 1; HM10618, Ibn Hanbal, II/509.



THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

“EVERYONE IS BORN IN AL-FITRA”

أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“No child is born except in al-Fitra (a natural state, i.e., Islam) and then his
parents make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian.”

(B4775, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir (al-Rûm), 2; M6755, Muslim, al-Qadar, 22)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ عَالَ ثَلَاثَ بَنَاتٍ، فَأَدَّبَهُنَّ وَزَوَّجَهُنَّ، وَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهِنَّ، فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ.“



أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَبَّلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْحَسَنَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ، وَعِنْدَهُ
الْأَقْرَعُ بْنُ حَابِسٍ التَّمِيمِيُّ جَالِسًا، فَقَالَ الْأَقْرَعُ: إِنَّ لِي عَشْرَةَ مِنْ الْوَلَدِ مَا
قَبَّلْتُ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا، فَنَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ثُمَّ قَالَ:
”مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يُرْحَمُ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ [بْنِ مَالِكٍ] قَالَ: خَدَمْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، وَاللَّهِ! مَا قَالَ
لِي: أُوْفَا قَطُّ، وَلَا قَالَ لِي لِشَيْءٍ: لِمَ فَعَلْتَ كَذَا؟ وَهَلَّا فَعَلْتَ كَذَا؟



حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ بْنُ مُوسَى عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلِ أَفْضَلٍ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ.“



According to Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Whoever undertakes to support three daughters, teaching them manners and
treating them well, he will go to Paradise.*”

(D5147, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab 120-121; HM11946, Ibn Hanbal, III, 96)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) kissed al-
Hasan b. ‘Ali while al-Aqra‘ b. Habis al-Tamim was sitting beside him.
Al-Aqra‘ said, ‘I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of
them.’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) looked at him and said, ‘*Whoever is
not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.*’”

(B5997, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6028, Muslim, al-Fada‘il, 65)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “I served the Prophet (saw) for ten years, and he
never said to me, ‘Uff,’ (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and
never blamed me by saying, ‘*Why did you do so or why didn’t you do so?*’”

(M6011, Muslim, al-Fada‘il, 51; B6038, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39)



Ayyub b. Musa said that his father said that his grandfather said that the
Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*There is nothing more valuable that parents
can give their child than a good training.*”

(T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33; HM16830, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 77)



Little Anas was startled by the touch of a hand on his head, and timidly turned around. Across from him, our Prophet was standing with a smiling face, as usual. In a soft voice, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Little Anas! Did you go to the place I told you?” Anas immediately started walking and said, “Yes, I am going, O Messenger of Allah.”¹

Anas, who came to the Prophet (saw) with his mother,² was perhaps the most meaningful gift presented to our Master the Prophet (saw) by the Medina Muslims. Trusting in her maternal instincts, Umm Sulaym (ra) must have realized that a little assistant could be a great help to the Prophet (saw) in this new city. When she gave her son in service to the Prophet (saw), she actually was entrusting him to be brought up by the Prophet (saw). To have such a smart and agile child serving him with all his heart was pleasing to the Prophet (saw), and he always kept Anas next to him, even under the most difficult conditions. By then the Prophet’s children were grown up and his grandchildren were not yet born. Therefore, from Anas’ childhood to his adolescence, the Messenger of Mercy was interested in his education for the last ten years in Medina before his death.

Our Prophet was not content to spend time only with Anas in the mosque or in his house, but he also enjoyed visiting Anas’ relatives. There he ate, took an afternoon nap, and led prayers with the household congregation.³ Anas’ morals were shaped by this love and sincerity. “No child is born except in *al-Fitra* (a natural state, i.e., Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian,” said the Prophet (saw).⁴ With these words, our Master the Prophet (saw) emphasized that children, regardless of their race, color, and sex, had a natural tendency to accept what was good and to embrace what was beautiful. At the same time, he drew attention to how ready the structure for education was.

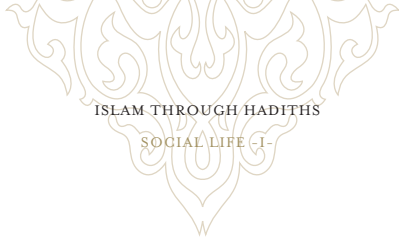
In fact, parents, valuing the child and wanting to educate him in the

¹ M6015, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 54; D4773, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 1.

² B6379, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 47; M6375, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 142.

³ B380, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 20; D2490, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 9.

⁴ B4775, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir (al-Rum), 2; M6755, Muslim, al-Qadar, 22



best way, first need to bear in mind one truth. Although the child is completely dependent upon his parents, his protection and discipline come not from the parents but from Allah (swt). In other words, the parents are not the owners but the custodians of their children. They are in charge of taking good care of them and properly raising them for this life. Because the child is a trust, the parents do not have the right to restrict what is desired for the child. When they feed him, educate him, reward him, punish him, in short, when they raise him and shape his personality, they are obliged to act in accordance with Allah's approval. Because when the time comes, the real owner of the trust will ask them how they took care of the trust, what they provided him, and what they denied him.

The duty of the parents is not limited only to filling the child's belly and putting clothes on his back. It goes well beyond this, reaching a place that affects all of society, namely a youngster's education. Bringing up children is a long process that requires sensitivity. The fact that children are called "tests" in the Holy Qur'an⁵ indicates that this process is time consuming and difficult. "Raising a human being" is a business that is as valuable as it is difficult and honorable as it is wearisome. Ultimately, by doing their best to raise a child, the parents will find a chance to be together with their child in Paradise.⁶ Our Prophet said, "*Whoever undertakes to support three daughters, teaching them manners and treating them well, he will go to Paradise.*"⁷ Those who don't give enough attention to their children, who don't take them seriously, and who do not raise them in accordance with Allah's approval, will drag both themselves and their children to destruction on the Day of Judgement.⁸

The first stage of education is to acknowledge the existence of the child and show him the respect he deserves as a human being. Without respecting and valuing a student as an individual, an educator cannot possibly be successful. One can immediately see that the Prophet (saw) treated children as "little adults" in his communications with them. Those children whose ideas are valued, whose feelings are respected, and whose needs are met, can develop healthy relationships with their parents, and it is clear that efforts spent on education have positive results. The fact that the Prophet (saw) greeted them,⁹ asked about their health,¹⁰ and wanted to learn their preferences¹¹ meant that he accepted them as equals. Inviting a Jewish child to Islam as if he were an adult,¹² and permitting children

⁵ Al-Anfal, 8:28; al-Mu'minun, 23:55-56.

⁶ Al-Ra'd, 13:23.

⁷ D5147, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 120-121; HM11946, Ibn Hanbal, III, 96.

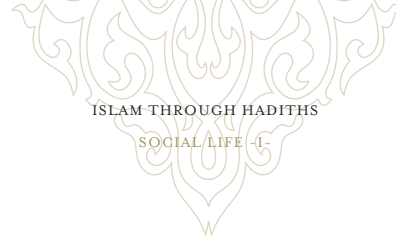
⁸ Al-Zumar, 39:15.

⁹ M5663, Muslim, al-Salam, 14.

¹⁰ B6129, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 81.

¹¹ T1357, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 21.

¹² B5657, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 11.



to pledge loyalty to him¹³ clearly show that the Prophet (saw) valued children, who were the surety of the future. Also the fact that the Prophet (saw) made special prayers for children,¹⁴ told them secrets,¹⁵ and offered them refreshments,¹⁶ shows how much he cared about education based on friendship.

The way to be effective in winning a child's heart comes from being close to him by saying you love him, by hugging and kissing him, and by playing with him. The Messenger of Allah (saw), trying to mold a child but not hurt him during training, created a concept of training that was never without compassion. Such an attitude, which was astonishing to the people of those days, made history by way of this *hadith*: “Who ever does not show mercy to our children and does not show respect to our elders is not from us.”¹⁷ To al-Aqra' b. Habis, who couldn't hide his surprise when he saw the Prophet (saw) kissing his grandson, the Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.”¹⁸

The Qur'an's description of parents who show compassion for their children as an example to humanity is significant in the creation of a desirable parental model. The Prophet Jacob, despite the fact that his children had committed a great offense by throwing their brother in a well, forgave his children and asked forgiveness for them from Allah,¹⁹ and still offered good advice to them on his death bed.²⁰ Verses containing Luqman's advice to his son begin with the most tender and heartfelt words: “My darling child!”²¹ In like manner, Abraham and the gentle demeanor he showed his son, Isma'il, are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.²² When facing death during the great flood, Noah said to his son, who did not accept his father's prophethood, “Come aboard with us, my dear son. Do not stay with the disbelievers.”²³ All of these examples are quite striking in showing that fathers, who are usually imagined as authority figures, are asked to be compassionate and merciful to their children.

A father, during the training of his child, should look no further than our beloved Prophet in order to not resort to violence or to not equate discipline with violence. Anas (ra), who grew up at the side of the Prophet (saw), said, “I served the Prophet (saw) for ten years, and he never said to me, ‘Uff’ (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and never blamed me by saying, ‘Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?’”²⁴ Like the prophets before him, our Prophet called him, with kindness, “My beloved son,”²⁵ or

¹³ M5616, Muslim, al-Adab, 25.

¹⁴ B3071, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 188; M6376, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 143.

¹⁵ M6270, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 68; M6379, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 146.

¹⁶ M5292, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 127; M3335, Muslim, al-Hajj, 474.

¹⁷ T1919, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15.

¹⁸ B5997, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6028, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 65.

¹⁹ Yusuf, 12:97-98.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:132-133.

²¹ Luqman, 31:13, 16-19.

²² Al-Saffat, 37:102.

²³ Hud, 11:42.

²⁴ M6011, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 51; B6038, al-Bukhari al-Adab, 39.

²⁵ M5623, Muslim, al-Adab, 31; T2831, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 62.



“Little Anas.”²⁶ When Anas made a mistake, the Prophet (saw) gave him a second chance,²⁷ and at other times he held his hand and directed him to do a particular job, and waited there until he finished it, so that he could prevent him from making a mistake.²⁸

Our Master the Prophet (saw) not only treated children well, but also advised people around him to do the same thing. One day, the wet nurse Umm al-Fadl got mad at his grandson Hasan (ra), who urinated in her lap, and she struck him. The Prophet (saw) reacted to this by saying, “*May Allah reform you! You hurt the soul of my son!*”²⁹ Umm Khalid (ra), when she was a little girl, came with her father to visit the Prophet (saw). When she touched the mole on his sacred back, she was scolded by her father, but the Prophet (saw) said, “*Let her [touch it].*”³⁰

It is also a Prophetic action to turn the mistakes of children into a teaching opportunity. Rather than punishing them, it is better to teach them the right way in order to prevent them from making the same mistake again. One time a child, who was pelting date trees with stones, was caught and brought before our beloved Prophet for punishment. But our Prophet, instead of scolding him, asked, “*My son, why did you pelt the trees with stones?*” Upon learning that the boy was hungry, he said, “*Do not throw stones at them, just eat what has dropped from the trees.*” With this, the Prophet (saw) taught him the right course of action and after patting his head, he prayed, “*O Allah, nourish this little child!*”³¹ In another incident, he corrected the behavior of ‘Umar b. Abi Salama (ra), who, while eating, indiscriminately placed either hand in the dish. He said, “*My child, say bi’smi’llāh and eat what’s in front of you with your right hand.*”³²

The Prophet (saw) adopted a patient and violence-free method of educating children and never resorted to violence against his helpers.³³ The value of such an attitude can be better appreciated when considering that he lived in a society in which violence was common. It is very important for an educator not to belittle the one being educated, and try to gain his respect and trust. When considered from this point of view, it can be seen that the Prophet’s method of teaching was based not on a show of strength and being unchallenged, but on advice and examples. It must not be forgotten that children learn by example rather than through orders and admonitions. A child assimilates what he sees, not what he hears or reads, especially when taking direction from his parents, modeled on their own

²⁶ D4773, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 1.

²⁷ M6015, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 54.

²⁸ D5203, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 135-136.

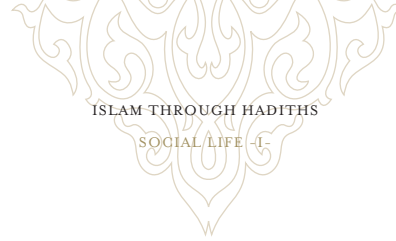
²⁹ HM27416, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 340.

³⁰ B5993, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 17.

³¹ D2622, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 85; T1288, Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 54.

³² B5376, al-Bukhari, al-At’ima, 2; M5269, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 108.

³³ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.



behavior. In this context, children of those fathers who heed the Qur'anic command, "*Fear Allah, and establish justice among your children,*"³⁴ learn justice at home. One day the Prophet (saw) heard the mother of 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr calling her son, saying, "Come here, I will give you something!" The Prophet (saw) asked her whether she really intended to give him something, and she said that she was going to give him some dates. Then the Prophet (saw) said, "*If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.*"³⁵ Because if the parents keep their word, then the children will learn to keep their word, otherwise, a life based on lies would seem normal. Anas, who grew up at the side of the Prophet (saw), witnessed several events in the Prophet's private life and was very careful in guarding them. When his mother asked what he had been doing for the Prophet (saw), Anas replied, "This is a secret!" His mother, appreciating his sensitivity, said, "Do not tell the secret of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to anyone."³⁶

Setting a good example for a child is not only necessary for his moral upbringing, but also for teaching him how to socialize and to adopt a life of worship. The most obvious indication that the Prophet (saw) did not exclude children from social life was that he did not prevent them from coming to the Medina mosque. The mosque in those days was not only a house of worship and a school, but also a center of life and for all kinds of social activities, from law to literature. Having a children's prayer line behind the men's prayer line in the mosque³⁷ demonstrates how the Prophet (saw) engaged children in the flow of life. Sometimes with a girl on his shoulders, sometimes with his grandsons, the Prophet (saw) performed his prayers.³⁸ Sometimes in this way he was even leading congregational prayers³⁹ or giving a sermon at the mosque.⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw) especially wished for children to grow up with prayer.

Not only in the mosque but also in homes, the Prophet (saw) provided for the participation of children in prayers,⁴¹ and he didn't mind when children roamed around the prayer lines in the mosque.⁴² He did not keep them away from places of worship; on the contrary, he personally taught them how to perform prayers. For example, he said to Anas (ra), "*My dear child! During prayers don't keep looking around!*"⁴³ When 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, the younger son of the Prophet's uncle, joined the congregation and mistakenly stood to the left of the *imām*, the Prophet (saw) took him to the right side and patted his head.⁴⁴ At every opportunity our Prophet encour-

³⁴ M4181, Muslim, al-Hiba, 13; B2587, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 13.

³⁵ D4991, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 80.

³⁶ M6378, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 145.

³⁷ D677, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 96.

³⁸ D918, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 164, 165; N1142, al-Nasa'i, al-Tatbiq, 82.

³⁹ M1214, Muslim, al-Masajid, 43.

⁴⁰ T3774, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manqib, 30; N1414, al-Nasa'i, al-Jum'a, 30.

⁴¹ B871, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 164; D1364, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 26.

⁴² B861, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 161; M1124, Muslim, al-Salat, 254.

⁴³ T589, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jum'a, 60.

⁴⁴ M1789, Muslim, al-Musaafirin, 182.



aged and supervised the prayers of the children around him. One night, when he entered the chamber of his wife, Maymuna (ra), he saw that ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) was spending the night with his aunt and asked, “*Has the child performed his prayers?*” and did not feel at ease until he learned the affirmative.⁴⁵

It is seen that in giving religious training to children, the Prophet (saw) put special emphasis on prayer. In order to establish a love for prayer at an early age and turn it into a habit, he said, “*When a child is old enough to tell right from left, then command him to pray,*”⁴⁶ and also emphasized that parents should insist that their children perform their prayers in later years.⁴⁷

As with prayer, the Prophet (saw) also wanted children to get used to fasting from an early age. In those times, in order to accustom their little ones to fasting, mothers tried to make them forget about their hunger by making them toys from wool.⁴⁸ Because it was necessary for children to be raised in a religious environment, the Prophet (saw) even tolerated children joining a crowd, such as for the Hajj. To a mother who held up her child from her lap and asked, “Is there Hajj for this one?” the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Yes, and for making the Hajj with him you also will have a reward.*”⁴⁹

Children, although they are living today, in fact belong more to the future than to the present. Efforts made on their behalf are to educate the people of tomorrow, that is to say, to give shape to future society. By saying, “*Your children have rights over you,*”⁵⁰ the Prophet (saw) warned parents to surrender completely to their children and indicated that the principal right of children is to get a good education. The cultural and social development of a child, his physical and mental education, and his moral and religious upbringing begin in the lap of the mother and are provided in the home of the father. Parents striving to have a righteous child must always remember the Prophet’s advice: “*There is nothing more valuable that parents can give their child than a good training.*”⁵¹

⁴⁵ D1356, Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu’, 26.

⁴⁶ D497, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 26.

⁴⁷ D495, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 26; T407, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 182.

⁴⁸ B1960, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 47; M2669, Muslim, al-Siyam, 136.

⁴⁹ M3253, Muslim, al-Hajj, 409; T924, Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 83.

⁵⁰ M2731, Muslim, al-Siyam, 183.

⁵¹ T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33; HM16830, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 77.



FAMILY TRANQUILITY
NOT WITH VIOLENCE BUT
COMPASSION



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، وَخَيْرُكُمْ
خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“The most complete of the believers in faith is the one with the best character
among them. And the best of you are those who are best to their women.”

(T1162, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”لَا يَفْرِكُ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً، إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَمْعَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَجْلِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَمْرَأَتَهُ جِلْدَ الْعَبْدِ ثُمَّ يُجَامِعُهَا فِي آخِرِ الْيَوْمِ.“



عَنْ خَالِدِ بْنِ الْوَلِيدِ، قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، أَشَدُّهُمْ عَذَابًا لِلنَّاسِ فِي الدُّنْيَا.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ [بْنِ مَالِكٍ] قَالَ: خَدَمْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، وَاللَّهِ! مَا قَالَ لِي: أِفَّا قَطُّ، وَلَا قَالَ لِي لَشَيْءٍ: لِمَ فَعَلْتَ كَذَا؟ وَهَلَّا فَعَلْتَ كَذَا؟



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“A believer should not hold a negative feeling towards his wife. Although he does
not like some of her behaviors, he may like the others.”*

(M3645, Muslim, al-Rada', 61)



According to 'Abd Allah b. Zam'a (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“None of you should flog his wife as he flogs a slave and then have sexual
intercourse with her in the last part of the day.”*

(B5204, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 94)



According to Khalid b. al-Walid (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The most tormented person on the Day of Judgement is the one who torments
people in this world.”*

(TM1253, al-Tawalisi, Musnad, II, 11; HM16943, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 90)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “I served the Prophet (saw) for ten years, and he
never said to me, ‘Uff’ (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and
never blamed me by saying, ‘Why did you do so or why didn’t you do so?’”

(M6011, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 51)



Thabit b. Qays (ra), who was the preacher of the Prophet (saw), was a short-tempered person. One day he gave in to his anger and when he got into an argument with his wife, he hit her. The poor woman's arm was broken. That woman, who was the sister of 'Abd Allah b. 'Ubayd, was named Jamila (ra),¹ and she shared with her brother the trouble that she'd been hiding. She did not want to continue her marriage under such painful conditions. Thinking that it was necessary for him to intervene in the situation, her brother immediately went to the Prophet (saw) to complain. In fact, she herself had earlier gone to the Prophet (saw) to say that she had run out of patience with Thabit.² The Messenger of Allah (saw) immediately sent news to Thabit that he was summoning him to his presence. He said, "Take what she owes you and let her go." By saying, "Yes," Thabit accepted this. The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked Jamila to wait for one menstrual cycle and then return to her family.³

The Prophet (saw) grew up in a society that was rather harsh towards women. After the Jahiliyya, the traces of this harshness could be seen even in the Islamic period. As with all other issues, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sensitive to violence against women. Although Islamic sources and especially *hadith* collections provide us with all the details about the Prophet's life, none of them mentions any form of violence or humiliating and denigrating words that he said to his wives and children. On the contrary, the Prophet (saw) warned those who had a tendency to follow the habit passed down from the Jahiliyya of using violence against women.⁴ The aforementioned incident reveals our beloved Prophet's actual response to domestic violence and the oppression to which women have been exposed throughout history, and his measures to protect the dignity of women. As one can see, he didn't allow female victims to suffer, or say, as was so often said, "Things like that just happen in families." Although he

¹ TE2/337, al-Nawawi, al-*Tahdhib al-Asma'*, II, 337.

² B5275, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 12.

³ N3527, al-Nasa'i, al-Talaq, 53.

⁴ M7191, Muslim, al-Janna, 49; T3343, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al Qur'an, 91.



had some petty resentments toward his wives in his married life, he never raised a hand against them,⁵ or said degrading and hurtful words. Thus, in his Farewell Sermon his advice to believers was that they “*should fear Allah regarding women,*” because their husbands “*received them as a trust of Allah, and married them in the name of Allah so that they became lawful for them.*”⁶

In the Holy Qur’an the verse that says, “*If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of Allah], then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. If they obey you, you have no right to act against them: Allah is most high and great,*”⁷ can sometimes be associated with violence against women. Considering this verse, which describes what men would do in the event of trouble caused by women, it is a serious mistake to say that Islam approves of violence against women. In the social structure of that time, husbands were seen as the owners of everything, including wives and children. In this verse, the husband was shown as having exhausted all options regarding his wife’s immodesty, and punished her as a last resort. However, this verse was understood as if the violence was Allah’s commandment. This last resort was a solution related to the society and family structure of that time which prevented divorcing a woman and deserting her. We understand this from the second half of the verse, “*If they obey you, you have no right to act against them.*” Also, this physical intervention found in some accounts of the Farewell Sermon can clearly be seen as a mild warning in a situation in which violence takes place because of a woman’s immoral behavior.⁸

A believer cannot see the repression of wives as normal, or defend the use of violence, based on this verse because the Prophet (saw) who revealed these verses to mankind also explained how to implement them. If we perform our prayers the way he taught us, we can treat our wives the way the Prophet (saw) treated his wives. The words and behavior of the Prophet (saw), who said, “*The most complete of the believers in faith is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to your women,*”⁹ should be our guiding principle in this matter. In one instance, he asked one of his Companions (ra) not to refer to his wife as ugly and not to beat her.¹⁰ According to Caliph ‘Umar the Prophet (saw) said, “*A person should not be asked why he beat his wife,*”¹¹ but should be evaluated in the light of the Prophet’s Sunna. Allah Almighty saw love and mercy between spouses as signs of His existence¹² and said, “*Live with*

⁵ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.

⁶ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:34.

⁸ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

⁹ T1162, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 11; IM1978, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

¹⁰ D2143, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 40-41.

¹¹ D2147, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 41-42; IM1986, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 51.

¹² Al-Rum, 30:21.

*them in accordance with what is fair and kind: if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah has put much good.*¹³ Thus, it is not reasonable to think that He would approve of violence between spouses.

There are several reasons for violence in the family, especially that which is directed against women. It would be against the nature of two people with different personal characteristics and upbringings to live in harmony without making any effort. A meaningful harmony will emerge, in spite of differences, as a result of mutual tolerance and sacrifice. Being short-tempered in quarrels, resorting to violence, and being ready for divorce at any moment would be behaviors that neither Allah (swt) nor His Messenger would approve of. As mentioned earlier, Almighty Allah ordered men to get along well with women, and announced that there could be good found in what men thought was bad.¹⁴ The Messenger of Allah (saw), by saying, *“A believer should not hold a negative feeling towards his wife. Although he does not like some of her behaviors, he may like others,”*¹⁵ confirmed Allah’s message.

The first sign of unrest within the family is the partners’ use of unkind behavior and insulting words against each other. This repeated behavior in time could become permanent, and can be seen as a natural part of family relations. However, Allah and His Messenger prohibited the use of bad words¹⁶ because it turns into psychological violence for both the children and the partners and makes life intolerable. To Hudhayfa (ra), who asked the Prophet (saw) what to do about his use of bad and hurtful words with his family members, but not with other people, the Prophet (saw) told him to ask Allah for forgiveness several times a day.¹⁷

To another Companion named Laqit b. Sabra (ra), who was complaining about his wife’s filthy mouth, the Prophet (saw) suggested that he divorce her. When Laqit said, *“We have spent a lot of time together and, besides that, we have children,”* the Prophet (saw) said, *“Then ask her (to obey you). If there is something good in her, she will do so (obey) . . . ,”* and thus he did not allow men to turn to violence.¹⁸ Thus, knowing that violence was not the solution, the Prophet (saw) suggested divorce for couples whose marriage had become unbearable. The Prophet (saw) also strongly warned those who incited trouble within the family. By saying, *“Anyone who incites a woman against her husband or a slave against his master is not one of us,”*¹⁹ he revealed the importance he gave to protecting the family.

¹³ Al-Nisa’, 4:19.

¹⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4:19.

¹⁵ M3645, Muslim, al-Rada’, 61.

¹⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:148; T1977, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 48.

¹⁷ IM3817, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 57; DM2751, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 15.

¹⁸ D142, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 55.

¹⁹ D2175, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 1.



The Prophet (saw), who was amazed how a man could raise his hand against the woman with whom he shared his life, said, “None of you should flog his wife as he flogs a slave and then have sexual intercourse with her in the last part of the day.”²⁰ From the expression mentioned in this *ḥadīth*, “as you flog a concubine (or slave),” it is not correct to think that the Prophet (saw) saw as normal the beating of slaves. This is an expression that shows that in that society concubines and slaves were more exposed to violence, and people saw this as normal. Indeed, the Prophet’s warnings on this subject were very clear. He said, “When one of you beats his servant then he (should) remember Allah and, withhold your hands.”²¹ Abu Mas‘ud al-Ansari (ra) reported, “When I was beating my servant, I heard a voice behind me (saying), ‘Abu Mas‘ud, bear in mind . . .’ I turned and (found him) to be the Messenger of Allah (saw). He said, ‘Bear in mind Allah has more dominance over you than you have upon him.’” Abu Mas‘ud said that he dropped his whip and never beat a slave again, and also freed that slave.²² According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Whoever beats his slave, the only way to expiate his sin is to free the slave.”²³

Although the most common violence inside the family is the husband’s physical violence against his wife, there are also other types of domestic violence, such as the wife’s violence against her husband, the parents’ against the children, and the children’s against the parents. In this regard, spiritual and psychological oppression should be included within the scope of violence. For example, spouses accusing each other of adultery, with no valid evidence, is slander and spiritual violence against one’s honor and dignity. Because of that, the Holy Qur’an, in order to protect women who would be more likely to be exposed to such a charge, gave a punishment of eighty lashes to whoever committed this slander, and asked that their testimony not to be accepted for life.²⁴ Disclosing a partner’s intimate secrets is also another form of violence. Family members trust in each other and share some secrets with them. Disclosing those secrets is a serious transgression of personal rights. Because of this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “One of the worst persons in the eyes of Allah on the Day of Judgement is a man who goes to his wife and then discloses her secrets.”²⁵

The Prophet (saw), who said, “Those who do not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah,”²⁶ prohibited people from mistreating and persecuting each other in or outside the family.²⁷ When someone asked the

²⁰ B5204, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 94.

²¹ T1950, al-Tirmidhi al-Birr, 32.

²² M4306, Muslim, al-Ayman, 34; M4308, Muslim, al-Ayman, 35.

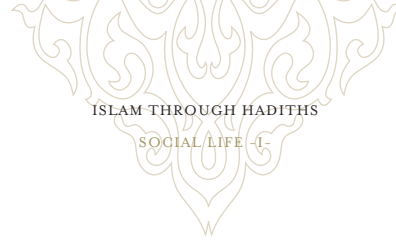
²³ M4298, Muslim, al-Ayman, 29.

²⁴ Al-Nur, 24:4.

²⁵ M3542, Muslim, al-Nikah, 123.

²⁶ B7376, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 2.

²⁷ B2442, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 3.



Prophet (saw) if he was doing his rituals correctly during the Hajj prayer, and he replied, “No harm will come; no harm will come except to one who defames a Muslim acting wrongfully. That is the one who will be in trouble and will perish,”²⁸ he thus indicated that the mistake of attacking people was more significant than mistakes made while praying to Allah (swt). Apart from wartime, the Prophet (saw) never raised his hand against anyone, and struck neither women nor servants.²⁹ While he said, “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands,”³⁰ he also warned that, “Those who torment people in this world will be subject to the torments of Allah.”³¹ When Abu ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrah (ra), who was the governor of Damascus, attempted to extort a poll tax from a man, Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) mentioned this *ḥadīth* to the governor. When someone told Khalid that he made the governor mad, he replied, “On the Day of Judgement, the people who will be subjected to the most severe torment are the ones who torment people in this world.”³²

The Prophet (saw), who was very sensitive to people who had suffered attacks and injustice, showed the same sensitivity to his household members, including his wives, children, grandchildren, and servants, and treated them with love and compassion. His harshest treatment of his wives was to stay cross with them for a month because of some event.³³ He treated his wives’ jealousy with maturity³⁴ and paid no attention when they raised their voices to him.³⁵ The daughters of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were the Prophet’s wives. When he heard that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were scolding their daughters because they were from time to time upsetting the Prophet (saw), he prevented Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) from scolding their daughters.³⁶

The Messenger of Allah’s mature and tranquil attitude can be seen in his explanation of how he understood when his beloved wife ‘A’isha (ra) was angry and when she was pleased. According to ‘A’isha, the Prophet (saw) said, “I know when you are pleased with me or angry with me.” When ‘A’isha asked how he knew that, he said, “When you are pleased with me, you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Muhammad,’ but when you are angry with me, then you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Abraham.’” The answer ‘A’isha gave him reflects the grace of a wife who loved her husband very much: “Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I leave nothing but your name.”³⁷

It is very well known that the Prophet (saw) was very fond of his

²⁸ D2015, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasik, 87.

²⁹ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.

³⁰ B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.

³¹ M6657 Muslim, al-Birr, 117.

³² HM16943, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 90; TM1253, al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 11.

³³ M3691, Muslim, al-Talaq, 30.

³⁴ D3567, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 89; B5267, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 8.

³⁵ M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29.

³⁶ D4999, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 84.

³⁷ B5228, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 109.



children and grandchildren. Showing love for his daughter, Fatima, on every occasion,³⁸ and often declaring love for his grandchildren³⁹ while performing prayers, even carrying them on his shoulders and back,⁴⁰ were very clear indications of this. The Prophet (saw) treated his servants the same way he treated the principal members of his family. The comments of Anas b. Malik (ra) on this point provide a clear idea of his gentle character and mature conduct: “I served the Prophet (saw) for ten years, and he never said to me, ‘Uff’ (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and never blamed me by saying, ‘Why did you do so or why didn’t you do so?’”⁴¹

Parents’ innate love for their children prevents them from mistreating their children to some degree, but not fully. Sometimes they forget the fact that children are Allah’s trust to them, and they treat their children as if they are their property and take advantage of them. That’s why people of the Jahiliyya period did not see the harm in killing their baby daughters, whom they regarded as an economic burden and a source of shame for them. Allah warned those who would commit such a terrible crime with the verse, “Do not kill your children for fear of poverty—We shall provide for them and for you—killing them is a great sin.”⁴² Although this brutal practice of domestic violence against children was in the past, through history and in our time, violence and exploitation of children somehow continues. Voluntary abortion, forcing children to work at a young age, encouraging them to beg or do criminal activities, and beating and abusing them are usually the forms of violence perpetrated against children by their parents. Unfortunately the number of children who are subjected to domestic violence and forced to spend most of their time on the streets in unsuitable conditions incompatible with human dignity is increasing.

In some societies, the most brutal example of domestic abuse is murder, in the name of honor, of young girls who willingly or unwillingly have sexual intercourse outside marriage. Family elders who approve of honor killings are just as responsible as those who committed the crime. Anyone who is a victim is supposed to be protected by everyone, especially the family. Anyone who is victimized by his own choices is responsible for his own mistakes. If a person has reached adolescence and has committed a crime, then he takes his punishment and asks Allah for forgiveness. If one is not an adolescent, advice and counsel are made by the parents and family elders. He must be protected from exposure to new dangers. In both

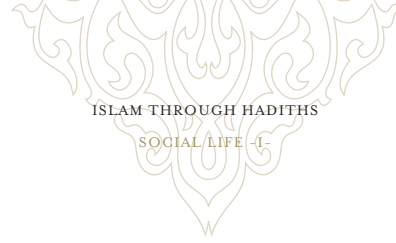
³⁸ T3872, al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 60; D5217, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 143-144.

³⁹ B6003, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 22.

⁴⁰ B5996, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; N1142, al-Nasa’i, al-Tatbiq, 82.

⁴¹ M6011, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 51.

⁴² Al-Isra’, 17:31.



cases, the family has no right to judge and punish their children. According to our religion, everyone is responsible for their actions and no one is held responsible for another's sins.⁴³ Parents, instead of punishing their children, should question themselves and consider their responsibilities in this regard. In these matters, social awareness also must come into play, and society must fulfill the obligation incumbent upon it. Society should take legal, social, educational, and economic measures for victimized children who have fallen away from their family environments as a result of domestic violence or violent discord between their parents. In particular, the discreet mediation of family elders and community volunteers has vital importance in this regard.

On the other hand, one of the issues to which Islam pays the most attention is violence shown by children to their parents. The Holy Qur'an, in many verses, mentions the subject of the respect and good treatment of parents.⁴⁴ Commanding, "Do not even say, 'Uff,' to them (say no word that shows impatience with them),"⁴⁵ for parents growing old with a child, it reports that any kind of behavior that would offend parents should be avoided. As seen here, the verse forbids not only physical violence but also spiritual violence, that is, using words and behavior that could upset or offend parents. In some verses, commandments about showing goodness to parents come right after the topic of serving Allah.⁴⁶ Our Prophet mentioned the importance of serving and respecting parents on every possible occasion;⁴⁷ he counted bad treatment of parents equal to one of the major sins, that of assigning partners to Allah;⁴⁸ and he stated that the mistreatment of mothers was especially forbidden by Allah (swt).⁴⁹

The Messenger of Allah (saw), in accordance with his divine mission, gave the necessary advice to individuals, families, and societies on the need to be peaceful, and he himself set an example for the community on how a Muslim family should be. When he said, "Those who do not show mercy to our youngsters and do not show respect to our elders are not from us,"⁵⁰ he wanted to establish a loving and respectful civilization that started with the family and continued through society. In this atmosphere of respect, he gave priority to women and always conducted his relationships with them within a framework of kindness and tolerance. In the gentle way he treated his wives, the Prophet (saw) gave a message on correct behavior to families, both to the Bedouin of the Jahiliyya and to his followers until the

⁴³ Al-An'am, 6:164.

⁴⁴ Al-An'am, 6:151; al-'Ankabut, 29:8; Luqman, 31:14; Al-Ahqaf, 46:15.

⁴⁵ Isra', 17:23.

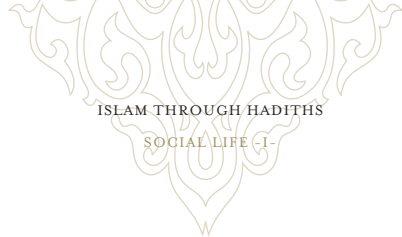
⁴⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:83; al-Nisa', 4:36; al-Isra', 17:23.

⁴⁷ B5970, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 1; M6500, al-Muslim, al-Birr, 1.

⁴⁸ B6273, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 35; M261, Muslim, al-Iman, 144.

⁴⁹ B5975, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6.

⁵⁰ T1919, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15; D4943, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 58.



time of the Day of Judgement. To the servant who drove the camels that were carrying his wives, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Anjasha! Calm down. Be careful with the crystals (or glass vessels)!*” This warning clearly shows the Prophet’s kindness toward women in general, and his wives in particular.

Sustaining the family union is as important as establishing the family. The only way to do this is to remove all the obstacles to family peace. In today’s world, the physical, spiritual, and psychological violence that family members do against each other has reached a point where it threatens not only family peace but also society’s peace. The continuation of the family system is based on all family members, in particular spouses, treating each other with love, kindness, and compassion, and recognizing their mutual rights and responsibilities.



DIVORCE

A LAWFUL ACT THAT ALLAH MOST DISLIKES

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَبْغَضُ الْحَلَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الطَّلَاقُ.“

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Of all the lawful acts the most detestable to Allah the Exalted, the Glorious is
divorce.”

(D2178, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 3; IM2018, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 1)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ حَبَّبَ امْرَأَةً عَلَى زَوْجِهَا...“



عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ سَأَلْتُ زَوْجَهَا طَلَاقًا فِي غَيْرِ مَا بَأْسٍ فَحَرَامٌ عَلَيْهَا رَائِحَةُ الْجَنَّةِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا يَفْرُكُ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً، إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Anyone who incites a woman against her husband or a slave against his master
is not one of us”*

(D2175, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 1; HM23368, Ibn Hanbal, V, 353)



According to Thawban (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If any
woman asks her husband for divorce without some strong reason, the fragrance
of Paradise will be forbidden to her.”*

(D2226, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 17-18)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw)
said, *“A believer should not hold a negative feeling towards his wife. Although
he does not like some of her behaviors, he may like her other behaviors.”*

(M3645, Muslim, al-Rada’, 61)



Our mother, ‘Aisha (ra) reported, “Before the revelation of the verses on divorce, a man could divorce his wife as many times as he wanted. As long as he returned to his wife within the *‘idda* (waiting period), she would continue to be considered his lawful wife. Even if he divorced her a hundred times, the rule would still be the same.” One day, a man said to his wife, “By Allah, I am going to divorce you in such a way that you will neither get away from me, nor remain as my wife.” When the wife asked how he could do that, the man replied, “I am going to divorce you and, right before the end of the waiting period, I am going to come back to you.”

‘Aisha (ra) continued, saying, “One of those women who was in this circumstance came to me. I could not say anything to her but I reported the incidence to the Prophet (saw). He did not say anything either, and remained silent. After a short while, the following 229th verse of Sura al-Baqara was revealed: “Divorce is allowed twice, and then, [on the third, a woman] must be retained in honour or released in kindness.”¹

According to ‘Aisha (ra), after this date, every Muslim, including those who had divorced their wives earlier, observed this Qur’anic commandment.² Thus, one of the major injustices to women in the matter of divorce came to an end.

Nevertheless, injustices towards women on the subject of divorce were not limited to the above-mentioned issue. Sometimes women of this society suffered at the hands of their husbands without any apparent reason. Khuwayla bint Tha‘laba (ra) from the al-Khazraj tribe was one of those women. After being deserted by her husband through “*zihār*,” she made the decision to go to the Prophet (saw) and complain about her situation, and to seek refuge with Allah. *Zihār* was a pre-Islamic Arabian custom whereby a husband could divorce and desert his wife by simply declaring, “You are to me like my mother’s back.” The specific injustice of this divorce was that the

¹ Al-Baqara, 2:229.

² T1192, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 16.



woman virtually became a household slave. She lost her rights and status as a spouse but at the same time was not free to marry anyone else. This is what happened to Khuwayla when her husband Aws b. al-Samit, who was the brother of a famous Companion, ‘Ubada b. al-Samit (ra),³ got angry and uttered the statement of *zihār* to her. Thus, Khuwayla went to the Prophet (saw) and complained about this situation, noting that she had served this old and ill-tempered husband⁴ for years and given him children, but in return this same husband had put her in this miserable state. Later on, the first four verses of the *sūra* of al-Mujadela (meaning, the disputing woman) were revealed to the Prophet: *“Allah has heard the words of the woman who disputed with you [Prophet] about her husband and complained to Allah: Allah has heard what you both had to say. He is all hearing and all seeing. Even if any of you say to their wives, ‘You are to me like my mother’s back’ they are not their mothers; their only mothers are those who gave birth to them. What they say is certainly blameworthy and false, but Allah is pardoning and forgiving. Those of you who say such a thing to their wives, then go back on what they have said, must free a slave before the couple may touch one another again—this is what you are commanded to do, and Allah is fully aware of what you do—but anyone who does not have the means should fast continuously for two months before they touch each other, and any one unable to do this should feed sixty needy people. This is so that you may [truly] have faith in Allah and His Messenger. These are the bounds set by Allah: grievous torment awaits those who ignore them.”*⁵

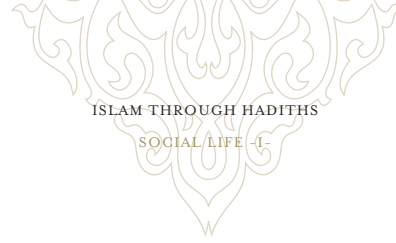
In these verses, Allah (swt) indicates that the pre-Islamic tradition of *zihār* was wrong and that a woman could never literally become the mother of her husband because of such words. Moreover, Allah instituted some punishments for those who uttered such words because they were false and blameworthy, punishments that could turn out to be beneficial for those who were poor and needy. Thus, Islam abrogated this type of divorce, and made the wife unlawful to the husband until he redeemed himself through the bounds set by Allah (swt). Furthermore, this case warned people not to use the word divorce carelessly, and set new rules and regulations about divorce for the Muslims.

The main goal of the Muslim family is to sustain a life-long union; couples successfully facing challenges of life, staying united during times of both happiness and misfortune, sharing good and bad times, and turning the family environment into a loving abode.

³ D2214, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 16-17.

⁴ HM27862, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 410.

⁵ Al-Mujadala, 58:1-4; IM2063, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 25.



Therefore, divorce can be a very delicate and irreversible process with bitter repercussions. Unless marriage is extremely unbearable for both sides, it is hard to justify divorce. Therefore the Prophet (saw) said, *“Of all the lawful acts the most detestable to Allah the Exalted, the Glorious is divorce,”*⁶ signaling that divorce should be the last resort for couples in their marital disagreements.

Marriage is a fact of life and so is divorce. Sometimes, the harmony found among a couple can instead turn into hate and bitterness, and mutual trust can turn into mutual distrust and a destructive emotional state. If the couple cannot resolve their problems, after every possible attempt, and the marriage turns into an unbearable union, then divorce is inevitable.

Although our supreme religion abhors divorce, it also considers it as a fact of life. If a marriage that unites two people does not work well, then divorce is the solution for this. It seems that other religions have stricter attitudes towards divorce. Despite differences among its denominations, traditional Christianity either forbids divorce or makes it difficult. Specifically, the Catholic Church interprets the words of Jesus, *“May no one separate what Allah unites,”*⁷ to mean that no one can dissolve what is indissoluble because Allah (swt) has established marriage as a permanent union. Even for adultery the Catholic Church does not allow divorce but instead an annulment. The Orthodox and the Protestant denominations are a bit more flexible on the issue of divorce. Traditional Judaism is also well known to have firm limits with regard to divorce based upon a number of conditions.

In the contemporary world, in which the institution of the family is under constant assault, the divorce rate increases every day. Among the major reasons for divorce today are financial hardship, disharmony between the couple, neglect, adultery, barrenness, personal discord, deep-seated cultural/religious/ideological differences, excessive negative family interventions, weak personalities, sexual problems, immaturity at the time of marriage, forced marriages, mental disorders (depression, schizophrenia, obsessions, paranoia, and excessive jealousy), addictions to alcohol and gambling, and a great age difference between the couple.

Those who play their individual roles in this matter should remember their responsibilities and do whatever is necessary to try to repair the problem. It is clear that the dismantling of family ties and erosion of family

⁶ D2178, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 3; IM2018, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 1.

⁷ New Testament, Matthew, 19:6.



values raises numerous problems related to the working mechanism of the family in a healthy manner.

It seems that a major reason for divorce in our society is the intervention of third parties into the affairs of married couples. This disrupts the harmony of the marriage and harms the mutual respect of the two individuals who make up the married couple. Our Master the Prophet (saw), by saying, “*Anyone who incites a woman against her husband is not one of us,*”⁸ reminds us that Muslims should not spoil the relationship between a couple and avoid words and actions that would interrupt their harmony and peace.

Although men are given the right to divorce in principle, women may also claim their right to divorce. It is true that the Holy Qur’an does not explicitly give this right to women, because the verses mainly refer to the men who are given the right to divorce.⁹

However, in the *ḥadīths* it is possible to observe that this right of divorce belongs to whoever has legal capacity. This legal capacity can be clearly understood from the following account: “A slave came to the Prophet and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, my master married me to his slave woman, and now he wants to separate her from me.’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) ascended the pulpit and said, ‘O people, what is the matter with one of you who marries his slave to his slave woman, then wants to separate them? Divorce belongs to the one who takes hold of the calf (i.e., her husband).’”¹⁰

Giving the right to divorce to men is in conformity with Qur’anic principle.¹¹ Nevertheless, in agreement with the groom during the preparation of the marriage contract, the woman can also be granted the right to divorce. One day, the grandchild of Abu Bakr, Muhammad,¹² came in tears to Zayd b. Thabit (ra), the transcriber of the revelations. Zayd asked him what had happened. He said, “I had granted the right of divorce to my wife, and she has now divorced me.” Zayd asked him what made him to do so, and he answered, “It was destiny.” Then Zayd said, “You can return to your wife, if you want! This is because she divorced you with one divorce pronouncement (*rij’i*), and you have a right to return to her.”¹³

Based on the above example, we can safely surmise that women have the right to divorce. It is perfectly legitimate for a woman to ask for the right to divorce during the marriage contract, or even obtain it after the marriage.

If a woman does not get the right to divorce during the marriage

⁸ D2175, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 1; HM23368, Ibn Hanbal, V, 353.

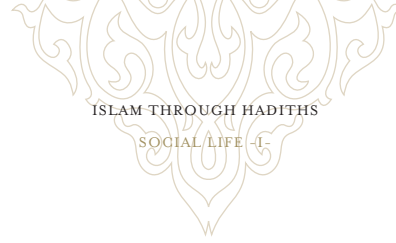
⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:230, 232, 237; al-Ahzab, 33:49.

¹⁰ IM2081, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq 31; BS15569, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 588.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:34.

¹² AU17/266, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XVII, 266.

¹³ MU1164, al-Muwatta’, al-Talaq, 4; BS15415, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 552.



ceremony, and wants to divorce, she can do it as long as she pays off the amount (*mukhālaʿa*) that they agreed upon in the contract. Only a radical disharmony and discordance between the couples could justify this solution, however.¹⁴ In a case in which sustaining the family union is impossible, the Holy Qurʾān allows the couple to divorce in a peaceful and agreeable fashion: “...It is not lawful for you to take back anything that you have given your wives, except where both fear that they cannot maintain [the marriage] within the bound set by Allah: If you [arbiters] suspect that the couple may not be able to do this, there will be no blame on either of them if the woman opts to give something for her release.”¹⁵

Such divorce cases were seen during the Prophet’s time. For example, Habiba (or Jamila) bint Sahl came to the Prophet (saw) and complained about her husband, Thabit b. Qays (ra),¹⁶ about whom the Prophet (saw) had once said, “What a good man!”¹⁷ She then said that it was impossible to continue her marriage with him.¹⁸ Habiba said, “O Messenger of Allah! I do not blame Thabit for any defects in his character or his religion, but I am afraid that I (being a Muslim) may become unthankful for Allah’s Blessings.”¹⁹ At this he indicated that her reason for divorce was legitimate.²⁰

Abusing and taking advantage of this kind of consensual divorce based on a predetermined amount (*mukhālaʿa*) is not seen as a legitimate thing to do in Islam. As stated in the Holy Qurʾān “...nor should you treat your wives harshly, hoping to take back some of the bride-gift you gave them...”²¹ Thus, in cases when the man divorces a woman it is not lawful for the man to force the woman to accept *mukhālaʿa* in order to escape from paying the dowry. Likewise, the Prophet (saw) did not approve a woman’s demand for divorce without a legitimate and obvious reason. On this issue, he said, “If any woman asks her husband for divorce without some strong reason, the fragrance of Paradise will be forbidden to her.”²²

Divorce should be practiced in accordance with the Qurʾānic commandment and Prophetic tradition. It should be realized in a way that was described and approved by Allah (swt) and his Messenger. In the verse, “O Prophet, when you intend to divorce women, do so at a time when their prescribed waiting period can properly start...”²³ Allah asks men to divorce their wives in a religiously pure state, and without having intercourse with them. Having intercourse, while the woman is not menstruating, could lead to pregnancy, a pregnancy that may make the woman regret her decision to divorce.²⁴

¹⁴ “Muhalea,” *DIA*, XXX, 400.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:229.

¹⁶ D2228, Abu Daʿud, al-Talaq, 17-18.

¹⁷ T3795, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 32.

¹⁸ D2227, Abu Daʿud, al-Talaq, 17-18.

¹⁹ B5276, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 12.

²⁰ D2228, Abu Daʿud, al-Talaq, 17-18.

²¹ Al-Nisaʾ, 4:19.

²² D2226, Abu Daʿud, al-Talaq, 17-18.

²³ Al-Talaq, 65:1.

²⁴ ṢN10/61, al-Nawawi, *al-Sharh ʿala al-Muslim*, X, 61.



The son of ‘Umar, ‘Abd Allah (ra), divorced his wife while she was menstruating. So ‘Umar b. al-Khattab asked the Prophet (saw) about this matter. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Order him, he must take her back and keep her with him until she is purified, then she will have another menstrual period and then she will again be purified. Thereafter if he desires he may divorce her before having intercourse with her, for that is the period of waiting which Allah the Glorified has commanded for the divorce of women.*”²⁵ In another account, the Prophet (saw) said, “*...if he so desires he may keep her and if he desires divorce her (finally) before touching her (without having had intercourse with her), for that is the period of waiting (‘idda).*”²⁶

‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) describes the divorce that would be in conformity with the Sunna as follows: “The divorce which is in conformity with the Sunna is that one should divorce his wife while she is purified, and without having had sexual intercourse with her. When she has menstruated and then she is again purified, that is when he gives her the second divorce, and when she has a menstruated and is purified again, that is when he gives her the third divorce. And finally the woman has to wait until the end of the waiting period.”²⁷ In this way, the divorce is spread out over a time, and the couple have more time to reconsider and question their decisions.

In accordance with the verse, “*Divorce can happen twice, and [each time] wives can either be kept on in an acceptable manner or released in a good way,*”²⁸ the divorce should be realized not in one stage, but in a gradual fashion. The Messenger of Allah (saw) treated contested divorces according to this principle. Rukana b. ‘Abd al-Yazid (ra) divorced his wife with three divorce pronouncements, and then regretted his decision.²⁹ He informed the Prophet (saw) about this, and said to him, “I swear by Allah that I meant it to be only a single pronouncement of divorce. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Do you swear by Allah that you meant it to be only a single divorce?*” When Rukana repeated the same, the Prophet (saw) sent his wife back to him. Then he divorced her the second time in the time of ‘Umar’s caliphate and the third time during the caliphate of ‘Uthman.”³⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not approve of the divorce that consisted of three pronouncements at once, as in the case of Rukana. In another instance, when he heard that someone divorced his wife with three pronouncements of divorce at once, he stood up angrily and said, “*Is the Book of Allah being toyed with while I am still among you?*”³¹

²⁵ D2179, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 4.

²⁶ M3654, Muslim, al-Talaq, 2.

²⁷ N3423, al-Nasa‘i, al-Talaq, 2.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:229.

²⁹ HM2387, Ibn Hanbal, I, 266.

³⁰ D2206, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 13-14.

³¹ N3430, al-Nasa‘i, al-Talaq, 6.

Unfortunately, after the Prophet (saw), the practice of divorcing with three pronouncements at once became widespread. Seeing that this right was being abused, Caliph ‘Umar (ra) took some measures against it. The Prophet’s cousin, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) explained these measures as follows: “When a man divorced his wife by three pronouncements before sexual intercourse, they made it a single divorce during the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abu Bakr, and in the early phase of the caliphate of ‘Umar. When ‘Umar saw that people frequently divorced (by three pronouncements at once), he said, “Make them operative on them (i.e., on women).”³²

For the divorce to be valid, the mental faculties of the one who divorces should be sound. In *hadiths*, it is mentioned that the divorces of those who are not mentally sound,³³ or of people who lose themselves out of anger,³⁴ are not valid. According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), a divorce under duress or in the state of drunkenness is also not valid.³⁵

Allah Almighty set a time, called *‘idda* (waiting period), for a woman before she could remarry in order to cut all the ties she had with her previous husband. In accordance with the verse, “*Divorced women must wait for three monthly menstruation periods before remarrying,*”³⁶ the waiting period was calculated based on the menstruation period of the woman. About the waiting period of a pregnant woman, the Holy Qur’an states, “*If you are in doubt, the period of waiting will be three months for those women who have ceased menstruating and for those who have not [yet] menstruated; the waiting period of those who are pregnant will be until they deliver their burden.*”³⁷ The waiting period of a pregnant woman ends with the birth of the baby. For example, Subay’a bint al-Harith (ra) gave birth twenty days after the death of her husband. After her post-partum period, she was ready to consider new marriage proposals. Her behavior was shunned upon and related to the Prophet (saw). But the Prophet (saw) said, “*If she is willing, she may marry, as her waiting period has ended.*”³⁸

The immediate rationale of the waiting period was to make sure that the woman was not pregnant with a child from her previous husband. However, its rationale was not limited to this. The waiting period was also the time in which the couple could contemplate their decisions, and consider returning to their partner. That is why it is not allowed for other men to make proposals to women during the waiting period.³⁹

³² M3673, Muslim, al-Talaq, 15; D2199, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 9-10.

³³ T1191, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 15.

³⁴ D2193, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 8.

³⁵ Al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 11–Section title–.

³⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:228.

³⁷ Al-Talaq, 65:4.

³⁸ IM2027, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 7.

³⁹ “Iddet,” *DIA*, XXI, 469.



The woman should not be expelled from her house during the waiting period. On this matter, Allah Almighty says, “Do not drive them out of their homes—nor should they themselves leave—unless they commit a flagrant indecency.”⁴⁰ Living in her husband’s home, and receiving alimony are some of the rights of a woman in the waiting period. Living in the same house after the first divorce pronouncement would give the couple a chance to reconsider their decision, and in that regard it is seen as a responsibility of the woman.⁴¹ The Holy Qur’an forbids the man to give her any concern or bother her during the waiting period, and asks the man to pay alimony in the meantime. Especially for a pregnant woman in the waiting period, the Holy Qur’an rules, “If they are pregnant, maintain them until they are delivered of their burdens.”⁴² As repeated in the Holy Qur’an several times,⁴³ the couple should end their marriage without necessarily closing the doors of dialogue. On disputed issues, such as alimony, they should resolve them without abusing each other’s rights.⁴⁴

If we think about its consequences, divorce is a very serious matter. The decision about it should be thought through in several stages. The couple, rather than having high and unrealistic expectations from each other, should be able to see the good sides of each other and try to continue their marriage. Furthermore, our Lord informs us that we should consider the fact that there could be something good in what we perceive to be bad: “Live with them in accordance with what is fair and kind: if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah has put much good.”⁴⁵ In addition, our Prophet advised us to look at the positive aspects of our partners when we live with them by saying, “A believer should not hold a negative feeling towards his wife. Although he does not like some of her behaviors, he may like her other behaviors.”⁴⁶

The couples should think about divorce as a last resort in their unresolved problems. They should discuss their issues in a civilized and sober manner, and in case of disagreement they should try to reach a reconciliation. Here is what Allah Almighty recommends us to do regarding this issue: “If a wife fears high-handedness or alienation from her husband, neither of them will be blamed if they come to a peaceful settlement, for peace is best. Although human souls are prone to selfishness, if you do good and are mindful of Allah, He is well aware of all that you do.”⁴⁷

Divorce harms not only the couple but also their children, on whom

⁴⁰ Al-Talaq, 65:1.

⁴¹ “Iddet,” *DIA*, XXI, 469.

⁴² Al-Talaq, 65:6.

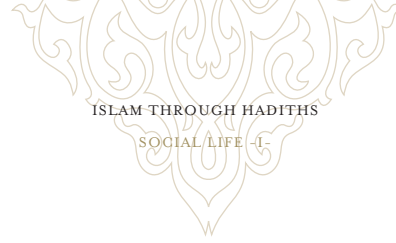
⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:231; al-Talaq, 65:6.

⁴⁴ FM30/34, al-Razi, *al-Tafsir*, XXX, 34.

⁴⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:19.

⁴⁶ M3645, Muslim, al-Rada’, 61.

⁴⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:128.



the future rests. A divorce of parents can have a life-time effect on the children who need a family during their upbringing and development. Those children who lose one of their parents or feel abandoned by both during the divorce procedure find themselves to be severely hurt and may find themselves living with psychological scars that are never truly dealt with throughout their life. Thus, children are the ones who pay the heaviest price for a divorce. Needless to say, a child completes his physical and psychological development in the best possible manner only in a good family unit. He needs the love and compassion of both a mother and a father. Therefore, children of divorced parents have tendencies to develop behavioral disorders. They may drop out of school, indulge in criminal activities, and develop numerous bad habits. As a result, they may turn into delinquents, which can lead to problems for the wider society.

The couple, knowing that divorce is frowned upon in our religion, should try to maintain their marriage based on mutual love, respect, understanding, and tolerance. They should try to act as a happy family for themselves, their children, and all their loved ones. Divorce is a legal, psychological, and social process. Given its psycho-social and economic results, it can radically change the lives of the couple and their children. Therefore the level of impact on the lives of the couple and their children depends on the cooperation and constructive approaches of the couple to their problems.

When disagreements and conflict between the couple reach such a level that it they are at the brink of destroying the unity of the family, it is appropriate to seek help from a mediator and arbiter. Thus, in case of severe disagreements and conflict between a couple, Allah Almighty gives us guidance as to how we should behave, He states, *“If you fear that a couple may break up, appoint one arbiter from his family and one from hers. Then, if the couple want to put things right, Allah will bring about a reconciliation between them.”*⁴⁸ This verse does not clarify how to choose arbiters, but it is clear that it refers to the necessity of reaching a good-intentioned and peaceful solution in this matter. The purpose here is to find a solution before disagreements lead to a divorce. The arbiters, representing both parties, could intervene and try to find a peaceful solution for the problems. The arbiters could be chosen from family members as well from friends who would know the couple well. They try their best to reconcile the couple, and pro-

⁴⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:35.



vide them with constructive suggestions. If the couple are open to suggestions and solutions, their problems could be resolved with the mediation of the arbiters and the help of Allah (swt). The arbiters could bring up the problematic issues as a part of negotiation and reconciliation.

If a solution to the problems between the couple is no longer viable, then the final resort is divorce. Sometimes forcing marriages to continue may lead to even larger problems such as having illegitimate relations, domestic violence, and even homicide. Therefore, if the couple exhaust all the possibilities of living together, then the best way is to divorce without harming each other further as indicated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an: "*When they have completed their appointed term, either keep them honorably, or part with them honorably. ...Allah will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him.*"⁴⁹ Because the marriage contract is a legal responsibility, it is possible for some of the duties related to the contract to continue after the divorce: "...do not take any of her bride-gift back, even if you have given her a great amount of gold. How could you take it when this is unjust and blatant sin? How could you take it when you have lain with each other and they have taken a solemn pledge from you?"⁵⁰ This verse transparently states that the couple cannot escape from their moral and financial responsibilities even if they do not get along during the divorce process. The divorcing couple should not do injustice to each other, and be mindful of the other party's possible financial hardships in their new lives. As the Holy Qur'an states, "*If the husband and wife do separate, Allah will provide for each out of His plenty,*"⁵¹ and, "*[He] will provide for them from an unexpected source.*"⁵²

Once the financial responsibilities, such as dowry, alimony, and child care are considered, it becomes clear how important the legal and social dimensions are in divorce. This is the reason that Allah Almighty urged us to have witnesses for the divorce: "...*[In divorce] call two just witnesses from your people and establish witness for the sake of Allah.*"⁵³ This would constitute a preemptive attempt to prevent possible future disagreements.

After the divorce, the two individuals that used to be a couple are now simply brothers and sisters in religion. In the Holy Qur'an it is stated, "*Don't forget to be generous towards one another. Allah sees what you do.*"⁵⁴ In the light of this verse, they should keep their civility both during and after the divorce, and if they have children, they should be thoughtful about the well-being of their children.

⁴⁹ Al-Talaq, 65:2.

⁵⁰ Al-Nisa', 4: 20-21.

⁵¹ Al-Nisa', 4:130.

⁵² Al-Talaq, 65:3.

⁵³ Al-Talaq, 65:2.

⁵⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:237.



MOTHER AND FATHER TWO GATES TO PARADISE



عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ :
”الصَّلَاةُ لَوَقْتِهَا، وَبِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، ثُمَّ الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ“ .

As related by Ibn Mas‘ud (ra), a man asked the Prophet (saw), “What deeds are the best?” The Prophet (saw) said, (1) *To perform the (daily compulsory) prayers at their stated fixed times*, (2) *to be good and dutiful to one’s own parents*, (3) *and to participate in jihād in Allah’s Cause.*”

(B7534, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 48)



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَلَا أُنبِئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكِبَائِرِ؟“ -ثَلَاثًا- قُلْنَا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: ”الْإِشْرَاكُ
بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”رِضَا الرَّبِّ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدِ وَسَخَطُ الرَّبِّ فِي سَخَطِ الْوَالِدِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَحَقُّ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قَالَ: ”أُمُّكَ“، قَالَ: ثُمَّ
مَنْ؟ قَالَ: ”أُمُّكَ“، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: ”أُمُّكَ“، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ:
”ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ.“



فَقَالَ أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”الْوَالِدُ أَوْسَطُ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَاصْبِرْ ذَلِكَ الْبَابَ أَوْ احْفَظْهُ.“



‘Abd al Rahman b. Abi Bakra said his father (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) said thrice, “*Shall I inform you of the biggest of the great sins?*” We said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah” He said, “*To join partners in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one’s parents.*”

(B5976, Bukhari, al-Adab, 6)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*The Lord’s pleasure is in the parents’ pleasure, and the Lord’s anger is in the parents’ anger.*”

(T1899, Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, “A man came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*Your mother.*’ The man said. ‘Who is next?’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*Your mother.*’ The man further said, ‘Who is next?’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*Your mother.*’ The man asked for the fourth time, ‘Who is next?’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*Your father.*’”

(B5971, Bukhari, al-Adab, 2)



Abu al-Darda’ (ra) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘*The father is the middle gate to Paradise. So the choice is yours if you wish to neglect that door or protect it.*’”

(T1900, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3)



After a long journey, he was able to come to Medina to see the Prophet (saw). First, he was going to declare his belief in him as Allah’s last Messenger, and then he was going to underpin this belief by pledging loyalty to him. Next his aim was to make his awakened soul taste *jihād* by joining the fighters of the Prophet (saw) with the expectation of sacrificing his own life, if Allah (swt) willed, in the name of his religion.

He had left his family behind. His needy mother and father were in tears when he left. They understood that their son’s soul was filled with zealous passion. Perhaps they felt that he was not going to return home once he left for Medina. Now he was standing before the Prophet (saw). When he expressed his intention to the Prophet (saw), he could not help but say, “I came to you, O Messenger of Allah. But I left behind my mother and father in tears.” He seemed eager to show what he could sacrifice for his religion. The answer of our Prophet to him, however, was very disheartening to him: “Go back to your family, and make them smile as you made them cry!”¹

Once again, the Prophet (saw) said, “Go back to them and ask for their permission. If they permit you, then fight (in the path of Allah- *fi sabilillah*), otherwise be devoted to them.”² By equating the service to parents to the service of Allah, the Prophet (saw) even said, “Indulge in *jihād* for them.”³ When he was asked what was the best deed, the Prophet (saw) said, “(1) To perform the (daily compulsory) prayers at their stated fixed times, (2) to be good and dutiful to one’s own parents, (3) and to participate in *jihād* in Allah’s Cause.”⁴

The *hadith* books are replete with accounts containing principles to organize our relations with our parents. In *hadiths*, the term “*al-birr*” is used to refer to good deeds. In many other places, the term “*al-‘uqūq*” is used in contrast to refer to ungrateful and rebellious behaviors towards the parents. In fact, the term “*al-birr*” refers to all kinds of good deeds and

¹ D2528, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 31; N4168, al-Nasa’i, al-Bi’a, 10; IM2782, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 12; IŞ9/191, *al-Sharh ala Ibn Battal*, IX, 191.

² D2530, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 31.

³ B5972, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 3; M6504, Muslim, al-Birr, 5.

⁴ B7534, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 48; M254, Muslim, al-Iman, 139.



beauties in this world and the Hereafter. For example, being rightly guided, and enjoying blessings and abundance in this world are all different forms of *“al-birr.”* This term also includes the meaning of attaining ultimate happiness on the Day of Judgement and earning Paradise as a final reward.

Furthermore, *“al-birr”* refers to the genuine interest a child takes in his or her parents, in not breaking their hearts, and taking care of them when they get old. Performing these good deeds is also a sign of being a good servant of Allah (swt). This is one of the best ways to gain Allah’s pleasure. The reverse of these behaviors would be to rebel against parents and completely disregard their rights. As a matter of fact, *“al-birr”* is the antonym of the term *“al-‘uqūq,”* which means to cut off, or to break up with something or someone. Allah Almighty abhors the idea of anyone rebelling against their parents.⁵ On the Day of Judgement, the Lord of the Universe will not look at the faces of those who rebelled against their parents,⁶ and will not receive them in His Paradise.⁷ Moreover our Prophet made unequivocal statements about being rebellious against one’s parents. For example, after asking, *“Shall I inform you of the biggest of the great sins?”* the Prophet (saw) first mentioned, *“To join partners in worship with Allah,”* and then said, *“to be undutiful to one’s parents.”*⁸ The term used in these warnings is *“‘uqūq al-wālal-‘Idayn,”* which means to disobey and disrespect parents, not to heed their words, and to break their hearts with defying statements. The meaning of this term also includes such actions as not taking care of old parents, not meeting their individual needs, leaving them all alone, and not ensuring regularly that they are safe and well in their houses.

The Qur’anic verse, *“If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them,”*⁹ has been interpreted by the Muslim scholars in various ways. They all agreed that it meant not to be rebellious against one’s parents, and to heed their words at any stage of life. Nevertheless, Allah Almighty also warns us that there are some requests that parents cannot make, *“We have commanded people to be good to their parents, but do not obey them if they strive to make you serve, beside Me, anything of which you have no knowledge.”*¹⁰

In that regard, for example, one does not have to listen to his mother if she asks him to cut off ties with a relative that she is not talking to; or to listen to one’s father if he asks him to cooperate with him in any immoral affair. For both parents and children, the most important duty is to obey

⁵ D2842, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 20-21; N4217, al-Nasa’i, al-Aqiqa, 1.

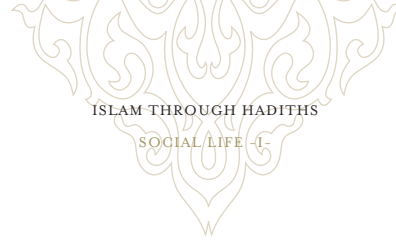
⁶ N2563, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 69.

⁷ N5675, al-Nasa’i, al-Ashriba, 46; DM2125, al-Darimi, al-Ashriba, 5.

⁸ B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; T2301, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shahada, 2.

⁹ Al-Isra’, 17:23.

¹⁰ Al-Ankabut, 29:8; Luqman, 31:15.



Allah (swt), and to make Him pleased with them, not anyone else. Thus, children at any age are meant to heed their parents' warnings concerning what is religiously lawful and unlawful, which also means to obey all the boundaries set by Allah (swt).

If necessary, offspring who pay attention to Allah's pleasure should be courageous and righteous enough to demonstrate against their parents.¹¹ At the same time, it is important not to forget that cursing and humiliating parents will always attract Allah's curse.¹² In addition, it is important to be careful to not curse someone else's parents since such actions may lead to drawing a curse on one's own parents.¹³

In practical terms it is important to recognize that it is impossible to sustain good relations all the time in any family. However, when children's beliefs and actions sometimes turn wayward and irrational,¹⁴ or parent's antipathy against their children grows because of their beliefs and actions,¹⁵ then this may harm the foundation of good relations in the family. In such instances, as indicated in the Qur'anic verse below, there is not much that can be done because certain things are irreparable.¹⁶ *"O believers! Do not take your fathers and brothers as allies. If they prefer disbelief to faith: those of you who do so are doing wrong,"*¹⁷ and *"It is not fitting for the Prophet (saw) and believers to ask forgiveness for the idolaters—even if they are related to them—after having shown that they are the inhabitants of the Blaze."*¹⁸

Thus, even enjoining good on parents and trying to keep them away from evil are duties of the offspring. Consequently, the difference in age and status between parents and children cannot be an impediment in performing this duty in a genuine and delicate manner. The attitude of our ancestor Abraham, who gently and patiently invited his father to the truth,¹⁹ but then had to abandon him because of his negative response,²⁰ should be our guiding principle in this matter.²¹

As with all other actions, it is the responsibility of the adults to set an example for children in treating parents well. This is perhaps the best way to teach children how to behave with their own parents in the future. Hence, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an, *"Shall the reward of good be anything but good?"*²² According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"If a young person honors an elderly one on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to honor him in his old age."*²³ A child does not have a right to treat his parents poorly because the parents may have treated him badly

¹¹ Al-Nisa', 4:135.

¹² M5124, Muslim, al-Adahi, 43; HM1875, Ibn Hanbal, I: 217.

¹³ D5141, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 119-120; T1902, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 4.

¹⁴ Al-Taghabun, 64:14

¹⁵ Maryam, 19:46; T3189, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 29.

¹⁶ T3101, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 9; HM771, Ibn Hanbal, I, 99.

¹⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:23; al-Mujadala, 58:22.

¹⁸ Al-Tawba, 9:113.

¹⁹ Al-An'am 6:74; al-Anbiya', 21:52.

²⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:114.

²¹ Al-Hajj, 22:78.

²² Al-Rahman, 55:60.

²³ T2022, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 75.



when he was a child. In this matter, our guide is the following advice from the Prophet (saw) who said, “Do not let yourselves be a people who agree with everything that someone else asserts by saying: ‘If the people are good then we will be good, and if they are wrong then we will be wrong.’”²⁴ We have to leave our selfishness aside, and heed the advice of our Lord: “Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend.”²⁵ Therefore, children should not forget that they will be parents one day. Likewise, parents should not forget that they were young once.

Our Lord created the world in order to test us,²⁶ and used parents as conduits through which we come to this world. In order for a soul to be embodied in a person, the paths of countless mothers and fathers were crossed²⁷ since the time of Adam and Eve.²⁸

No one has an option of choosing his parents, or exchanging his children. Moreover, for those who deny their tie with their children, the Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever claims to be the son of a person other than his father, and he knows that person is not his father, then Paradise will be forbidden for him.”²⁹ The union between children and parents starts in the mother’s womb, lasts throughout life, and continues after death³⁰ in the Hereafter.³¹ It is common for children to share all their happiness and agonies of life with their parents, and keep their parents memory alive after their death. However, in this kind of a relationship there are some behaviours and attitudes that develop that may not be healthy and sound for a good life. For example, some parents begin to identify themselves entirely with their children and almost lose themselves in them. They take excessive pride in their property and their children.³² They consider them as signs of power and prestige. Likewise, some children value their parents so much that they shape their decisions, dreams, and plans in accordance with their parents’ demands. When they introduce themselves, they cannot do it without mentioning their names. They face issues in life with the mental comfort that their parents would back them up if necessary.³³ They take pride in their family lineage to the extent that they begin to count the number of their family members on tombstones.³⁴ They do not seem to want to face the fact that is mentioned in the following *ḥadīth*: “He who is made slow by his good deeds will not be any faster through his genealogy.”³⁵ Those who take pride in their children, or those who rely heavily on their parents should

²⁴ T2007, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 63.

²⁵ Al-Fussilat, 41:34; al-Ra’d, 13:22; al-Mu’minun, 23:96.

²⁶ Al-Mulk, 67:2.

²⁷ Al-Mu’minun, 23:12-14; al-Mursalat, 77:20-23.

²⁸ Al-A’raf, 7:27.

²⁹ B6766, al-Bukhari, al-Fara’id, 29; M218, Muslim, al-Iman, 113; M219, Muslim, al-Iman, 114.

³⁰ M4223, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 14; D5142, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 119.

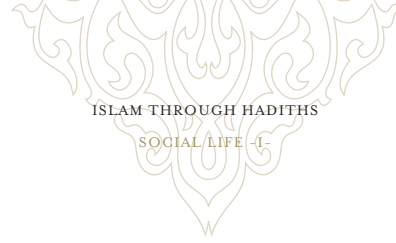
³¹ Al-Ra’d, 13:23.

³² Maryam, 19:77; al-Hadid, 57:20; al-Qalam, 68:14.

³³ Al-Ma’ida, 5/104; Luqman, 31:21.

³⁴ Al-Takathur, 102:1-2

³⁵ M6853, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 38; D3643, Abu Da’ud, al-’Ilm, 1.



not forget the day “when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child take the place of their parent, in any way.”³⁶

In this regard, we should think hard on the meaning of the following *ḥadīth*: “The Lord’s pleasure is in the parent’s pleasure, and the Lord’s anger is in the parent’s anger.”³⁷ The relationship between parents and children is one way in which one could earn Allah’s pleasure. Therefore, this relationship should not be turned into fulfilling worldly desires and interests. Our relations with our loved ones should not blind us to the love of Allah who warns us as follows: “Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: those who do so will be the ones who lose.”³⁸

The relationship between parents and children is very rewarding, and yet it is one of the most challenging.³⁹

In the early years of childhood, it was the parents who shaped the nature of the relationship. They took the responsibility for feeding, clothing, educating, and raising the children in their infant and teenage years. Although their responsibility in keeping the inner dynamics of the family increased day by day, the children for a long period of time had more rights than responsibilities.

One day, when they are grown up to start their own family, the children, who are now adults, will have more influence on the development of their relationships with their elderly parents. For both sides a new period begins—a period which requires more work and understanding for both parties. During the time when these children have become adults and have their own children, the mutual respect and dependency between the elderly parents and their grown-up children become more and more meaningful.

When these parents reach their advanced age, it is time for their adult children to take more responsibility in the relationship. In a way, the parents begin to reap what they sow, and wait expectantly for compassion from their children. At this point, the duty of their children is to treat their elderly parents gently and compassionately, and make sure that they do not become the focus of the curse of the Prophet (saw), who said, “*May a man whose parents reached old age in his presence, and they were not a cause for his entrance to Paradise, be humiliated.*”⁴⁰

The parents have a life-long responsibility towards their children, depending on their needs at different stages of their life. However, when the parents get older it is the children who have the responsibility of taking

³⁶ Luqman, 31:33; al-Shu‘ara, 26:88.

³⁷ T1899, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3; B57830, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘b al-Iman*, VI, 177.

³⁸ Al-Munafiqun, 63:9.

³⁹ Al-Anfal, 8:28; al-Taghabun, 64:15.

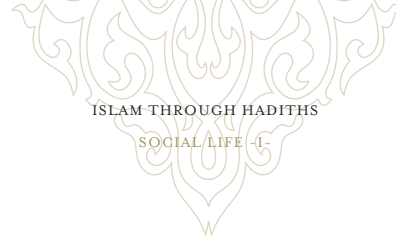
⁴⁰ M6510, Muslim, al-Birr, 9; T3545, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 100.



care of them. Hence, Allah Almighty says, *“Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully and lower your wing in humility towards them in kindness and say, ‘Lord, have mercy on them, just as they cared for me when I was little.’”*⁴¹ Therefore, it is expected from all children who grow up, even those who might have a tendency to neglect and disrespect their parents, to do good deeds towards their elderly parents and respect them.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) told the Companions (ra) the story of three young men in a cave, and described how the good deeds to parents could have broken the rock blocking the cave’s mouth. According to this story, *“While three persons were walking, rain began to fall and they had to enter a cave in a mountain. A big rock rolled over and blocked the mouth of the cave. They said to each other, ‘Invoke Allah with the best deed you have performed (so Allah might remove the rock)’. One of them said, ‘O Allah! My parents were old and I used to go out for grazing (my animals). On my return I would milk (the animals) and take the milk in a vessel to my parents to drink. After they had drunk from it, I would give it to my children, family, and wife. One day I was delayed and on my return I found my parents sleeping, and I disliked to wake them up. The children were crying at my feet (because of hunger). That state of affairs continued until it was dawn. O Allah! If You regard what I did to be sincerely for Your sake, then please remove this rock so that we may see the sky.’ So, the rock was moved a bit. The second said, ‘O Allah! You know that I was in love with a cousin of mine, like the deepest love a man may have for a woman, and she told me that I would not get my desire fulfilled unless I paid her one-hundred dinars (gold pieces). So, I struggled for it until I gathered the desired amount, and when I sat between her legs, she told me to be afraid of Allah, and asked me not to deflower her except rightfully (by marriage). So, I got up and left her. O Allah! If You regard what I did to be sincerely for Your sake, kindly remove this rock.’ So, two-thirds of the rock was removed. Then the third man said, ‘O Allah! No doubt You know that once I employed a worker for one faraq (three sā’s) of millet, and when I wanted to pay him, he refused to take it, so I sowed it and from its yield I bought cows and a flock of sheep. After a time that man came and demanded his money. I said to him: “Go to those cows and the flock of sheep and take them for they are for you.” He asked me whether I was joking with him. I told him that I*

⁴¹ Al-Isra’, 17:23-24.



was not joking with him, and that all of it belonged to him. O Allah! If You regard what I did to be sincerely for Your sake, then please remove the rock.’ So, the rock was removed completely from the mouth of the cave.”⁴²

Our Lord asks from us, as He did from the previous community,⁴³ to do good to our parents. It is noteworthy to point out that Allah Almighty mentions this demand literally next to the commandment of “pray to Allah only.”⁴⁴ This is because, some of Allah’s attributes, such as creating out of nothing, providing blessings, protection, and showing compassion to humankind, are manifested through the deeds of parents. The fact that parents are conduits thorough which these divine attributes are transferred to children makes parents worthy of honor and respect.

Our Prophet, when he described the labor invested in raising a child, said, “A son could not do enough for his parents, unless he found them as a slave and purchased them to set them free.”⁴⁵ His mother carried him in her womb, gave birth to him, and raised him by sacrificing numerous things in her life.⁴⁶ If we can simply remind ourselves that elderly people are in need of much more attention and care, just like a young child, then we would understand and recognize that this period of time is like one of recompensation from us to our parents. This is the reason for the following request in the Holy Qur’an: “Be thankful to me and to your parents!”⁴⁷

Mother’s arms, which embrace the baby immediately after birth, are like the warm hug of Paradise. Without knowing all the hardship that mothers have, the baby learns peace and trust in his mother’s arms. Allah Almighty sent a mother and provided this blessing even with Moses, who had been living in Pharaoh’s luxurious palace.⁴⁸ Those who grow up on their mother’s milk, and under her education, would want to help and support her throughout her life. The mother, whose name is associated with love and sacrifice, is the one “who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship.”⁴⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked not to bar mothers, even if they belonged to a different religion, who wanted to continue their relation with their child. He also recommended that children treat those mothers well.⁵⁰ While the Prophet (saw) abhorred disrespecting and rebelling against mothers,⁵¹ he also reminded us that Paradise was just few steps away from the feet of the mother.⁵²

For a child, fathers are also role models in overcoming the challenges of life. Fathers, by bringing bread and food to their household,⁵³ and de-

⁴² B2215, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 98; M6949, Muslim, al-Riqaq, 100.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:83.

⁴⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4:36; al-An’am, 6:151; al-Isra’, 17:23.

⁴⁵ M3799, Muslim, al-Itq, 25; T1906, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 8.

⁴⁶ Luqman, 31:14; al-Ahqaf, 46:15.

⁴⁷ Luqman, 31:14

⁴⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:7.

⁴⁹ B5971, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 2; M6500, Muslim, al-Birr, 1.

⁵⁰ B5978, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 7; M2325, Muslim, al-Zakat, 50.

⁵¹ B6473, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 22; B7292, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 3.

⁵² N3106, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 6.



fending the family against all odds,⁵⁴ received praises from the Prophet (saw). Fatherhood is not limited to feeding and clothing the children, however. The father is also expected to have a compassionate heart which is going to be part parcel of the relationship with his child throughout life.⁵⁵

While tolerance, a smiling face, and compassion are generally associated with mothers, discipline and seriousness are associated with fathers. Nevertheless, the Holy Qur'an tells the stories of perceptive fathers such as Abraham⁵⁶ and Jacob⁵⁷ who had deep love, and compassion for their children. A child does not have a right to turn his back and desert his father,⁵⁸ whose prayer would not be rejected by Allah (swt).⁵⁹ A child, simply put, belongs to his father.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note that even when Allah praises one of His prophets, He refers to his relation with his parents: “[John the Baptist was] kind to his parents, not domineering or rebellious.”⁶¹ When Allah (swt) asks children to do good deeds to parents, He does not limit the options. For example, verbal good deeds including respectful conversations with the parents⁶² and material good deeds including financial support and physical care⁶³ are some of the good deeds that Allah would accept. As long as the children want, there are countless ways to do good deeds towards their their parents in order to fulfill the commandment of our Lord. Moreover, the things that can be done for parents are not limited to this world. A child who is dedicated to continue to serve to his parents can give charity after their death,⁶⁴ fulfill their unfulfilled demands,⁶⁵ ask forgiveness for them,⁶⁶ and even perform the Hajj on their behalf.⁶⁷ As such, the parents will join the group of people whose good deeds would continue after their death. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the glad tidings about this matter as follows: “When a man dies, his action discontinues from him except three things, namely, the perpetual *sadaqa* (charity), or the knowledge by which benefit is acquired, or a pious child who prays for him.”⁶⁸

For those who want to be like a virtuous son who kept his father's memory alive, 'Umar's son, 'Abd Allah (ra) was a good example. He, on the way to Mecca, met a bedouin. After greeting him, he let him ride with him, and then gave him his turban as a gift. When his companions, who were surprised, said that the bedouin would have been happy with much less, he replied, “This man's father was a friend of my father.” The reason why 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) behaved this way was the following statement of

⁵³ B55, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 41; M2322, Muslim, al-Zakat, 48.

⁵⁴ D4772, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 28-29; N4099, al-Nasa'i, al-Muharaba, 23.

⁵⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33/5; B5088, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16.

⁵⁶ Al-Saffat, 37:102.

⁵⁷ Yusuf, 12:94.

⁵⁸ B6768, al-Bukhari, al-Fara'id, 29.

⁵⁹ D1536, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr 29; T3448, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 47.

⁶⁰ D3530, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', 77.

⁶¹ Maryam, 19:14, 32.

⁶² Al-Isra', 17:23-24.

⁶³ Al-Baqara, 2:180; al-Nisa', 4:36.

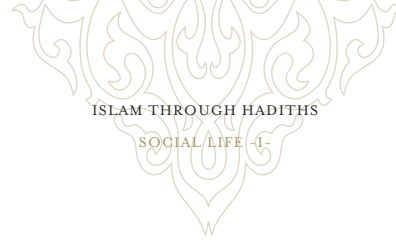
⁶⁴ M4220, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 12.

⁶⁵ B2761, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 19.

⁶⁶ D5142, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 119-120; IM3664, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 2.

⁶⁷ D1810, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 25; T930, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 87.

⁶⁸ M4223, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 14; D2880, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 14.



the Prophet: *“One of the finest acts of kindness is for a man to treat his father’s friends in a kindly way after he has departed.”*⁶⁹ He also said, *“The father is the middle gate to Paradise. So the choice is yours if you wish to neglect that door, or protect it.”*⁷⁰

In short, in our relationship with our parents, our prayer should always be this: *“Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day of Reckoning.”*⁷¹

⁶⁹ M6513, Muslim, al-Birr, 11; D5143, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 119-120; T1903, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 5.

⁷⁰ T1900, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3; IM2089, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 36.

⁷¹ Ibrahim, 14:41.



VISITING THE RELATIVES FAMILY RELATIONS



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ أَرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَّن فِي
السَّمَاءِ، الرَّحِمُ شِجْنَةٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلَهُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَهَا
قَطَعَهُ اللَّهُ.“

According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The merciful are shown mercy by Allah, the most Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*). Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from the One Who is above the heavens. The womb is named after *al-Raḥmān*, so whoever bonds with it, Allah bonds with him, and whoever severs it, Allah severs His ties with him.”

(T1924, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16)



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا الرَّحْمَنُ وَهِيَ الرَّحْمُ شَقَقْتُ لَهَا اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي، مَنْ
وَصَلَّاهَا وَصَلَّتْهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَهَا بَتَّتْهُ.“



عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ بْنِ عَازِبٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”الْخَالَةُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأُمِّ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُبْسَطَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ، أَوْ يُنْسَأَ فِي أَثَرِهِ، فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ...“



عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جَبْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعٌ.“



According to ‘Abd al-Rahman (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah the Exalted has said, ‘I am most Compassionate (*al-Rahmān*), and this has been derived from mercy (*rahīm*). I have derived its name from My name. If anyone connects it, I shall connect him, and if anyone cuts it off, I shall cut him off.’”

(D1694, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 45; HM1687, Ibn Hanbal, I, 195)



As related by al-Bara’ b. ‘Azib (ra), “A man came to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! I have been afflicted by a tremendous sin. Is there any repentance for me?’ He said, ‘Do you have your mother?’ The man said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Do you have any maternal aunts?’ The man said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Then be dutiful to them.’”

(T1904, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 6)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘Whoever loves that he be granted more wealth and that his lease on life be prolonged then he should keep good relations with his kith and kin.’”

(M6523, Muslim, al-Birr, 20; B5986, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 12)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should unite the bond of kinship (i.e., keep good relations with his kith and kin)....”

(B6138, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85)



According to Muhammad b. Jubayr b. Mut’im, his father (ra) said the Prophet (saw) said, “The person who severs the bond of kinship will not enter Paradise.”

(M6521, Muslim, al-Birr, 19; B5984, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 11)



The Prophet (saw) said, “Allah created the universe, and when He completed all of it *al-rahim* (i.e., the womb), said, ‘(O Allah) at this place I seek refuge with You from all those who sever me (i.e., sever the ties of kith and kin).’ Allah said, ‘Yes, won’t you be pleased that I will keep good relations with the one who will keep good relations with you, and I will sever the relations with the one who will sever the relations with you.’ It said, ‘Yes, O my Lord.’ Allah said, ‘Then that is for you.’” Allah’s Messenger added, “Read (in the Holy Qur’an) if you wish, the statement of Allah: ‘Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship? These are the ones that Allah has rejected, making their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Will they not contemplate the Holy Qur’an? Do they have locks on their hearts?’”¹

In religious language, inanimate objects talk. This is a rhetorical style. One can see many examples of this style in the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths*. For example, the spirit of an unborn child can speak.² When the mouths are sealed in the Day of Judgement, skin, hands, feet, and eyes will speak in order to testify to what they have done.³ In response to the question, “Are you full?” Hell answers, “No, not yet!”⁴ The above mentioned Ḥadīth al-Qudsi is also an example of this style.

Keeping relations with relatives is described in the terms, “*ṣilat al-rahim*” in Islamic literature. The word “*rahim*” means “womb,” and “*ṣila*” means “tie.” Relations with family members are established through *rahim*, i.e., the womb. Similar to the umbilical cord that ties the fetus and womb, there is also a spiritual network of cords that ties family members to each other.

“*Al-Raḥmān*” and “*al-Raḥīm*,” which are two names of our Lord, and the terms “*raḥma* (mercy)” and “*rahim*” (womb) stem from the same word root. This root means “to spare, to protect and to show mercy.”⁵ The relationship between “*al-Raḥmān*” and “*rahim*” cannot only be explained through their linguistic roots. This is because Allah the Most Merciful

¹ Muhammad, 47:22-24; B5987, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 13; M6518, Muslim, al-Birr, 16.
² Al-A'raf, 7:172.
³ Yasin, 36:65; al-Fussilat, 41: 20-21.
⁴ Qaaf, 50:30.
⁵ LA18/1611, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, XVIII, 1611.



grants his mercy not only to humans but also to animals through their mother's womb. Even the wildest animals show compassion to their offspring. This also means that heavenly mercy is channeled through the mother's womb. In two of his *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) said, "*Raḥim*, is a tie, extended from *al-Raḥmān* and tied to the heavens"⁶ and "*The womb is named after al-Raḥmān.*"⁷ Therefore there are two types of ties: one type is the relationship between *al-Raḥmān* and *raḥim*, and the other type is the relationship among the relatives who were born from the same womb. In both relationships, there is a flow of mercy and compassion among the parties. As long as these relationships continue, mercy and compassion will continue to flow. In one *Ḥadīth al-Qudsi*, the Prophet (saw) said, "*Allah the Exalted has said, I am Compassionate, and this has been derived from mercy. I have derived its name from My name. If anyone joins it, I shall join him, and if anyone cuts it off, I shall cut him off.*"⁸

Interestingly, *ṣilat al-rahim* was a virtuous practice in the Jahiliyya. Once Islam gained ascendancy it began to give more importance to this phenomenon, and revised some of the wrong practices attached to it. Thus, since the early days this phenomenon became an essential Islamic teaching. For example, in the Jahiliyya family relations and tribal affiliations were matters of boasting, pride, and arrogance. During this period, people were fanatical about their tribal identity, which resulted in biased and blind support for their family members regardless of whether they were oppressor or oppressed, victim or perpetrator, and just or unjust. In short, they glorified their tribe and kin.⁹ Islam revised these practices, established a new network of relations, putting justice and mutual responsibility at the center of that network.

Justice, rule of law, and the personal nature of any crime are the important Islamic principles related to the decision-making process. No family connections can overrule them. In Islam believers are taught that even if a crime is linked to a close family member, it is vital not to give up on honesty and justice in their testimony and Judgement against the culprit.¹⁰ In Islam, no one is held responsible for the other, even if he is a relative.¹¹ In this matter, our Prophet was not exempted either. As he stated clearly about such a matter, there was nothing that he could do; "*even if it was his daughter Fatima...*" he would not be able to do anything to change a Judgement in this world or in the world to come.¹²

⁶ SI442, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, II, 185.

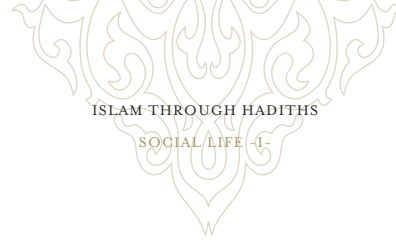
⁷ T1924, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16; B5988, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 13.

⁸ D1694, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 45; HM1687, Ibn Hanbal, I, 195

⁹ M6582, Muslim, al-Birr, 62.

¹⁰ Al-An'am, 6:152; al-Nisa', 4:135

¹¹ Al-Fatur, 35:18.



Relationships among relatives are among the important topics found in the Holy Qur'an.¹³ In several different verses, our Lord emphasizes giving relatives their rights,¹⁴ encourages good behavior towards them,¹⁵ discourages abusing their rights,¹⁶ and associates weak family ties with sedition.¹⁷

The Messenger of Allah (saw) learned the importance of family relationships through his own experience. He was an orphan who never saw his father. He lost his mother on the way to Medina when they were going to visit his maternal uncles. He grew up under the tutelage of, first, his grandfather, and then his uncle, Abu Talib, to whom he owed a lot. The Prophet (saw), who was known as one of the most generous people, strived hard to invite his uncle to Islam. This was because the Prophet (saw) always hoped to transform his "*al-rahim*" relation with his uncle to Allah's mercy. Although his uncle supported him until his last breath, he never embraced Islam.¹⁸

When the Prophet (saw) received the first revelation, he became very anxious and distressed. In her attempt to calm him down and bolster his self-confidence about being a righteous person, our mother Khadija (ra) said, "This was because you continue to have your relations with your relatives."¹⁹ This statement demonstrates that the Messenger of Mercy had been quite concerned on this matter all along.

The Prophet of Islam emphasized overtly the importance of family ties starting from the early days of Islam. The Byzantine emperor, Heraclius, asked Abu Sufyan, who was not yet a Muslim, about the Prophet's message. Abu Sufyan told him that that the main messages were that a person should be a servant of Allah without associating anything with Him, pray, give charity, be just and chaste, and keep relations with family members.²⁰

Among the first messages that the Prophet (saw) addressed to the people of Medina, to which he had just emigrated, was the subject of family ties. 'Abd Allah b. Salam, a Jewish scholar and later a Muslim, described the scene as follows: "When the Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived, the people came out to meet him. There was news that the Messenger of Allah (saw) had arrived, so I went with the people to try to get a look at him. When I gazed upon the face of the Messenger of Allah (saw), I knew that this face was not the face of a liar. The first thing that he said was the following: "*O people! Spread the salām (peace), feed (others), visit your rela-*

¹² B2753, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 11; M504, al-Muslim, al-Iman, 351; N4895, al-Nasa'i, al-Qat' al-Sariq, 5.

¹³ Al-Nisa', 4:36.

¹⁴ Al-Isra', 17:26; al-Rum, 30:38.

¹⁵ Al-Nahl, 16:90; al-Baqara, 2:83, 177.

¹⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:1.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:27; Muhammad, 47:22.

¹⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:56; al-Tawba, 9:113.

¹⁹ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wayh, 1; M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252.

²⁰ B7, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wayh, 1; M4607, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 74.



tives, and perform prayer while the people are sleeping; you will enter Paradise with peace.”²¹

It is important to keep in mind that in keeping relationships with family members it does not matter if they belong to different religions. Yet, it is prohibited to obey the parents or any other family member if they ask you to associate partners with Allah (swt) or indulge in pagan practices. Nevertheless, Muslims are asked to keep civil relations with such family members until they pass on from this world.²² For example, we know that our Prophet kept his relationship with his uncle Abu Talib until he died, even though he did not accept Islam.

The daughter of Abu Bakr, Asma’ (ra) said, “When our Prophet was getting ready for the emigration to Medina, I was carrying food for them.” From the time that Asma’ tore her waistcloth in two and wrapped in it the food she was carrying for Abu Bakr and the Prophet (saw), she was called “*dhāt al-niṭāqayn*,” namely, “the one with two waistcloths.” She was the sister of ‘A’isha (ra), but they had different mothers. While ‘A’isha’s mother, Umm Ruman became an early Muslim, the mother of Asma’, Qutayba bint ‘Abd al-‘Uzza, was not honored by the glory of Islam.²³ Concerning this topic, Asma’ said,

“My mother, who was a *mushrika* (pagan), came with her father during the period of a peace pact between the Muslims and the Quraysh polytheists. I went to seek the advice of the Prophet (saw) saying, ‘My mother has arrived and she is hoping (for my favor).’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘Yes, be good to your mother.’”²⁴

One of the most important family ties mentioned in the *ḥadīths* is that with uncles. Not seeing his father, our beloved Master was known for his fondness for his uncle, al-‘Abbas (ra), although he was only two years older than him. Once, when he was talking about al-‘Abbas, the Prophet (saw) likened him to a “*different branch of the same date-tree*.”

One day, al-‘Abbas (ra), entered the Prophet’s presence in a state of anger. When he was asked the reason for his anger, he said, “O Messenger of Allah, what is it with us and the Quraysh? Whenever they meet one another it is with glad faces, and when they meet us it is with other faces.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) then became angry until his face reddened, and he said, “*By the One in Whose hand is my soul! Faith does not enter a man’s heart until he loves you for the sake of Allah, and for the sake of*

²¹ T2485, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 42; IM3251, Ibn Maja, al-At’ima, 1.

²² Luqman, 31:14-15.

²³ EU7/7, Ibn al-Athir, *Uṣd al-Ghaba*, VII, 7.

²⁴ B5979, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 8; M2325, Muslim, al-Zakat, 50.

His Messenger.” Then he continued, “O people! Whoever harms my uncle, he has harmed me, for indeed, a man’s uncle is like his father.”²⁵

The relationships among relatives, in addition to love, respect, and mutual visitations, require solidarity in every fields of social life. This solidarity has legal aspects, such as ransom and inheritance, and moral aspects. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchical order in doing good to relatives and behaving well with them. In this hierarchy the first person is the mother followed by the father, then the sisters, and finally the brothers. In extending a hand to the needy or giving alms, one needs to start by considering the closest relatives first. As our Master the Prophet (saw) indicated, “*al-aqrab fa’l-aqrab*,” i. e., the help needs to go from the closest ones to the most distant ones.²⁶

Things which are given to the needy are considered as charity. However, things which are given to needy relatives are considered both as a charity and as “*ṣilat al-rahim*.”²⁷ Those who are in trouble are put first and foremost in the trust of their relatives. The case of Fatima bint Qays (ra), who was an early emigrant to Medina, is a good example to illustrate this point. When she was divorced with three pronouncements of divorce by her husband, the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent her to the house of Ibn Umm Maqtum (ra), who was her cousin, in order to complete her waiting period. It is interesting to note that Ibn Maqtum was blind.²⁸

According to the Messenger of Allah (saw), an uncle from one’s mother’s side may also be the inheritor of his maternal nephew. Because he is able to pay his ransom, he may also be his inheritor.²⁹

Aunts are also important family members who deserve to be closely cared for and kept in one’s thoughts. The adage “*the aunt is like the mother*” mirrors the following *ḥadīth* on this matter. As related by Ibn ‘Umar (ra), a man asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! I committed a great sin. Is there any repentance for me?” He said, “*Do you have your mother?*” The man said, “No.” He said, “*Do you have any maternal aunts?*” The man said, “Yes.” He said, “*Then be dutiful to them.*”³⁰ Furthermore, he added, “*The maternal aunt holds the same status as the mother.*”

As for the conditions for the utterance of this *ḥadīth*, the following incident took place: When the Prophet (saw) left Mecca after performing his delayed ‘Umra, the daughter of Hamza (ra) ran after him, and wanted to go with him. When they came to Medina, the relatives of the girl wanted

²⁵ T3758, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 28.

²⁶ D5139, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 119-120; T1897, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 1.

²⁷ T658, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 26; N2583, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 82.

²⁸ M3713, Muslim, al-Talaq, 48; N3447, al-Nasa’i, al-Talaq, 15.

²⁹ D2899, Abu Da’ud, al-Fara’id, 8; IM2634, Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 7.

³⁰ T1904, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 6; HM4624, Ibn Hanbal, II, 14.



to host her. 'Ali said, "I have more right to her as she is my uncle's daughter." Ja'far said, "She is my uncle's daughter, and her aunt is my wife." Zayd (ra) said, "She is my brother's daughter." The Prophet (saw) judged that she should be given to her aunt (Ja'far's wife), and said "*the aunt is like the mother.*"³¹

The *ḥadīth*, "*the aunt is like the mother,*" should not be understood within the framework of the legal rules of inheritance, but within the framework of love, care, respect, and mercy.

One day the Prophet (saw) gathered a group of people from the Ansar. He asked them whether there was any stranger among them. They said, "No, except the son of a sister of ours." So he said, "*The son of the sister of a people is from them.*"³²

In parallel with the statements in the Holy Qur'an, the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized the importance of family relationships again and again. There are several *ḥadīths* that encourage perpetuating family relations, and discourage their termination. For example, our beloved Prophet said, "*Whoever loves that he be granted more wealth and that his lease on life be prolonged then he should keep good relations with his kin.*"³³ He also encouraged people to get acquainted with their extended family members because "*keeping the ties of kinship encourages affection among the relatives, increases the wealth, and increases the lifespan.*"³⁴ In short, the Prophet (saw) recommended keeping good relations with the family, in order to have prolonged life, increase wealth, and avoid a tragic death.³⁵

A man went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "Tell me of such a deed as will make me enter Paradise." The people said, "What is the matter with him? What is the matter with him?" The Prophet (saw) said, "*He has something to ask.*" Then the Prophet (saw) said, (In order to enter Paradise) "*you should worship Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him, offer prayer perfectly, pay the zakāt and keep good relations with your kith and kin.*"³⁶

According to a Prophetic teaching, "*One who keeps relations with family members is not the one who recompenses good done to him by his relatives, but he is the one who keeps good relations with those relatives who had severed the bond of kinship with him.*"³⁷ A man went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have relatives. I keep my connections with them, but they do not do the same with me. I do favors for them, but they do bad things to me. I treat them gently, but they treat me rudely." Thereupon the

³¹ D2278, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq 34-35; B2699, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 6.

³² M2439, Muslim, al-Zakat, 133; T3901, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 65.

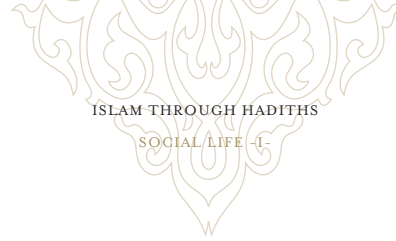
³³ M6523, Muslim, al-Birr, 20; B5986, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 12.

³⁴ T1979, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 49; HM8855, Ibn Hanbal, II, 374.

³⁵ HM1213, Ibn Hanbal, I, 143.

³⁶ B1396, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 1; M104, Muslim, al-Iman, 12.

³⁷ B5991, Bukhari, al-Adab, 15; D1697, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 45.



Prophet (saw) said, “If the things are the way in which you state, then, it seems that they are crushed in the face of your best behavior! As long as you continue to do this, Allah will always provide you with a helper.”³⁸

In other accounts, the Prophet (saw) considered it a most virtuous act if one kept relations with those who cut ties with him, that is, he praised the one who gave to the one who did not give and the one who forgave the one who gave him trouble.³⁹

A Companion of the Messenger of Allah, ‘Uqba b. ‘Amir (ra) reported, “One day, I met with the Messenger of Allah (saw). I immediately extended my hand to him, but he was quicker than me. He held my hand and said, “O ‘Uqba, shall I tell you the most virtuous moral behavior here and in the Hereafter?” and then he listed them as: “You continue to have your relations with the relatives who cut off their relations with you; you give to the one who does not give it back to you; and you forgive the one who gives you trouble.”⁴⁰

According to Prophetic teaching, “an oath to break ties of relationship is not binding.”⁴¹ For example, a wealthy Companion, Malik b. Nadla al-Jushami (ra) took an oath not to give anything to his cousin, and broke his ties with him. When the Prophet (saw) heard about this, he asked him to do something better, which was to pay the expiation fee for that oath.⁴²

The Messenger of Allah (saw), in some of his *hadiths*, connected family relations to matters of faith, and in others mentioned the negative implications of breaking family ties, such as “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should unite the bond of kinship (i.e., keep good relations with his kith and kin).”⁴³

In a sermon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Abstain from avarice, for those who were here before you were annihilated due to avarice. It (avarice) commanded them to show niggardliness; it commanded them to cut off their relationships with their nearest relatives, so they cut them off. It commanded them to show profligacy, so they showed it.”⁴⁴

In addition to blood ties and kinship, we can talk about spiritual kinship. For example, Abu Bakr (ra), after pointing out that the Prophet (saw) did not leave any inheritance, said, “By Allah, I would love to do good to the kith and kin of Allah’s Messenger rather than to my own kith and kin.”⁴⁵

In fact, family ties were among the most cherished virtues during the Jahiliyya. Both the Holy Qur’an and *hadiths* expanded upon this virtue and

³⁸ M6525, Muslim, al-Birr, 22.

³⁹ HM15703, Ibn Hanbal, III, 439.

⁴⁰ NM7285, Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VII, 2602 (4/162).

⁴¹ N3823, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 17; D3272, Abu Da’ud, al-Nuzur, 12.

⁴² N3819, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 16; IM2109, Ibn Maja, al-Kafarat, 7.

⁴³ B6138, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

⁴⁴ D1698, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 46; HM6792, Ibn Hanbal, II, 191.

⁴⁵ B4036, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 14.



invited Muslims to be proactive about it. A principle of Islamic teaching is that family relations should not be established based on mutual relations. In other words, even if a family member breaks his family ties, it would be very virtuous to keep in touch with him. Although our religion gives great importance to this behavior, Muslims in modern times, unfortunately, do not appreciate this tradition sufficiently. As we move from being agricultural societies to industrial societies and from rural life to urban life, the ties among families have begun to break on a massive scale. In agricultural societies, relatives usually live in a same region and they depend on each other because of the nature of their work. In urban settings where millions of people live, people become increasingly isolated and alone. The life styles and the urge of “I can live by myself without needing anyone” make modern individuals move away from their families. Because of the busy schedule of life, no one has enough time for family, parents, and relatives. Despite the advancements in communications and transportation, the frequency of visiting relatives is declining day by day. Unfortunately, family visits are reduced to the first-degree relatives. The second and third-degree relatives forget about each other, and the new generations never met each other. Furthermore, the existing family relations are mostly limited to short encounters during the major holidays, weddings, and funerals.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to strengthen the *rahim* and *al-Rahmān* ties just as they are emphasized and cherished in our religion. By breaking family ties, one need not forget that he would be deprived of two mutual blessings, mercy and love. As stated by our Prophet, “*Those who are breaking ties with their relatives may not enter Paradise.*”⁴⁶

Establishing these *rahm* (compassion) ties is not only to make sure that the *rahm* flows among the family members, but also to make sure Allah’s *rahm* flows to us in abundance. As related by our Prophet, the *rahim* is hung down from the Heavens, and he says, “*With those who continue to have relations with me, may Allah continue to have relations with them! With those who break ties with me, may Allah break his ties with them!*”⁴⁷

Finally, let’s not forget that, according to the Prophet (saw), breaking ties with relatives was one of the portents of the Last Day.⁴⁸ As revealed in his wise words, “*The fastest way to get reward from good deeds is to uphold kindness and ties of kinship, and the fastest way to get punished for evil deeds is to do injustice and sever ties of kinship.*”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ M6521, Muslim, al-Birr, 19; B5984, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 11.

⁴⁷ M6519, Muslim, al-Birr, 17.

⁴⁸ HM3982, Ibn Hanbal, I, 420.

⁴⁹ İM4212, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 23; T2511, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 57; D4902, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 43.



SUCKLING AFFINITY THROUGH MILK

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ [لِي] رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
“يَحْرُمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ مَا يَحْرُمُ مِنَ الْوِلَادَةِ.”

According to ‘Aisha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Indeed Allah has made unlawful through suckling whatever He made unlawful (marriage) through birth.”

(M3569, Muslim, al-Rada’, 2)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ ... قَالَ:
”انظُرْنَ [مَنْ] أَخَوَاتِكُنَّ فَإِنَّمَا الرِّضَاعَةُ مِنَ الْمَجَاعَةِ.“



عَنْ حَجَّاجِ بْنِ حَجَّاجِ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ: أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقَالَ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَا يُذْهِبُ عَنِّي مَذْمَةَ الرِّضَاعِ؟ فَقَالَ: ”غُرَّةٌ: عَبْدٌ أَوْ أُمَّةٌ.“



أَنَّهُ عُمَرَ بْنِ السَّائِبِ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ بَلَغَهُ؛ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ جَالِسًا يَوْمًا،
فَأَقْبَلَ أَبُوهُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ، فَوَضَعَ لَهُ بَعْضَ ثَوْبِهِ فَقَعَدَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَتْ أُمُّهُ
فَوَضَعَ لَهَا شِقَّ ثَوْبِهِ مِنْ جَانِبِهِ الْآخَرَ فَجَلَسَتْ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ أَخُوهُ مِنَ
الرِّضَاعَةِ، فَقَامَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَأَجْلَسَهُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ.



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Be sure that you know who your milk-brother is because the foster suckling relationship is established solely on the instance when milk is the only food of the child.”*

(B5102, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 22)



Hajjaj b. Hajjaj al-Aslami reported that his father (ra) asked the Prophet (saw), *“O Messenger of Allah! What will remove the responsibility of the foster relationship from me?”* So he said, *“A ghurra: a male slave or a female slave.”*

(T1153, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 6; N3331, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 56)



'Umar b. al-Sa'ib (ra) reported the following event: One day when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sitting, his foster-father came forward. He spread out a part of his garment and he sat on it. Then his foster-mother came forward and he spread out the other side of his garment and she sat on it. Then his foster-brother came forward. The Messenger of Allah (saw) stood up for him and seated him before himself.

(D5145, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 119-120)



One day, while our Master the Prophet (saw) was with ‘A’isha (ra) in her room, she heard the voice of a man who was asking permission to enter Hafsa’s room. Assuming that the Prophet (saw) did not hear the voice, she said, “Someone is asking permission to enter your room.” The Prophet (saw), implying that it was Hafsa’s milk-uncle, said “*he must be so and so.*” A little bit puzzled with this reaction, ‘A’isha (ra) asked, “Had my milk-uncle so and so been alive, could he have entered my room?” She wanted to make sure she understood this issue clearly. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Indeed Allah has made unlawful through suckling whatever He made unlawful (marriage) through birth.*”¹

After a while, when Aflah, the brother of ‘A’isha’s milk-father Abu al-Qu‘ays, asked permission to visit ‘A’isha (ra), she said that she could not permit it without asking the Prophet (saw). This was because she was thinking that her milk-mother was Abu Qu‘ays’ wife, and therefore, even though Abu al-Qu‘ays was her milk-father, she was not sure if she had any connection with his brother. When the Prophet (saw) came home, ‘A’isha (ra) reported the incident to him, and reported the following dialogue between the Prophet (saw) and herself: “The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*What stopped you from permitting him to come into your room? He is your uncle.*’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! The man was not the person who had nursed me, but the woman, the wife of Abu al-Qu‘ays had nursed me.’ He said, ‘*Admit him, for he is your uncle.*’”²

Milk-relatives are the types of relatives who emerge when a baby is being nursed by someone other than his mother. In this relationship, the milk-mother’s close relatives become the baby’s relatives.

Being nursed and raised by milk-mothers was a wide-spread practice in Arabia before Islam. Families settled in urban areas especially preferred to send their children to bedouin families in order for them to live in

¹ M3568-M3569, Muslim, al-Rada’, 1-2; B5099, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 21.

² B4796, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 9.



a healthier environment, and learn pure Arabic. This practice had some unwritten rules in the Jahiliyya period. According to these rules, a special bond emerged between the milk-mothers and the babies. With the stipulation that the mutual rights and the requirements of milk-based family relations were being observed, the Holy Qur'an endorsed this practice: "*If, by mutual consent and consultation, the couple wish to wean [the child], they will not be blamed, nor will there be any blame if you wish to engage a wet nurse, provided you pay as agreed in a fair manner.*"³

Our beloved Prophet was raised by a milk-mother. First, he was nursed by his mother Amina.⁴ In that year, Abu Lahab's concubine, Thuwayba, had a son, named Masruh. Until he was sent to a milk-mother, Muhammad was nursed by Suvaiba for one year. Through Thuwayba, the Prophet (saw) had two more milk-siblings. One was his uncle, Hamza, otherwise known as Allah's lion, and the other was Abu Salama, who was nursed by Thuwayba after Muhammad, and became one of the Muhajirun to Abyssinia after the coming of Islam.⁵

After a while, the Messenger of Allah (saw) had a new milk-mother, Halima. Because she had some financial difficulties, she had come to Mecca in order to find a baby from a rich family to nurse. At first, she was hesitant to accept Muhammad as he was an orphan. However, she did not want to return home empty-handed and accepted him as her milk-son. This decision brought blessing and abundance to her house.⁶ Through Halima, the Prophet (saw) had more milk-siblings, whose names were 'Abd Allah, 'Unaysa and Shaima.⁷

In our religion, the relationship established through the milk-mother is considered the same as that of the relationship established through blood lineage. The milk which nurtures a baby physically,⁸ also establishes an emotional bond between the baby and the milk-mother. The milk-siblings who grow up together develop a relationship similar to the relationship that they develop with their real siblings. That is why the verse mentions the milk-mothers and milk-sisters among the women with whom marriage is not allowed.⁹ For example, when it was proposed to the Prophet (saw) that he marry the daughter of his milk-brother, Hamza, he turned it down by saying, "*I am not legally permitted to marry her, as milk relations are treated like blood relations (in marital affairs). She is the daughter of my milk-brother.*"¹⁰ In addition when Umm Habiba proposed that the Prophet (saw) marry

³ Al-Baqara, 2:233.

⁴ KMS23, al-Kattani, *al-Mukhtasar al-Kabir fi Sirat al-Rasul*, p. 23.

⁵ CU12/91, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Jami' al-Usul*, XII, 91; BH2/139, al-Halabi, *al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, I, 140.

⁶ HS1/298, Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat*, 1/298-301.

⁷ HS1/298, Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat*, 1/298

⁸. HM4114, Ibn Hanbal, I, 432; D2059, Abu Da'ud, *al-Nikah*, 8.

⁹ Al-Nisa', 4:23.

¹⁰ B2645, al-Bukhari, *al-Shahada*, 7; M3583, Muslim, *al-Rada'*, 12.

her sister, the Prophet (saw) did not accept this either, saying that it was not lawful for him. When Umm Habiba (ra) said, “We have heard that you want to marry the daughter of Abu Salama.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) answered her as follows: *“Even if she were not my step-daughter, she would be unlawful for me to marry as she is the daughter of my milk-sibling. Abu Salama and I were suckled by Thuwayba. So you should not present to me your daughters or your sisters (in marriage).”*¹¹

The Companion ‘Uqba b. al-Harith (ra) married the daughter of Abu Ihab b. ‘Aziz. In the meantime, a woman showed up and said that she had nursed both ‘Uqba and his wife. ‘Uqba said to her, “I did not know that you have suckled me, and you did not inform me.” He then sent someone to the house of Abu Ihab to inquire about it, but they also did not know that she had suckled their daughter. In order to resolve the issue, ‘Uqba went to the Prophet (saw) in Medina and reported what had happened. The Prophet (saw) said to him, *“How (can you keep your wife) after it has been said (that both of you were suckled by the same woman)?”* So, he divorced her and she was married to another (husband).¹²

The Prophet (saw) treated milk-relatives in the same way as he treated his blood-relatives, but he did not explain the physiological, sociological, and psychological dimensions of this matter in the way we understand it today. For example, he did not explain the influence of the mother’s milk on our body in a scientific manner. Nevertheless, he explained the length of time that a baby needed to suckle in order to form a milk-relationship with anyone else. One day, when the Prophet (saw) entered ‘A’isha’s room, he saw a man sitting there. Signs of anger seem to appear on his face indicating that he disliked the situation. ‘A’isha (ra) said, “This is my milk-brother.” He said, *“Be sure that you know who your milk-brother is because the foster suckling relationship is established solely on the instance when milk is the only food of the child.”*¹³

In order to establish a milk-relationship, two conditions are to be met: the suckling period and the amount of milk that was suckled. Milk-based family relations can only be established within the first two years of a infant’s life.¹⁴ The Holy Qur’an mentions that babies need to suckle for two years.¹⁵ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) said that suckling at an early age can establish family ties, and not at any later age.¹⁶ As for the amount of the milk that babies need to suckle, there are various accounts. While some ac-

¹¹ B5101, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 21; M3586, Muslim, Rada’, 15.

¹² B2640, al-Bukhari, al-Sahada, 4.

¹³ B5102, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 22; M3606, Muslim, al-Rada’, 32.

¹⁴ T1152, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 5; IM1946, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 37.

¹⁵ Luqman, 31:14.

¹⁶ MU1280, al-Muwatta’, al-Rada’, 1.



counts consider child development and feeding as the bases of their opinion, others do not pay attention to the amount of milk the babies suckle, and accept that any amount of suckling establishes the family bond. These opinions are based on the following traditions: “Fosterage is not valid except by what strengthens love and grows flesh”¹⁷ and “No prohibition results from suckling except for what penetrates the intestines.”¹⁸ According to these traditions, suckling a few times does not establish family relations.¹⁹ According to other traditions, even suckling once could establish family relations, and therefore create a ban for future marriage.²⁰

Like the biological mother who has rights on her child, the milk-mother has rights on him as well. Thus suckling has been considered quite an important practice in Islamic tradition. For example, Hajjaj b. Hajjaj al-Aslami asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! What will remove the responsibility of the milk-mother relationship from me?” So he said, “A *ghurra*: a male slave or a female slave.”²¹

Our beloved Prophet treated his milk-relatives in the best possible manner. He never forgot his first milk-mother. For example, he never failed to visit her when he was in Mecca. He respected and honored her until she died. The way the Prophet (saw) treated Thuwayba affected Khadija (ra) so much that she tried her best to treat Thuwayba with similar respect and honor. Khadija even wanted to buy her out of slavery and free her. She knew that freeing Thuwayba would make the Prophet (saw) very happy. But she could not convince her owner, Abu Lahab, to sell her. Abu Lahab freed her only after the Prophet (saw) emigrated to Medina. When the Prophet (saw) was in Medina he did his best to help her, and protect her from all difficulties. Thuwayba died in the year of the conquest of Khaybar. Upon hearing of the death of his milk-mother, the Prophet (saw) asked about her son, Masruh. He was told that he had passed on beforehand. He made an inquiry about her other relatives and learned that none remained alive.²²

In addition, the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed great consideration to his milk-mother, Halima. Each time he saw her, he called her “*my dear mother*” and showed her the utmost respect and veneration. He never failed to offer her presents and gifts. Once there was a major drought and famine in the lands of the Bani Sa’d. Halima’s family also suffered from the drought. Upon learning this, Khadija sent her forty sheep and a camel for

¹⁷ HM4114, Ibn Hanbal, I, 432; D2059, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 8.

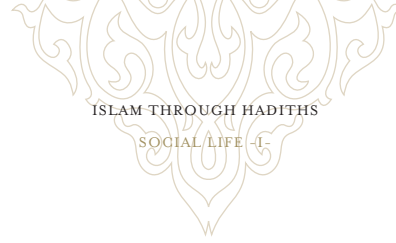
¹⁸ T1152, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 5; IM1946, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 37.

¹⁹ M3590, Muslim, al-Rada’, 17.

²⁰ MU1278, al-Muvatta’, Rada’, 1.

²¹ T1153, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 6; N3331, al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 56.

²² ST1/108, Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, I, 108-109.



Halima's transportation.²³ The Prophet (saw)'s respect was not limited to his milk-mothers. One day, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sitting, his milk-father came forward. He spread out a part of his garment and he sat on it. Then his milk-mother came forward and he spread out the other side of his garment and she sat on it. Then his milk-brother came forward. The Messenger of Allah (saw) stood up for him and seated him before himself.²⁴

These examples show that the Prophet (saw) treated his milk-relatives as if they were blood-related. In Islamic society, in addition to blood-relations and marriages, family relations were kept alive and social solidarity was strengthened through milk-relations. In other words, the meaning of family relatives expanded in meaning. Although it did not have any legal consequences in inheritance, alimony, and testimonials, milk-relations created a kind of culture of relatives. Therefore moral responsibilities, such as *ṣilat al-rahim*, visiting families during the major holidays, and visiting the ill, were expected to be observed in the framework of milk-based family relations. This is the reason behind the affirmation that the same virtuous and respectful relations that are established with blood-relatives should also be observed with the milk-based relatives.

²³ ST1/113, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 113-114; BH1/153, al-Halabi, *al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, I, 153.
²⁴ D5145, Abu Da'ud, *al-Adab*, 119-120.



THE WOMAN AN HONORABLE HUMAN BEING



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”حُبِّبَ إِلَيَّ النِّسَاءُ وَالطِّيبُ وَجَعَلْتُ فُرَّةَ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Two things (of your world) were made dear to me, perfume and women; and the coolness of my eyes is in prayer.”

(N3392, al-Nasa'i, Ishrat al-Nisa', 1)



عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ حَكِيمِ بْنِ مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ مُعَاوِيَةَ
الْقُشَيْرِيِّ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ: مَا تَقُولُ فِي
نِسَائِنَا؟ قَالَ: «أَطْعُمُوهُنَّ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ، وَاكْسُوهُنَّ مِمَّا تَكْتَسُونَ،
وَلَا تَضْرِبُوهُنَّ وَلَا تُقَبِّحُوهُنَّ.»



عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْأَخْوَصِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي أَنَّهُ شَهِدَ حَجَّةَ
الْوَدَاعِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ... فَقَالَ: «...الْأَيُّ لَكُمْ عَلَى نِسَائِكُمْ
حَقًّا، وَلِنِسَائِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا...»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
«...خِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو؛ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
«الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ.»



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
«...أَلَا أُخْبِرُكَ بِخَيْرِ مَا يَكْنِزُ الْمَرْءُ؟ الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ؛ إِذَا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهَا سَرَّتَهُ
وَإِذَا أَمَرَهَا أَطَاعَتْهُ وَإِذَا غَابَ عَنْهَا حَفِظَتْهُ.»



Sa'id b. Hakim b. Mu'awiya said that his father said that his grandfather Mu'awiya al-Qushayri (ra) said, "I asked the Prophet (saw) about our wives. And he said, *'Let them eat what you eat, let them wear what you wear, and do not beat them, and do not talk bad about them.'*"

(D2144, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 40-41)



Sulayman b. 'Amr b. al-Ahwas (ra) said, "My father told me that during the Farewell Pilgrimage the Prophet (saw) said, *"...Indeed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you..."*

(T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"...And the best of you are those who are best to their women."*

(T1162, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11; IM1978, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50)



According to 'Abd Allah b. ' Amr, (ra) the Prophet (saw) said, *"The worldly things are temporary blessings. The most valuable worldly thing is a righteous woman."*

(M3649, Muslim, al-Rada', 64)



As Ibn 'Abbas (ra) reported, the Prophet (saw) said (addressing Umar), *"Let me inform you about the best a man hoards; it is a virtuous woman who pleases him when he looks at her, obeys him when he gives her a command, and guards his interests when he is away from her."*

(D1664, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 32)



They were on the way to the Farewell Pilgrimage. The Prophet (saw)'s wives were accompanying him. The camels that carried the wives of the Prophet (saw) had been walking in harmony with the beautiful voice of the camel driver who had been singing songs and reciting poems with the joy of this holy journey. The camel driver was Anjasha from Abyssinia whose songs and melodies were stirring up the camels and frightening the passengers. This fast rhythm and flurry made the camels walk faster, and their rough ride began to bother the women they were carrying. Our Prophet became worried and politely warned Anjasha, “*Anjasha! Calm down. Be careful with the crystals (or glass vessels).*”¹

With this statement, the Prophet (saw) called women in general and his wives in particular, who were on the camels, “*al-qawārīr*,” meaning glass or crystal. This refers to the delicate, sensitive, and fragile nature of women as well as to their value and preciousness. On hearing this term, Abu Qalaba could not help but say, “the Messenger of Allah used such a term that, if any of you used it, you could be blamed for using it.”² Those who were steeped in a culture which did not value women at all were surprised by such a delicate, respectful, and valuable assessment of women. ‘Umar (ra) said, “We never used to give significance to women in the days of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, but, when Islam came and Allah mentioned their rights, we used to give them their rights but did not allow them to interfere in our affairs. Once there was a dispute between my wife and me and she answered back to me in a loud voice. I said to her, ‘Strange! You can retort in this way?’ She said, ‘Yes. Do you say this to me while your daughter troubles Allah’s Messenger?’”³

This account demonstrates how people had to change their perception of women after they encountered Islam. After Islam, the status of women was elevated from mere property to human being which had rights as well

¹ B6202, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 111; M6040, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 73; EU1/284, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 284.

² B6149, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 90.

³ B5843, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 31; M3695, Muslim, al-Talaq, 34.



as responsibilities. The age-old institutionalized mistreatment and misperception of women was not limited to Arab society. This perennial misunderstanding is surprising as well as thought-provoking. Our Lord, after creating Adam and Eve, hosted them at Paradise, let them enjoy whatever they wanted to eat, but asked them not to approach the fruit of one of the trees.⁴ It was the first prohibition for humankind, and a test for both Adam and Eve. This was because Allah decided that he wanted to test the father and mother of humankind—and every human being who came after them—⁵ and then return him (each human) to Himself.⁶ The Devil tempted them at the Paradise. By convincing them that they could be angels and live forever, he led them to eat the forbidden fruit.⁷ By saying, “*Satan made them slip*”⁸ and “*He lured them with lies*”⁹ the message of the Holy Qur’an about this issue is very clear: Satan deceived both Adam and Eve, not just one of them. In the Holy Qur’an, it is possible to see that one of the verses puts the blame squarely on Adam alone,¹⁰ but in no verse is Eve alone blamed. Allah warned them against Satan, not against each other, and said, “*Adam, this is your enemy, yours and your wife’s.*”¹¹ This is to say, if you read all the verses of the Holy Qur’an on this topic together then the message is clear that Adam and Eve were lured together, committed the mistake together, repented together, and were sent to this world together.¹²

Despite these Qur’anic explanations, the misperception about women continued with the assumption that Adam was deceived by his wife, Eve.¹³ Based on this assumption, woman was pictured as someone who lured man to commit sin, and became the reason for the expulsion from Paradise. Therefore, it is argued by those who have this misconception that the woman ultimately paid the price for this sin through suffering during birth and menstruation.¹⁴ But then how can we explain the Supreme Being’s unjust treatment of males and females? Especially, because He clearly states in the Holy Qur’an, “*I will not allow the deeds of any one of you to be lost, whether you are male or female, each is like the other [in rewards].*”¹⁵ Consequently, should we not from the above verse reason that He has promised to reward both man and woman equally? While describing some crimes, He refers to both of them by saying, “*Both male and female burglars...*”¹⁶ and “*Both adulterous male and female...*”¹⁷ At this juncture should we not ponder the fact that He did not differentiate between males and females in punishment. After the divine command of

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:35, al-A’raf, 7:19.

⁵ Al-Mulk, 67:2.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:28.

⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:20-21.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:36.

⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:22.

¹⁰ Ta Ha, 20:121.

¹¹ Ta Ha, 20:117.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:36-38, Ta Ha, 20:121-123.

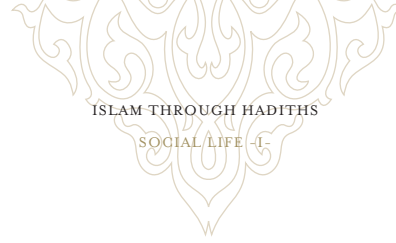
¹³ Old Testament, Genesis, 3:6, 12.

¹⁴ Old Testament, Genesis, 3:16

¹⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3:195.

¹⁶ Al-Ma’ida, 5:38.

¹⁷ Al-Nur, 24:2.



“Tell believing men to lower their glances and guard their private parts,”¹⁸ Allah immediately says, “Tell believing women to lower their glances and guard their private parts.”¹⁹ This shows that Allah (swt) expects the same responsibilities from males and females. When Allah says, “I will create a vicegerent in the earth,”²⁰ and when He states that He made man “the vicegerent in the earth,”²¹ in other words, by putting humans in charge of taking care of the world, He never made a differentiation between males and females.

The message of the Prophet (saw) through his words and deeds with regard to women was not different from the Qur’anic message. The Messenger of Allah said, “Women are counterparts of men.”²² He did not separate man and woman, or glorify one and humiliate the other. Rather he declared that they were inseparable parts of a whole. Furthermore, our Lord refers to the partners as “they are your cloths, and you are their cloths.”²³ They are cloths which cover what is incomplete, and the ones who provide each other with love, compassion, and tranquility.²⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Two things of your world were made dear to me, perfume and women; and the coolness of my eyes is in prayer.”²⁵ Allah Almighty created man and woman together in order to overcome the challenges and share the beauties in life, and asked them to help each other to pass the test successfully. By saying, “The believers, both men and women, support each other,”²⁶ He promised to reward them with the blessings of Paradise provided that they collaborate in performing good deeds. The verse which begins with, “The hypocrites, both men and women, are all the same,” reveals that if they collaborate in bad deeds, then they will be punished and damned in hell together.²⁷

The religion that the Prophet (saw) established was not a gender-oriented but a human-oriented religion. It commands us to be respectful to human dignity and be just in every sphere of life. The sons of Adam and Eve cannot gain any status or prestige based upon their race, language, color, or gender identity. This is because the rule set by the last Prophet is clear: “In Allah’s eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: Allah is all knowing, all aware.”²⁸ Although man and woman were sent into this world in different bodies, they share the same “human essence,” namely “spirit.” As pointed out by Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, it is important not to be deceived by their appearance. If you break cups in different shapes, the water coming out of them is the same.

¹⁸ Al-Nur, 24:30.

¹⁹ Al-Nur, 24:31

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2/30.

²¹ Al-Naml, 27:62; al-Fatr, 35:39.

²² D236, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 94.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2:187.

²⁴ Al-Rum, 30:21.

²⁵ N3392, al-Nasa’i, Ishrat al-Nisa’, 1

²⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:71-72.

²⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:67-68.

²⁸ B4689, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Yusuf) 2; al-Hujurat, 49:13.



When the Prophet (saw) was asked, “What do you say about our wives?” he replied, “*Let them eat what you eat, let them wear what you wear, and do not beat them, and do not talk bad about them.*”²⁹ And then he warned us, “...*Indeed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you...*”³⁰

The Prophet (saw) always wanted to strike a balance between spouses and did not let one side suffer in the relationship. He reminded us about the status of the woman in society, paid attention to her honor, and warned people about giving her rights. He did not limit these rights to the rich and royal women, but rather he commanded that these rights were for women from all walks of life. For example, once when the Messenger of Compassion noticed the absence of the black woman who normally used to clean the mosque, he made an inquiry about her, and learned that she had died. Saddened by this news, he rebuked the Companions (ra) who thought it was not appropriate to bother the Prophet (saw) for her funeral. Subsequently, he did something unusual, he performed another funeral prayer by her graveside, and prayed for her soul.³¹ The Prophet (saw) banned killing women during war,³² and asked his followers to treat female prisoners of war gently. When he heard that the child of a female prisoner of war was separated from her mother, and was about to be sold as a slave, he intervened and said, “*Whoever separates a mother from her child, Allah separates him and his most beloved on the Day of Judgement.*”³³ The Prophet (saw) made the same point again and again: Women have rights to live in an honorable and dignified manner.

The Prophet (saw) did not deter women who wanted to join in daily life by using their basic human rights. He asked women to behave themselves modestly in public. He allocated a special time for women who were interested in learning more about their religion,³⁴ listened to them attentively and answered their private questions.³⁵ He helped troubled women who came to him,³⁶ and did not turn down women who brought food to him.³⁷ He visited his women Companions,³⁸ rested at the houses of his female relatives and prayed for them,³⁹ and attended their invitations and led prayers in their houses.⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw) shared not only peaceful and tranquil days but also troubled and stressful times with women. He allocated war booty to women⁴¹ who provided logistical help such as taking care of wounded soldiers and carrying water.⁴² He congratulated a heroic

²⁹ D2144, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 40-41.

³⁰ T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11.

³¹ M2215, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 71; B458, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 72.

³² M4548, Muslim, al-Jihad, 25; T1569, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 19.

³³ T1283, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 52.

³⁴ M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152.

³⁵ B5260, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 4.

³⁶ M6044, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 76.

³⁷ B2575, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 7; T2037, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 1.

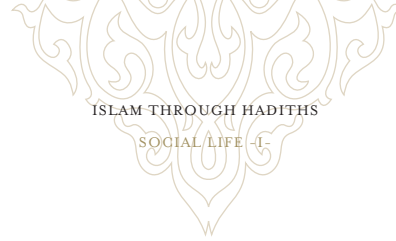
³⁸ M6570, Muslim, al-Birr, 53.

³⁹ B2788, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 3; M6319, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 104

⁴⁰ B380, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 20.

⁴¹ D2729, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 141.

⁴² M4682, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 135.



woman who, sword at hand, shielded him with her body during the Battle of Uhud. He described the event as follows: “Wherever I turned (left, right, front, back), I saw her (Umm ‘Umara) fighting.”⁴³ In short, the Prophet (saw) did not discriminate or exclude women from the daily life, and did not limit their lives to certain areas.

Our beloved Prophet indicated on every occasion that his audience was not limited to men. He did not exclude women from his congregation, and did not deprive them of participating in his congregational prayers and listening to his talks. The female believers came to participate in the fajr congregational prayers behind him at dawn.⁴⁴ The Prophet (saw) asked husbands not to stop them if they wanted to participate in the late ‘isha’ prayer.⁴⁵ They listened to the Friday sermons, and benefited from their educational and spiritual value.⁴⁶ The Prophet (saw) also asked them to be present at the prayers of the major holidays.⁴⁷

For ages, women had been considered impure during their menstruation period, and because of that men did not sit with them at the same table, sleep in the same bed, or touch their clothes.⁴⁸ But we had a very thoughtful Prophet who invited them to listen to the prayers of the congregation on the major holidays even if they could not pray on that day.⁴⁹ We had a Prophet who recited the Holy Qur’an while he was leaning on the lap of his menstruating wife,⁵⁰ or letting her comb his hair when he was in seclusion.⁵¹ We had a Prophet who slept with his menstruating wife under the same velvet quilt.⁵² We had a compassionate Prophet who did not wake up ‘A’isha (ra) when she was lying in front of the prayer rug, but instead, during the prayer, he just gently touched her to pull her feet away while he made his prostrations.⁵³

We had a gentle Prophet (saw) who made the male congregation stay inside and gave priority to women in exiting the mosque in order to protect them from the commotion and chaos in front of the mosque.⁵⁴ We had an understanding Prophet (saw) who intended to hold a long congregational prayer, but then cut it short when he heard the cries of a child. Instead of rebuking the mother, he said, “Because I know that the cries of the child will incite its mother’s passions.”⁵⁵ When he said, “Do not stop Allah’s women servants from going to Allah’s Mosques,”⁵⁶ he was giving a timeless message to humankind that the woman and the man were equal in terms of being servant of Allah.

⁴³ ST8/412, Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, 8, 415.

⁴⁴ B578, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 27.

⁴⁵ B865, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 162; M994, al-Muslim, al-Salat, 139.

⁴⁶ M2012, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 50.

⁴⁷ B974, al-Bukhari, al-Idayn, 15.

⁴⁸ Old Testament, 15:19-24; M694 Muslim, al-Haidh, 16.

⁴⁹ M2055, Muslim, al-Idayn, 11.

⁵⁰ B297, al-Bukhari, al-Haidh, 3; M693, Muslim, al-Haidh, 15.

⁵¹ B2031, al-Bukhari, al-Itikaf, 4; M686, Muslim, al-Haidh, 8.

⁵² B298, al-Bukhari, al-Haidh, 4; M683, Muslim, al-Haidh, 5.

⁵³ HM25663, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 148.

⁵⁴ B866, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 163; D1040, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 196, 197

⁵⁵ B709, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 65; M1056, Muslim, al-Salat, 192.

⁵⁶ B900, al-Bukhari, al-Jum’a, 13; M990, Muslim, al-Salat, 136.



The attitude of the Messenger of Allah (saw) towards women was not superficial or inconsistent. His respectful and gentle attitude towards women, stranger, poor or noble, was the same as towards his wives. He paid even more attention to the compassionate role of the husband towards his wife when he said, “*And the best of you are those who are best to your women.*”⁵⁷ He reminded us that having a good partner was a great blessing, and that we have to value this blessing. By saying, “*If Allah blesses someone with a good wife then it means that He has helped him with half of his religion. He should take care of the other half by himself,*”⁵⁸ the Prophet (saw) reminded us of the spiritual support of a well-mannered wife.

The Prophet (saw) was known to warn husbands who devoted themselves to prayers and neglected their wives.⁵⁹ During the Farewell Pilgrimage, while he was giving advice to humankind he turned to the men and told them that women were not property. Therefore, they could not continue to exercise power over them in whatever way they wanted. The question that arises from this is what is the real status of a woman? The answer to this question by the Prophet (saw) was marvelous: She is Allah’s trust just like all other creation, including men. He said, “*Fear Allah regarding women for they have been given to you [through law] with Allah’s security and you have the right to intercourse with them by Allah’s word.*”⁶⁰ When the time comes, the real owner will take all His trust back, and with regard to women He will ask the man how he behaved with her.

Once, the Prophet (saw) said, “*The Worldly things are temporary blessings. The most valuable worldly thing is a righteous woman.*”⁶¹ Since the creation of the world, there has been a division of labor among people in order to sustain communal life. People were created with various abilities and opportunities. Some of them were created smarter, some were richer, some stronger, some more emotional, some more courageous, and some more compassionate. But they were all expected to do the same thing: Not to abuse their power over others. Divine revelation, which came through the prophets, asked people to be just on every occasion. In the teachings of each messenger, there was a call to protect the needy, the elderly, the slaves, the orphans, and all other potential victims. The statement of our Prophet, “*O Allah, bear witness that I have issued a warning concerning (failure to fulfill) the rights of the two weak ones: orphans and women,*”⁶² was a part of this call.

⁵⁷ T1162, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 11; IM1978, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

⁵⁸ NM2681, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, III, 1009 (2/161).

⁵⁹ D1369, Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu’, 27; HM26418, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226.

⁶⁰ M2950, Muslim, al-Haj, 147; D1905, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasik, 56.

⁶¹ M3649, Muslim, al-Rada’, 64.

⁶² IM3678, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6; HM9664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

The Prophet (saw) was especially keen on protecting the woman against the negative attitudes originating from her immediate circles. Allah (swt) created man and woman as a couple who could give each other peace of mind.⁶³ Therefore, an attempt must be made to resolve all troubling issues which arise in the family. As a natural consequence of being human, a woman as well as a man, is entitled to make mistakes and wrong decisions. In such cases, Allah shows husbands what to do: *“Live with them in accordance with what is fair and kind: If you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah has put much good.”*⁶⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) prohibited all violence perpetrated against wives. He pointed out the paradox of badly beating one’s wife and sharing the same bed with her in the same evening.⁶⁵ The Prophet (saw) lived in a society in which wife-beating was considered normal and acceptable. He himself, however, never beat a woman or a slave during his entire life.⁶⁶ Those who took him as a role model should emulate his patience, forgiveness, and compassion in their relationships. In the eyes of the Prophet (saw), violence against women was an unforgivable crime. An example from the Prophet’s period was when a man who had beaten his slave-girl because of her negligence in taking care of a flock of sheep regretted his actions. When he came and asked the Prophet (saw) whether he had to manumit her for his forgiveness, the Prophet (saw) advised him to free her.⁶⁷

One day, the Prophet (saw) said to ‘Umar (ra), *“Let me inform you about the best a man hoards,”* and then continued, *“It is a virtuous woman who pleases him when he looks at her, obeys him when he gives her a command, and guards his interests when he is away from her.”*⁶⁸ With these words, the Prophet (saw) was also addressing the woman who was a vital part of a happy family. A wife who has a long face all the time, disregards the most legitimate requests of her husband, and does not guard her home, assets, and dignity cannot be regarded as the most valuable treasure of a man. On every possible occasion, the Prophet (saw) showed women the ways in which they could achieve the goal of being a virtuous woman. He advised against dismantling the family by stating that a woman who was asking for a divorce without a legitimate reason would not have even whiff of the scent found in Paradise.⁶⁹ One day, he greeted women who were chatting in front of the mosque⁷⁰ and told them, *“Never be like those who are ungrateful of what they have.”*⁷¹ He stated that those women who have a habit of

⁶³ Al-A’raf, 7:189; al-Rum, 30:21.

⁶⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4:19.

⁶⁵ B4942, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Shams) 1.

⁶⁶ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.

⁶⁷ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33; D3282, Abu Da’ud, al-Ayman, 16.

⁶⁸ D1664, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 32.

⁶⁹ T1186, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 11.

⁷⁰ T2697, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 9.

⁷¹ HM28141, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 457.



cursing everything,⁷² do not acknowledge the sacrifices that their husband make, and are ungrateful for the favors done to them would end up going to Hell.⁷³

The Messenger of Allah (saw) valued women and took their unique characteristics into consideration. Women have an inborn refinement and attraction. The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked them not to abuse these Allah-given blessings and be careful about the weaknesses of other people. For example, he frowned upon wearing perfume and alluringly strolling among strangers.⁷⁴ By reminding them that using beauty in an unlawful way would serve Satan's aims, the Prophet (saw) warned both men and women.⁷⁵ He also declared that this issue could be a serious test.⁷⁶

Our Prophet never silenced a woman. He attentively listened to women who insisted that he reconsider his decisions,⁷⁷ or acted surprised and waited to be convinced, and made sure to answer them in a sober manner.⁷⁸ He was never bothered to hear the opinions of women, and honored their decisions. The daughter of Ibn 'Umar's aunt married 'Uthman b. Maz'un (ra) upon the insistence of other people. But she could not get used to being married to him. Her mother went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "By Allah, my daughter is not happy in her marriage." Our Prophet did not disregard the woman's plea, and asked 'Uthman to divorce her.⁷⁹ In another instance, a man wanted to join a military expedition for *jihād*, but his wife was getting ready for the Hajj. The Prophet (saw) asked him to accompany his wife on the Hajj.⁸⁰

Our Prophet, who was sent as a blessing to all the universe, was not against the idea that women could weigh in and make decisions in various affairs. For example, he proposed to his uncle's daughter, Umm Hani (ra), but was turned down by her. He never considered this as something which harmed his pride. Worrying that he was an old man, who could be bothered by the loud noise of children, Umm Hani turned down the proposal. Moreover, the Prophet (saw) never questioned her decision. On the contrary, the Prophet (saw) praised all the well-mannered and virtuous women who were compassionate with their children as well as respectful of the rights of their husbands.⁸¹ The same Umm Hani once declared that she intended to shelter a man, and asked people not to touch him. The Prophet (saw) condoned her decision and said, "*We shelter the person whom you have sheltered.*"⁸² This means that a woman could have authority in so-

⁷² M241, Muslim, al-Iman, 132.

⁷³ B5197, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 89; M2109, Muslim, al-Kusuf, 17.

⁷⁴ N5129, al-Nasa'i, al-Zina, 35.

⁷⁵ M3407, al-Muslim, al-Nikah, 9.

⁷⁶ B5096, Bukhari, al-Nikah, 18; M6945, Muslim, Riqaq, 97.

⁷⁷ D2214, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 16-17.

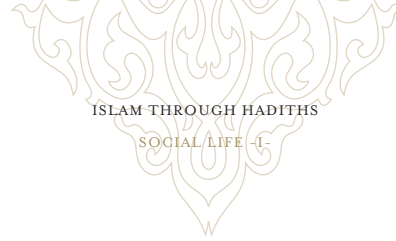
⁷⁸ M241, Muslim, al-Iman, 132.

⁷⁹ NM2703, al-Hakim, al-*Mustadrak*, III, 1017 (2/167).

⁸⁰ B1862, al-Bukhari, *Jaza' al-Sayd*, 26; M3272, Muslim, al-Hajj, 424.

⁸¹ B3434, al-Bukhari, *Anbiya'*, 46; M6459, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 201.

⁸² B357, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 4; D2763, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 155.



ciety, about which the Prophet (saw) said, “*Indeed a woman has authority to grant (assurances of protection) to people.*”⁸³

The change in the status of women, or the transformation that the Messenger of Allah (saw) led, was revolutionary in his time. The sense of comfort and security that women felt next to the Prophet (saw) was surprising and even worrisome for some people. This approach, which accepted women’s rights in full, acknowledged their independent identity, and allowed them to develop their own characters, shook the established traditions. The incident during which women were freely conversing with the Prophet (saw) and became rigid when they saw ‘Umar (ra) coming angered ‘Umar, who thought that they did not show enough respect to the Prophet (saw). Nevertheless, the very same incident made the Prophet (saw) smile.⁸⁴ Sometimes some husbands, complaining about their wives who did not heed their words, committed violence against them. Those women went to the Prophet’s house even late at night to complain against their husbands. On this matter, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Many women have gone around to Muhammad’s family complaining against their husbands. Those men are not the best among you.*”⁸⁵

The Prophet of Islam, whose main goal was to eradicate conventional misconceptions throughout his prophethood, protected women, guarded them, and insisted that they must be recognized as an independent human beings. However, accomplishing this goal was not an easy task. For example, when ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) reminded people of the Prophet’s saying, “*Do not stop women attending mosques,*” his son Bilal opposed this and said, “By Allah, we will stop them.” How surprising that a member of one of the closest families to the Prophet (saw) thought differently from him and believed that women could be a source of sedition.⁸⁶ Despite his soft personality, the father scolded his son harshly on this matter, saying the following telling words: “I reported what the Prophet (saw) had said on the issue. How come you can still say, ‘By Allah we will stop them?’”⁸⁷

The Prophet (saw) was the guarantor of the peace and tranquility of Allah’s female subjects. His holy body was like a castle to which one could seek refuge. After the departure of his body from this world, all believers—regardless of whether they were males or females—are obliged to heed his words, take him as a role model, emulate his life style, and keep his teachings in mind. The rights of women, which were acquired through the

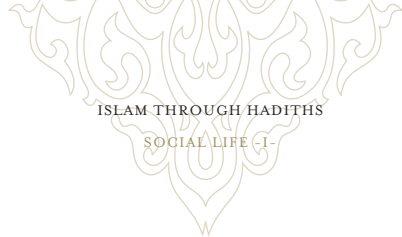
⁸³ T1579, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 26.

⁸⁴ B3294, al-Bukhari, al-Bad’ al-Khalq, 11; M6202, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 22.

⁸⁵ D2146, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 41-42; IM1985, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 51.

⁸⁶ M992, Muslim, al-Salat, 138.

⁸⁷ M989, Muslim, al-Salat, 135.



teachings of the Prophet (saw), should be protected until the Day of Judgment. However, developments concerning the status of women after the demise of the Prophet (saw) were not promising, as reflected in the words of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra): “During the Prophet’s lifetime, we used to avoid chatting leisurely and freely with our wives lest some Divine inspiration might be revealed concerning us. But when the Prophet (saw) died, we started chatting leisurely and freely (with them).”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ B5187, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 81.



WOMEN AND SOCIETY WITHIN LIFE



عَنْ أُمِّمَةَ بِنْتِ رُقَيْقَةَ أَتَتْهَا قَالَتْ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فِي نِسْوَةٍ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ نُبَايَعُهُ
فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! نُبَايِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَلَا نَسْرِقَ، وَلَا نَزْنِي،
وَلَا نَأْتِيَ بِبُهْتَانٍ نَفْتَرُ بِهِ بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَأَرْجُلِنَا، وَلَا نَعْصِيكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ...

Umayma bint Ruqayqa (ra) said, “I came to the Prophet (saw) with some other women of the Ansar to give our pledge. We said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, we give you our pledge that we will not associate anything with Allah, we will not steal, we will not have unlawful sexual relations, we will not utter slander, fabricating from between our hands and feet, and we will not disobey you in goodness’...”

(N4186, al-Nasa'i, al-Bay'a, 18)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تَمْنَعُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ أُمِّ عَطِيَّةَ قَالَتْ: أَمَرَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، أَنْ نُخْرِجَهُنَّ فِي الْفِطْرِ وَالْأَضْحَى،
الْعَوَاتِقَ وَالْحَيْضَ وَذَوَاتِ الْخُدُورِ، فَأَمَّا الْحَيْضُ فَيَعْتَزِلْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيَشْهَدْنَ الْخَيْرَ
وَدَعْوَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ...



عَنْ أُمِّ عَطِيَّةَ الْأَنْصَارِيَّةِ قَالَتْ: غَزَوْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ سَبْعَ
غَزَوَاتٍ، أَخْلَفُهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ، فَأَصْنَعُ لَهُمُ الطَّعَامَ، وَأُدَاوِي
الْجُرْحَى، وَأَقُومُ عَلَى الْمَرْضَى.



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Do not stop Allah’s women servants from going to Allah’s mosques!*”

(M990, Muslim, al-Salat, 136)



Umm ‘Atiyya (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked us to invite to the mosque on the major holidays the young girls, the menstruating women, and the women who always stayed at home. The menstruating women did not participate in the prayers, but they joined in at the supplication part.”

(M2056, Muslim, al-‘Idayn, 12)



Umm ‘Atiyya al-Ansariyya (ra) said, “I participated in seven expeditions with the Messenger of Allah (saw). I safeguarded the personal property of the soldiers, cooked for them, treated the wounded, and took care of the ill.”

(M4690, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 142)



It was a jubilant day in the city of the Prophet (saw). At last, Umm Salama (ra), with her son in her arms, had arrived in the city. Abu Salama (ra) was very happy that he was finally reunited with his wife and son. One whole year of longing and suffering could now be left behind. Umm Salama, after taking her beloved son from her husband's family, who withheld him, set herself to travel from Mecca to Medina. This young woman's journey with her son through the paths of the deserts that were not even safe for caravans became legendary. She also never forgot the help she received from 'Uthman b. Talha (ra), whom she met at the town of al-Tan'im during her long journey.¹ After this event, everyone referred to Umm Salama as "the first woman who emigrated to Abyssinia, and the woman who emigrated from Mecca to Medina by herself." Now, she was grateful to Allah (swt) that she had been reunited with her husband, and that she was going to have a new life in the city of the Prophet (saw).²

Medina was known to be a peaceful place for women. In this city women were treated with respect and dignity. The believing women were aware that Allah (swt) and His Messenger valued them greatly and that there was peace and tranquility to be found in the city. Thus they longed to emigrate to Medina and had no doubt about settling in this city. Many of Muslim women left their polytheistic spouses in Mecca and made their way to Medina. The treaty that was signed with the Meccan pagans at al-Hudaybiyya in the sixth year of the Hijra prevented the Meccans to emigrate to Medina. However, despite this treaty 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayt's daughter, Umm Kulthum, followed by Sabay'a bint Haritha, and Umayya bint Bishr (ra) deserted their pagan husbands by emigrating to Medina. It was at this time that Allah Almighty revealed a verse of the Holy Qur'an in response to Umm Kulthum's situation and ordered the Prophet (saw) not to return any women who left their pagan husbands behind in Mecca.

¹ HS2/315, Ibn Hisham, *al-Sira*, II, 315-316.

² H18/222, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VIII, 222-223.



However, based upon the Qur'anic verse mentioned above, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was required to test the genuineness of the faith of those who had escaped from Mecca. He questioned them concerning the reasons for their emigration from Mecca to Medina, and based upon their genuine answers, he allowed them to stay in Medina. Evidently, the main desire of these women was to join the society of Islam and attain the happiness that other women enjoyed in Medina.³

As a head of state, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was known to make both religious and political treaties; consequently he also took pledges of allegiance from all Muslims. This pledge of allegiance is known as *bay'a* in both the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith literature and the Prophet (saw) requested that men and women alike give the *bay'a* to him. For instance, Muslim women were present during the *bay'at* of 'Aqaba, Medina, and Mecca. With regard to this, a well-known case was that of Umayma bint Ruqayqa, the niece of Khadija,⁴ who went to the Prophet (saw) with a group of women from the Ansar in order to give him their pledge. She reported it in these words: "I came to the Prophet (saw) with some other women of the Ansar to give our pledge. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, we give you our pledge that we will not associate anything with Allah, we will not steal, we will not have unlawful sexual relations, we will not utter slander, fabricating from between our hands and feet, and we will not disobey you in goodness'..."⁵

In these pledges, the women promised to abide by the principles of Islamic social life. These principles included not to associate partners with Allah (swt), not to steal, not to have unlawful sexual relations, not to kill one's own children,⁶ not to slander each other, and not to oppose the Prophet (saw). In fact, all of these principles were also listed in a Qur'anic verse.⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) took pledges from both the Meccan⁸ and the Medinan⁹ women on the above mentioned principles. It was clear for these women that, in order to observe these principles properly, it was necessary to understand each of them. This was the reason that so many Muslim women did not hesitate to ask the Prophet (saw) questions on many ambiguous issues; they wanted to plan their lives according to Islam. For example, Umm 'Atiyya of Medina was confounded by the Prophetic order, "*Do not elegize for the deceased ones!*" In her society, at that time, crying out and elegizing with wild cries, beating oneself, and rending clothes had been seen as acceptable practices during mourning. It seems she found it

³ TT23/328, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XXIII, 328-332; IT8/91, Ibn Kathir, *al-Tafsir*, VIII, 91-93; BH2/718, al-Halabi, *al-Sira al-Halabiyya* II, 718.

⁴ HI10849, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VII, 510.

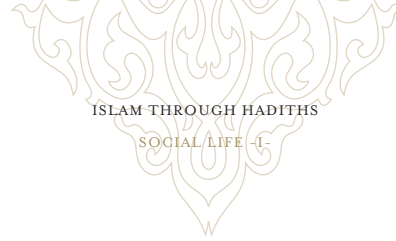
⁵ N4186, al-Nasa'i, *al-Bay'a*, 18; HM27548, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 357.

⁶ M4463, Muslim, *al-Hudud*, 43.

⁷ Al-Mumtahana, 60:12.

⁸ B5288, al-Bukhari, *al-Talaq*, 20; M4834, Muslim, *al-Imara*, 88.

⁹ N4186, al-Nasa'i, *al-Bay'a*, 18.



very difficult to keep this prohibition. Thus, she received permission from the Prophet (saw) to do this pre-Islamic practice one last time when attending the funeral of a woman and then proceeded to give her pledge to the Prophet (saw).¹⁰ On that day, the other women who also gave pledges to the Prophet (saw) were Umm Sulaym, Umm al-'Ala', the wife of Mu'adh b. Jabal and the daughter of Abu Sabra (ra). These women never broke their promise to the Prophet (saw) for the rest of their lives.¹¹

It is important to note that it was not easy for these early Muslims to observe all of the commandments of Allah and His Messenger. Hence, to make it easier for the soul who is on this path, it is vital to feed it with prayer and motivation all the time. This is the reason why believing women became permanent members of the ritual prayer congregation in the Mosque of the Prophet (saw).¹² They participated in the daily congregational prayers and listened to the Prophet's sermons and talks.¹³ In order to encourage their presence in mosques, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Do not stop Allah's women servants from going to Allah's mosques!"*¹⁴ Attending the morning, evening, and late evening prayers required women to walk to mosques early in the morning and late at night. Nevertheless, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not do anything to stop women from going to mosques during these times. Moreover, he warned his Companions (ra) regarding this issue by saying, *"If your women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, allow them."*¹⁵

Consequently, during the time of the Prophet (saw), mosques were more than mere prayer houses. They were at the center of social life, where scholarly, legal, and political activities could be conducted. For women, being at the mosque meant being part of these activities. However, this fact bothered some people of that time. For instance, Bilal, the grandchild of 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra), was not pleased with this practice even though he had heard his father 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) state that women should not be stopped from going to the mosque. When he said to his father that he was going to stop women from frequenting mosques, 'Abd Allah scolded his son by saying, "I reported what the Prophet (saw) has said on this issue. How come you can still say 'by Allah I will stop them?'"¹⁶

Interestingly, 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) was known as one of those who was against women frequenting the mosque. Despite this, his wife, 'Atiqah bint Zayd (ra), following the advice of the Prophet (saw), continued to go to

¹⁰ B7215, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 49; M2165, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 33.

¹¹ B1306, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 45; M2163, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 31.

¹² B578, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 27.

¹³ B98, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 32.

¹⁴ M990, Muslim, al-Salat, 136.

¹⁵ B865, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 162; M992, Muslim, al-Salat 138.

¹⁶ M989, Muslim, al-Salat, 135.



the mosque. She even joined the morning and the late evening prayers at the mosque. ‘Umar expressed his displeasure about this on every possible occasion, but ‘Atiqa said that she would continue to go to the mosque.¹⁷ When ‘Atiqa was asked why she had been going to the mosque despite ‘Umar’s displeasure, she answered with a question, “What prevents him from stopping me from doing this action?” and the inquirer replied, “The statement of Messenger of Allah that, ‘Do not stop Allah’s women servants from going to Allah’s mosques’, prevents him from stopping you.”¹⁸

The fact is that the mosque served as the center of social life during the time of the Prophet (saw), connecting all believers including males, females and children to the mosque. It seems that this is what the Prophet (saw) envisioned by his teachings. When he came to Medina, he asked women to gather in one home. Then, he sent ‘Umar (ra) to them as an envoy. Thus, ‘Umar went to that house and passed the Prophet’s message to those women. In that message, the Messenger of Allah (saw) requested all females, including teenage girls, women who normally stayed home all the time, and menstruating women to attend the mosque during the holiday prayers.¹⁹ It is evident that the major holidays, to the Prophet (saw), were days in which all Muslims should spend together and show solidarity. Thus, everyone was requested to attend prayer together in the mosque. And no woman would be deprived of the blessing, peace, and joy of the holidays. During prayer times, menstruating women abstained from the ritual congregational prayer, but participated in the supplication part, so that they could enjoy the spiritual atmosphere of these special days.²⁰

Thus, Muslim women joined in the daily ritual prayers with their children standing next to them in the mosques. The Prophet (saw) was very well aware of this situation. He did not want to load any extra burden on women, and encouraged them to come to the mosque with their children. This attitude also shaped the nature of the congregational prayers. The Prophet (saw) explained this to his Companions (ra) as follows: “When I start the prayer I intend to prolong it, but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut short the prayer because I know that the cries of the child will incite its mother’s passions.”²¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) tried to make women comfortable in order to make sure that they stayed close to the heart of social activities. One of the new regulations introduced for that purpose was to allow women to exit the mosque before men after the ritual congregational prayer.

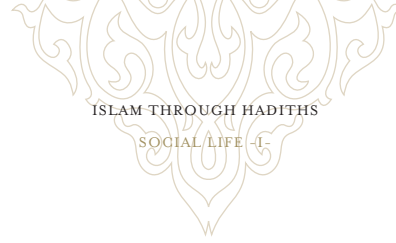
¹⁷ MA5111, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, III, 148; MU471, *al-Muwatta’*, *al-Qibla*, 6.

¹⁸ B900, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Jum’a*, 13.

¹⁹ M2056, *Muslim*, *al-Idayn*, 12; D1139, *Abu Da’ud*, *al-Salat*, 238, 241.

²⁰ B971, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Idayn*, 12; M2056, *Muslim*, *al-Idayn*, 12.

²¹ B709, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Adhan* 65; M1056 *Muslim*, *al-Salat*, 192.



The Messenger of Allah (saw), after finishing this prayer, let the women leave the mosque first and then asked the men to follow.²² This was a very thoughtful practice which made women feel more comfortable when exiting the mosque and not be crowded by men at the entrance.

There are many other things we can learn regarding social life during the time of early Islamic society. For instance, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not want men and women to be distracted during prayer at the mosque. In addition, he wanted women to dress modestly in accordance with the verse that prescribe the way that women should dress, and to stay away from behaviors that attracted unnecessary attention.

It seems that, as moral integrity began to wither away after the age of felicity, something began to change in Muslim understanding with regard to women's participation in congregational prayers. On this issue, the mother of the believers, 'A'isha (ra) said, "Had the Messenger of Allah (saw) known what women had been doing in mosques, he would have forbidden them from going to mosques, just as the women of the Israelites had been forbidden (going to synagogues)."²³ This statement demonstrates how much importance the Prophet (saw) gave to the issue of how women needed to dress and act modestly and decently in public places, including mosques.

Another aspect of social life in Medina was engagement in solidarity and philanthropic work. The Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted women to be active in this part of social life. He gave special advice to women to do charity work. As a result of his efforts, the first Islamic society was full of examples of many determined Muslim women who engaged in charity and philanthropic work.

During a prayer on a Eid al-Fitr, the Prophet (saw) walked through the male congregation and reached the female section. Next to him was Bilal al-Habashi (ra). The Prophet (saw) commenced making a special sermon to the women and asked them to make donations. Bilal extended the edge of his shirt and began to collect their donations. The Muslim women followed the request of the Prophet (saw) and began to put their ear rings and rings in Bilal's extended skirt.²⁴

When Zaynab al-Thaqafiyya (ra) heard that the Prophet (saw) said, "*Donate things even from your jewelry!*" she began to contemplate how she could follow his advice. She had the heavy responsibility of taking care of her husband and family. Moreover, she was taking care of some orphan

²² B83, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 152.

²³ M999, Muslim, al-Salat, 144; B869, Bukhari, al-Adhan, 163.

²⁴ M2044, Muslim, al-'Idayn, 1; B98, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 32.



children at her house. Could her expenses be considered as donations? She asked her husband, ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), to make an inquiry about this issue with the Prophet (saw). Her husband was of the opinion that she needed to ask the Prophet (saw) herself. Thus, Zaynab went to him to make the inquiry. At his gate, she met the wife of ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr al-Ansari’s wife, Zaynab, who had been waiting for the same reason. When Bilal saw the two women conversing in front of the Prophet’s house, he approached them. They related their inquiry to Bilal, and asked him to take their question to the Prophet (saw). Bilal went to the Prophet (saw) to inform him of the inquiry and the inquirers. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “(it is sufficient for her) and she will receive a double reward (for that): One for helping relatives, and the other for giving zakāt.”²⁵ This example shows that during the time of the Prophet (saw) women had both financial power and social responsibilities for the people around them.

Like the above-mentioned two Zaynabs (ra), Muslim women in Medina tried to accomplish their social responsibilities on the one hand, and, on the other hand, questioned their social status continuously in the hope of attaining a better place in society. For instance, during the Prophet’s life there is evidence that it was very important for them to see women being mentioned in the revelations from Allah. One of the female Muslims of Medina, Umm ‘Umara (ra), said the following to the Prophet: “I see nothing except that everything is allocated for men, and I see no mention of women anywhere.”²⁶ Afterwards, the following verse was revealed: “For men and women who are devoted to Allah—believing men and women, obedient men and women, truthful men and women, steadfast men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, chaste men and women, men and women who remember Allah often—Allah has prepared forgiveness and a rich reward.”²⁷ This verse emphasized that Allah would forgive and reward all believing and obeying Muslims regardless if they were male or female, and that there was no difference between men and women in the eyes of Allah (swt).

Consequently, Muslim women did not hesitate to ask the Prophet (saw) questions about the problems and challenges they encountered in their social life. Umm Salama (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), raised a concern similar to the one which Umm ‘Umara (ra) had raised before her. She is reported to have said, “The men fight and the women do not fight, and

²⁵ M2318, Muslim, al-Zakat, 45; B1466, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 48; IF3/329, Ibn Hajar, *al-Fath al-Bari*, III, 329.

²⁶ T3211, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 33.

²⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:35.

we only get half of the inheritance.”²⁸ As a response to this concern, the thirty-second verse of the *sūra* of al-Nisa’ was revealed. In this verse, Allah Almighty revealed that He gave different advantages to males and females, and that they should not envy each other.²⁹ One that day, the Prophet (saw) recited the thirty-fifth verse of the *sūra* of al-Ahzab, “*Indeed the Muslim men and Muslim women...*”³⁰ in his sermon.

During the time of the Prophet (saw), Muslim women participated in battles and wars which are, of course, dangerous. Nasiba bint Ka’b, also known as Umm ‘Umara al-Ansariyya (ra), was a woman from the Ansar who was present during the *Bay’a* of ‘Aqaba.³¹ She participated in the Battle of Uhud and, with her husband and son, safeguarded the Prophet (saw) during the battle, never leaving him alone and receiving twelve injuries as a result. The Messenger of Allah (saw) reported that wherever he turned, he saw Nasiba fighting and guarding him, and said, “*Today, the status of Nasiba was higher than such and such person.*” This special woman was present at al-Hudaybiyya during the conquest of Khaybar, and also participated in the Battle of Hunayn. After the death of the Prophet (saw), she participated in the Battle of Yamama, and was wounded in twelve places, and lost one of her hands.³²

In the wars of this period there were women who fought like Nasiba and other women who served behind the front lines. Umm ‘Atiyya al-Ansariyya (ra) participated in seven different small battles with the Prophet (saw). In those battles, she safeguarded the property of soldiers, cooked for them, treated the wounded, and took care of the ill.³³ Another woman from the Ansar, Rubayyi’ bint Mu’awwidh (ra), also participated in various battles. She reported that Muslim women served in the army, brought water to the soldiers, and carried the dead and wounded to Medina.³⁴

Young Anas had a vivid memory of the Battle of Uhud when the Muslims were nearly defeated and endured very hard times. His mother Umm Sulaym and ‘A’isha (ra), with their skirts tied up, ran around with water skins on their shoulders. They offered water to the wounded soldiers, and when the water skins were emptied, they refilled them and went back to the battle field.³⁵ In like manner, Fatima, with her husband ‘Ali (ra), treated the Prophet’s injury during the Battle of Uhud.³⁶

Later on, women who intended to participate in the Battle of Khaybar went to the Prophet (saw) and asked permission to partake in it, saying,

²⁸ T3022, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 4.

²⁹ Al-Nisa’, 4:32.

³⁰ HM27110, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 301.

³¹ HM15891, Ibn Hanbal, III, 461.

³² ST8/412, Ibn Sa’d, al-*Tabaqat*, VIII, 412-415; H18/140, Ibn Hajar, al-*Isaba*, VIII, 140.

³³ M4690, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 142.

³⁴ B5679, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 2.

³⁵ M4683, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 136; B2880, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 65.

³⁶ B243, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 72; M4642, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 101.



“We have come out to spin the hair, by which we provide aid in the cause of Allah. We have medicine for the wounded, we hand arrows (to the fighters), and supply drink made of wheat or barley.”³⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) allowed them to join the expedition. After the conquest of Khaybar, he allotted shares to them from the same spoils that he allotted shares to the men.

Another women who served as a medical helper during time of war was Rufayda al-Ansariyya (ra). She was known as the physician who established the first mobile hospital. The tent in which she treated the wounded soldiers was known as “the tent of Rufayda.”³⁸ Sa‘d b. Mu‘adh (ra), who was wounded during the Battle of the Khandaq was taken to this tent by command of the Prophet (saw).³⁹

Such examples demonstrate that Muslim women took medical care of both men and women during the time of the Prophet (saw). Moreover, they did not limit their service to medical support in war only, but also visited the ill at their homes. After the Hijra, ‘A’isha (ra) visited both Abu Bakr and Bilal (ra) at home when they became ill.⁴⁰ In like manner, a group of women visited the Prophet (saw) at his death bed, and Fatima, who was the sister of Hudhayfa b. Yaman (ra), was one of those women.⁴¹

Furthermore, during the Age of Felicity, women did not lag behind in scholarly activities. One of them went to the Prophet (saw) and related their request for assistance in learning: “O the Messenger of Allah (saw)! Men (only) benefit by your teachings, so please devote to us from (some of) your time, a day on which we may come to you so that you may teach us of what Allah has taught you.”⁴² The Prophet (saw) did not deny their request and went allocated a special time for the women. In these sessions, Muslim women could ask the Prophet (saw) all kinds of questions.

Thus, Medina was turning into to a center of scholarship with each passing day. Umm Khulthum bint ‘Uqba, ‘A’isha bint Sa‘d, Karima bint al-Miqdad, al-Shifa’ bint ‘Abd Allah, and one of the wives of the Prophet (saw), Hafsa bint ‘Umar, were some of the scholarly Companions (ra).⁴³ Al-Shifa’ bint ‘Abd Allah taught Hafsa bint ‘Umar how to read and write.⁴⁴ Umm al-Darda’ taught wise words to her students by writing them down on tablets.⁴⁵ Umm Waraqa from Medina was one of the compilers of the Holy Qur’an. The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked her to be the *imām* of her household, and assigned a *mu’adhdhin* for her.⁴⁶

‘A’isha (ra) had a very strong knowledge of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. Many

³⁷ D2729, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 141.

³⁸ HS4/199, Ibn Hisham al-Sira, IV, 199.

³⁹ HI7/646, Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, VII, 646.

⁴⁰ B5654, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 8.

⁴¹ HM27619, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 368.

⁴² M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152; B7310, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itisam, 9.

⁴³ BFS661, al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan, 661-662.

⁴⁴ D3887, Abu Da’ud, al-Tibb, 18; HM27635, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 372

⁴⁵ TE2/360, al-Nawawi, Tahdhib al-Asma’, II, 360-361.

⁴⁶ D592, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 61; HM27826, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 404.

people, women and men alike, came to ask her questions about religious matters. Sometimes 'A'isha⁴⁷ and Umm Salama (ra)⁴⁸ led the prayers of the women congregations.

In the time of the Prophet (saw), Muslim women were also active and visible in business life. The sister of 'A'isha (ra), Asma', was a very smart and hard-working woman. Despite its demanding nature, she groomed the horse of her husband, Zubayr.⁴⁹ Once, by getting the approval of her husband, she gave permission to a poor man to sell some things under the shade in front of her house. In this way, she contributed to trade and distributed some of her earnings as charity.⁵⁰

Among the merchants in the Medina market were female Companions (ra). Asma' bint Mahrama was known to sell perfume⁵¹ and Qayla (ra) was known for her outstanding ability as a merchant. She asked the Prophet (saw) questions about work ethics, and learned a lot from him on this matter.⁵² Samra bint Nuhayk (ra) was the first woman to be appointed as an inspector in the market, known for patrolling the market with a whip in her hand, and monitoring the business transactions. As such, she forbade evil and enjoined good in the market.⁵³ Later on, al-Shifa' bint 'Abd Allah (ra) was the women that 'Umar appointed as an inspector in the market. 'Umar valued her opinion very much.⁵⁴ Both Samra bint Nuhayk and al-Shifa' bint 'Abd Allah (ra) were in charge of forbidding evil and enjoining good, a task that later evolved into the *hisba* institution.

At the time of the Prophet (saw), another talented woman was the wife of Ja'far b. Abi Talib, Asma' bint 'Umays (ra). She was one of the sixteen emigrant women who travelled to Abyssinia by boat. While she was there, she observed that the Abyssinians made enclosed coffins, and took this knowledge back to the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁵ Later on, she made the coffins for Fatima and Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra).⁵⁶ Asma' bint 'Umays was knowledgeable in leather-making as well.⁵⁷ She was known as a woman with high self-confidence, and did not hesitate to defend her rights against anybody. One day, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to see one of his wives, Hafsa, 'Umar went there a little earlier to see his daughter. At that time Asma' bint 'Umays was with her. 'Umar, on seeing Asma', said, "Who is this woman?" She replied to him, "I am Asma' bint 'Umays." 'Umar then said to Hafsa, "Is she the Abyssinian? Is she the sea-faring lady?" Asma' replied in the affirmative. After that 'Umar said, "We have emigrated before you (people of

⁴⁷ MA5087, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, III, 141; NM 731, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 304 (1/204

⁴⁸ MS4952, Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, al-Salawat, 316.

⁴⁹ B5224, al-Bukhari, *al-Nikah*, 108.

⁵⁰ M5693, Muslim, *al-Salam*, 35

⁵¹ IBS903, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*, 903.

⁵² IM2204, Ibn Maja, *al-Tijarat*, 29.

⁵³ IBS914, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*, 914.

⁵⁴ HI17727, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VII, 727-728.

⁵⁵ ST8/280, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 280-281.

⁵⁶ ZS2/131, al-Dhahabi, *al-Siyar*, II, 131-132; ZS2/212, al-Dhahabi, *al-Siyar*, II, 212-213.

⁵⁷ HM27626, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 370.



the boat), so we have got more right than you over Allah's Messenger." On hearing that, Asma' became very angry. She was aware of the importance of the emigration to Abyssinia, so although her interlocutor was 'Umar, she did not hesitate to say, "No, by Allah, while you were with Allah's Messenger who was feeding the hungry among you, and advising the ignorant among you, we were in the far-off land of Abyssinia, and all that was for the sake of Allah's Messenger." Asma' became even more heated and continued by saying, "By Allah, I will neither eat any food nor drink anything until I inform Allah's Messenger of all that you have said. There we were harmed and frightened and I will mention this statement of yours to the Prophet (saw) and will not tell a lie or shorten your saying or add something to it."⁵⁸ Upon the arrival of the Prophet (saw), she related the incident to him. She did not hesitate to take this issue up with the Prophet (saw) and demanded an answer from him. The Prophet (saw) said the following comforting words to her: "*He (i.e., 'Umar) has not got more right than you people over me, as he and his companions have (the reward of) only one emigration, and you, the people of the boat, have (the reward of) two emigrations.*"⁵⁹

Asma' (ra) felt like she had heard the best thing that she could have ever heard in her entire life. The words of the Prophet (saw) made her and all the other Muhajirun to Abyssinia utterly happy. Soon all the Abyssinian Muhajirun came to hear this *hadith* from Asma'.⁶⁰ This incident shows the important role of women in *hadith* transmission, and also that Muslim men did not hesitate to come to learn *hadiths* from women Companions (ra).

The role of women in politics and administration during the time of the Prophet (saw) was a curious issue. The Prophet (saw) is reported to have said, "*Those people who are ruled by a woman would never be successful.*"⁶¹ As with all other *hadiths*, one needs to look at the reason and context of this saying in order to make better sense out of it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) made this statement during the seventh year of Hijra in the course of which he sent letters of invitation to neighboring monarchs.

One of those letters was sent to the Persian king Khusraw, who read it and tore it apart at once. The Messenger of Allah (saw) was deeply hurt by this insult and cursed the Persian monarchs: "*May Allah destroy them (as they destroyed my letter).*"⁶² In the same year, the above mentioned Persian king was murdered by his son, Shahriyar, who also killed his brothers because of his greed for power. But his rule did not last long for he soon also died.

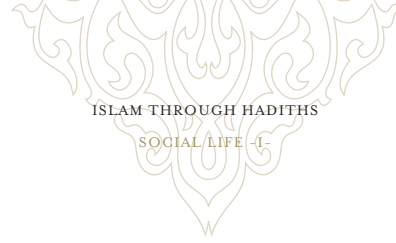
⁵⁸ B4230, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39.

⁵⁹ B4231, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39; M6411, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 169.

⁶⁰ M6411, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 169.

⁶¹ B4425, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 83; T2262, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan 75.

⁶² B64, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 7.



Because there was no male heir, Shahriyar's sister, Borandukht became the new ruler in the tenth year of Hijra. When the Prophet (saw) heard about it, he said, "Those people who are ruled by a woman will never be successful."⁶³

Thus, it is clear that the Messenger of Allah (saw) cursed the Persian king, Khusraw, and all those who followed him because of his disrespect for the Muslim state. After a number of disasters related to royal succession, a woman ruler may have seemed like a new ray of hope for the Persian people. However, the Prophet (saw) at that point pointed out that the new ruler would not be able to unite them, and that this dynasty would never experience peace again. Looking at this *hadith* in context clearly informs us that this statement of the Prophet (saw) does not contain within it a general principle that would prevent future generations of women from being rulers, but instead refers to a specific case related to the immanent misfortune of the Sasanid Empire, whose present ruler was a woman.

When the Holy Qur'an refers to the Queen of Sheba, Balqis, it neither uses negative words and appellations for her nor implies anywhere that women were not eligible for any top-level administrative positions.⁶⁴ Therefore it can be deduced that as long as they have the qualifications that are needed, women may serve as administrators as well as become the heads of state. There is nothing in the Holy Qur'an or *hadiths* that would prevent women from performing such duties.

The best example to demonstrate that women undertook important political and legal responsibilities was the incident that occurred during the conquest of Mecca. In that year, the daughter of Abu Talib, Umm Hani (ra) went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Allah's Messenger! My brother 'Ali has declared openly that he will kill a man to whom I have granted asylum." The Prophet (saw) then said, "O Umm Hani! We will grant asylum to the one whom you have granted asylum."⁶⁵

It is obvious that granting asylum to someone would be a legal and political act. Recognition of this asylum by political authorities means that the one who could give this asylum has a certain recognizable power. Fifteen years after this incident, after the death of 'Umar, the committee which was assigned to determine the next Caliph, choose the house of Fatima bint Qays (ra) for this important political and strategically important event.⁶⁶

Thus, the Prophet (saw) made some rules and regulations in order to make both men and women join in social life comfortably, and protect

⁶³ AU18/75, al-'Ayni, *Umdat al-Kari*, XVIII, 75-76.

⁶⁴ Al-Naml, 27:22-44.

⁶⁵ B3171, al-Bukhari, al-Jizya, 9; M1669, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 82.

⁶⁶ IBS929, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*, 929.



them from all kinds of dubious behavior. One of those regulations was to prohibit the meeting of a man and woman alone in a secluded place. This prohibition was institutionalized after an incident which took place between Asma' bint 'Umayy and Abu Bakr (ra). Some people from the Hashimi family went to visit Abu Bakr, but he was not at home. Asma' was home alone, and she invited them into her home. When Abu Bakr returned home a short while later he was displeased to see his wife sitting with a group of men at home. He related his displeasure to the Prophet (saw). On that day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) went up the pulpit and addressed the Companions (ra) as follows: *"From this day onwards, no one is allowed to pay a visit alone to a woman who does not have her husband next to her."*⁶⁷

It was very important for everyone to be careful in this matter in order to avoid all kinds of suspicions and false allegations. The Prophet (saw) wanted his people to be mindful against slander and misunderstandings in this matter as women were becoming part of social life. He did not want their dignity to be harmed, and wished to protect both men and women. This precaution was an important attempt to sustain the socialization of men and women without any impediment to public life.

Another precautionary measure taken by the Prophet (saw) was a regulation about women's journeys. For this purpose, the Prophet (saw) said, *"It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to travel for one day and night except with a mahram."*⁶⁸ Another Prophetic account confirms this prohibition: *"A woman should not travel for more than three days except with a mahram."*⁶⁹ In order to understand the context of this *hadith*, we need to take a look at the Prophet's conversation with 'Adi b. Hatim (ra). Once the Prophet (saw) told him, *"If you should live for a long time, you will certainly see that a woman in a hawda traveling from al-Hira will (safely reach Mecca and) perform the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, fearing none but Allah."*⁷⁰ These *hadiths* indicate that the aforesaid prohibition was primarily about security on the road. Such prohibitions were meant to provide men and women with peace, security, and comfort in social life. The Messenger of Allah (saw) discouraged women from traveling in case of danger during travel. In such instances, he gave more responsibility to the *mahram*, and asked them to accompany women.

When one of the Companions (ra) heard that women ought not to travel alone, he got up and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! I intend to go to

⁶⁷ M5677, Muslim, al-Salam, 22.

⁶⁸ B1088, al-Bukhari, Taqdir al-Salat, 4; M3266, Muslim, al-Hajj, 419.

⁶⁹ B1087, al-Bukhari, Taqdir al-Salat, 4; M3268, Muslim, al-Hajj, 421.

⁷⁰ B3595, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25.

such and such an army and my wife wants to perform the Hajj.” Then the Prophet (saw) said, “Go along with her (to the Hajj)”⁷¹ This example shows that even *jihād*, one of the most virtuous acts, could be abandoned to fulfill the aforesaid obligation, and women’s desire to perform the Hajj should not be postponed. Therefore the stipulation that women should be accompanied by a *mahram*, should not be seen as a regulation which strips women from their basic rights, but rather a responsibility on the shoulders of the *mahram*.

Entertainment and celebrations have always been part and parcel of social life. Such activities were performed during the lifetime of the Prophet (saw). Once, after the prayer on one of the major holidays, men, women and children were returning to their homes. In the meantime, a group from Abyssinia began to perform a show with swords and shields in the mosque. ‘Umar (ra) angrily approached the group, with the intention of scolding and removing them from the mosque. The group was caught by surprise at this intervention. Upon witnessing this, the Prophet (saw) intervened and said to ‘Umar, “Leave them alone!” Then he said to them, “You are good to continue,”⁷² and made the group feel comfortable with what they had been doing. The Prophet (saw) wished people to entertain themselves during the major holidays. They were supposed to be times of joy and happiness. He turned to ‘A’isha (ra), who was a young girl then, and said, “Would you like to watch the show?” and she replied, “Yes.” The Prophet (saw) covered her with his garment⁷³ and they began to watch the Abyssinians. During the show, the Prophet (saw) even sang songs, such as “Carry on, Banu Arfida,” and encouraged the entertainers. When ‘A’isha (ra) got tired, the Prophet (saw) asked her, “Is that enough?” she replied in the affirmative, and they left the show.⁷⁴ It was a memorable moment for her. When she related this account to her nephew, ‘Urwa (ra), years later, she said, “So you may deduce from this event how a little girl who was eager to play, enjoy and be amused should be treated in this respect.”⁷⁵

‘A’isha (ra) learned from the Prophet (saw) that having fun and taking part in any kind of entertainment were acceptable as long as they were performed within legitimate boundaries. In another incident, two girls from Medina were playing the tambourine and singing next to the house of the Prophet (saw) on one of the major holidays. In the meantime, the Prophet (saw) was resting at home. When Abu Bakr (ra), who happened to come to visit his daughter at the Prophet’s home, saw this scene he said with dis-

⁷¹ B1862, al-Bukhari, Jaza’ al-Sayd, 26.

⁷² B988, Bukhari, al-‘Idayn, 25.

⁷³ B5236, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 115.

⁷⁴ B2907, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 81; M2065, al-Muslim, al-‘Idayn, 19.

⁷⁵ B5236, Bukhari, al-Nikah, 115



pleasure the following words: “Musical instruments of Satan in the house of Allah’s Messenger!” However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) intervened and said, “*O Abu Bakr! There is a major holiday (īd) for every nation and this is our major holiday.*”⁷⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) was not against women taking part in celebrations and entertainment during special occasions. He neither stopped women nor let others stop them in celebrating special events. It was only natural for the Companions (ra)—men, women, and children—to participate in social activities such as weddings and holiday celebrations. One day the Prophet (saw) saw a group of women with their children coming from a wedding ceremony. They were house wives from the Ansar (ra). Like everyone else, the people of Medina enjoyed weddings and entertainment. It is well known that he loved the people of Medina. The Prophet (saw) stoop up and said to the approaching women, “*By Allah, you are my most favorite people.*” The Prophet (saw)’s love and respect for the people of Ansar was deeply embedded and undeniable. Confirming his love and respect, the Prophet (saw) repeated these words three times to the aforesaid women.⁷⁷ The house wives of the Ansar were extremely pleased by the Prophet’s kindness towards them. Through time these beautiful and kind words of the Prophet (saw) became the traditional greeting conveying the joy of weddings.

If we take all of these examples into consideration, we can say with confidence that Muslim women were aware of their rights and responsibilities during the time of the Prophet (saw), and that they strived hard to learn and implement them. They had activities in all sectors of life, such as scholarship, trade, philanthropic work, war, and medicine. We also see that many social activities, including weddings and celebrations, took place in mosques during those days. The fact of the Prophet’s encouraging words regarding women, “come to the mosque even at dawn,” demonstrate his resoluteness in keeping women active in social life. Furthermore, his request that all women, including those menstruating, come to the mosque on major holidays demonstrates his wish for women not to be excluded from any social and religious activity. According to Islamic tradition, humans were created from one male and one female, and then were divided among nations and tribes.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is evident that a social life in which there is no place for women or their knowledge and experience defies the laws of creation.

⁷⁶ B952, Bukhari, al-Idayn, 3; M2061, Muslim, al-Idayn, 16.

⁷⁷ B3785, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 5; M6417 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 174.

⁷⁸ Al-Hujurat, 49:13.



WOMEN AND EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE IS AN OBLIGATION ON ALL MUSLIMS

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: جَاءَتْ امْرَأَةٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَتْ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! ذَهَبَ الرِّجَالُ بِحَدِيثِكَ، فَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ نَفْسِكَ يَوْمًا نَأْتِيكَ
فِيهِ، تُعَلِّمُنَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَكَ اللَّهُ، قَالَ: "اجْتَمِعْنَ يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا." فَاجْتَمَعْنَ،
فَأَتَاهُنَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَعَلَّمَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ...

According to Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), "A woman came to the Prophet (saw) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! (Only) men benefit by your teachings, so please devote to us from (some of) your time, a day on which we may come to you so that you may teach us what Allah has taught you.' The Prophet (saw) said, 'Then let us meet at such and such days!' The women gathered on those days, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught them what Allah had taught him..."

(M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ... فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: نِعَمَ النِّسَاءِ نِسَاءُ الْأَنْصَارِ! لَمْ يَكُنْ يَمْنَعُهُنَّ الْحَيَاءُ
أَنْ يَتَفَقَّهْنَ فِي الدِّينِ.



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تَمْنَعُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: خَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَوْمَ عِيدِ فَصَلَّى رَكَعَتَيْنِ لَمْ يُصَلِّ
قَبْلُ وَلَا بَعْدُ، ثُمَّ مَالَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ، وَمَعَهُ بِلَالٌ، فَوَعَّظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ أَنْ يَتَصَدَّقْنَ،
فَجَعَلَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ تُلْقِي الْقُلُوبَ وَالْخُرُصَ.



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِذَا أَدَّبَ الرَّجُلُ امْرَأَتَهُ فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبَهَا، وَعَلَّمَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمَهَا ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهَا
فَتَزَوَّجَهَا كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرَانِ...“



'A'isha (ra) said, "What good women the womenfolk of the Ansar were! They did not let shyness prevent them from seeking to understand their religion."

(M750, Muslim, al-Haidh, 61)



According to Ibn 'Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Do not stop Allah's women servants from going to Allah's mosques!*"

(M990, Muslim, al-Salat, 136)



Ibn 'Abbas (ra) said, "The Prophet (saw) went out for the holiday prayer on the holiday and offered a prayer of two rak'as, and he neither offered a prayer before it or after it. Then he went towards the women along with Bilal. He preached to them and ordered them to give charity. Some of the women started giving their arm bangles and earrings (on to Bilal's extended skirt)."

(B1431, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 21)



According to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "If a person teaches his slave girl good manners properly, educates her properly, and then manumits and marries her, he will get a double reward."

(B3446, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48)

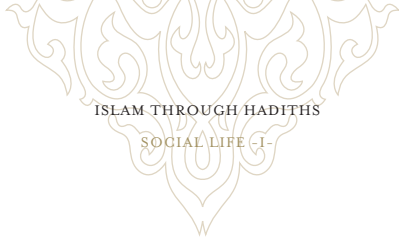


Allah, who created us all as men and women, holds us equally responsible with regard to the divine commandments. Moreover, the Prophet (saw) treated his interlocutors equally regardless if they were males or females. For example, because of the complaint of one of the female Companions (ra) with these words, “O Messenger of Allah! (Only) men benefit by your teachings,” a number of special education classes for women were initiated by the Prophet (saw). Unlike men, the female Companions (ra) did not have the opportunity to always benefit from the Prophet’s teaching because they were not able to be with him all the time. Conveying the requests of all the other women, the above-mentioned female Companion said, “please devote to us from (some of) your time, a day on which we may come to you so that you may teach us what Allah has taught you.” Agreeing with this request, the Prophet (saw) allocated a special time and place for educating women.¹

The first Muslims began to create a new society in Medina after a period of struggle in Mecca. During the process of the creation of their new society in Medina, prophetic education included all members of society, regardless if they were male or female, free or slave, or old or young. Everyone was given value during the formation of the new Islamic society. The Messenger of Allah’s aim was to implant a strong sense of belief in Allah’s unity in the hearts of the believers, and educate them accordingly. The framework of this education was shaped by divine principles. The Prophet (saw) educated the people by teaching what Allah (swt) had revealed to him, and implementing those revelations in his own life. Women as well as men received this education, which aimed to correct and improve the existing society. As indicated in the Holy Qur’an, both men and women were the Prophet’s interlocutors,² and therefore they needed to know their rights and responsibilities so that they could practice the good news that

¹ B7310, al-Bukhari, al-Itisam, 9; M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152.

² Al-Ahzab, 33:36.



they had received, “Anyone, male or female, who does good deeds and is a believer, will enter Paradise and will not be wronged by as much as the dip in a date stone.”³ Hence, women’s education could not be neglected and was important for yet another reason, the education of future generations. Children who were born into their mothers’ arms would grow up with the education and training of their mothers whose education had been shaped by Prophetic teaching.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave special importance to the education of women as early as the first days of Islam. When he was sharing the first Qur’anic messages in the house of al-Arqam, which was located on the hill of Safa in Mecca, with his close circle in secret, the Prophet (saw) had no issue about admitting women to these meetings.⁴ Before the Hijra, the group of Muslims that came to give him their *bay’at* at ‘Aqaba included women. Furthermore, a group of women who went to visit him after the Hijra said the following, which would become the basis of their future moral education: “O Messenger of Allah, we give you our pledge that we will not associate anything with Allah, we will not steal, we will not have unlawful sexual relations, we will not utter slander, we will not fabricate from between our hands and feet, and we will not disobey you in goodness.”⁵

Women were quite eager to learn and consult with the Prophet (saw) about things they did not know. They were able to ask him all kinds of questions concerning the faith and its practices. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, a woman from the Khath‘am tribe asked him whether she could perform a Hajj on behalf of her old father and he replied, “Yes, you can perform it.”⁶

Muslim Women could also directly ask the Prophet (saw) questions concerning their private lives. Once a woman went to ask him, “If anyone of us gets menses in her clothes then what should she do?” and the Prophet (saw) replied, “*She should (take hold of the soiled place), rub it and put it in the water and rub it in order to remove the traces of blood and then pour water over it. Then she can pray in it.*”⁷

Fatima bint Abi Hubaysh (ra) informed the Prophet (saw) that she had a permanent bleeding problem and thus she could not clean herself properly. He explained to her how to clean herself in such a case.⁸ When the Prophet’s wife ‘A’isha witnessed Asma’ (ra) asking the Prophet (saw) how to clean herself after a menstruation period and about sexual intercourse,

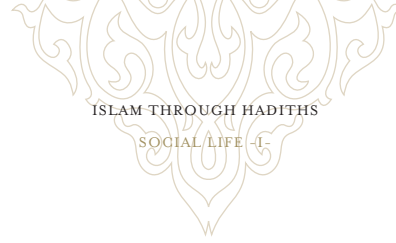
³ Al-Nisa’, 4:124.

⁴ HS2/188, Ibn Hisham, al-Sira, II, 188.

⁵ MU1812, al-Muwatta’, al-Bay’a, 1; N4186, al-Nasa’i, al-Bay’a, 18.

⁶ B1513, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 1; M3251, Muslim, al-Hajj, 407.

⁷ B227, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 63; M675, Muslim, al-Tahara, 110.



she made the following statement: “What good womenfolk are the women of the Ansar! Their shyness and their natural reserve did not prevent them from learning things.”⁹ However, some women, who felt hesitation in asking the Prophet (saw) personal questions, acquired their knowledge of these issues from the wives of the Prophet (saw). For example, one woman who had continuous bleeding consulted the Prophet (saw) through his wife Umm Salama (ra) to find out how to deal with this matter during ritual prayers.¹⁰ Another woman learned through ‘A’isha (ra) how to pray during the menstruation period.¹¹ From time to time, ‘A’isha (ra) taught women who, in turn, taught their husbands about private and personal matters. For example, once she told the women of Basra that they needed to use water to clean their private parts after the call of nature. She also told them that their husbands should follow suit: “Encourage your Husbands to clean themselves with water, for I am too shy of them, but Allah’s Messenger would have done it.”¹²

The Prophet (saw) never turned down any woman who wanted to learn the answers to various questions. He was polite and thoughtful enough to provide them with appropriate circumstances in which they could ask their questions freely. Once a woman approached the Prophet (saw) to share distressing news and asked him for help. He addressed her by name and told her that he could go wherever she wanted, and stated that he would be pleased to speak to any of her demands.¹³

The Prophet (saw) did not limit his teachings to a specific time because his main task was to spread Allah’s message. In like manner, people who wished to attain the ultimate happiness did not limit their learning to a specific time. Not limiting himself to any space or time, the Prophet (saw) spread his message to people under all conditions. Sometimes he taught people during a normal conversation, sometimes in a mosque, and sometimes during the Friday and holiday sermons. He encouraged women to be part of these settings and made sure that men did not stop women from participating in such events. This was because he wished both men and women to attend the mosque where educational and scholarly activities took place all the time. By addressing men, “*If your wives ask permission to go to the mosque, let them go!*”¹⁴ the Prophet (saw) wanted to eliminate conditions which might prevent women from going to the mosque. In addition, the Prophet (saw) addressed women and informed them of the issues that

⁸ B325, al-Bukhari, al-Haidh, 24; M753, Muslim, al-Haidh, 62.

⁹ M750, Muslim, al-Haidh, 61.

¹⁰ D274, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 107; N209, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 134.

¹¹ B321, L-Bukhari, al-Haidh, 20; M763, Muslim, al-Haidh, 69.

¹² T19, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 15; HM25130, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 94.

¹³ M6044, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 76.

¹⁴ M991, Muslim, al-Salat, 137.



they needed to heed with such words as, “Do not stop Allah’s women servants from going to Allah’s mosques!”¹⁵ and “They may go out (to the mosque) having not perfumed themselves.”¹⁶ During the time of the Prophet (saw), Muslim women consistently attended the Friday sermons, the aim of which was to educate all believers. As a result, they enjoyed the peace and tranquility of performing Friday prayers as well as continuing their education. For instance, Umm Hisham bint Haritha b. al-Nu‘man (ra) said, “I memorized the *sūra* of al-Qaaf directly from the lips of the Messenger of Allah (saw); he used to recite it every Friday.”¹⁷

Umm ‘Atiyya reported that all the female Companions (ra), regardless of their age and status, attended the mosque for the major holiday prayers upon the request of the Prophet (saw). She also said that even though menstruating women attended the mosque in order to be part of the congregation, they stayed behind when the ritual prayer commenced.¹⁸ Afterwards, they joined the recitation of the *takbīr* along with the men. Alongside the whole congregation, they invoked Allah through supplication, praying for the blessings of the day and purification from sins.¹⁹ It is evident that the Prophet (saw) gave much importance to the issue of women’s attendance at the mosque because it was the most important educational center for them. For instance, once he even suggested to one woman, who said that she did not have any decent clothes to wear to attend the mosque, to borrow some clothes from a friend in order to go to the mosque.²⁰

When addressing the Companions (ra) during the major holiday prayers, the Prophet (saw) never neglected to address the women. Once, he approached them and gave a special talk, containing specific advice. His efforts did not go unnoticed by women. Those women who learned things from him began to practice what they learned immediately. Once, for example, the Prophet (saw) walked through the women’s section after the prayer and gave them certain advice, encouraging them to make charitable donations. Without any hesitation, the women believers did so from jewelry that they were wearing at the time. The amount was so great that the edge of Bilal’s skirt, in which he was collecting the donations, overflowed.²¹

When ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud’s wife, Zaynab (ra), heard the Prophet’s suggestion on donations, she thought of making donations to her poor husband and nephews. She shared her idea with her husband who said

¹⁵ M990, Muslim, al-Salat, 136.

¹⁶ D565, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 52; DM1309, al-Darimi, al-Salat, 57.

¹⁷ M2015, Muslim, al-Jum‘a, 52; D1102, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 221, 223.

¹⁸ M2055, Muslim, al-‘Idayn, 11.

¹⁹ B971, al-Bukhari, al-‘Idayn, 12.

²⁰ D1136, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 238, 241

²¹ B1431, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 21; M2045, Muslim, al-‘Idayn, 2.

that she needed to consult with the Prophet (saw) about this. Zaynab went to the Prophet (saw) to make an inquiry. At the gate of his home, she met another woman who came to ask the same question. They related their concern to Bilal and asked him to take their question to the Prophet (saw). Bilal went to the Prophet (saw) and consulted him about this matter. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “(it is sufficient for her) and she will receive a double reward (for that): One for helping relatives, and the other for giving zakāt.”²²

It was very important for the Prophet (saw) that Muslim women should correct their age-old wrong habits and traditions. For that purpose, he personally warned them to change their behaviors. For example, eulogizing a deceased person with wild cries in a rebellious spirit was a common practice in Jahiliyya society. Acknowledging that it was difficult for women to abandon this habit,²³ the Prophet (saw) warned them and took their pledges to abandon such practices.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) was not only interested in the moral and religious education of believers, but also encouraged them to learn how to read and write. When he commanded his Companions (ra) to teach others what they had learned from him,²⁵ or when he declared that scholars were the heirs of the prophets,²⁶ he was speaking for all of humankind regardless of gender. It is also important to notice that the Messenger of Allah (saw) used very inclusive language when he said that both teachers and students could get the same reward,²⁷ and that they were among the most virtuous people.²⁸ Even more importantly, the Prophet (saw) thought that all women, regardless of their class, status, and age, should receive a decent education. He said, “If a person teaches his slave girl good manners properly, educates her properly, and then manumits and marries her, he will get a double reward.”²⁹

During the time of the Prophet (saw), women developed an interest not only in learning the prophetic teaching, but also in learning and teaching in general. Al-Shifa’ bint ‘Abd Allah (ra) was a literate person before she converted to Islam, and she taught Hafsa, the wife of the Prophet (saw), how to read and write.³⁰ Likewise, ‘A’isha, Umm Salama, Karima bint al-Miqdad, Umm Kulthum bint ‘Uqba, and ‘A’isha bint Sa’d were among the literate female Companions (ra).³¹

Among the *ḥadīth* transmitters there were several women Companions (ra). Among the Prophet’s wives, ‘A’isha (ra) was the one who trans-

²² M2318, Muslim, al-Zakat, 45; B1466, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 48; IF3/329, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, III, 329.

²³ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 29.

²⁴ M2163, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 31.

²⁵ B67, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 9; M4383 Muslim, al-Qasama, 29

²⁶ D3641, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm, 1; T2682, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 19.

²⁷ IM228, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 17.

²⁸ B5028, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 21.

²⁹ B3446, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

³⁰ D3887, Abu Da’ud, al-Tibb, 18; HM27635, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 372.

³¹ BFS662, al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, s. 661-662.



mitted the highest number of *ḥadīths*. In fact, ‘A’isha’s scholarship is worth mentioning. She stood out from both the female Companions (ra) and the male Companions (ra) who were scholars, thanks to her knowledge, wisdom, and powerful analytical thinking. During her lifetime several of the Companions (ra) had to resort to her knowledge in religious matters. Her knowledge was not limited to religious matters and extended to other areas, including literature, poetry, history, and medicine.³²

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was sent to redeem a group of people who had deviated from the divine message and indulged in irreligious and immoral practices. When he was spreading his message, the Prophet (saw) did not differentiate between males and females, and paid equal attention to their edification. It was no accident that the pre-Islamic period was called the “Age of Ignorance” (Jahiliyya) and the period of the Prophet (saw) and the one directly after it was called the “Asr al-Sa’ada.” Clearly, this was a direct result of the Prophetic education of that society. It is important to note the critical role that women played in raising the generation who formed this society and established a deeply-rooted Islamic tradition.

Today, as in all other ages, the education of women, whose population is more than half of the world population, should be given the utmost priority. This is the best way to ensure forming an educated and cultured society. Stripping women of education, and preventing their talents and knowledge to be shared by society, mean literally to keep half of society ignorant. Educating women, both in the scholarly and the spiritual sense, is the best investment in raising future generations. As long as mothers are educated and cultured, the new generations will consist of well-educated, well-mannered, faithful, and morally upright people, who, in turn, will create a healthy and tranquil society.

³² H18/18, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VIII, 18.



THE PRIVACY OF THE BODY THE DIGNITY OF A HUMAN BEING



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْوَاصِلَةَ وَالْمُسْتَوْصِلَةَ وَالْوَأَشِمَةَ وَالْمُسْتَوْشِمَةَ.“

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Allah has cursed a woman who has lengthened her hair (artificially) or
someone else’s, and also a woman who tattoos herself or someone else.”

(B5937, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 83)



عَنْ يَعْلَى: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ رَأَى رَجُلًا يَغْتَسِلُ بِالْبِرَازِ، فَصَعِدَ الْمِنْبَرَ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ وَقَالَ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَلِيمٌ حَيٌّ سِتِيرٌ يُحِبُّ الْحَيَاءَ وَالسَّتْرَ، فَإِذَا اغْتَسَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَسْتِرَّ.»



عَنِ الْمِسْوَرِ بْنِ مَخْرَمَةَ قَالَ: أَقْبَلْتُ بِحَجَرٍ أَحْمَلُهُ ثَقِيلٌ وَعَلَيَّ إِزَارٌ خَفِيفٌ - قَالَ - فَانْحَلَّ إِزَارِي وَمَعِيَ الْحَجَرُ لَمْ أَسْتَطِعْ أَنْ أَضْعُهُ حَتَّى بَلَغْتُ بِهِ إِلَى مَوْضِعِهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «ارْجِعْ إِلَى ثَوْبِكَ فَخُذْهُ وَلَا تَمْشُوا عُرَاةً.»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ نِسَاءَ الْمُهَاجِرَاتِ الْأُولَى، لَمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ﴿وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾ شَقَقْنَ مُرُوطَهُنَّ فَاخْتَمَرْنَ بِهِ.



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ؛ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا يَنْظُرُ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى عَوْرَةِ الرَّجُلِ وَلَا الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَى عَوْرَةِ الْمَرْأَةِ، وَلَا يُفْضِي الرَّجُلُ إِلَى الرَّجُلِ فِي ثَوْبٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَلَا تُفْضِي الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَى الْمَرْأَةِ فِي الثَّوْبِ الْوَاحِدِ.»



According to Ya'la (b. Umayya) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw a man performing the *ghusl* (the major wudu') in an open place, so he ascended the minbar and praised and glorified Allah, then he said, "*Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is forbearing, modest and concealing, and He loves modesty and concealment. When any one of you performs the ghusl, let him conceal himself.*"

(N406, al-Nasa'i, al-Ghusl, 7)



Al-Miswar b. Makhrama (ra) recounted, "I was carrying a heavy rock, and wearing a thin waistcloth. While carrying it, my waistcloth became loose and fell off. I could not drop the rock until I arrived at the destination. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, '*Go and get your dress. Do not stroll undressed.*'"

(M773, al-Muslim, al-Haidh, 78)



'A'isha (ra) said, "May Allah bestow His Mercy on the early emigrant women. When Allah revealed the verse: '*... they should draw their coverings over their necklines (i.e., their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)...*' they tore their *murūt* (woolen or silken garments) and covered themselves with them."

(B4758, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 12)



Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Sa'id al-Khudri reported from his father (ra) that the Prophet (saw) said, "*A man should not look at the private parts of another man, and a woman should not look at the private parts of another woman. A man should not lie with another man (without wearing an under garment) under one cover; and a woman should not lie with another woman (without wearing an under garment) under one cover.*"

(M768, Muslim, al-Haidh, 74; D4018, Abu Da'ud, al-Hammam, 2)



One day, Allah's Messenger was having a conversation with his Companions (ra). His best friends were attentively listening to him, so that they could digest what they had heard and then carefully transmit the news to their families, friends, and neighbors. On that day, Mu'awiya b. Hayda (ra) was among the listeners. He too had a habit of relating what he had heard from the Prophet (saw) to his son, Hakim. Later, his grandson, Bahz became a link in the chain that transmitted to us the remembrances of Mu'awiya (ra). Knowing that our beloved Prophet did not leave any question unanswered, Mu'awiya decided to ask a question that had been bothering him for a while, "O Messenger of Allah!" he said, "Regarding our genitals (*awra*), what must we cover and what may we leave uncovered?"

He had previously heard from the Prophet of Islam that the private parts, called the *awra*, should be covered, but he did not know the extent of the coverage. The Prophet (saw) answered, "*Cover what needs to be covered from everyone except from your wife or slave girl.*" Mu'awiya, who understood from this that he should cover himself before a woman who was a stranger, then asked, "What should a man cover when he is with another man?" Our Prophet replied, "*If you are able to not let anyone see your genitals, then do so.*" Therefore there was a private part of the body which should be concealed from everyone regardless of sex. Mu'awiya then asked, "If a person is alone, how much should he cover?" Thereupon, wanting to help him understand the rationale for covering the private parts, the Prophet (saw) said, "*One should be shy above all before Allah.*"¹

Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught Mu'awiya that covering the body was an act of respect to oneself, his fellow beings, and to Allah. Allah (swt) said to his angels, "*I will create a mortal out of dried clay, formed from dark mud. When I have fashioned him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him.*"² Then He created human beings out of clay.³ The human body is a divine design which contains the spirit, heart, and mind, namely,

¹ T2769, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 22; D4017, Abu Da'ud, al-Hammam, 2.

² Al-Hijr, 15: 28-29.

³ Fatir, 35:11.



the essence of humanness, which acknowledges and loves Allah (swt) and follows His commandments. Allah Almighty created each of the billions of human beings descended from Adam and Eve differently and gave them each a unique body. Even if two people were similar, He did not create them the same. He then asked everyone to be content with the body that was given to him. Through the words of the Prophet (saw), Allah strongly warned those who, by putting their bodies at their disposal, tried to alter them artificially, and commodify them. This is why the Prophet (saw) said, *“Allah has cursed a woman who has lengthened her hair (artificially) or someone else’s, and also a woman who tattoos herself or someone else.”*⁴

Our Lord on High proclaimed that our bodies were not immortal.⁵ Declaring that *“Everybody is going to taste death,”*⁶ Allah (swt) explained to mankind that they were going to meet death at some point; that they were going to return to their origin, earth;⁷ and that they were going to be resurrected on the Day of Judgement.⁸ Although some people find this transformation incomprehensible and unbelievable and regard the reconstitution of a body from crumbled bones and worn flesh mixed with soil to be impossible,⁹ our Lord Allah Almighty demands that we believe this reality. He has clearly stated in the Holy Qur’an that He is going to recreate every body exactly the way it was down to its unique fingerprints.¹⁰ Until the day on which bodies are reunited with their spirits,¹¹ the body as well as its spirit are held in trust by man. We need to use our bodies to exhibit good behavior, to do good works, and to help in doing good; and we should protect each organ from evil or bad deeds. Our beloved Prophet said, *“Your body has rights over you.”*¹² He thus reminded us of our responsibilities towards our bodies. It is one of the greatest blessings of life to have eyes which see, ears which hear, hands which hold, and feet which walk, in short, a healthy body. Man should know the value of this blessing like all the others that Allah (swt) has given him, and he should not forget that he will be held accountable for how he used his body. This is because on the Day of Judgement, his mouth is going to be sealed, and his hands and feet are going to testify to what he had done with them during his life.¹³

It could be said that the instinct to cover one’s body originated from creation. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in Paradise, their private parts became visible. Their immediate reaction to this was to try to cover those parts with leaves.¹⁴ In a sense, after becoming aware of sexual-

⁴ B5937, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 83; N5094, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 20.

⁵ Al-Anbiya’, 21:8.

⁶ Al-Imran, 3:185; al-Ankabut, 29:57.

⁷ Ta Ha, 20:55 al-Hajj, 22:5.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:28; al-Shu’ara’, 26:81; al-Sajda, 32:11.

⁹ Al-Mu’minun, 23:82; al-Naml, 27:67.

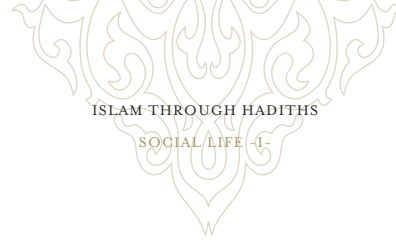
¹⁰ Al-Qiyama, 75:4.

¹¹ Al-Takwir, 81:7.

¹² M2730, Muslim, al-Siyam, 182.

¹³ Ya Sin, 36:65.

¹⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:20-22.



ity, man's natural reaction was to cover his private parts. As seen in the cave paintings of early man, it appears that even they felt the need to conceal the private parts of their bodies, albeit with simple clothing. This need ensured the development of a culture of wearing clothing in every society over time in accordance with its traditions, customs, and beliefs. The fact that young children are shy about undressing and want to withdraw to a corner and that when their mothers dress them they become uncomfortable and angry if strangers look at them are clear evidence of the instinct to cover oneself. Our Master the Prophet (saw) did not want to lose this feeling. To the contrary, he wanted nurture it from childhood.

Covering body parts is neither a legal obligation nor a religious restriction. It is an instinctual and moral issue. The best way to raise virtuous and healthy individuals in a society is to give them an education in morals and values in early childhood. Thus a child should be taught from an early age that his body is valuable and unique to him. The real responsibility of a person towards his body begins at the age puberty. Until puberty the body of a child is not faced with serious limitations like the privacy of the adult body. Referring to this responsibility, Allah's Messenger said, "*The ritual prayer of a women who has reached the age of menstruation is not accepted unless she wears a head covering.*"¹⁵ When he saw some young girls next to his wives, and learned that they were at the age of menstruation, he asked them to cover themselves properly,¹⁶ and he clearly drew the line on this matter. Nevertheless, before puberty a child should not neglect to learn to act carefully about the privacy of his body. It should be made clear in young minds that one should cover the body just as one is careful about and conceals everything he values. The child who has learned to be respectful of the bodies of others, and is conscious of the need to not touch them in a way that would be uncomfortable and not look at their private parts, should learn to want to be treated in the say way. By asking parents to sleep separately from their children after the age of seven,¹⁷ the Prophet (saw) wanted to reinforce this awareness.

Covering oneself properly has as much to do with self-respect as it does with respecting others. Covering one's private parts is an indication of giving importance to the body, and also of having a sense of shame. The sense of shame, in the vocabulary of the Prophet (saw), is grounded in faith.¹⁸ Our Prophet said, "*Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is forbearing, mod-*

¹⁵ T377, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 160; D641, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 84.

¹⁶ D642, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 84.

¹⁷ D495, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 26.

¹⁸ M154, Muslim, al-Iman, 59.



est, and concealing, and He loves modesty and concealment. When any one of you performs the ghusl, let him conceal himself.”¹⁹ Thus one should ponder the bond between himself and his Lord, who created his body and granted it to him as a gift, and adopt the behaviors that Allah (swt) loves. Because the practice of covering the body is related to self-respect, it should be observed even after death. Washing the corpse under a cover and burying it in a shroud are the ultimate signs of respect to the privacy of the body.

The privacy of the body, that is, respect for the body, requires that it not be exposed carelessly. The people of the Jahiliyya period were said to be so heedless in this respect that they gave little importance to covering themselves in daily life and even circumambulated the Ka’ba as an act of worship while naked.²⁰ The Prophet of the last religion taught them in particular to cover their bodies when they could at every moment of their daily lives, and wanted them to have the same sensitivity while worshipping. Thus, in Jahiliyya society, those who were exposed to the Prophetic teaching had a significant behavioral transformation. For example, al-Miswar b. Makhrama (ra) reported that one day while he was carrying a big rock, his waistcloth became loose and fell to the ground so that he became naked. Nevertheless, he did not put down the rock and reattach the waistcloth. When our Prophet saw this, he warned him saying, “Go and get your dress. Do not stroll undressed.”²¹

The Prophet (saw), who reminded us that we should avoid exposing our bodies to others while bathing, said, “...When any one of you performs the ghusl (major wudu’, bath), let him conceal himself.”²² And by practicing what he had said, he made himself a role model for the Companions (ra).²³ The Prophet (saw) also preached that if two persons were side by side while seeing to their toilet needs they should not talk to each other or look at each other’s private parts.²⁴ When he relieved himself in an open area, he was accustomed to not lifting his dress without stooping close to the ground and thus to guard his privacy.²⁵ The same purpose was served when the Prophet (saw) forbade anyone who was wearing something like a robe or waist cloth without underwear to sit with his knees planted in the ground so that his private parts could be seen.²⁶ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw), who, while performing ritual prayer, wrapped a cloth around him to cover his entire body,²⁷ also wanted all men²⁸ and women²⁹ to cover themselves while worshipping.

¹⁹ N406, al-Nasa’i, al-Ghusl, 7; D4012, Abu Da’ud, al-Hammam, 1.

²⁰ M7551, Muslim, al-Tafsir, 25; N2959, al-Nasa’i, al-Manasik al-Hajj, 161.

²¹ M773, al-Muslim, al-Haidh, 78.

²² N406, al-Nasa’i, al-Ghusl, 7; D4012, Abu Da’ud, al-Hammam, 1.

²³ B280, al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 21.

²⁴ D15, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara; HM11330, Ibn Hanbal, III, 36.

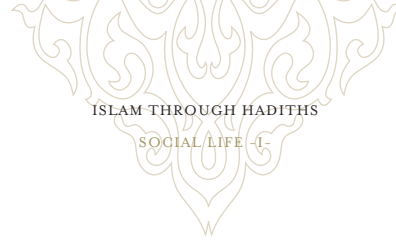
²⁵ DM691, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 6.

²⁶ M5501, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 72.

²⁷ B356, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 4; M1152, Muslim, al-Salat, 278.

²⁸ M1151, Muslim, al-Salat, 277; HM16635, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 50.

²⁹ D639, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 83.



Once when our beloved Prophet, who was the epitome of decorum, saw a Companion sitting while opening his legs so the part above his knees was exposed, and said to him, “Cover your thigh, for it is ‘awra.”³⁰ Our religion defines the ‘awra for men as the region of the body between the belly and knees.³¹ Because a woman’s body is more distinctive and attractive than that of a man, more of it needs to be covered. Both men and women should present themselves in society not with their bodies and charms but with their ideas and behavior. Women especially should wear clothing which could allow them to move comfortably in society. Allah’s Messenger wanted the skirts of women to be one span longer than the skirts of men, who wore robes or wrapped waistcloths around themselves according to the custom of the region.³² And he adjusted the dress of his daughter Fatima so it covered her legs.³³

Our Prophet, who took upon himself the reformation of the society of the Jahiliyya, which, as in all matters, was out of balance in the relations between men and women, and who served as an example to mankind, addressed those who not only paid no need to the privacy of the body but also transgressed the limits of decorum with respect to the privacy of the family. After the marriage ceremony of the Prophet (saw) with Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra) and the wedding meal was eaten, all the guests dispersed except for a few who insisted on sitting in the room of Allah’s Messenger and continuing to chat. These inconsiderate men would not leave the newlyweds alone. Consequently, the Prophet (saw) became annoyed and went outside. When he did so, the following verses were revealed: “Believers, do not enter the Prophet’s apartments for a meal unless you are given permission to do so; do not linger until [a meal] is ready. When you are invited, go in; then, when you have taken your meal, leave. Do not stay on and talk, for that would offend the Prophet (saw), though he would shrink from asking you to leave. Allah does not shrink from the truth. When you ask his wives for something, do so from behind a screen: this is purer both for your hearts and for theirs. It is not right for you to offend Allah’s Messenger, just as you should never marry his wives after him: that would be grievous in Allah’s eyes.”³⁴

These were the first verses on the etiquette of privacy.³⁵ With these verses, the people of the time learned to get permission before entering someone’s room or house, and also how to respect the privacy of the people in a home. In addition, following the example of the Prophet (saw),³⁶ the

³⁰ T2798, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 40; D4014, Abu Da’ud, al-Hammam, 1.

³¹ BS3330, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunna al-Kubra, II, 298.

³² N5340, al-Nasa’i, al-Zinah, 105; T1731, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 9.

³³ T1731, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 9.

³⁴ Al-Ahزاب, 33:53.

³⁵ M3506, Muslim, al-Nikah, 93.

³⁶ B5166, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 68.



early Muslims developed the habit of hanging curtains at home entrances.

The wives of the Prophet (saw) had their own rooms, and they had a continuous stream of visitors. People came to consult them on social and religious matters. ‘Umar became concerned that the Prophet’s wives (ra), who had to entertain many people, were encountering all kinds of people, men, women, good and bad.³⁷ Not satisfied with the traditional standards of covering, ‘Umar wished women to conceal their beauty and to be more careful in covering themselves. A while later in fact, Qur’anic verses were revealed which ordered women who were accustomed to wearing a head covering to cover their necks and bosoms as well: *“And tell believing women that they should lower their glances, guard their private parts, and not display their charms beyond what (it is acceptable) to reveal; they should let their headscarves fall to cover their necklines and not reveal their charms except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband’s fathers, their sons, their husband’s sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ son, their womenfolk, their slaves, such men as attend them who have no sexual desire, or children who are not yet aware of women’s nakedness; they should not stamp their feet so as to draw attention to any hidden charms. Believers, all of you, turn to Allah so that you may prosper.”*³⁸

Thus, these verses required women to cover not only their bodies but also their heads and bosoms. In addition they also listed the people to whom women could reveal their beauty. Additionally, our Lord wanted women to wear an outer garment over the clothes they wore at home when they left the house: *“Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and women believers to make their outer garments hang low over them so as to be recognized and not insulted: Allah is most forgiving, most merciful.”*³⁹

The women believers who reviewed their ways of dressing in light of this divine commandment adjusted to this new situation with surprising speed.⁴⁰ ‘A’isha (ra) reported how this had happened as follows: *“May Allah bestow His mercy on the early emigrant women. When Allah revealed the verse: ‘... they should draw their coverings over their necklines (i.e., their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)...’*⁴¹ they cut the hems from the (long) dresses (that they wore outside) and immediately covered their heads with the pieces.⁴² Once, our Prophet suggested to ‘Ali (ra) that, instead of wearing a piece of silk fabric which had been given to him as a gift, he should give it to the women who could use it to cover their heads.⁴³ Thus, the clothing practices

³⁷ B4790, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 8.

³⁸ Al-Nur, 24:31.

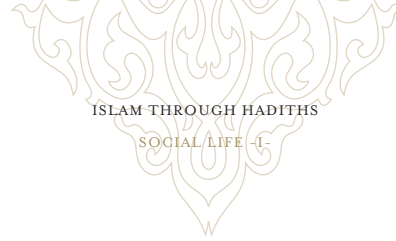
³⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33:59

⁴⁰ D4101, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 29.

⁴¹ Al-Nur, 24:31

⁴² B4758, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 12.

⁴³ IM3596, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 19.



of the Jahiliyya period, which were haphazard, were reformed and new regulations were introduced.

In the following verse, elderly women were given an exception with regard to clothing limitations: “No blame will be attached to elderly women who are not hoping for sex, if they take off their outer garments without flaunting their charms, but it is preferable for them not to do this: Allah is all hearing, all seeing.”⁴⁴ While inviting believing women to the place of prayer for the holiday prayers, the Prophet (saw) said to his relatives who did not have an outer garment to wear that they could definitely participate in the prayer by borrowing a garment from a friend.⁴⁵ Those women who set out from their homes at dawn in order to perform the fajr prayer behind the Prophet (saw) joined the congregation while wearing similar outer garments.⁴⁶

With a proper covering, exhibitionism was also prevented. In this respect, the Prophet (saw), who did not want the clothing that was specifically used to cover the body to be very tight,⁴⁷ suggested wearing a garment under it, if the cloth of the outer garment was too thin and transparent.⁴⁸ The Prophet (saw) reminded those who looked like they were virtually naked because they wore inappropriate clothing and exposed their bodies that Paradise would be denied to them.⁴⁹

Although the subject of the privacy of the body is usually discussed with regard to the opposite sex, those of the same sex should not reveal their bodies unabashedly to each other as well. In other words, when women are with women and men with men, they should conceal their private parts from each other. Unless absolutely necessary, uncovering the private part of the body between the stomach and knees was considered improper, and any physical contact with the same sex, even if insignificant, was prohibited. By saying, “A man should not look at the private parts of another man, and a woman should not look at the private parts of another woman. A man should not lie with another man (without wearing an under garment) under one cover; and a woman should not lie with another woman (without wearing an under garment) under one cover,”⁵⁰ the Prophet (saw) did not permit two naked women or two naked men to sleep in the same bed together.⁵¹ He pointed out that such behavior could have negative consequences, because a woman who had seen the private parts of another woman might tell her husband about them.⁵² By prohibiting this behavior, the Prophet (saw) also intended to prevent possible sexual deviance.

⁴⁴ Al-Nur, 24:60

⁴⁵ B351, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 2.

⁴⁶ B578, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 27.

⁴⁷ B368, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 10.

⁴⁸ D4116, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 36.

⁴⁹ M7194, Muslim, al-Janna, 52.

⁵⁰ M768, Muslim, al-Haidh, 74; D4018, Abu Da'ud, al-Hammam, 2.

⁵¹ N5094, al-Nasa'i, al-Zina, 20; DM2676, al-Darimi, al-Isti'dhan, 20.

⁵² B5240, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 119; T2792, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 38.



While saying that an adult should be careful of physical limits even with someone as close to him as his mother, the Prophet (saw) wanted all adults to observe the same sensitivity and decorum. When someone asked our Prophet, “O Messenger of Allah! Do I need permission to approach my mother (that is, interrupt her privacy)?” he said, “Yes.” When the man said, “I live with her in the same house,” the Prophet (saw) repeated his answer, “*Get permission from her.*” The man continued on this subject saying, “I serve her.” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) repeated himself, “*Get permission from her! Would you like to see her naked?*” The man naturally said, “No.” Then the Prophet (saw) said again, “*Then, do not approach your mother without getting permission from her.*”⁵³ It appears from this that we need to be careful to show respect for our parents’ privacy.

Being sensitive to respecting the body works two ways. Just as a person needs to respect his own body, he also needs to respect the bodies of others. In this regard, just as he should cover his body to protect himself from uninvited and unwanted attention, he should also show the same respect towards the privacy of others. Twice in the Holy Qur’an, our Lord ordered people to turn their eyes away from what was unlawful, and, addressing the two sexes separately, demanded that first men and then women observe the same commandment: “[Prophet], *tell believing men to lower their glances. . . . And tell believing women that they should lower their glances.*”⁵⁴ The Prophet (saw) said that seeing something that was unlawful by chance did not constitute any sin, but no one had a right to cause unease by looking at it carefully a second time. He said, “*Do not add a second look to the first one!*”⁵⁵ Therefore, it is a requirement of the ethics of the Prophet (saw) that if someone looks at an attractive woman or man by chance, he should immediately look in another direction.⁵⁶ Indeed, once, the Prophet (saw) used his blessed hands to turn the head of his uncle’s son, Fadl, who could not take his eyes from a beautiful young woman.⁵⁷ Therefore, the popular maxim “Looking at a beauty is meritorious (that is, Allah’s reward for good conduct on earth)” does not correspond with Prophetic practice because logically it violates the privacy of the body.

Once, when a woman was not able to cover her body because she had an epileptic seizure and fainted, our beloved Prophet made a special prayer saying that her dress should not be opened,⁵⁸ and in so doing, he saved her from the unsettling glances of strangers. In addition, he told his

⁵³ MU1766, al-Muwatta’, al-Isti’dhan, 1.

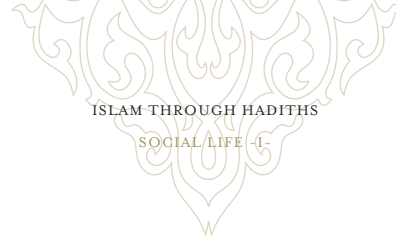
⁵⁴ Al-Nur, 24:30-31.

⁵⁵ D2149, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 42-43; T2777, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 28.

⁵⁶ D2148, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 42-43.

⁵⁷ B1513, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 1.

⁵⁸ B5652, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 6.



Companions (ra), who did not want give up the habit of sitting by the side of the road and chatting, that they should not stare at those who passed by and make them uncomfortable.⁵⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) commanded women who, in congregational prayer, were in rows behind the men, not to raise their heads from prostration until the men, who wore short waistcloths, sat up.⁶⁰ Thus, he taught women the proper etiquette during worship.

Our Lord, who said, “*Children of Adam, We have given you garments to cover your nakedness and as adornment for you,*”⁶¹ definitely created clothing for us to use for this purpose. According to this verse, the purpose of wearing garments can be to cover one’s private parts and to adorn oneself. According to the verse, “*It is Allah who has given you...garments to protect you from the heat, and garments to protect you in your wars,*”⁶² the purpose of wearing clothing can also be to guard and protect oneself. Regardless of its purpose, covering and protecting the body is part of being human and is a human virtue. Satan strives hard to lead man astray from this prized virtue and make him commit mistakes which would violate the privacy of the body. The Supreme Creator warned his servants by saying, “*Children of Adam, do not let Satan seduce you, as he did your parents, causing them to leave the Garden, stripping them of their garments.*”⁶³

Covering oneself with the aim of guarding chastity and dignity is a natural result of *taqwā*, namely, the need to be responsible and respectful to Allah (swt). This is because He said, “*The garment of taqwā is the best of all garments.*”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ M5647, Muslim, al-Salam, 2.

⁶⁰ B1215, al-Bukhari, al-‘Amal fi al-salat, 14.

⁶¹ Al-A’raf, 7:26.

⁶² Al-Nahl, 16:81.

⁶³ Al-A’raf, 7:27.

⁶⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:26.



DISABILITY A DIFFICULT TEST WHOSE REWARD IS PARADISE

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: إِذَا ابْتَلَيْتُ عَبْدِي بِحَبِيبَتَيْهِ فَصَبَرَ عَوَّضْتُهُ مِنْهُمَا الْجَنَّةَ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Allah said, ‘If I deprive my servant of his two beloved things (i.e., his eyes) and
he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.’”

(B5653, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 7)



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، ذَهَبَ الْأَغْنِيَاءُ بِالْأَجْرِ يُصَلُّونَ وَيَصُومُونَ وَيَحُجُّونَ. قَالَ: «وَأَنْتُمْ تُصَلُّونَ وَتَصُومُونَ وَتَحُجُّونَ». قُلْتُ: يَتَصَدَّقُونَ وَلَا نَتَصَدَّقُ. قَالَ: «وَأَنْتَ فِيكَ صَدَقَةٌ، رَفَعَكَ الْعَظَمَ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَهَدَايَتِكَ الطَّرِيقَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَعَوْنُكَ الضَّعِيفَ بِفَضْلِ قُوَّتِكَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبَيَانُكَ عَنِ الْأَرْضِ صَدَقَةٌ...»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.»



[أَنَّ] عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مَا مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ تُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ إِلَّا كَفَرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا عَنْهُ حَتَّى الشُّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا.»



Abu Dharr (ra) reported, “I said, ‘O the Messenger of Allah (saw)! The rich people collect all the religious rewards. They pray, fast, and perform the Hajj.’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*You too pray, fast, and perform the Hajj.*’ I said, ‘But they give charity, and we cannot.’ Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, ‘*You too can give charity. Taking the bone you find in the middle of the road to the side would be a charity; giving directions to those who ask for it would be a charity; helping the needy to the best of your ability would be a charity; or understanding the purpose of a person who had difficulty to express himself would be a charity.*”

(HM21691, Ibn Hanbal, V, 152)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Allah does not look at your appearances and properties, but He looks at your hearts and deeds.*”

(M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*No calamity befalls a Muslim but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn.*”

(B5640, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 1)



It was the early years of his prophethood. The blessed Messenger began to invite the people around him to Islam publicly. Day and night, he explained to those who came to listen to him the messages that Allah (swt) had sent. He called the people, who were idol worshippers, to Allah who was One.

One day, he was talking to a prominent Meccan polytheist. Their conversation went deeply into matters about Islam. While they were engaged, a blind Companion, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umm Maktum (ra) approached the Prophet (saw) and said that he needed to be enlightened about Islam, stating, “Show me the true path, O, the Messenger of Allah (saw)!” The Prophet (saw) did not like having this unexpected visitor and turned his head away from him, and continued talking to the other man. He asked him, “Do you have any question about what I said so far?” The man answered, “No.” Now, just as the Prophet (saw) was expecting that this man was going to accept Islam, Allah (swt) addressed the following verses to him: “He frowned and turned away when the blind man came to him — for all you know, he might have grown in spirit, or taken note of something useful to him. For the self-satisfied one you go out of your way — though you are not to be blamed for his lack of spiritual growth — but from the one who has come to you full of eagerness and awe you allow yourself to be distracted. No indeed! This [Qur’an] is a lesson from which those who wish to be taught should learn.”¹

The primary wish of the Prophet (saw) was to win over ‘Utba b. Rabi’a, Abu Jahl, and his uncle ‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib,² who were leading Meccans. If he could win them over, perhaps their families and those in their circle would become Muslims. For this reason he did not want to end his conversation which had reached a critical point. He could return to Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) later and answer his questions in detail. The Prophet (saw)’s reaction to this unexpected disruption was reflected in his

¹ Qur’an, 80:1-12; T3331 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 80; MU480, al-Muwatta’, al-Qur’an, 4.

² TT24/218, al-Tabari, al-Jami’ al-Bayan, XXIV, 218.



facial expressions. Ibn Umm Maktum did not realize, of course, that the Prophet (saw) had turned his face from him. However, the all-knowing and all-hearing Allah then revealed the *sūra* of ‘Abasa, which begins with a few verses criticizing the Messenger of Mercy’s attitude. Surely, Allah (swt) knew very well the intention of His messenger. Nevertheless, it was not acceptable to Allah that, even if he were inviting someone to Islam, he would turn away from a blind Muslim and be courteous to polytheists. This was because Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) was blind. He could not see but his heart was open. He came to be purified, to be protected, to learn, and to get advice. The Prophet (saw), albeit with body language, should not have turned his face.

Later the Messenger of Mercy got to know this sincere man, who caused him to be warned, better and gave him the respect he deserved for the rest of his life. Ibn Umm Maktum, who was one of those who had emigrated to Medina before the Prophet (saw), and Mus‘ab b. ‘Umayr (ra), taught the Holy Qur’an to the Muslims in Medina.³ After the Hijra, he and Bilal al-Habashi (ra) introduced the call to prayer at the Mosque of the Prophet (saw).⁴

The aforesaid blind Companion was instrumental in the revelation of another verse on a different subject. According to Zayd b. Thabit (ra), who was one of those who recorded the revelations expressed by the Prophet (saw), this came about as follows: “The Messenger of Allah (saw) was making me write down the verse *‘Those believers who stay at home , . . . , are not equal to those who commit themselves and their possessions to striving in Allah’s way.’*”⁵ At that moment, Ibn Umm Maktum came up to him and said, “O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, if I had the ability to participate in fighting in the cause of Allah, I would definitely fight.”⁶ Thereupon, the same verse was revealed again by Allah but with the addition of “*except those who are disabled.*”⁷

It is interesting that, although Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) was the reason that the addition to this verse, which exempted the disabled from fighting, was revealed, he had a burning desire to be a martyr. He participated in the Battle of Qadisiyya in which he was, in fact, martyred while he was serving as a standard bearer.⁸

After the *sūra* of ‘Abasa was revealed, the close relations that developed between the Prophet (saw) and Ibn Umm Maktum ensured that he

³ B4941, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (A’la) 1.

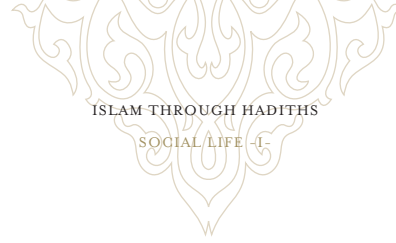
⁴ B617, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 11; M845, al-Muslim, al-Salat, 8.

⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:95.

⁶ B4592, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nisa’) 18.

⁷ B4990, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 4.

⁸ NS8605, al-Nasa’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, V, 181; EU4/251, Ibn al-Athir, *Ud al-Ghaba*, IV, 251.



would be given more important tasks. This eminent Companion, who saw not with his eyes, but with his heart, served as the Prophet's deputy thirteen times. When the Prophet (saw) was away on various battles and campaigns, he left Ibn Umm Maktum as his deputy in Medina.⁹ If we recall that our Prophet was both a social and political leader in Medina, we can more easily understand how much the Prophet (saw) valued his blind friend. By assigning to him his own tasks, the Prophet (saw) demonstrated to us that handicapped people, although they lacked certain abilities, could fulfill the responsibilities of the highest position.

Both the verses that were revealed about him and the tasks that he was given make it clear that Ibn Umm Maktum was an extremely reliable person. In fact, when the husband of Fatima bint Qays (ra), who was among the first Muhajirun, divorced her with three *ṭalāqs*, the Prophet (saw) sent her to the house Ibn Umm Maktum, the son of his uncle, so she could spend her waiting period (*'idda*) there.¹⁰

The same Ibn Umm Maktum complained that there were date groves and other trees between his home and the mosque and that he could not always find someone to help him. So he asked the Prophet (saw) for permission to perform the ritual prayer in the Prophet's house. When the Prophet (saw) asked him if he could hear the call to prayer, he answered, "Yes." Thereupon, Allah's Messenger, who wanted him to participate with the congregation, said, "*In that case, come!*"¹¹

Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) did accept a similar request from another blind Companion, 'Itban b. Malik (ra). 'Itban explained what happened as follows: "I used to lead the prayer for my tribe the Banu Salim in their homeland. There was a valley between my home and them. Whenever it rained it became very difficult for me to cross the valley and go to their mosque. So I went to the Prophet (saw) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I have weak eyesight and the stream in the valley between me and my people rises when it rains and it becomes difficult for me to cross it. I wish you would come to my house and do the ritual prayer at a place inside so that I could consider that place as a mosque.' The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'I will do so.' The next morning after the sun had risen, he and Abu Bakr came to my house. Allah's Messenger asked for permission to enter and I gave him permission. After entering he did not sit and said, 'Where do you want us to perform the prayer in your house?' I pointed to the

⁹ CU12/617, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Jami' al-Usul*, XII, 617.

¹⁰ M3709, Muslim, *al-Talaq*, 45; N3447, *al-Nasa'i*, *al-Talaq*, 15.

¹¹ HM15572, Ibn Hanbal, III, 424; D552, D553, Abu Da'ud, *al-Salat*, 46.



spot where I wanted him to pray. So Allah's Messenger stood up for the prayer and started with the *takbīr*. We were aligned in rows behind him; and he performed two *rak'as*, and finished them with the *taslīm*. We also performed the *taslīm* with him. Then the prayer was finished and I offered him a meal called *khazīr* which was prepared for him."¹²

The fact that the Prophet (saw) accepted the invitation of 'Itban, who was blind, went to his house, prayed where he indicated, and ate the food he offered,¹³ shows the Prophet's humility and warm feelings towards those with disabilities. The reason that the Prophet (saw) allowed 'Itban to perform his prayers at his own home but did not allow Ibn Umm Maktum to do so could be explained by the fact that Ibn Umm Maktum's house was close enough to the mosque for him to hear the first and second calls to prayer (*adhān* and *iqāma*). And, while, on the one hand, the Prophet (saw) tacitly emphasized the importance of his praying with the congregation, on the other he probably wished to see a talented Companion like Ibn Umm Maktum among the congregation even if it was difficult for him to go to the mosque.

The Prophet (saw)'s relations with and interest in handicapped people were not limited to the above mentioned blind Companions (ra). When Mecca was conquered, Abu Bakr brought his father, Abu Kuhafa, who was old and blind, to visit the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw), who was suffering from the same condition, said to Abu Bakr, "*I wish you had left this elderly man at home. I could have gone to visit him,*" and in this way expressed his respect for Abu Kuhafa.¹⁴

Among disabilities, the loss of sight is perhaps the most challenging. Indeed, 'A'isha (ra) confirmed this when she referred to the blind companion Hassan b. Thabit, who was the Prophet's famous poet, by saying, "What could be a worse punishment than blindness."¹⁵ Consequently there are many Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīths* about the loss of sight. For example, according to a *ḥadīth qudsī* reported from the Prophet (saw) by Anas b. Malik (ra), "Allah said, *'If I deprive my servant of his two beloved things (i.e., his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.'*"¹⁶

In the following famous story, Allah's Messenger related in very dramatic fashion how Allah's ill servants would have their patience and gratitude tested. Allah Almighty wished to test three of the Israelites. One was a leper, one was blind, and one was bald. He sent an angel to them and he

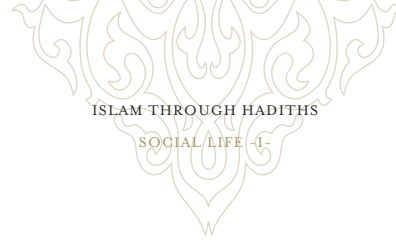
¹² B1186, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 36; M1496, Muslim, al-Masajid, 263.

¹³ M1497, Muslim, al-Masajid, 264.

¹⁴ HM27496, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 350.

¹⁵ B4146, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35; M6391, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 155.

¹⁶ B5653, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 7.



cured them. Then He made them rich by granting them what they wanted most of all from prolific animals, such as camels, cows, and sheep. Years later, the angel visited each of them in turn disguised in the form in which they had originally been and asked them, for the sake of Allah (swt), for the property that Allah had given them. The leper and bald man said that they had inherited this property and would not give anything to him. As a punishment, Allah returned both of them to their previous states. As for the man who had originally been blind, he said, “I was blind and Allah gave back to me the sense of vision. I was poor and He made me rich. Take what you wish. I will not prevent you from taking anything for the sake of Allah.” The angel then replied, “Keep your property. You have only been tested. Allah is pleased with you but is angry at your two companions.”¹⁷

According to a weak *ḥadīth*, there was a devout man who worshipped Allah (swt) for five hundred years at the top of a mountain on an island and, while he was prostrating himself, asked Allah to take him. On the Day of Judgement, when Allah said, “*Take my servant to Paradise with my mercy*,” the holy man said three times, “O my Lord, with my deeds!” Then Allah said to the angels, “*Then compare the blessings that I gave him, with his deeds!*” The angels found out that only the ability to see was equal to five hundred years of prayer and that no other blessing of the body was comparable. Then Allah said, “*Take my servant to Hell!*” The saintly man then took refuge in Allah, saying, “O Lord! Have mercy on me, and put me in your Paradise.” So Allah in his mercy placed him in Paradise.¹⁸ This *ḥadīth* is significant for emphasizing both Allah’s mercy and the value of the blessing of sight.

As was the case in many verses of the Noble Qur’an, the Prophet (saw) used certain characteristics like blind, deaf, and mute in the sense of not seeing reality, not hearing the truth, and not speaking the truth.¹⁹ For example, he said, “*Your love for a thing makes you blind and deaf.*”²⁰ Likewise, he referred to the turmoil that will appear at the end of the world as “*blind and deaf.*”²¹ Furthermore, according to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), one day the Prophet (saw) said, “*Take me to this person from among the Banu Waqif who has excellent insight (baṣīr).*” However the man he meant was blind.²² Referring to a blind man as “*baṣīr*,” that is, one who has good insight, shows that the Prophet (saw) used the abilities to see, hear, and speak in both literal and metaphorical senses.

¹⁷ B3464, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 51; M7431, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 10.

¹⁸ NM7637, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 278; BṢ4620, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, IV, 150.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:18; al-Anfal 8:22; al-Hud, 11:24.

²⁰ D5130, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 115-116; HM22036, Ibn Hanbal, V, 194.

²¹ D4246, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 1; HM23842, Ibn Hanbal, V, 405.

²² BS21449, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 333.



Among the Companions (ra), the number of those who were blind from birth, or lost their sight from illness, or from injuries in battle was rather high. For example, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra), known as “the translator of the Qur’an,”²³ became blind towards the end of his life and had to entrust to his heart what he had seen. Ibn ‘Abbas, who was also known as Ḥibr al-Umma, that is, “the great sage of the Muslim community,” did his best to teach the Holy Qur’an and Sunna even after he had become blind. Other Companions (ra), such as al-Bara’ b. ‘Azib, Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah, Ka’b b. Malik, Abu Sufyan, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, ‘Abd Allah b. Abi ‘Awfa, al-‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib,²⁴ Malik b. Rabi’a²⁵ and the mother of ‘Abd Allah b. Zubayr, Asma’ (ra),²⁶ were blind at one time in their life.

The Prophet (saw) did not consider disabilities as an obstacle for people who could serve in certain fields according to their abilities. He gave them tasks and responsibilities commensurate with their talents. For example the Messenger of Mercy considered his young lame friend²⁷ Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra) to be talented and sent him to Yemen as a judge and alms collector.²⁸

‘Imran b. Husayn (ra) was another great Companion who had a disability. Water and fat had concentrated in his stomach and he had patiently endured this illness for many years. Indeed he suffered from this for thirty years until finally his stomach was opened and the fat was removed.²⁹ One day he asked the Prophet (saw) how he could perform his prayers while ill. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Pray while standing and if you can’t do that, then pray while sitting, and if you can’t do that, then pray lying on your side.*”³⁰ Because ‘Imran had become so corpulent, before he died he willed that a cube-shaped grave site be prepared for him.³¹

There were also Companions (ra) who, of their own accord, wanted to participate in military campaigns although they were disabled and had a reason not to do so. ‘Amr b. Jamuh (ra), a Companion who was lame, went to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! If I fight on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah) until I die, would my lame leg be healed in Paradise so I could walk?” The Prophet (saw) said, “Yes.” Subsequently, ‘Amr, his nephew, and his servant were martyred together at the Battle of Uhud. The Prophet (saw) encountered the funeral of ‘Amr on the battlefield, he said, “*It is as if I see you walking in Paradise with a healed leg.*” By order of the Prophet (saw), the three fighters were buried in the same place.³²

²³ IBS424, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti‘ab*, 424.

²⁴ MIS587, Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘arif*, 587-588.

²⁵ MIS272, Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘arif*, 272.

²⁶ EÜ7/8, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, VII, 8.

²⁷ MIS583, Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘arif*, 583.

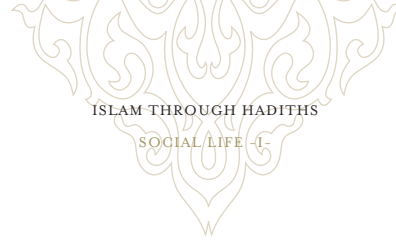
²⁸ B3038, al-Bukhari, *al-Jihad*, 164.

²⁹ EU4/270, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, IV, 270

³⁰ B1117, al-Bukhari, *Taqdir al-Salat*, 19; D952, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Salat*, 174-175.

³¹ ST7/11, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, VII, 11.

³² HM22920, Ibn Hanbal, V, 300.



‘Amr b. Jamuh (ra) was a representative of the Ansar, and, despite being lame, was at the forefront of the army.³³ ‘Amr had four sons, and they participated in battles with the Prophet (saw). They tried to persuade their father that Allah would have excused him from going to war because he was lame. ‘Amr went to the Prophet (saw) and said that his sons were trying to prevent him from going to war, but he himself wanted to be a martyr. Eventually he became a martyr at the Battle of Uhud.³⁴

Although Allah Almighty had excused him from going to war,³⁵ the crippled ‘Amr was consumed with the desire to go to Paradise exactly like the blind ‘Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum (ra). Despite the excuse, he preferred to set out for battle and drank the sherbet of martyrdom. As for those who were ill, infirm, and disabled and who accepted the excuse that was given to them, and whose prayers and hearts were at the front although their weak bodies remained in Medina, the Prophet (saw) said of them in one battle, “*Some people have remained behind us in Medina but they have crossed every valley and mountain with us (in spirit). Only their condition prevented them from being with us.*”³⁶

The reason that the Prophet (saw) insisted that visually disabled Companions (ra) join the congregation at the mosque, that he gave them important responsibilities, and even gave them permission to participate in war was to make sure that they were not excluded from society. Using their abilities in areas in which they were talented and skilled for the benefit of society was of great importance in making them hardworking and productive individuals and in developing their ideas and personalities. Indeed, even today, this is what many of our brothers who have disabilities wish to do. They don’t want society to have pity on them. Many of them do not want to spend their lives depending on the support of others. Instead, they want to be productive members of society to the best of their abilities. Being dependent makes one sulk and withdraw most of the time because of being frustrated, and causes psychological problems. Whereas being productive is to feel strong and have a happy and hopeful life. This is exactly what the Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted to accomplish.

Allah’s Messenger, who was a true friend and protector of the weak and frail, the poor and needy, stated that all assistance to the disabled would be considered charity (*ṣadaqa*). When Abu Dharr (ra) said to the Prophet (saw) that rich Muslims earn rewards (in the next world) from

³³ KC8/226, al-Qurtubi, *al-Tafsir*, VIII, 226

³⁴ BS18318, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 43.

³⁵ Al-Fath, 48:17.

³⁶ B2839, al-Bukhari, *al-Jihad*, 35; D2508, Abu Da’ud, *al-Jihad*, 19.



acts of worship, such as praying, fasting, and performing the Hajj, as well as from giving charity, while he was among those who were too poor to do these things, the Prophet (saw) declared that there were many different kinds of charity, and said, “. . . giving directions to those (blind and other people) who ask for it would be a charity; helping the needy to the best of your ability would be a charity; or understanding the purpose of a person who had difficulty to express himself would be a charity.”³⁷ It is striking that the Prophet (saw), who declared that helping the disabled would be considered charity, that is, a sign of loyalty to Allah (swt), also declared that misguiding a blind person or intentionally directing him in the wrong direction would be uncharitable and considered a damnable act.³⁸

It is worthy of note that there are a number of weak and fabricated *ḥadīths* in various works which are sympathetic or unsympathetic to the disabled. For example, the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (saw) said, “Stay away from the handicapped!”³⁹ is not only not in conformity with the spirit of the Holy Qur’an but also contradicts the words and deeds of the Messenger of Allah (saw) who “helped the needy”⁴⁰ and who considered all assistance to the disabled to be charity. The *ḥadīth* according to which the Prophet (saw) said, “If Allah takes away the vision of someone in this world, he has a right on Allah that his eyes won’t see hellfire,”⁴¹ must have been fabricated to console blind people. As attested by sound *ḥadīths* that we have previously mentioned, those who are patient will be rewarded although they have lost their sight or hearing. There are in fact *ḥadīths* indicating that the disabled would continue earning the same rewards for the good deeds that they had been performing when they were healthy.⁴² However, to assume that losing certain abilities would expiate all sins and guarantee that one would not go to Hell cannot be reconciled with the concept of personal responsibility. Throughout history, there have always been a significant number of people with disabilities in every society. This is also true for modern societies. A good number of people in the world are handicapped. In the past, this number increased because of epidemics and war but today it has reached its peak for such reasons as work, traffic, and other accidents. It should not be forgotten that taking the necessary precautions before embarking on a task and seeking the necessary treatment after an accident are part of the Prophet’s Sunna and he insisted on doing these things. As for events that occur as a result of divine will or fate, if one is

³⁷ HM21691, Ibn Hanbal, V, 152; HM21816, Ibn Hanbal, V, 169.

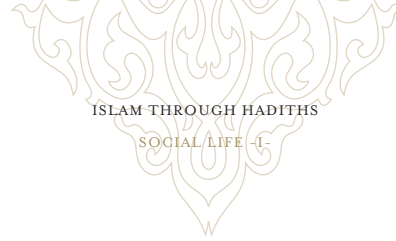
³⁸ HM2917, Ibn Hanbal, I, 317; HM1875, Ibn Hanbal, I, 217.

³⁹ MHS18, al-Sakhawī, *al-Maqasid al-Hasana*, 18.

⁴⁰ B3, al-Bukhari, *Bad’ al-Wahy*, 1; M403, Muslim, *al-Iman*, 252.

⁴¹ CM3/203, Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Mawzu’at*, III, 203.

⁴² B2996, al-Bukhari, *al-Jihad*, 134; HM6825, Ibn Hanbal, II, 194.



injured he must be patient, continue living a responsible life to the extent that he can, and strive to pass the test. In the meantime, the people around him are to give him material and moral support.

No doubt in accordance with divine justice, no one is burdened with more than he can bear.⁴³ The Creator tests everyone one with the blessings he gave and did not give to him in order to distinguish those who are grateful and patient.⁴⁴ The believer who realizes that this is a test can pass the test by being grateful for the blessings that have been given to him and by being patient when faced with difficulties.⁴⁵ The Noble Messenger mentioned this succinctly, saying, “*Allah does not look at your appearance and property, but at your hearts and deeds.*” Indeed, the illness of the distinguished Prophet Job, which was cured by the mercy of Allah (swt) after a long period of patience and prayer is a good example of this.⁴⁶ As stated in another *ḥadīth*, “*No calamity befalls a Muslim but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it, even though it were the prick he receives from a thorn.*”⁴⁷ This even elevates its status to a higher level.⁴⁸

The Prophet (saw), who was “*uswa ḥasana*,”⁴⁹ i.e., an ideal role model for Muslims, in every way, taught extensively about the disabled. His teachings should be our guiding principles in determining our relationship with disabled people. This is because, throughout his life, Allah’s Messenger looked after the disabled, never belittled them, and neither reproached nor condemned them because of their disabilities. In contrast to what appears to be the case today, Islam never permitted ridiculing those who were handicapped from birth or as a result of events over which they had no control. In fact, our Lord forbade ridiculing people in general.⁵⁰

People who do not have disabilities should never forget that one day they might have similar problems, and that they should provide as much physical and emotional assistance as they can to their disabled brethren. This is because not only disabled people but also the people around them are being tested by our Lord with respect to their attitude toward the disabled. Therefore, on the one hand, everyone should recognize and be grateful for the blessings that Allah (swt) has given to them and, on the other, they should give support to the disabled in every sense in order to be able to achieve both individual and social tranquility.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:233, 286; al-Talaq, 65:7.

⁴⁴ M7500, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 64.

⁴⁵ M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

⁴⁶ Al-Anbiya’, 21:83-84.

⁴⁷ B5640, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 1.

⁴⁸ M6561, Muslim, al-Birr, 46.

⁴⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33:21.

⁵⁰ Al-Hujurat, 49:11.



OLD AGE THE MOST ABJECT STATE OF LIFE



عَنْ مُطَرِّفِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الشَّخِيرِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَثَلُ ابْنِ آدَمَ وَإِلَى جَنْبِهِ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ مَنِيَّةً، إِنْ أَخْطَأَتْهُ الْمَنَائِيَا وَقَعَ
فِي الْهَرَمِ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ.“

Mutarraf b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Shikhir reported that his father said (ra) that the Prophet (saw) said, “The son of Adam was created surrounded by ninety-nine life-threatening calamities. If these calamities miss him, he is stricken by decrepitude until he dies.”

(T2150, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 14)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَدْعُو بِهَؤُلَاءِ الدَّعَوَاتِ :
”اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَأَرْدَلِ الْعُمْرِ، وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَفِتْنَةِ
الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ.“



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ عَبَسَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ شَابَ شَيْبَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌ شَيْخًا لِسِنَّةٍ إِلَّا قَيَّضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَنْ يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ.“



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَيْسَ مِثْلًا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَ[لَمْ] يَعْرِفْ شَرَفَ كَبِيرِنَا.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) used to make the following prayer: *“O Allah! I take refuge in you from stinginess, laziness, the most abject stage of life (that is, old age), the torments in the grave, the turmoil of life and death-threatening calamities.”*

(M6876, Muslim, al-Dhikr, al-Du‘a’, and al-Tawba, 52)



According to ‘Amr b. ‘Abasa (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Whoever becomes white haired in the cause of Allah, the whiteness will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement.”*

(T1635, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 9)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If a young person honors an elder because of his old age, Allah appoints for him one who will honor him in his old age.”*

(T2022, Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 75)



According to ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb, his father said that his grandfather (ra) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor acknowledges the honor of our elders.”*

(T1920, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15)



It was the day of the conquest of Mecca. Abu Bakr, the Noble Prophet's loyal friend who had accompanied him on the Hijra, brought his father, Abu Kuhafa,¹ whose hair and beard had turned pure white from age, to visit the Prophet (saw). Greeting this blind old man, in his mild-mannered, polite, and respectful fashion, our Master the Prophet (saw) said to Abu Bakr, "If you had left this elderly man at home, would I not have gone to him?"

On that day, Abu Kuhafa, believing in Allah and his Messenger, was going to become a Muslim. Abu Bakr replied, "O the Messenger of Allah (saw)! It is more appropriate for him to come to you than for you go to him." The old man sat in front of our Master the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) patted his chest and commanded, "Be a Muslim!" Abu Kuhafa accepted the command to start a new life and found honor and tranquility in Islam for the rest of his life.²

Old age is time for a person to reflect upon his life, taking into consideration both the good and the bad. Some people regard this as the closest stage of life to death. For others, this time represents the last moments before union with Allah (swt). As the Prophet (saw) said, "The son of Adam was created surrounded by ninety-nine calamities. If these calamities miss him, he is stricken by decrepitude until he dies."³ Old age is the last station, the fall season of life. Death is not the end. It is a gate opening to the Creator. As Jalal al-Din Rumi said, death is the *shab-i 'arūs*, that is, the wedding night, for virtuous people. In the words of the Prophet (saw), when the believer is given the glad tidings of Allah's mercy and Paradise, he desires to unite with Allah (swt). And Allah wishes to unite with him. When the unbeliever is given the "glad tidings" of the torments inflicted by Allah, he is not happy to unite with Allah. And Allah is not happy to unite with him.⁴ Faced with the inevitability of death, a person can attain happiness before

¹ M5509, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-Zina, 79; N5079, al-Nasa'i, al-Zina, 15.

² HM27496, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 350.

³ T2150, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 14.

⁴ M6822, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 15.



death only if accepts this view of the world. Death is the time to unite with Allah. Thus, when the Prophet (saw) approached the end of his life and the Lord asked him if he preferred to live in this world as long as he wished and eat and drink in this world as long as he wished or to unite with Him, Allah's Messenger chose to unite with Allah.⁵

An old person, who understood the importance of good health during his youth, is pleased, on the one hand, to have tasted the delights of childhood, youth, and middle age, which have been granted to him as blessings,⁶ but he is uneasy, on the other hand, to leave this world behind. Those old people who did not pay enough attention to their health when they were young⁷ regret that they cannot bring back the past, and compensate for what they have missed.

Every illness has a cure. But Allah (swt) did not create a cure for old age.⁸ One can observe the change in his body over time. He was a child, then grew up into a strong mature man, and finally again became weak like a child. In old age, he is no longer able to see, hear, or act as he did in the past. In short, he can no longer do what he used to do. In accordance with divine law, his skin is wrinkled, his back is stooped, and his hair is grayed. His thought and understanding have lost their keenness. When the signs of old age become clear, as our Lord says in the following manner: "*If We extend anyone's life, We reverse his development. Do they not use their reason?*"⁹ the person who loses his youth, beauty, and strength and whose back is stooped essentially becomes child-like and needs compassion.

In the noble Qur'an, our Exalted Lord referred to old age as "*ardhal al-'umr*," that is, the most abject state of life, as follows: "*It is Allah who has created you and in time will cause you to die. Some of you will be reduced, in old age, to a most abject state, so that, after having knowledge, they will know nothing at all.*"¹⁰ Every man has a different life-span. Some lives are short and some lives are long. This noble verse places the emphasis on those who live long and reach the most abject state of their life. In this state, their mental and physical abilities weaken and can even disappear. At this stage, it is impossible to recapture the strength and power of youth.

According to the Holy Qur'an, "*It is Allah who creates you weak, then gives you strength, then weakness after strength, together with your grey hair: He creates what He will; He is the All Knowing, the All Powerful.*"¹¹ Thus Allah (swt) gives strength and good health to a person when he is young, and

⁵ T3659, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 15; HM16018, Ibn Hanbal, III, 478.

⁶ Al-Mu'min, 40:67.

⁷ B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1.

⁸ IM3436, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 1.

⁹ Ya Sin, 36:68.

¹⁰ Al-Nahl, 16:70; al-Hajj, 22:5.

¹¹ Al-Rum, 30:54.

then takes them away from him when he is old. Fully aware of this, our Master the Prophet (saw) often took refuge in Allah from the loss of abilities accompanying old age with the following prayer: *“O Allah! I take refuge in you from stinginess, laziness, the most abject state of life (that is, old age), the torments in grave, the turmoil of life and death-threatening calamities.”*¹² Many people spend their lives unaware that Allah (swt) created life and death as tests of their behavior.¹³ The strong and powerful person cannot help but be deceived that he will enjoy endless pleasures in life. He wastes his life without giving heed to his health and using his time wisely.¹⁴ Is this not why Satan, who knew man very well, was able to deceive Adam by exploiting his innate sense of immortality when he whispered to him, *“O Adam! Shall I show you the tree of immortality and power that never decays?”*¹⁵

The condition of man, who scampers in pursuit of worldly ambitions, although only a step away from death, is miserable. By saying, *“As a person grows old and two things grow old with him, i.e., love for wealth and wish for a long life,”*¹⁶ our Prophet pointed out that a person could not give up egotistical desires even in old age. It is expected that the maturity and dignity that one’s age brings would draw him closer to Allah, but if he plunged into sin out of attachment to this world, then he would deserve Allah’s wrath. Indeed, our Prophet said that one of the three people whom Allah (swt) hated the most was the elderly adulterer.¹⁷ If elderly people engage in illicit and disgraceful activities, can this be considered for the betterment of society?¹⁸

When Allah (swt) calls man to Paradise saying, *“This is the Garden you have been given as your own on account of your deeds,”*¹⁹ those who spend their lives in vain will greatly regret it and be disappointed and deprived. For, what they will be deprived of are all the things that they had been seeking in this life, especially property and long life.²⁰ All of these things will be granted to the believers in Paradise: life without death, health without illness, youth without aging, and abundance without shortage.²¹ Therefore, a man should prepare himself not for this world of temporary benefits but for eternal life in the Hereafter.²² He should strive to do good deeds before death, which can happen suddenly as a result of illness or old age, which causes senility.²³ Sooner or later one will be at death’s door and all activity will come to an end. Therefore a believer should not ask for death early. This is because a long life adorned with faith gives the believer more op-

¹² M6876, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 52.

¹³ Al-Mulk, 67:2.

¹⁴ B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1.

¹⁵ Ta Ha, 20:120.

¹⁶ B6421, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 5; M2412, Muslim, al-Zakat, 115.

¹⁷ T2568, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 25; N2571, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 75.

¹⁸ IM4015, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 21.

¹⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:43.

²⁰ T2338, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 28; IM4233, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 27.

²¹ T3246, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 39; HM8241, Ibn Hanbal, II, 320.

²² Al-Mu’min, 40:30.

²³ T2306, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 3.



portunity to increase his good deeds.²⁴ A believer who does not associate any partner with Allah (swt) will eventually go to Paradise regardless of his sins.²⁵ One day an old man came to the Prophet (saw) with his walking stick and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I have committed some mistakes and sins. Could I be forgiven?” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “*Have you not testified that there is no god but Allah?*” When the old man said, “Of course, I did, and I would also testify that you are the Messenger of Allah (saw),” the Prophet (saw) said, “*Then, all of your previous bad deeds will be forgiven.*”²⁶

Yes, those who believe, who sincerely attach themselves to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), and whose hair turns white in their cause (that is, who grow old in their cause) will be rewarded by Allah. Their sins will be forgiven, and their status will be elevated in the Hereafter.²⁷ Indeed our Prophet honored such people by saying, “*Whoever becomes white haired in the cause of Allah, the whiteness will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement.*”²⁸

Whereas this world is the arable field for the Hereafter, old age is, in a certain respect, when one reaps the harvest of youth. What one sows in youth he reaps in old age. Saying, “What a pity being in the state of old age. He is asked about it but has no knowledge of it,” ‘Urwa gathered his sons around him and gave them the following advice: “Learn this my sons! Today you are the children of society, but inevitably the day will come when you will be older than others.”²⁹

An old person should combine the knowledge, experience, and talent that he acquired in his youth with the maturity of his age, and transfer this combination to the next generation. In this way he can be helpful to young people. And while educating them he would also increase his own esteem in their eyes. In addition to becoming a person whose opinions would be sought and whose views would be respected in society, he would be productive with respect to himself and others. The word *ikhtiyār* in Arabic, which can mean “old” in Turkish, connotes the meanings of “distinguished, selected, and experienced”. Someone who is elderly is a wise person whose views are sought even by heads of state when appropriate. For example, the Caliph ‘Umar (ra) did not hesitate to seek the opinions of old and experienced women about controversial issues.³⁰ Sometimes an elderly person could win the respect of others with simply a cup of soup. Some of the Companions (ra) used to visit one of their grandmothers.

²⁴ M6819, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 13.

²⁵ HM6586, Ibn Hanbal, II, 170.

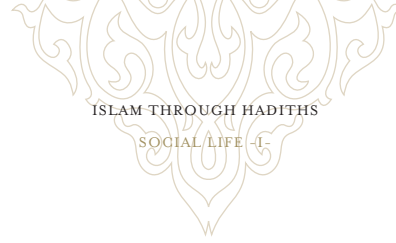
²⁶ HM19652, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 385.

²⁷ HM6962, Ibn Hanbal, II, 210

²⁸ T1635, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 9; N3146, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 26.

²⁹ DM563, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 46.

³⁰ MU1425, al-Muwatta', al-Aqdiyya, 21.



This pleased her which, in turn, made them happy. She used to prepare a special meal for them on Friday. After the Friday prayer, the Companions (ra) would go to her, greet her, and eat the meal. This occasion, which was a source of great pleasure for the Companions (ra),³¹ shows what great importance they gave to human relationships. Man needs to maintain his social relationships by being in continuous contact with his environment, that is, living together with others. As he gets older, his dependence on his surroundings increases even further. Excluding or distancing elderly people from social activities makes them feel unhappy and lonely. By saying, “*Had there not been old people with stooped backs, nursing babies, and grazing animals, calamities would befall you,*”³² the Prophet (saw) declared that old people with grey hair and stooped backs were a source of mercy for the society in which they lived and brought blessings to others. It is for this reason that visiting elderly people makes the visitors feel good about themselves. Visiting in particular elderly people who have lost their spouse or parents or are far from their children would connect them to life and help prevent depression and crises that arise from loneliness.

It would be very ungrateful for children to not visit their elderly parents if they lived nearby. By saying, “*The Lord’s pleasure is bound to the parent’s pleasure, and the Lord’s anger is bound to the parent’s anger,*”³³ our Master the Prophet (saw) stated that pleasing parents was tantamount to pleasing Allah (swt). The best way to please parents is to visit them frequently when they grow old. Our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “*Those who cut off ties with their relatives will not go to Paradise.*”³⁴ This general principle holds true first and foremost for parents. While describing how disagreeable it would be for one not to respect and show kindness to his parents if they grew old in his presence (that is, he was available to help but did not), our beloved Prophet said, “*Let him be cursed.*” And he repeated this rebuke three times. When the Companions (ra) asked, “O the Messenger of Allah (saw)! Who is he?” the Prophet (saw) explained, “*He is one who does not enter Paradise if one or both of his parents grew old in his presence.*”³⁵ He thus connected entering Paradise with pleasing one’s parents.

Therefore, one who recognizes that his parents and grandparents grow older by the day should treat them kindly in accordance with divine command, especially if they live nearby, and become increasingly responsible and sensitive towards them, and provide more and more support and

³¹ B6248, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 16.

³² MK19305, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 309; BS6483, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, III, 486.

³³ T1899, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3.

³⁴ B5984, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 11; M6521, Muslim, al-Birr, 19

³⁵ M6511, Muslim, al-Birr, 10.



assistance. As indicated in the verse, *“If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully. And lower your wing in humility towards them in kindness and say, ‘Lord, have mercy on them, just as they cared me when I was little,’”*³⁶ the children should frequently pray for their parents and, at the same time, try to receive their prayers. This is because their prayers will be accepted by Allah (swt).³⁷ In fact, not only the prayers of parents but also those of other elderly people will be accepted by Allah. Our Master the Prophet (saw), saying, *“When a gray-haired elderly Muslim who has lived in accordance with the Sunna prays for something for himself, Allah does not hesitate to give him what he wants,”*³⁸ declared that the prayers of the elderly will be accepted. Abu Hurayra (ra) looked after the needs of his aged mother and received her prayers. She prayed for him for his kindnesses in her old age as follows: *“May Allah treat you with compassion in your old age just as you have treated me with kindness and favor in my old age.”*³⁹

It is the duty of every Muslim to see to the needs of old people, above all parents, with respect to such things as housing, food, health care, and clothing. Indeed, throughout his life, our Master the Prophet (saw) undertook the maintenance of poor and needy people,⁴⁰ and stated that Allah (swt) would provide assistance to the needy among His servants.⁴¹ Furthermore, in order to emphasize the importance of treating one’s parents well, he told his Companions (ra) the story of the three men who were stuck in a cave with their parents and spent all night on their feet serving them.⁴²

Showing respect to the elderly also helps to maintain social order. This has a two-fold effect, for by respecting old people, a young person, who will be old one day himself, also makes an investment in his future. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following about this reality: *“If a young person honors an elder because of his old age, Allah appoints for him one who will honor him in his old age.”*⁴³ Young people should greet old people,⁴⁴ and let them speak first in conversations.⁴⁵ Such practices conform to the Prophet’s wishes. Our Prophet declared that, during congregational prayer, the first row behind him should be composed of the oldest. The rationale for this practice is noteworthy: *“Don’t be mixed together [in the mosque] like in the marketplace.”*⁴⁶ Furthermore, when those who could lead the prayer all had the same merits, the Prophet (saw) recommended that the oldest serve

³⁶ Al-Isra’, 17:23-24.

³⁷ D1536, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 29.

³⁸ ME5286, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Awsat, V, 270.

³⁹ EM12, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 18.

⁴⁰ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252.

⁴¹ T1702, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 24; N3181, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 43.

⁴² M6949, Muslim, al-Riqaq, 100.

⁴³ T2022, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 75.

⁴⁴ B6231, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 4; T2704, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 14.

⁴⁵ B3173, al-Bukhari, al-Jizya, 12; M4342, Muslim, al-Qasama, 1.

⁴⁶ M974, Muslim, al-Salat, 123.

as *imām*.⁴⁷ In this way he maintained respect for old people in society.

Our Prophet, who said, “*Glorifying Allah is to respect a grey-haired Muslim, one who can expound on the Holy Qur’an without going to extremes or criticizing it, and a just ruler,*”⁴⁸ personally showed respect to elders. One day, an elderly man came to visit the Prophet (saw). The people around the Prophet (saw) were slow to show a place to him. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, “*He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor acknowledges the honor of our elders.*”⁴⁹ In another instance, the Prophet (saw) was offered a drink. He drank some of it, and, as was his habit, wished to share it with his Companions (ra). On his right sat a young man, the son of his uncle, Ibn ‘Abbas (ra),⁵⁰ and on his left sat old men. Instead of starting from the right as usual, the Prophet (saw) wanted to offer the drink to the elderly people out of respect, and asked permission from Ibn ‘Abbas to do so. But when Ibn ‘Abbas said, “No, By Allah, O Messenger of Allah! I would not leave my portion coming from you to anyone,” our Prophet gave him the cup.⁵¹ On the one hand, this incident shows the young man’s love for the Prophet (saw) and the Prophet’s habit of starting from the right, and, on the other hand, it shows the Prophet’s interest in, and respect for, the elderly.

An elderly person who receives esteem, respect, and compassion from people is given a greater portion of mercy and forgiveness from Allah (swt) as he gets older. Knowing man, whom He created, very well,⁵² Allah exempted him from certain obligations, and lighten some of his duties in old age. For example, the Prophet (saw) said, “*If anyone of you leads the people in the prayer, he should shorten it for among them are the weak, the sick and the old; and if anyone among you prays alone then he may prolong (the prayer) as much as he wishes.*”⁵³ In addition, if one were too old to make the Hajj, the Prophet (saw) gave permission for another person to perform it on his behalf.⁵⁴

Not being able to see to one’s needs and becoming senile at the end of life are not desirable human conditions.⁵⁵ In order not to fall into this state of affairs, the Messenger of Allah (saw) beseeched his Lord in the following prayer: “*...O Allah! Wash my sins with water of ice and hail, and cleanse my heart of sins, as You cleansed a white garment of filth, and distance me from my sins as You distanced the east from the west. O Allah! Indeed, I seek refuge in You from laziness, senility, sin and debt.*”⁵⁶

⁴⁷ M1534, Muslim, al-Masajid, 291.

⁴⁸ D4843, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 20.

⁴⁹ T1920, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15.

⁵⁰ IF1/282, Ibn Hajar, al-Fath al-Bari, I, 282.

⁵¹ B5620, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 19; M5292, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 127.

⁵² Al-Mulk, 67: 13-14.

⁵³ B703, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 62.

⁵⁴ B1513, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 1; N5396, al-Nasa’i, Adab al-Qudat, 10.

⁵⁵ B2823, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 25; M6909, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 76.

⁵⁶ M6871, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 49; T3495, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 76.



ORPHANS

A TRUST OF GREAT MAGNITUDE FOR THE SOCIETY

عَنْ سَهْلِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :

”أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هَكَذَا.“ وَأَشَارَ بِالسَّبَابَةِ وَالْوَسْطَى، وَفَرَجَ بَيْنَهُمَا شَيْئًا.“

According to Sahl (b. Sa'd) (ra),
“The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘I and the one who looks after an orphan
will be like this (next to each other) in Paradise,’ showing his middle and index
fingers and separating them.”

(B5304, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25)



عَنْ عَوْفِ بْنِ مَالِكِ الْأَشْجَعِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَنَا وَامْرَأَةٌ سَفْعَاءُ الْخَدَيْنِ كَهَاتَيْنِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“ وَأَوْمَأَ يَزِيدُ بِالْوُسْطَى
وَالسَّبَابَةِ. ”امْرَأَةٌ آمَتْ مِنْ زَوْجِهَا ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ حَبَسَتْ نَفْسَهَا
عَلَى يَتَامَاهَا حَتَّى بَانُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ قَبِضَ يَتِيمًا بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ وَشَرَابِهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ الْبُتَّةَ
إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْمَلَ ذَنْبًا لَا يُغْفَرُ [لَهُ].“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”خَيْرُ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ بَيْتٌ فِيهِ يَتِيمٌ يُحْسَنُ إِلَيْهِ. وَشَرُّ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ
بَيْتٌ فِيهِ يَتِيمٌ يُسَاءُ إِلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُحْرِجُ حَقَّ الضَّعِيفِينَ: الْيَتِيمَ وَالْمَرْأَةَ.“



According to 'Awf b. Malik al-Ashja'i (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"I and a woman whose cheeks have become black (due to hardships) shall on the Day of Resurrection be (together) like these two (pointing to the middle and forefinger). She who is a woman of rank and beauty who has been bereft of her husband devotes herself (without getting married) to her fatherless children until they go their separate ways or die."*

(D5149, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 120, 121)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"Whoever takes in an orphan among the Muslims to raise, to feed and to give him drink, Allah, without a doubt, admits him into Paradise, unless he has done a sin for which he is not forgiven."*

(T1917, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 14)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"The best house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly."*

(IM3679, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"O Allah, bear witness that I have issued a warning concerning (failure to fulfill) the rights of the two weak ones: Orphans and women."*

(IM3678, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6; HM9664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440)



Uhud...It is a mountain, on whose feet a handful of Muslims sacrificed their lives and property, and tasted martyrdom... On that day, Mt. Uhud, as well as the Hill of ‘Aynayn, which came to be known as Archers’ Hill, witnessed the martyrdom of Hamza, Anas the son of Nadr, and Aqraba (ra)...

Anas the son of Nadr was heard murmuring, “Oh! The scent of Paradise!”...Then he whispered with his trembling lips to his nearby friend, Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra), “I smell the scent of Paradise at the foot of Uhud...”¹

The mountain of Uhud witnessed a lot! It witnessed, for example, the half-dressed Mus’ab b. ‘Umayr... In later years, ‘Abd al-Rahman (ra) remembered Mus’ab when he had attended a lavish *iftār* banquet, and gasped...Mus’ab was shrouded with worn-out clothes. Did not Hamza’s shroud fall short as well? He was the lion of Allah! In his mighty presence, the unbelievers used to shiver. Everybody behaved properly in front of him. He was the uncle of the Messenger of Allah (saw)... He was Hamza! Similar to Mus’ab (ra), he was going on his last journey with his feet sticking out of his shroud.²

And Aqraba (ra)... At the Battle of Uhud, he left behind a child with beautiful hair... During his lifetime, Aqraba once took his son to the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked the child, “*What is your name?*” “Bahir,” he said, with a broken stuttering voice. According to another account, his name was “Hanin.” Our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “*No. This is not a good name.*” This was because Bahir means weak, exhausted, and sick. And Hanin means sad and troubled. The Messenger of Allah (saw) changed his name, saying, “*From this moment on, your name is Bashir.*” What a beautiful name it was since it meant to be joyous and giver of glad tidings. He was a source of happiness for many faces and hearts.³

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) returned from the Battle of Uhud,

¹ T3200, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 33.

² B4045, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 17.

³ KU36862, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, XIII, 298.



Bashir (ra) stood in front of him and asked about his father, “What happened to my father?” The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, “Your father became a martyr. May Allah show him mercy.” Bashir cried... The Messenger of Allah (saw) stood next to the child, and stayed there for a while, because he valued children immensely. Bashir was still crying ... The Messenger of Allah (saw) tried to console him, saying, “*Please don’t cry!*” And then, he said, “*Wouldn’t you want that I become your father, and ‘A’isha (ra) become your mother?*” Without too much thought, Bashir (ra) replied, “Yes, I would very much love that.”⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) stroked Bashir’s head, and gave him a big hug. With the close attention and prayer of the Prophet (saw), Bashir stopped stuttering. When Bashir (ra) grew older, and began to have grey hair, the part of the hair that the Prophet (saw) stroked, continued to remain black.⁵

Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) willingly gave a hug to the son of a martyr and made him forget his loneliness and being an orphan. The word “*yatīm*” (orphan) in Arabic means “being alone and lonely.” It also means “the one who walks slowly and lags behind.” To some, the meaning may also be linked to “negligence and confusion,”⁶ but that is probably inaccurate, for how could it have been possible for anyone to be negligent of something as important as taking care of an orphan in front of the Messenger of Allah (saw)!

This was after all the early years of Islam, and several verses of the Holy Qur’an reminded believers about the rights of orphans. “*No indeed! You [people] do not honour orphans!*”⁷ “*Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you?*”⁸ “*So do not be harsh with the orphan!*”⁹ “[Prophet], *have you considered the person who denies the Judgement? It is he who pushes aside the orphan and does not urge others to feed the needy.*”¹⁰

Ja’far (ra)... The son of the Prophet’s uncle, whom our Master called “brother,”¹¹ became a martyr in the Battle of Muta. The Messenger of Allah (saw) waited a while before visiting the house of Ja’far after his martyrdom. He did not disturb Ja’far’s family for three whole days so that they could take their time to best deal with their grief and loss through their tears, and console their souls.

Thus, the Prophet (saw) visited Ja’far’s house three days later. The house was still in a deep sorrow and grief. He commenced by saying, “*No*

⁴ Hī1/302, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, I, 302

⁵ Dī10/300, Ibn ‘Asakir, *Ta’rikh al-Dimashq*, X, 300.

⁶ LA55/4948, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, LV, 4948

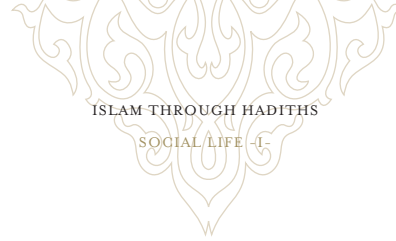
⁷ Al-Fajr, 89:17

⁸ Al-Dukha, 93:6

⁹ Al-Dukha, 93:9

¹⁰ Al-Ma’un, 107: 1-3

¹¹ D4192, Abu Da’ud, *al-Tarajjul*, 13.



more crying for my brother from this day on!” Then he said, “Bring forward the children of my brother. Ja’far’s son.” According to ‘Abd Allah (ra), “We sat in front of the Messenger of Allah (saw). We were like baby birds.”¹²

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did something unexpected. He called for a barber to give a haircut to these orphans, whose hair was messed because of the miserable state they had been in since their father passed on. The purpose of the haircut seems to have been to brighten the children’s faces, and also to demonstrate to everyone that life continues. Some may perhaps think that calling for a barber at that moment should have been the last thing on any one’s mind. Nevertheless, the Messenger of Allah (saw) got the children haircuts, as if the next day was festival day

The Messenger of Allah’s invitation to his Companions (ra), by showing them his middle and index fingers and the distance between them, is still in front of our eyes: “*I and the one who looks after an orphan will be (together) like this in Paradise.*”¹³ Our Master Prophet is telling us that those who take care of an orphan, and share their food with him in this world would be with the Prophet (saw) in Paradise. A prophet who was an orphan himself would instinctively think and care for other orphans...

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not forget about the mothers who, against all odds, took good care of their fatherless children, and sacrificed a lot for them: “*I and a woman whose cheeks have become black (due to hardships) shall on the Day of Resurrection be (together) like these two (pointing to the middle and forefinger). She who is a woman of rank and beauty who has been bereft of her husband devotes herself (without getting married) to her fatherless children until they go their separate ways or die.*”¹⁴ Indeed, who would understand the needs of orphans better than the Messenger of Allah (saw), who himself was an orphan?

To a man who was complaining about his tough and grumpy personality, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “*Stroke the heads of the orphans and feed the poor.*”¹⁵ Stroking the head of an orphan means not only to show love and compassion to him, but also to help him to survive in this difficult world. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) gave the good news to those who took care of orphans that they would go to the paradise: “*Whoever takes in an orphan among the Muslims to raise, to feed and to give him drink, Allah, without a doubt, admits him into Paradise, unless he has done a sin for which he is not forgiven*”¹⁶ The Holy Qur’an as well refers to those who share their belong-

¹² N5229, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 57.

¹³ B5304, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25.

¹⁴ D5149, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 120, 121.

¹⁵ HM9006, Ibn Hanbal, II, 387.

¹⁶ T1917, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 14.



ings with orphans as virtuous people.¹⁷ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) never had a meal without having an orphan at his table.¹⁸ Because he was educated by the Prophet (saw) himself, his behavior is a model for us.

By saying, “*The best house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly,*”¹⁹ the Messenger of Allah (saw) demonstrated to us that the treatment of orphans is one of the main and important criterion for a household to be labeled a good or bad home.

It is clear from the sources above that orphans have priority in the Islamic tradition. These orphans may be the children of martyrs, others may have lost their parents to illnesses or accidents, and some may have lost their parents to devastating wars, which destroy our material and spiritual worlds. The main point is that they are no longer with their parents. They need special care, more than anyone else. They all wish to be like Anas (ra) who was taken care of by the Prophet (saw). They, like the orphans next to Umm al-Darda’ (ra), expect to hear glad tidings from the Messenger of Allah (saw), and receive attention and compassion from Muslims.

When Fatima and two other women went to the Prophet (saw) and asked him to give them female war captives who could help them at home, our Master the Prophet (saw) told them, “*The orphans of Badr have priority over you.*”²⁰ His enthusiasm for taking care of orphans should be a guiding principle for us through all time.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Indeed there is a duty on the wealthy aside from zakāt.*”²¹ Taking care of orphans is not only a matter of generosity but also a matter of responsibility for wealthy and able people. The Prophet (saw) explained this responsibility by reciting the following verse: “*Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travellers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger. These are the ones who are true, and it is they who are aware of Allah.*”²²

Exploiting the properties of orphans is one of the greatest sins. As the Prophet (saw) reminds us, it is similar to murder and slander, because it

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:177.

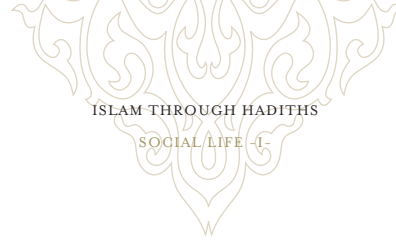
¹⁸ EM136, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 60.

¹⁹ M3679, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6.

²⁰ D2987, Abu Da’ud, al-Kharaj, 19-20.

²¹ T659, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 27.

²² Al-Baqara, 2:177.



is one of the seven grave sins that would destroy humankind.²³ This sin is unpardonable for us who are the representative of a civilization, which is very keen on protecting the rights of orphans. For us, orphans, being the trust of their families and Allah (swt), are the gates to heaven.

Although there have been strict warnings with regard to the exploitation of the property of orphans, custodians were allowed to use some part of it, if the caretaker was a poor person.²⁴ When someone came to the Prophet (saw) and said that he was a poor man and was taking care of an orphan, the Prophet (saw) told him that he could make use of some of the property of the orphan with the condition that he would not waste it, or appropriate it.²⁵

According to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (ra), when the verses "*Stay well away from the property of orphans, except with the best [intentions], until they come of age*"²⁶ and "*Those who consume the property of orphans unjustly are actually swallowing fire into their own bellies: they will burn in the blazing Flame*"²⁷ were revealed, those who had been taking care of orphans left the meeting with the Prophet (saw) at once, and went back home separating the orphans' food and drink from their own. They even kept the leftovers of the orphans separately. However, when the leftovers began to rot, and much food was wasted, the Companions (ra) reported to the Prophet (saw) what was happening in their houses. Shortly afterwards, the following verse was revealed: "*They ask you about [the property of] orphans: say, 'It is good to set things right for them. If you combine their affairs with yours, remember they are your brothers and sisters: Allah knows those who spoil things and those who improve them. Had He so willed, He could have made you vulnerable too*"²⁸ After this, the Companions (ra) mixed the food and drink of the orphans with their own.²⁹

The reason the Companions (ra) were so keen on this issue was that they wanted to be *kāfil al-yatīm*, the one who takes care of orphans, about whom the Prophet (saw) gave the glad tiding that they would be neighbors in Paradise.³⁰ The word *kāfil* is connected to the word *kifāla*, meaning to be a guarantor. Furthermore, both words originate from the word, *kifl*, meaning "saddle, cloth, share, and runaway soldier."³¹ It is interesting to observe that the word is used in this form in the *ḥadīth*. In that regard, *kāfil al-yatīm*, would refer to people who take good care of orphans, who make sure orphans are fed before they eat themselves, and who make sure that orphans are clothed before they wear their own clothes.

²³ M262, Muslim, al-Iman, 145.

²⁴ B4575, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nisa') 2; M7533, Muslim, al-Tafsir, 10.

²⁵ D2872, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 8; N3698, al-Nasa'i, al-Wasaya, 11.

²⁶ Al-An'am, 6:152

²⁷ Al-Nisa', 4:10.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:220.

²⁹ D2871, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 7.

³⁰ B5304, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25.

³¹ LA43/3905, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, XXXXIII, 3905.



The fathers or mothers of orphans, who do not differentiate them from their own children, would help the orphans to hold onto their share in life. They would be people who would wrap up the orphan with the warm cloth of compassion during the cold winter nights. This is not without consequence, because, those who take care of orphans are the recipients of “*kiflayn*”, i.e., those “*having two shares*,” as described in the Holy Qur’an.³²

Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Believers, be mindful of Allah and have faith in His Messenger: He will give you a double share of His mercy; He will provide a light to help you walk; He will forgive you—Allah is most forgiving, most merciful.*”³³ It is important to be the father or mother of an orphan in every sense. Being a guarantor is a multi-dimensional responsibility. In this regard, one needs to protect the property of the orphan, and make sure not to harm it. One also needs to be vigilant against all kinds of things that may lead to harm against the property. For example, it is reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned Abu Dharr (ra) not to take responsibility for orphans’ property, because he was not competent in financial matters.³⁴

In order to secure the future of an orphan, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked the custodian of the orphan’s property to do business with the property so that it would increase in value, rather than lose value. Our Master, said, “*As for one who is the guardian of an orphan who has wealth, then let him do business with it and not leave it until it becomes consumed by charity.*”³⁵ The Companions (ra) took this advice very seriously and followed it as a principle in life. For example, the Caliph ‘Umar (ra) constantly emphasized doing business with the property of orphans.³⁶ It is also known that ‘A’isha (ra) used to do business with the property of the orphans under her care.³⁷

The Prophet (saw)’s statement, “*There is no orphanhood after puberty.*”³⁸ marks the end of the age of orphanhood. Does the notion of puberty here in the text refer to regular puberty or something else?

When Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) was asked, “At what age does the orphan cease to be an orphan?” he replied, “A man may grow a beard but he is still too weak to fend for himself and unable to handle his own affairs. When he becomes capable of handling his own affairs, then he is no longer an orphan.”³⁹

³² IM3678, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6; HM9664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

³³ Al-Hadid, 57:28.

³⁴ M4720, Muslim, al-Imara, 17; D2868, Abu Da’ud, al-Wasaya, 4.

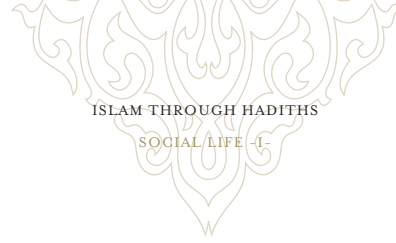
³⁵ T641, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 15.

³⁶ MU592, al-Muwatta’, al-Zakat, 6.

³⁷ MU594, al-Muwatta’, al-Zakat, 6.

³⁸ D2873, Abu Da’ud, al-Wasaya, 9.

³⁹ M4684, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 137.



The Holy Qur'an asks custodians to take care of orphans until the age of marriage, and to make sure that they are mature and ready for real life, and only then are they allowed to be in charge of their own property.⁴⁰

An orphan is Allah's trust to us. He needs to be protected emotionally, mentally, and physically. Because of this trust, Allah (swt) and his Messenger asked us to be very careful and sensitive towards slaves, women, and orphans, who were among the most fragile segments of society. If people realize that real happiness is not contained in deceptive things, such as wealth, status and power, they would appreciate the light in a child's eye more than anything else. Only at that moment, the meaning of the verse "*If you combine their affairs with yours, remember they are your brothers and sisters*"⁴¹ would find its real place in our life.

⁴⁰ Al-Nisa', 4:6

⁴¹ Al-Baqara, 2:220



SOCIAL LIFE LIVING TOGETHER



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَتَتْهَا قَالَتْ: ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ مَنْ اتَّقَاهُ النَّاسُ لِشَرِّهِ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Among the most evil of people is the one with whom people are
cautious because of his evil.”

(MU1639, *al-Muwatta’*, Husn al-Khalq, 1)



عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ بْنِ عَازِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أَمَرَنَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِسَبْعٍ:
بِعِيَادَةِ الْمَرِيضِ، وَاتِّبَاعِ الْجَنَائِزِ، وَتَشْمِيتِ الْعَاطِسِ، وَنَصْرِ الضَّعِيفِ، وَعَوْنِ
الْمَظْلُومِ، وَإِفْشَاءِ السَّلَامِ، وَإِبْرَارِ الْمُقْسِمِ...



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ؛ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ لَهَا:
”إِنَّهُ مَنْ أُعْطِيَ حَظَّهُ مِنَ الرَّفْقِ، فَقَدْ أُعْطِيَ حَظَّهُ مِنْ خَيْرِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَصِلَةُ
الرَّحِمِ، وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ، وَحُسْنُ الْجَوَارِ يَعْمُرَانِ الدِّيَارَ، وَيَزِيدَانِ فِي الْأَعْمَارِ.“



عَنِ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحِمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ، مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ، إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ
عُضْوٌ، تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهْرِ وَالْحُمَى.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ؛ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْمُؤْمِنُ مَالِفٌ، وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي مَنْ لَا يَالِفُ وَلَا يُؤَلَّفُ.“



Al-Barâ' b. 'Azib (ra) said, "The Prophet (saw) ordered us to do seven things: Visit the sick, follow funeral processions, say 'bless you' to one who sneezes, help the weak, help the oppressed, spread greetings, and help others fulfill their oaths."

(B6235, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 8)



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Well-mannered people are the ones who will get their share of goodness both in this world and the world to come. Taking care of relatives, having upright moral behavior, and establishing good neighborly relations would bring peace to towns, and make our lives longer."*

(HM25773, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 159)



According to al-Nu'man b. Bashir (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"In loving each other and showing compassion to each other, the believers resemble a body in which all the organs share the pain and misery of the one organ that becomes ill."*

(M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"A believer is a kindhearted person. Those who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near to them are not people of good character."*

(HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400)



A Companion of the Prophet (saw) was passing through an oasis. The oasis had a small creek with fresh water. He liked the taste of the water. He was very impressed with what he saw in the oasis, and could not help thinking to himself, “I wish I was living here, away from all the people.” It immediately occurred to him that he could not do such a thing without the consent of the Prophet (saw). He went to the Prophet (saw) and shared his thoughts with him. After listening to him, the Prophet (saw) advised him against his aspiration because participating in *jihād*—however short it was—in solidarity with his brethren would be recognized as more virtuous than performing prayers alone for years in seclusion.¹

Observing and living a religion are not limited to fulfilling obligations to Allah (swt) in solitude. On the contrary, a believer is expected to be mindful of other people and other creatures in addition to performing his religious duties. This is one of the most important criteria that would make the test of a believer more meaningful, and even change the result of the test. Islam does not approve of a secluded monkish lifestyle that would separate a believer from his community. This is exactly why the Prophet (saw) warned ‘Uthman b. Maz‘un, after his wife, Hawla bint Hakim (ra), came to complain to ‘A’isha (ra) about this matter. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “O ‘Uthman! We were not ordered to live in seclusion. Am I not an example for you? By Allah, I am the most fearful of Allah, and even I have to observe the boundaries set by Allah.”²

Living in seclusion is against human nature, because the human being was created weak and vulnerable.³ Unlike other creatures, he depends upon other people to sustain his material and spiritual life. He would not survive otherwise. This is the reason that human beings were called *al-insān*, meaning, “the ones who recognize each other.” Islam is a religion which takes the individual as well as the society into consideration. The

¹ T1650, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 17; HM10796, Ibn Hanbal, II, 524.

² HM26418, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226.

³ Al-Nisa’, 4:28.



social dimension of Islam can be observed in the believer's faith, practices, moral behavior and human relations. Allah Almighty reminds us of our social dimension, and He takes that dimension into consideration in His commands and prohibitions when He says, *"We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another."*⁴

Allah Almighty ordered the Prophet (saw) at the very early stage of his prophethood, when he was still unsure of the nature of his own mission and even went as far as to hide himself under a cover at home, to go out and socialize with the people.⁵ By the order of Allah (swt), he undertook a heavy responsibility against those whom he knew personally and those who were distant tribal members. He was going to explain to humankind who they were and where they were going, and teach them the right steps in religion to reach the ultimate goal. He continued to socialize with people at his home, on the street, in the market, and even on the battle field, always teaching them what he learned from his Lord. The Prophet (saw) called this responsibility, which is established in the hearts of human beings, a "trust,"⁶ and recommended that believers strongly hold onto it, for originated from faith and created solidarity among people. According to this prophetic approach, human relations are various kinds of responsibilities which begin in the personality of believers and extend to others who may live in the farthest corner of the world.

The heaviest responsibility was shouldered by the Prophet (saw). He was both a normal human being and a man who was given a divine duty, and therefore he was in constant touch with Allah (swt), transmitting Allah's message to humankind. On the one hand, he established relationships with other people as a member of society, and, on the other hand, he devoted particular time to worshipping Allah (swt). He only advised people about what he himself believed and practiced. He was a well-respected leader in his society.⁷ He was known to partake in work like everyone else, as can be seen during the construction of the Medina Mosque⁸ or the digging of trenches around Medina during the Battle of the Khandaq.⁹ He did not hesitate to provide help to anyone who asked for it. There were occasions in which he even paid off the debts of some destitute Companions (ra).¹⁰ His door was open to people from all walks of life. He answered anyone who had a question,¹¹ and tried to resolve the problems of anyone who came to

⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49:13.

⁵ Al-Muddaththir, 74:1-2

⁶ B6497, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35.

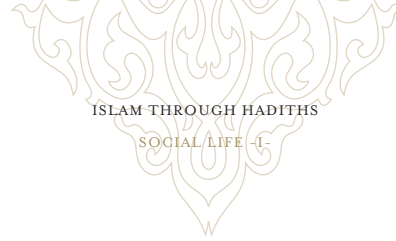
⁷ M321, Muslim, al-Iman, 192.

⁸ B3906, al-Bukhari, Manqib al-Ansar, 45.

⁹ B6414, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1.

¹⁰ B2399, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 11; M4159, Muslim, al-Fara'id, 15.

¹¹ B63, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 6.



talk to him.¹² For example, a concubine who lived in Medina used to come to talk to him about her problems.¹³

While living among his people, the Prophet (saw) always used to ask his community to be on good terms with other people. He recommended his Companions (ra) to “*endure hardships coming from people,*”¹⁴ and not to “*give any harm to others.*” He portrayed the Muslim as “*the one from (the harm of) whose tongue and hand (other) Muslims are safe,*” and the believers as “*the one with whom the people trust their blood and their wealth.*”¹⁵ According to this principle, a believer needs to stay away from all behavior which would harm social peace and justice. For example, when entering a crowded place, the Prophet (saw) recommended his archers to be careful in carrying their arrows so that they would not, unintentionally, harm other people.¹⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) specified that the faith had seventy parts, one of which was to remove stumbling blocks from roads.¹⁷ By saying, “*Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for others’ faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relations with) one another, and do not hate one another; and O Allah’s worshipers! Be brothers,*”¹⁸ he strongly recommended his people to stay away from behavior which would be the source of distrust among them. About those who transgress this main principle, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Among the most evil of people is the one with whom people are cautious because of his evil.*”¹⁹

Allah (swt) praised the Prophet (saw) by saying, “*truly you have a strong character.*”²⁰ This and other verses clarified the point that, whatever the Prophet (saw) was teaching his people, it was identical to what Allah was teaching them through the verses of the Noble Qur’an. The Lord of the universe is *al-Raḥmān*, who has taken it upon Himself to be merciful.²¹ He is also *al-Raḥīm* who opens His gates of mercy and blessing to His creatures.²² His Messenger, who was sent to the universe as the agent of mercy,²³ requested his people to establish good social relations and be steadfast in sustaining them. In so doing, he advocated rejecting the reciprocity principle and adopting a moral principle that suggested giving to others without taking something in return, visiting others without waiting to be visited, forgiving people’s faults, and being forgiving and benevolent in all conditions and circumstances.²⁴

¹² M5359, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 172.

¹³ HM12811, Ibn Hanbal, III, 174.

¹⁴ T2507, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 55.

¹⁵ T2627, al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 12.

¹⁶ B452, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 67; M6665, Muslim, al-Birr, 124.

¹⁷ M153, Muslim, al-Iman, 58.

¹⁸ B6064, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

¹⁹ MU1639, al-Muwatta’, Husn al-Khalq, 1

²⁰ Al-Qalam, 68:4.

²¹ Al-An’am, 6:12.

²² Al-Nahl, 16:20.

²³ Al-Anbiya’, 21:107.

²⁴ HM17589, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 159.



The Messenger of Allah (saw) discouraged believers from living a self-ish life. Believers should organize their life according to the principle of “what can I do to help others have a comfortable life,” rather than “how can I have a comfortable life for myself.” Making sure that the needs of a brother are fulfilled and standing behind him during his difficult times should be the life style of the Muslim. The Companion al-Bara’ b. ‘Azib’s following statement, “The Prophet (saw) ordered us to do seven things: visit the sick, follow funeral processions, say ‘bless you’ to one who sneezes, help the weak, help the oppressed, spread greetings, and help others fulfill their oaths,”²⁵ indicates how the Prophet (saw) was keen on educating his Companions (ra) about the realities of social life. According to Prophetic morality, the strong should be at the service of the weak. By saying, “*The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a mujāhid (warrior) who fights for Allah’s cause, or like one who performs prayers all night and fasts all day,*”²⁶ the Prophet (saw) highlighted the value in the eyes of Allah of doing a service for one’s fellow man. The most virtuous human being is one who is helpful to others.²⁷

Being at the service of other people does not simply depend on one’s material wealth. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Administering of justice between two men is also a ṣadaqa. And assisting a man to ride upon his beast, or helping him load his luggage upon it, is a ṣadaqa; and a good word is a ṣadaqa; and every step that you take towards prayer is a ṣadaqa, and removing harmful things from the pathway is a ṣadaqa.*”²⁸ All these deeds are indeed an indication of one’s genuine interest in other human beings. Because we live in a society, we need to consider the well-being of other people as well. Our Prophet praised those who are, “. . . lowering of your gazes (on seeing what is illegal to look at), refraining from harming people, returning greetings, advocating good and forbidding evil.”²⁹

The Prophet (saw) emphasized the need to be mindful and have good relations with people, starting with the closest relatives. For example, when he learned that the parents of a person who asked permission to participate in *jihād* needed their son at home, the Prophet (saw) advised him to stay at home, and said the following: “*Then, do jihād (struggle) for them.*”³⁰ He also reminded us that *ṣadaqa* should be given to people starting with the closest relatives.³¹ By saying, “*The best of you is the one who is best to his family,*”³² he emphasized the importance of having good relations with the

²⁵ B6235, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 8.

²⁶ B5353, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 1.

²⁷ MB129, al-Quda’i, *Musnad al-Sihab*, I, 365.

²⁸ M2335, Muslim, Zakat, 56.

²⁹ B2465, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 22; M5563, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 114.

³⁰ B3004, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 138; M6504, Muslim, al-Birr, 5.

³¹ B1426, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 18; M2313, Muslim, al-Zakat, 41.

³² T3895, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63; IM1977, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

closest people to us. In addition, it is important to pay attention to having good relations with neighbors. Those who believe in Allah (swt) and the Day of Judgement should be nice to their neighbors,³³ and establish good relations with them. The main thing which would turn neighborhoods and towns into peaceful places is healthy human relations. This is the reason that the Prophet (saw) said, “*Well-mannered people are the ones who will get their share of goodness both in this world and the world to come. Taking care of relatives, having upright moral behavior, and establishing good neighborly relations would bring peace to towns, and make our lives longer.*”³⁴ In other words, establishing good relations with other people would make people more peaceful, and grant them a blessed life. As a result, they would acquire a joy for life, and be happy both in this world and the world to come.

A believer’s responsibility in human relations is not limited to the people closest to him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) reminded us that helping orphans and the needy is another responsibility of Muslims. For example, when a group of destitute people from the Mudar tribe arrived before him, the Prophet (saw) urged the Muslims of Medina to help them.³⁵ For Muslims, social life refers to the entire society in which they live. The Messenger of Allah (saw) considered all men, women, children, and slaves as part of social life. In that regard, he encouraged women to attend congregational prayer,³⁶ and allocated special time for their education.³⁷ If he came across children on his way, he greeted them,³⁸ and stroked their heads.³⁹ He reminded people that slaves and servants were their brothers and sisters, and recommended sharing their food and clothes with them.⁴⁰ For example, he honored a former slave, Bilal al-Habashi (ra), with the post of the Prophet’s muazzin.

The Prophet (saw) also considered non-Muslims as part of society. Thus, he reminded Muslims that, in the eyes of Allah (swt), they had responsibilities towards non-Muslims. He informed us that anyone who murdered a non-Muslim in an Islamic society would not even smell the scent of Paradise, which according to Islamic tradition can be sensed from a very long distance.⁴¹ In conformity with the verse, “*He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes,*”⁴² the Prophet (saw) recommended, except at the times of war, the establishment of civilized relations with them.

Consequently, social life brings forth rights as well as responsibili-

³³ B5185, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 81; M174, Muslim, al-Iman, 75.

³⁴ HM25773, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 159.

³⁵ M2351, Muslim, al-Zakat, 69.

³⁶ M991, Muslim, al-Salat, 137.

³⁷ B7310, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 9; M6699, Muslim, al-Birr, 152.

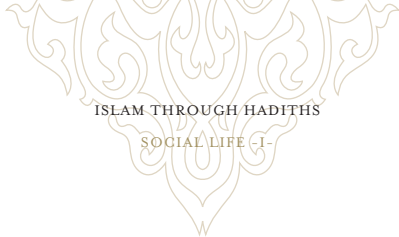
³⁸ M5665 Muslim, al-Salam, 15.

³⁹ M6052, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 80.

⁴⁰ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22; M4313, Muslim, al-Ayman, 38.

⁴¹ B3166, al-Bukhari, al-Jizya, 5.

⁴² Al-Mumtahana, 60:8.



ties for a person. Therefore, in social life one needs to take other people's needs into consideration, and be aware of one's own boundaries. In one of his *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) explained this consciousness with the analogy of a ship. According to this *ḥadīth*, some people gained the right to travel on the upper deck and some travelled on the lower deck. The ones who travelled in the lower deck wished to make a hole in the ship in order to get some water. If the people who were travelling on the upper deck allowed this to happen, then the ship would sink and all of them would perish. If they stopped them then they would all be spared this end.⁴³ With this analogy, our Master the Prophet (saw) succinctly explained to us the role of social classes and the stratifications that exist in everyday life. By the ship, he meant family, neighborhood, village, town, city, country, and even the whole world. The people who travelled on the upper deck were the rulers, the rich people, the employers, and the scholars; and the ones who travelled on the lower deck were the ruled, the poor, the workers, the unemployed, and the illiterate. The hole represents all kinds of illegitimate things such as theft, robbery, and corruption, which would harm social peace and justice. Allah Almighty, who asked the Muslims to create a responsible and exemplary community,⁴⁴ said the following in the Holy Qur'an: "[Believers], you are the best community singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah."⁴⁵

⁴³ B2493, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 6.

⁴⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

⁴⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:110.

⁴⁶ M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66.

⁴⁷ B6129, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 81; M5622, Muslim, al-Adab, 30

⁴⁸ M732, Muslim, al-Haidh, 46; N414, al-Nasa'i, al-Ghusl, 10.

⁴⁹ D2578, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 61

⁵⁰ N1359, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 99.

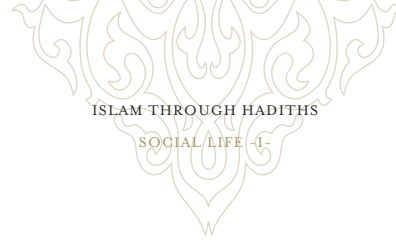
⁵¹ D5125, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 112-113.

⁵² T2392, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.

⁵³ B12, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 6; M160, Muslim, al-Iman, 63.

⁵⁴ B2906, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 81; M2065, Muslim Salat al-'Idayn, 19.

Although human relations are described as a chain of responsibility in the Prophetic tradition, this responsibility is not based on a strict moral duty, but on recognition, love, and affection, originating from faith. The Prophet (saw) summarized this in a very effective manner by saying, "In loving each other and showing compassion to each other, the believers resemble a body in which all the organs share the pain and misery of the one organ that becomes ill."⁴⁶ Asking about the bird kept by a child, in order to show how much he valued the child,⁴⁷ jesting with family members,⁴⁸ spending quality time with relatives,⁴⁹ conversing with friends about the old days,⁵⁰ telling people that you love them,⁵¹ asking the name of the father of a recently met person,⁵² and greeting everyone regardless of their status⁵³ were some of the behaviors that the Prophet (saw) liked to do, and he asked others to follow him in doing the same. He also allowed the organization of games and entertainment in festivals;⁵⁴ he permitted archery competitions, and at



other times horse and camel races⁵⁵ in order to strengthen social solidarity among the people.

In addition, ritual prayers played a role in socialization. After the Prophet (saw) arrived at Medina, he built a mosque and gathered the people there. He placed the mosque at the heart of social life by gathering the people in the mosque five times a day. According to traditional sources, a prayer in the mosque prevents Muslims from indulging in bad deeds⁵⁶ and provides them with an opportunity to get together and strengthen their ties. It is well known that the Prophet (saw) recommended that his Companions (ra) perform their prayers in congregation rather than alone.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he asked men not to prevent women from participating in congregational prayers,⁵⁸ and he asked everyone including men, women, children, and the elderly to partake in the ritual prayers of major holidays and share the joy of those days.⁵⁹ For example, a blind Companion, Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) once asked permission to skip the congregational prayers. The Prophet (saw) asked him whether he was able to hear the *adhān* from his home. When he said that he could hear it, the Prophet (saw) asked him to attend the congregational prayer.⁶⁰ The Prophet (saw) did not want anyone, including the impaired, to be excluded from the social life of the Muslims.

Alms giving, which is mentioned several times next to ritual prayer in the Holy Qur'an, aims to reduce the gap between rich and poor; curb selfish ambitions, and strengthen solidarity in society. Fasting, which brings the rich and the poor metaphorically together at the table, can enable people to create empathy towards the poor, keep everyone from acting against each other, and improve social relations.⁶¹ Likewise the ritual of Hajj, which does not make any differentiation among people, brings people together in a peaceful environment.⁶²

The Prophet (saw) always had a purpose in mind when he met with people. He met them in order to accomplish a specific goal, otherwise he avoided pointless meetings and idle talk. Our Master said that those who talk in vain, and try to influence people with word play, will be unlikable on the Day of Judgement.⁶³ By saying, "*Whoever does things to for ostentation, Allah is going reveal their true intention on the day of Judgement,*"⁶⁴ the Prophet (saw) pointed out that it is unacceptable to socialize with people for the purpose of gaining a false reputation, increasing prestige, and boasting

⁵⁵ T1700, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 22; N3615, al-Nasa'i, al-Khayl wa 'l-Sabq wa 'l-Ramy, 14.

⁵⁶ Al-Ankabut, 29:45.

⁵⁷ B645, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 30; M1521, Muslim, al-Masajid, 282.

⁵⁸ D565, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 52; DM1309, al-Darimi, al-Salat, 57.

⁵⁹ B351, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 2; M2055, Muslim, al-'Idayn, 11.

⁶⁰ HM15572, Ibn Hanbal, III, 424.

⁶¹ B1894, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 2; M2703, Muslim, al-Siyam, 160.

⁶² Al-Baqara, 2:197.

⁶³ T2018, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 71.

⁶⁴ DM2776, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 35; HM22678, Ibn Hanbal, V, 270.



about one's piety and wealth. Instead, human relations must rely on genuine feelings, and not on hypocrisy and arrogance. Disingenuous people do not only commit sin but also endanger their faith. Our Prophet likened even petty hypocrisy to associating partners with Allah (swt).⁶⁵

Although the Prophet (saw) taught Muslims to socialize with people, and to be patient in case they faced hardship in social relations, there were also times in which he recommended that we avoid people, as he did during his own life. Because he was in the presence of Allah (swt) all the time, he never felt the need to live in seclusion, but once in a while, especially in the month of Ramadan, he withdrew from his daily affairs to spend some time in seclusion and worship.⁶⁶

According to the Messenger of Allah (saw), some occasions necessitated a certain amount of distance from people. For example, if a group of people were committing sin, and there was no way to prevent it from happening, then it was better to leave them. The Prophet (saw) equated such evil company to the ironsmith's bellows, which, even if it did not burn you with its sparks, would bother you with its bad odor.⁶⁷ With this analogy, the Prophet (saw) reminded us to put a distance between ourselves and evil company. Our Master said that he would guarantee a house in Paradise to a man who avoided quarrelling even if he were in the right.⁶⁸ With this, he emphasized the fact that instead of making the quarrel longer in order to prove that one is right, it was better to leave the scene in order not to hurt the feelings of the interlocutor, and this action would also give everyone a chance to realize their own mistakes.

The Prophet (saw) encouraged socialization as a form of education, and also warned people about the things that they needed to be careful with in society. For example, he prohibited deliberate intervention in other people's private lives, such as secretly watching their houses,⁶⁹ and overhearing their conversations.⁷⁰ He was very keen on the necessity of asking permission before entering other people's houses.⁷¹

Although the Prophet (saw) recommended staying away from dangerous environments, he never preferred living in seclusion. His life style was the best evidence for this. For example, after all his hardships, he left Mecca for Medina. In so doing, he left the environment in which he did not feel comfortable, and began to live in another society, rather than withdrawing to a secluded place. In Medina, he reconciled the conflict be-

⁶⁵ IM3989, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 16.

⁶⁶ B2026, al-Bukhari, al-ʿIṭikaf, 1; M2784, Muslim, al-ʿIṭikāf, 5.

⁶⁷ B2101, al-Bukhari, al-Buyuʿ, 38; M6692, Muslim, al-Birr, 146.

⁶⁸ D4800, Abu Daʿūd, al-Adab, 7.

⁶⁹ B6902, al-Bukhari, Diyat, 23; M5643, Muslim, al-Adab, 44.

⁷⁰ B7042, al-Bukhari, al-Taʿbir, 45.

⁷¹ B6241, al-Bukhari, al-Istiʿdhan, 11; M5626, Muslim, al-Adab, 33.

tween the two tribes, al-Aws and al-Khazraj, and then made the Ansar and Muhajirun brothers and sisters. With the Medina Contract, he made a new agreement with the Jews, and took important steps towards creating an Islamic civilization. He highlighted the uncivilized manners of the Bedouin, and in this way included them in his mission of civilizing his society.⁷² All of these combined, namely, the emigration to Medina, the establishment of brotherhood between the Ansar and Muhajirun, and making the nomadic Bedouin in Medina sedentary were part and parcel of a process of socialization and building a civilization.

Knowing that human beings are social creatures, the Prophet (saw) put a lot of emphasis on human relations, and encouraged believers to be part of a Muslim social life from the cradle to the grave. Social relations in Islam begin with the people closest to us and expand to outer circles, from family members to neighbors, friends, Muslims, non-Muslims, and the whole of humankind. Muslims have rights and responsibilities for all of these people. Islam prohibits all activity which would weaken or destroy these circles. In our contemporary times, urban and modern life paradoxically makes social relations weaker, and push people into solitude. Although people live next to each other in large societies, they do not communicate with each other as if there were invisible walls separating them. It is the responsibility of a Muslim to establish good relations with other people, and turn this world into a habitable planet. Thus, our Prophet aptly described the main characteristic of a believer as a person who is kindhearted. He further said, *“Those who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near them are not people of good character.”*⁷³

⁷² HM18822, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 297.

⁷³ HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.



SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND HABITUATION THE ART OF LIVING ISLAM

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ؛ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْمُؤْمِنُ مَالِفٌ، وَلَا خَيْرَ فِيمَنْ لَا يَأْلُفُ وَلَا يُؤْلَفُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A believer is a kindhearted and amicable person. Those people who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near them are not of good character.”

(HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ اسْتَعَاذَ بِاللَّهِ فَأَعِيدُوهُ، وَمَنْ سَأَلَ بِاللَّهِ فَأَعْطُوهُ، وَمَنْ دَعَاكُمْ فَأَجِيبُوهُ،
وَمَنْ صَنَعَ إِلَيْكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا فَكَافِئُوهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا مَا [تُكَافِئُونَهُ] فَادْعُوا لَهُ
حَتَّى تَرَوْا أَنْكُمْ قَدْ كَافَأْتُمُوهُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُزْحَرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَيَدْخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَلْتَدْرِكْهُ مَنِيَّتُهُ وَهُوَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَيَأْتِي إِلَى النَّاسِ مَا يُحِبُّ أَنْ يُؤْتَى إِلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَنْ يَحْرُمُ عَلَى النَّارِ، وَبِمَنْ تَحْرُمُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارُ؟ عَلَى كُلِّ
قَرِيبٍ هَيِّنٍ لَيْسَ سَهْلٍ.“



عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تَبَاغُضُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَحِلُّ
لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If anyone seeks protection in Allah’s name, grant him protection; if anyone begs in Allah’s name, give him something; if anyone gives you an invitation, accept it; and if anyone does you a kindness, recompense him; but if you have not the means to do so, pray for him until you feel that you have compensated him.”*

(D1672, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 38)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Whoever wishes to avoid Hell and go to Paradise should taste (metaphorical) death before death. If he wishes others to treat him well, he should treat them well.”*

HM6807, Ibn Hanbal, II, 192; M4776, Muslim, al-Imara, 46)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Shall I not inform you for whom the Fire is unlawful and who is unlawful for the Fire? Every person who is near (to people), is amicable, and is easy (to deal with).”*

(T2488, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 45)



Al-Zuhri related from Anas b. Malik (ra) that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another, and O Allah’s worshipers! Be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days.”*

(B6065, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57)



It was the day of Mecca's conquest. This was the day when the Companions (ra), who had been insulted, tortured, and finally banished from Mecca, had an opportunity to seek their vengeance. On that day, the Prophet (saw) addressed his people with these words: "O you people! Verily Allah has removed the slogans of the Jahiliyya from you, and its reverence of forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: a man who is righteous, has taqwā and is honorable before Allah, and a wicked man, who is miserable and insignificant to Allah. All people are children of Adam, and Allah created Adam from dust. Allah said, 'People! We created you all from a single male and a single female, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another.' In Allah's eyes, the most honored of you are the ones most mindful of Him."¹

According to Islam, we are all the children of Adam because every human being carries the same essence, but what makes human beings different from each other is their faith in Allah (swt).² From an Islamic legal point of view, faith in Allah does not grant anyone a privilege over another human being. On the contrary, it gives them additional responsibilities. The following ḥadīth confirms this: "The most virtuous human being is the one who helps others."³

Muslims, like the Messenger who testified for all the Muslims, are responsible for all humankind.⁴ The way the Prophet (saw) treated other people was described in the Holy Qur'an in the following manner: "By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them—had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you—so pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah: Allah loves those who put their trust in Him."⁵ This attitude of the Messenger of Allah (saw) provides us with an example of how to treat people in our social

¹ Al-Hujurat, 49:13; T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49.

² T3955, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 74.

³ MB129, al-Quda'i, Musnad al-Shihab, I, 365.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:159.



circles. Without a doubt, solidarity should be the main principle that we ought to utilize to shape our relations with others. As Allah (swt) commanded, it is important to “say what is best” to people,⁶ and to “hold fast to Allah’s rope all together.”⁷ In our relations, humbleness should replace hubris and transgressions.⁸ In being humble the believer would be exalted, and being forgiving would increase his honor.⁹

Once, a group of destitute people went to the Prophet (saw). He was so touched by their despondent condition that he asked Bilal (ra) to immediately call people to prayer. After worship, he delivered a sermon in which he reminded believers of the verse, “People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul,”¹⁰ and informed them that “One needs to give charity from his dinars, clothes, barley, or dry dates—even if all he owns is a half a date.” Straight away the listeners began to vie to give charity. A person from among the Ansar came with a bag of coins which he could barely carry. Consequently, people continued to give charity until two piles, one of food and one of clothes, were collected. The Muslims’ attention to this issue made the face of the Messenger beam. The Prophet (saw) said, “He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this (act of goodness) and there is a reward for him for those who act according to it subsequently, without any deduction from any of their rewards; but he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of those who act upon it subsequently, without any deduction from any of their burden.”¹¹

Giving charity as small as a half a date, or making donations “for every joint of the human body,”¹² would turn every moment of our life into worship. Our beloved Prophet indicated that judging justly between two persons, helping a man with his mount by helping him to ride it, or by lifting his luggage on to it, (saying) a good word, and every step taken on one’s way to offer the compulsory prayer (in the mosque) could be considered charity.¹³ This understanding of charity was one of the most important principles that shaped the believers’ attitude towards other people. By saying, “Beware of evil with each other, for indeed it is destructive,”¹⁴ the Prophet (saw) wanted to strengthen the solidarity among the believers because he knew that there was a strong connection between getting along well with people and being a good believer. For example, he said, “A believer is a kind-hearted and amicable person. Those people who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near them are not of good character.”¹⁵

⁶ Al-Isra’, 17:53.

⁷ Al-Imran, 3:103.

⁸ M7210, Muslim, al-Janna, 64

⁹ M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:1.

¹¹ M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 69.

¹² B2707, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 11.

¹³ B2989, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 128; M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 56.

¹⁴ T2508, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56.

¹⁵ HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.

Our beloved Prophet recommended gift giving for the same purpose, and said, *“Whoever is given a gift, then if he finds something, let him reciprocate. If he has nothing, then let him say some praise. For whoever has said some praise has expressed his gratitude. And whoever refrains (from doing so) has committed kufr.”*¹⁶ He suggested to people that they should invite their servant, who prepares the food, to the table,¹⁷ or at least to give him some food from the same meal.¹⁸ The Prophet (saw), in his relations with other people, never despised or belittled anyone based on their status and class. He never invaded anyone’s privacy,¹⁹ but at the same time, he was never unaware of what was happening around him.²⁰ Once, while he was out on a ride, a man walked near him, constantly looking around for something. The Prophet (saw) realized that he was in need of something specific so by saying, *“Let those who have a spare mounts, give them to the one who does not; let those who have extra food, give it to the one who does not,”*²¹ he demonstrated how much he cared about the needy, and how much he appealed to people to do charitable works. The Ash’ar tribe used to gather all of their food in one place, and shared it equally during a famine, or while they went out on an expedition. The Prophet (saw) praised them by saying, *“I am from them, and they are from me.”*²² With this, he indicated the importance of solidarity among people during difficult times.

To the woman who said to the Prophet (saw), *“I have something important to request from you,”* he replied, *“Mother of so and so, take a seat in the corner of any street you wish and I shall sit with you to discuss the matter.”*²³ This behavior demonstrated Prophet’s thoughtfulness in his relations with people. When he was invited to a meal, which was sufficient only for him, he asked others to be invited to share his meal.²⁴ In like manner, he shared small gifts which were sent to him.²⁵ Once the Prophet’s politeness was abused,²⁶ and Allah Almighty sent down a warning in the Holy Qur’an for the purpose of teaching the right manners with the Prophet (saw) in social relations: *“Believers, do not enter the Prophet’s apartments for a meal unless you are given permission to do so; do not linger until [a meal] is ready. When you are invited, go in; then, when you have taken your meal, leave. Do not stay on and talk, for that would offend the Prophet (saw), though he would shrink from asking you to leave.”*²⁷

Although the Prophet (saw) had a habit of first offering things to people sitting next to his right side, once a young man happened to sit next to

¹⁶ T2034, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 87.

¹⁷ T1853, al-Tirmidhi, al-At’ima, 44.

¹⁸ B5460, al-Bukhari, al-At’ima, 55.

¹⁹ T5352, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 160.

²⁰ D4818, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 12; T5332, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 149.
²¹ M4517, Muslim, al-Luqata, 18.

²² B2486, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 1; M6408, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 167.

²³ D4818, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 12; T5332, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 149.

²⁴ D4818, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 12; T5332, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 149.

²⁵ M3507, Muslim, al-Nikah, 94.

²⁶ M3508, Muslim, al-Nikah, 95.

²⁷ Al-Ahزاب, 33:53.



his right hand while elderly people were sitting to his left. On this occasion, he asked permission from the young man to serve the elderly people first.²⁸ This incident showed the Prophet's seriousness about his own principle, as well as his respect for people in general.

With statement, *"If anyone seeks protection in Allah's name, grant him protection; if anyone begs in Allah's name, give him something; if anyone gives you an invitation, accept it; and if anyone does you a kindness, recompense him; but if you have not the means to do so, pray for him until you feel that you have compensated him,"*²⁹ the Prophet (saw) added another dimension to human relations. He specified that helping the needy was a charity, and emphasized that Muslims had to give charity.³⁰ He equated those who were trying to help the needy and widows to those who were making *jihād* in the path of Allah (fi sabilillah).³¹ He praised those who did the work of people who were not able to explain their own problems in an adequate manner.³² Furthermore, he was well known to have said that even a smile was a charity.³³

All of these values contain the principle of "treat others in the same manner as you would want them to treat you." 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra) reported the following: "We were on a break while travelling with Allah's Messenger. While some were busy with erecting tents, others practiced archery skills or were busy with grazing animals. In the meantime, the muazzin called for prayer and we gathered in the mosque. Allah's Messenger said, *"Whoever wishes to avoid Hell and go to Paradise should taste (metaphorical) death before death. If he wishes others to treat him well, he should treat them well."*³⁴

In modern parlance this would be called empathy. The following story reported by Abu Hurayra (ra) will clearly explicate this principle: During an expedition with the Prophet (saw), a group of Companions (ra) encountered some camels, and straight away began to milk them. Seeing this, the Prophet (saw) scolded them by saying, *"Would you like it if they came to your home and ate your food?"*³⁵ After warning them that *"No one should milk an animal without the permission of its owner,"* the Prophet (saw) rhetorically asked them, *"Would anyone of you like it if somebody comes to your store and breaks the container and takes away the food?"*³⁶

Our beloved Prophet practiced these principles in his life. For example, he never interrupted while somebody was talking, and he attentively listened to them.³⁷ When his daughter, Fatima (ra), whose talking

²⁸ B2366, al-Bukhari, al-Musaqat, 10.

²⁹ D1672, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 38; N2568, al-Nasa'i, al-Zakat, 72.

³⁰ B1445, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 30; M2333, Muslim, al-Zakat, 55.

³¹ B5353, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 1; M7468, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 41.

³² D5131, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 116-117.

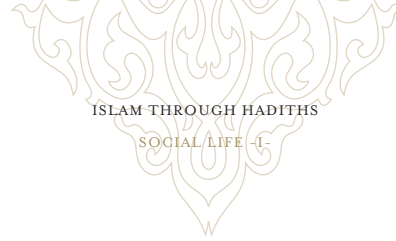
³³ T1970, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 45.

³⁴ HM6807, Ibn Hanbal, II, 192; M4776, Muslim, al-Imara, 46.

³⁵ HM9241, Ibn Hanbal, II, 406.

³⁶ B2435, al-Bukhari, al-Luqata, 8; M4511, Muslim, al-Luqata, 13.

³⁷ T5352, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama'il, 13.



and walking resembled his, gave him a visit, he stood up and let her sit in his seat.³⁸ However, he did not like others to stand up when he appeared in a meeting. Once, he entered upon a gathering, and everybody stood up out of respect to him. Thereupon, he warned them by saying, “*Do not do what the Persians do for their leaders.*”³⁹ According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Companions (ra) knew the personality of the Prophet (saw) and therefore did not stand up when they saw him, although they respected him the most.⁴⁰

The Prophet of Wisdom warned people about exaggerated respect, and did not approve of people’s inflated praise for each other. Once a man praised another man in the presence of the Prophet (saw). He warned him, saying several times, “*Woe to you, you have cut off your companion’s neck.*” Moreover, he went on to say, “*Whoever among you has to praise his brother should say, ‘I think that he is so and so, and Allah knows exactly the truth.’*”⁴¹ In order to warn against those who exaggerated praise for others, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Throw dirt at the faces of people who make too many compliments.*”⁴² It would be of course acceptable to make genuine compliments to those who deserve it, but it is important not to overdo it.

Before the relationship with the Jews went sour in Medina, the Prophet (saw) used to tolerate the discourteous and impolite behavior of ‘Abd Allah Ubayy b. Salul, who was vying for leadership in the city. One day, the Prophet (saw) went to pay a visit to Sa’d b. ‘Ubada (ra) (who was sick) at the dwelling place of Bani al-Harith b. al-Khazraj. On the way, the Prophet (saw) rode past a gathering in which there were Muslims, pagans, and Jews, and among them was ‘Abd Allah Ubayy b. Salul. When a cloud of dust raised by the animal’s hoofs covered the gathering, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy covered his nose with his cloth and said (to the Prophet), “Don’t cover us with dust.” The Prophet (saw) greeted them and then stopped, dismounted, and invited them to embrace Islam, and also recited to them the Holy Qur’an. ‘Abd Allah Ubayy b. Salul said, “O man! There is nothing better than what you say, if what you say is the truth. So do not trouble us in our gatherings. Go back to your mount (or house), and if anyone of us comes to you, tell (your tales) to him.” On that the Muslims, the pagans, and the Jews started quarreling until they were about to fight and clash with one another. The Prophet (saw) tried to calm them down. Then he got on his mount and rode away until he reached Sa’d b. ‘Ubada (ra), and shared his bewilderment with him. Thereupon, Sa’d said, “O Messenger of

³⁸ D5217, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 143-144; T3872, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 60.

³⁹ IM3836, Ibn Maja, al-Du’a’, 2.

⁴⁰ T2754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 13.

⁴¹ B2662, al-Bukhari, al-Shahadat, 16; M7501 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 65.

⁴² M7506, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 69.



Allah! Excuse and forgive him, for by Allah, Allah has given you what He has given you. The people of this town had decided to crown him (as their chief) and make him their king. But when Allah prevented that with the Truth which He had given you, it choked him, and that was what made him behave in the way you see him behaving.” So the Prophet (saw) excused and forgave him.⁴³

Our beloved Prophet recommended the avoidance of all kinds of rude improper words and behavior that would disturb other people. For example, he warned someone who had just joined a group carrying arrows and bows, by saying, “*Take care of the tip of your bows!*”⁴⁴ This warning was a natural result of his genuine concern about the safety of people. What’s more, he asked believers to be helpful to people in every situation and condition.⁴⁵

Emphasizing the importance of good deeds, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Shall I not inform you for whom the Fire is unlawful and who is unlawful for the Fire? Every person who is near (to people), is amicable, and is easy (to deal with).*”⁴⁶ He gave the following example in order to teach tolerance and forbearance to his community: “*There was a merchant who used to lend to the people, and whenever his debtor was in straitened circumstances, he would say to his employees, ‘Forgive him, so that Allah may forgive us.’ So, Allah forgave him.*”⁴⁷ In another *ḥadīth*, by saying, “*Indeed Allah loves tolerance in selling, tolerance in buying, and tolerance in repaying,*”⁴⁸ the Prophet (saw) reminded us that tolerant people would gain Allah’s favor.

Our beloved Prophet took the special status of people into consideration, and developed his relations with them accordingly. For example, once he received some kaftans as gifts and distributed them among his Companions (ra). He reserved one for Mahrama b. Nawfal, who was notorious for his rudeness. When Mahrama and his son came to the presence of the Prophet (saw), he said, “*This, I kept it for you.*”⁴⁹ In this way, the Prophet (saw) wanted to curb Mahrama’s possible future disturbing behavior.

The Prophet (saw) paid extra attention to troubled people, and made special arrangements for them. For example, when Ja’far b. Abi Talib (ra) was martyred during the Battle of Muta, he asked people to prepare food for the grieving family who had been busy with the funeral ceremony.⁵⁰

Pointing out that replacing jealousy and intolerance with understanding and tolerance was the only way to avoid the destruction of social peace

⁴³ B6254, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 20; M4659, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 116.

⁴⁴ DM1435, al-Darimi, al-Salat, 119.

⁴⁵ B6125, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 80.

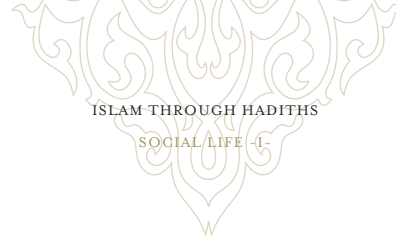
⁴⁶ T2488, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 45.

⁴⁷ B2078, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 18.

⁴⁸ T1319, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 75.

⁴⁹ B6132, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 82; M2432, Muslim, al-Zakat, 130.

⁵⁰ D3132, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 25-26.



and integrity, the Allah's Messenger said, *"The disease of the nations before you is creeping towards you: envy and hatred are such destruction. I do not speak of what cuts the hair, but what severs the religion. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love each other."*⁵¹ Recommending that believers be brothers, the Prophet (saw) in another *ḥadīth* said, *"Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another, and O Allah's worshipers! Be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days."*⁵²

Muslims have responsibilities for the society and world in which they live. They should intervene in the problems they witness in their best capacity. Allah Almighty chose a group called "Muslims" and held each prophet responsible for his own community,⁵³ and He holds the Muslims responsible for all of humanity.⁵⁴ Therefore Muslims have responsibilities for those who are hungry, homeless, needy, and oppressed in every corner of the world. Having good morality, which is defined as being amicable, enjoining good, and preventing evil,⁵⁵ is one of the essential characteristics that shapes Muslims' relations with others in society. Islam treats everyone equally, and puts this principle squarely at the center when Muslims develop relations with non-Muslims. Therefore being just, fair, and tolerant should also be the guiding principles in our relations with non-Muslims. However, in case of a personal assault, or insult to religious and family values, then the Muslims should act accordingly in their relations with non-Muslims. The *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in which he said, *"Indeed when a Muslim intermingles with people (non-Muslims) and he is patient with their maltreatment, then he is better than a Muslim who does not mix with the people (non-Muslims) and is not patient with the harm that they cause,"*⁵⁶ reminds us of the responsibilities that the Muslims have for their own society.

⁵¹ T2510, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56.

⁵² B6065, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

⁵³ Al-Nahl, 16:89.

⁵⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

⁵⁵ T2005, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

⁵⁶ T2507, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 55.



CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS SOCIALY ACCEPTABLE PRACTICES



عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَعَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ كُتِبَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ مَنْ عَمَلَ
بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً فَعَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ وِزْرِ مَنْ عَمَلَ بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ.“

According to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“He who introduces some good practice in Islam, which is then followed (by people) after him, will be assured of reward like the one who followed it, but without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduces some evil practice in Islam, which is then followed subsequently (by others), will be required to bear the burden like the one who followed this (evil practice) without their burden being diminished in any respect.”

(M6800, Muslim, al-‘Ilm, 15)



عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ دَخَلْنَا عَلَى جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
... فَقُلْتُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ حَجَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ...
فَقَالَ «رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ...» أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ تَحْتَ قَدَمِي مَوْضُوعٌ...



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَوْمَانِ فِي كُلِّ سَنَةٍ يَلْعَبُونَ فِيهِمَا
كَمَا قَدِمَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ الْمَدِينَةَ قَالَ: «كَانَ لَكُمْ يَوْمَانِ تَلْعَبُونَ فِيهِمَا وَقَدْ أَبَدَلَكُمُ اللَّهُ
بِهِمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا يَوْمَ الْفِطْرِ وَيَوْمَ الْأَضْحَى.»



أَنَّ أَبَا مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيَّ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
«أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ وَالطَّعْنُ
فِي الْأَنْسَابِ وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
«لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَطَمَ الْخُدُودَ وَشَقَّ الْجُيُوبَ وَدَعَا بِدَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ.»



According to Ja'far b Muhammad, his father (ra) said, "We went to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah and said, 'Tell me about the last Hajj of the Prophet (saw).'
He reported that the Prophet (saw) said, '*O people! Everything that used to belong to the mentality of the Jahiliyya is beneath these two feet of mine [i.e., is abolished.]*'"

(M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), "The people of the Jahiliyya had two days each year in which they would entertain and amuse themselves. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to Medina he said, '*You used to have two days when you would entertain and amuse yourselves, but Allah has given Muslims something as a substitute that is better than those two days: the day of al-Fitr and the day of al-Adha.*'"

(N1556, al-Nasa'i, al-Idayn, 1)



According to Abu Malik al-Ash'ari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*Four practices from the time of the Jahiliyya still survive among my umma which they cannot easily give up. These are taking pride in their nobility, belittling other families, praying for rain from the stars, and loudly lamenting for the deceased.*"

(M2160, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29)



According to 'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*He who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes and follows the ways and traditions of the Jahiliyya is not one of us.*"

(B1294, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 3)



A group of people from the Mudar tribe went to visit the Messenger of Allah (saw). They were wearing simple and worn woolen cloths. Obviously they were poor and needy. Feeling sorry for them, the Prophet (saw) asked his congregation to extend their help to these destitute people and he became a little dismayed when he realized that his Companions (ra) were sluggish in providing help for them. His disappointment could be seen in his face. However, in a short while, someone from the Ansar brought a sack of silver coins. Then another one brought something else. And then several others joined the bandwagon. The Messenger of Allah (saw) became very glad when he saw these acts of charity. He said, *“He who introduces some good practice in Islam, which is then followed (by people) after him, will be assured of reward just like the one who followed it, but without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduces some evil practice in Islam, which is then followed subsequently (by others), will be required to bear the burden just like the one who followed this (evil practice) without their burden being diminished in any respect.”*¹ It seems that customs and traditions are the products of social practices, and they reflect the values of society. The Messenger of Allah (saw) strongly recommended that his Companions (ra) do good deeds, be pioneers in establishing good practices, and be role models for the following generations. He also gave the glad tidings to those who through good deeds set precedents for other people and informed them that the one who did such good practices would keep getting rewards for them even after his death. Likewise those who set a bad example for later generations would continue to receive the bad credits that were the outcome of such bad practices. While Allah’s Messenger advocated the establishment and sustenance of good practices for his people, he also strived hard to eradicate bad and immoral practices. While he praised those who initiated good practices, he condemned and warned those who initiated immoral and wrong practices.

¹ M6800, Muslim, al-‘Ilm, 15.



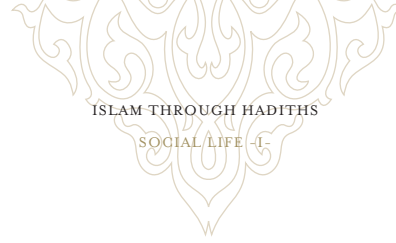
Because people have a tendency to conform to common behavior patterns with an attitude of calm acceptance, they keep doing what they become habitually used to without thinking too much about their actions. Although it is natural for a person to reason and calculate, thinking about every single issue could deter him from completing his tasks, and, in fact, complicate issues. In order to avoid such complications, instead of thinking about issues too much, it is easier to choose to do things which have been accepted and practiced by the larger society for a long time. These practices are called “customs and traditions.” Sometimes “good practices” are called *‘urf* and “good and bad practices combined” are called *‘ādāt*. Most of the time, however, these terms are used interchangeably. For example, in the thirty-sixth article of the *Majalla*, these terms are used interchangeably: “Customs and Traditions are used to justify decisions.” In Turkish, other terms, such as “*an’ane, gelenek, görenek, teamül,*” also refer to customs and traditions.

Muslim Jurists emphasized the importance of customs and traditions, and accepted them as sources of law. They also indicated that customs and traditions paved the way to formation of legal codes; made an impact on understanding, interpretation and implementation of the legal practices; and helped law to adapt to social life. Nonetheless, the jurists made some stipulations for customs and traditions to be acceptable sources of law. For example, one stipulation was that these customs and traditions should not contradict the main principles of religion.²

It is evident that customs and traditions play important roles in securing social peace and harmony. Especially in the absence of written rules and regulations, they function as guiding principles for the members of society. They are also the sources and inspirations of social dispositions, and of legal and moral principles. Because they are commonly accepted and ingrained deeply in people’s psyche, they are also effective in resolving conflicts among people. However, because customs and traditions can diverge from their original meanings, have difficulty adjusting to changing conditions, are interpreted differently, and differ from region to region, they create certain problems concerning their perception and implementation.

The Holy Qur’an acknowledges the existence of customs and traditions, and prescribes for the Muslims how they should consider them. According to Ibn al-‘Arabi, the term *‘urf* in the verse “*Be tolerant and command*

²“Adet,” *DIA*, I, 369-371; “Örf,” *DIA*, XXXIV, 87-91.



what is ‘urf: *pay no attention to foolish people*”³ was used in the meaning of the things which were accepted by previous religions, and the things that people considered right and good.⁴ The word “*ma’rūf*,” which originates from the same root as ‘urf, is mentioned several times in the Holy Qur’an. It means all kinds of activities whose lawfulness can be known through either revelation or reason.⁵ “*Mothers suckle their children for two whole years, if they wish to complete the term, and clothing and maintenance must be borne by the father in a fair manner [ma’rūf]. No one should be burdened with more than they can bear.*”⁶ In this verse the word “*ma’rūf*” means the things which are accepted by reasonable people, and that they comply with the traditions of that society. Also, in connection with customs and traditions, the words “*sunan*” (methods and behaviors);⁷ “*āthār*” (traces and impact);⁸ “*mā al-faynā ‘alayhi abā’anā*” (the practices of our ancestors)⁹ are used to denote them. In these verses, the Holy Qur’an does not categorially deny or accept the customs and traditions of previous nations, but rather asks the believers to test them with the yardstick of revelation and reason. In the Holy Qur’an one is also advised to abandon those who do not comply with reason and revelation.¹⁰ “*But when it is said to them, ‘Follow the message that Allah has sent down,’ they answer, ‘We follow the ways of our fathers.’ What! Even though their fathers understood nothing and were not guided?*”¹¹

“*He wishes to make His laws clear to you and guide you to the righteous ways of those who went before you. He wishes to turn towards you in mercy—He is all knowing, all wise—*”¹²

During the Jahiliyya, there were endless blood feuds and war between the tribes. These conflicts strengthened kinship ties and solidarity among the tribal members and made them act with a collective spirit. In such an atmosphere, the members of those tribes, when they had dissenting ideas, could not voice their opinions easily. The Holy Qur’an calls this pagan attitude “*hamiyyat al-jāhiliyya*.”¹³ The Holy Qur’an was very keen in eliminating some of Jahiliyya behavior. For example, it did not accept “*ḥukm al-jāhiliyya*,” which refers to the attempt to make paganism the dominant belief within society.¹⁴ With the expression “*tabarruj al-jāhiliyya*,” the Holy Qur’an warned women about immodest clothing which would remind them of the Jahiliyya.¹⁵ With the expression, “*zann al-jāhiliyya*,” it also asked people to avoid speculation, and criticized the Jahiliyya mentality, which was described in various verses.¹⁶

³ Al-A’raf, 7:199

⁴ AR2/359, Ibn ‘Arabi, *Ahkam al-Qur’an*, II, 359.

⁵ RM9, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 999.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:233.

⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:26.

⁸ Al-Zukhruf, 43:22.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:170.

¹⁰ “Adet,” *DIA*, I, 269.

¹¹ Al-Baqara, 2:170.

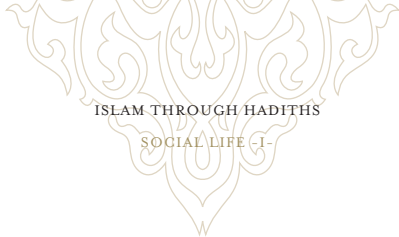
¹² Al-Nisa’, 4:26.

¹³ Al-Fath, 48:26.

¹⁴ Al-Ma’ida, 5:50.

¹⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:33.

¹⁶ Al-Imran, 3:154.



Because the Holy Qur'an asks for abolishing some practices in a gradual fashion,¹⁷ commands the use of the most proper method in disseminating the holy message,¹⁸ and warns not to insult the values of pagans and other people,¹⁹ all this demonstrates that it was not an easy task to eliminate certain customs and traditions found in Arab society. However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) acknowledged the customs that were socially accepted. According to 'A'isha, Hind, who was the wife of Abu Sufyan and the mother of Mu'awiya (ra), went to the Prophet (saw) one day and asked, "O Allah's Messenger! Abu Sufyan is a miser and a stingy man. Is it sinful for me to feed our children from his property?" Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, "*There is no blame on you if you feed them (thereof) in a just and reasonable manner.*"²⁰ While the Prophet (saw) told Hind that it was permissible to take from her husband's property, he obviously meant the socially acceptable amount which would be sufficient for the sustenance of a family during that time. This is clear from the sources which explain how the Prophet (saw), in his Farewell Pilgrimage, took local customs into consideration in determining the amount needed for the sustenance of a family.²¹

Although ascribed to the Prophet (saw),²² the following *hadith* belongs to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), whose life style and way of thinking were said to closely resemble those of the Prophet (saw). His statement, "The things that the believers see as good and beautiful are good and beautiful in the eyes of Allah, and the things that the believers see as bad and ugly are bad and ugly in the eyes of Allah,"²³ demonstrates the way in which people treated customs and traditions during the time of the Prophet (saw).

Allah's Messenger, in his Farewell Sermon, categorically denied the Jahiliyya customs and traditions which did not comply with the main principles of Islam. Among other statements, he said, "*O people! Everything that used to belong to the mentality of the Jahiliyya is beneath these two feet of mine [i.e., is abolished].*"²⁴

Before Islam, the Arabs also used to perform the ritual of Hajj. It was one of their established traditions that the wider society should show respect to the pilgrims and provided them with food and drink. As part of their rituals, the pilgrims used to go up Mt. 'Arafat, circumambulate the Ka'ba, run between the hills of Safa and the Marwa, and kiss the Black Stone. According to Arab tradition, these rituals had been performed since

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:219; al-Nisa', 4:43; al-Ma'ida, 5:90.

¹⁸ Ta Ha, 20:44.

¹⁹ Al-An'am, 6:108.

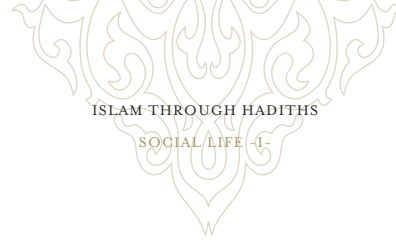
²⁰ B7161, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 14; B2211, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 95; M4479, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 8.

²¹ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

²² TUS87, al-Muwatta', p. 87.

²³ HM3600, Ibn Hanbal, I, 379.

²⁴ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.



the time of Abraham. However, over time the Meccan pagans had contaminated those rituals with their own customs. For example, they used to invoke the names of their idols, and circumambulate the Ka'ba in the nude.²⁵ During the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Allah (saw) removed all the idols from Mecca. In the ninth year of the Hijra, he performed the Hajj ritual and taught its principles to his Companions (ra). He explained in detail which of the former traditions would be maintained and which ones would be rejected: *“No pagan is allowed to perform the Hajj after this year, and no naked person is allowed to perform the circumambulation of the Ka'ba.”*²⁶ *“Every custom of the Jahiliyya period, and every blood claim, is beneath these two feet of mine (i.e., is abolished), except for the custodianship of the Ka'ba and the provision of water for the pilgrims, which I confirm still belong to the people to whom they belonged before.”*²⁷

In the Jahiliyya, it was a common practice to pay a visit to soothsayers and sorcerers. The pre-Islamic Arabs used to carry talismans, called *“nufra, tanjis, tamīma, nushra, ta'wiz, tawala, and hasuma,”* in order to protect themselves from unseen powers, and evil spells. Moreover, they used to go to the sorcerers, soothsayers, and Jewish mystics in order to cure their illnesses. Because these talismans contained pagan elements, the Prophet (saw) was very clear in his orders to Muslims concerning their usage being forbidden.²⁸ Nonetheless, he did allow the use of some non-pagan talismans which included Qur'anic verses and supplications. On this topic, 'Awf b. Malik (ra) said, *“We practiced incantation in the pre-Islamic days and we asked, ‘Allah’s Messenger, what is your opinion about it?’ He said, ‘Let me know your incantation,’ and said, ‘There is no harm in the incantation which does not suggest polytheism.’”*²⁹

While the religion of Islam required the abandoning of some former customs and traditions, it sometimes replaced the old traditions with new ones. For example, Anas b. Malik (ra) said, *“The people of the Jahiliyya had two days each year when they would entertain and amuse themselves. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to Medina he said, ‘You used to have two days when you would entertain and amuse yourselves, but Allah has given Muslims as a substitute something that is better than those two days: the day of al-Fitr and the day of al-Adha.’”*³⁰

It is not easy for a person to abandon age-old customs and traditions. By saying, *“Four practices from the time of the Jahiliyya still survive among my*

²⁵ M3081, Muslim, al-Hajj, 261; B4655, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Tawba) 2.

²⁶ B1622, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 67.

²⁷ IM2628, Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 5.

²⁸ D3883, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 17; IM3530, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 39.

²⁹ M5732, Muslim, al-Salam, 64.

³⁰ N1556, al-Nasa'i, al-Idayn, 1.



umma which they cannot easily give up. These are taking pride in their nobility, belittling other families, praying for rain from the stars, and loudly lamenting for the deceased.”³¹

The Prophet (saw) clearly pointed towards this issue of stubbornly holding on to practices from the time of the *Jahiliyya*. He warned people, saying, “[He] who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes and follows the ways and traditions of the days of Ignorance is not one of us.”³² He specifically asked women to abandon the aforesaid *Jahiliyya* customs, and took a pledge from them about it. However, those who gave their pledge of allegiance to the Prophet (saw) did not keep their word. Umm ‘Atiyya (ra), who was one of the pledge givers, described her observation about this in the following manner: “None of those women abided by her pledge except Umm Sulaym, Umm al-‘Ala’, and the daughter of Abu Sabra, the wife of al-Mu‘adh or the daughter of Abu Sabra, and the wife of al-Mu‘adh.”³³

The Messenger of Allah (saw) even went as far as warning his closest Companions (ra) concerning reprehensible *Jahiliyya* customs and traditions. The Companions (ra) took these warnings seriously, and quickly avoided these kinds of practices. However, some incidents during this period indicate that *Jahiliyya* customs continued to affect some individuals. For example, once Abu Dharr, during a debate with Bilal al-Habashi (ra), belittled him because his mother was a black woman. Bilal reported this to the Prophet (saw), who in return disparaged Abu Dharr, by saying, “Did you abuse him by using bad names for his mother. You still have some characteristics of the *Jahiliyya* left in you.”³⁴

There is no doubt that customs and traditions create pressure on individuals and societies. Therefore any society trying to abandon established customs that are wrong or immoral may face social resistance within itself. For example, al-Bara’ b. ‘Azib (ra) reported the following event: “The verse, ‘So enter houses through their proper doors,’ was revealed regarding us because the Ansar on returning from the Hajj never entered their houses through the proper doors but from the back door. One of the Ansar came back from the Hajj and instead entered through the front door and he was taunted for it. Therefore, the verse, ‘It is not righteousness that you enter the houses from the back, But the righteous man is he who fears Allah, obeys His order and keeps away from what He has forbidden. So, enter houses through the proper doors,’³⁵ was revealed.”³⁶

³¹ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 29.

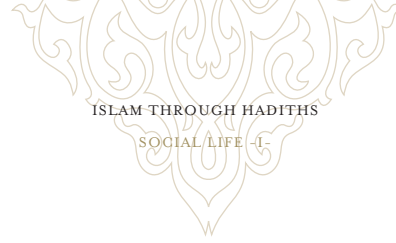
³² B1294, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 3.

³³ B7215, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 49; M2163, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 31.

³⁴ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22; M4314, M4315, Muslim, al-Ayman, 39, 40.

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:189.

³⁶ B1803, al-Bukhari, al-Umra, 18.



In the Arab society in which Islam was spread, customs and traditions were accepted as long as they complied with the main principles of Islam. In fact, some of those customs were strengthened with the advent of Islam. For example, shared values such as generosity, trustworthiness, integrity, faithfulness, and courage were encouraged and maintained by Islam and the Muslims. In commerce, while some practices were abolished, others were either modified or kept as they were. For example, all forms of usury and interest were banned. Furthermore, some ambiguous transactions which could have contained a risk of fraud and deception were completely abrogated. Islam accepted all economic transactions as long they were just, straightforward, and interest-free, such as partnership, *salām*, surety, and rent.

There were a number of customs and traditions concerning family values in those. Some were abolished in their entirety and some were reformed within Islam. For example, the Arabs took pride in various customs related to polygamy.³⁷ Nevertheless, *shighār* and *mut‘a* marriages, which the Arabs were very proud of, were among the types of marriages that Islam banned.³⁸ In addition, other types of marriages which contained the risk of mixing blood lines, or which did not give any rights to women were abolished.³⁹ In like manner, several other customs and traditions that disfavored women were abolished.

Even today many of our customs and traditions are rooted in the Prophetic Sunna. For example, reciting the *adhān* in the ear of newborn babies,⁴⁰ and bringing food to the house of the deceased are among those practices.⁴¹

As understood from the words and deeds of the Prophet (saw), pre-Islamic customs and traditions were maintained as long as they complied with the main principles of Islam. The Prophet (saw) permitted the maintenance of customs and traditions which were in conformity with reason and revelation, and prohibited those that contained elements of injustice, oppression, paganism, and tribalism.

After the spread of Islam and its establishment in the hearts of people, new customs and traditions, which originated from the Holy Qur’an and Sunna, began to take root among Muslims. Today, if the established customs and traditions are examined in the lands of Islam, it would become clear that many were indeed of Islamic origin. Reminding people of the

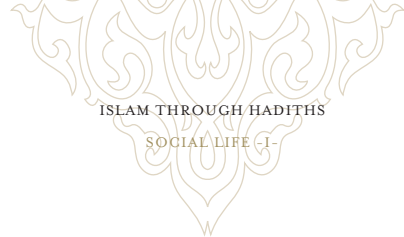
³⁷ CA10/219, Jawad ‘Ali, *Mufassal*, X, 219.

³⁸ D2241, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 24, 25; M3469, Muslim, al-Nikah, 61; M5005, Muslim, al-Sayd, 22.

³⁹ D2272, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 32-33.

⁴⁰ T1514, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adahi, 16.

⁴¹ T998, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana‘iz, 21.



origin of those customs would surely help them to understand and implement them in a more meaningful and conscientious manner.



THE RIGHTS OF NEIGHBORS ARCHANGEL JIBRIL'S WILL

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ لَا يَأْمَنُ جَارَهُ بَوَاقِهِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct.”

(M172, Muslim, al-Iman, 73)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ.“



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ سَعْدِ بْنِ مُعَاذٍ عَنْ جَدَّتِهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَا نِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ إِحْدَاكُنَّ لِجَارَتِهَا وَلَوْ كُرَاعَ شَاةٍ مُحْرَقًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: إِنَّ خَلِيلِي رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَوْصَانِي:
”إِذَا طَبَخْتَ مَرَقًا فَأَكْثِرْ مَاءَهُ، ثُمَّ انظُرْ أَهْلَ بَيْتٍ مِنْ جِيرَانِكَ،
فَأَصِبْهُمْ مِنْهَا بِمَعْرُوفٍ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَمُوتُ فَيَشْهَدُ لَهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَهْلِ آيَاتٍ مِنْ جِيرَانِهِ الْأَذْنِينَ بِخَيْرٍ، إِلَّا قَالَ
تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: قَدْ قَبِلْتُ شَهَادَةَ عِبَادِي عَلَى مَا عَلِمُوا، وَغَفَرْتُ لَهُ مَا أَعْلَمُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
كَيْفَ لِي أَنْ أَعْلَمَ إِذَا أَحْسَنْتُ وَإِذَا أَسَأْتُ؟ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِذَا سَمِعْتَ جِيرَانَكَ يَقُولُونَ: قَدْ أَحْسَنْتَ، فَقَدْ أَحْسَنْتَ. وَإِذَا سَمِعْتَهُمْ
يَقُولُونَ: قَدْ أَسَأْتُ، فَقَدْ أَسَأْتُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak about what is good or keep quiet, and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (or insult) his neighbor; and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should entertain his guest generously.”

(B6475, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23)



‘Amr ibn Sa’d ibn Mu’adh related on the authority of his grandmother (ra) that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “O trusting women, none of you must consider even a roasted sheep’s trotter too small to give to her neighbor.”

(MU1698, Muwatta’, Sifat al-Nabi, 10)



Abu Dharr (ra) reported Allah’s Messenger (saw) as saying, “Abu Dharr, when you prepare the broth, add water to it and give it (as a present) to your neighbor.”

(M6689, Muslim, al-Birr, 143)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “After the death of a Muslim, if three of his neighbors give testimonials that he was a good man, then Allah Almighty will say, ‘I accept the testimonials of my servants, and I forgive what I know about him as well.’”

(HM9284, Ibn Hanbal, II, 409)



As reported by ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud) (ra), a man went to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “How can I know when I have done well and when I have done something bad?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “If you hear your neighbors saying that you have done well, then you have done well, and if you hear them saying that you have done something bad, then you have done something bad.”

(IM4223, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 25; HM3808, Ibn Hanbal, I, 402)



During the conquest of Mecca, as reported by Khuwaylid b. ‘Amr al-Ka‘bi (ra), a standard-bearer of Banu Ka‘b b. Hudhaa tribe,¹ the Prophet (saw) said three times, “By Allah his faith is not complete.” When the Companions (ra) asked who he was, the Prophet (saw) said, “He, [who,] will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct.”²

Our beloved Prophet, who said that one could not enter Paradise without making his neighbors feel secure from him,³ and considered good neighbors as a source of happiness,⁴ vehemently opposed any kind of wrongdoing perpetrated against neighbors. In one of his *hadiths*, he said, “Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak about what is good or keep quiet, and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (or insult) his neighbor; and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should entertain his guest generously.”⁵

According to Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Salam (ra), a man came to the Prophet (saw), and complained about his neighbor. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “Be patient,” and sent him back home. When he came for the second time, the Prophet (saw) said the same thing. When he came for the third time, and said that his neighbor was hurting him, then the Prophet (saw) said, “Go back home, and throw your property to the street. When someone passes by you, you tell him, ‘My neighbor gives me trouble.’ With this, your neighbor will be cursed.”⁶ The man did what was instructed. As predicted, people began to curse the one who hurt the neighbor. That person came to the Prophet (saw), and asked, “O Messenger of Allah, why do people treat me like this?” Our beloved Prophet replied, “How?” And the man answered, “They curse me.” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “Before people, Allah cursed you.” The man regretted what he had done, and told the man who complained about him, “You will not see from me anything which you dislike.”⁷ And our Prophet told the neighbor, “Go remove your property from the street, you are safe now.”⁸

¹ IBS821, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isti‘ab*, 821.

² B6016, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 29.

³ M172, Muslim, al-Iman, 73.

⁴ HM15446, Ibn Hanbal, III, 408.

⁵ B6475, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23.

⁶ MŞ25410, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Adab, 10.

⁷ D5153, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 122-123.

⁸ MK18876, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 134; NM7303, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, VII, 2608 (4/166).



Caliph 'Ali (ra) indicated that displaying arrogance to neighbors was one of the portents of the last days.⁹ When a woman, who did not have abundant wealth but acted arrogantly and pretended to be a person of wealth towards her neighbor, asked the Prophet (saw) whether it was a sin to act like this, the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Those who pretend to be rich, although they do not have sufficient means, are the ones who wear cloths of lie.*”¹⁰ From this linguistic description, it is clear that the Prophet (saw) refused all kinds of seemingly innocent lies, and asked believers to be honest with friends and neighbors.

The Prophet (saw) said, emphasizing the importance of establishing good relations with neighbors, “*Be nice to your neighbors, so that you can be a good Muslim.*”¹¹ In another instance, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Do good deeds to neighbors, so that you can be a good believer.*”¹² As reflected in these *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) made a connection between being a good neighbor and a good believer. Our beloved Prophet indicated that the absence of good relations with neighbors was a portent of the last days.¹³ In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) said that those who were on good terms with their neighbors could enter Paradise, even if they did not perform *nāfila* (extra) worship, fasting, and charity work. Furthermore, those who gave trouble to their neighbors could not enter Paradise, even if they performed *nāfila* (extra) worship, fasting, and charity work.¹⁴ The Prophet (saw) recommended that believers serve and offer things to their neighbors, regardless of their own economic well-being.¹⁵ He also reminded believers not to despise any offering from neighbors. Addressing housewives, the Prophet (saw) said, “*O trusting women, none of you must consider even a roasted sheep’s trotter too small to give to her neighbor.*”¹⁶ The advice that the Prophet (saw) gave to Abu Dharr (ra) was also very telling: “*Abu Dharr, when you prepare the broth, add water to it and give it (as a present) to your neighbor.*”¹⁷ Trying to show the importance of neighborly relations, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Those who have a good night’s sleep while their neighbors are hungry are not genuine believers.*”¹⁸ He also asked believers to give assistance to their neighbors,¹⁹ and present them with gifts. Fittingly, the Prophet (saw) himself presented a gift to the short-tempered Makhrama in order to win his heart. This happened when he was distributing kaf-tans which he had received as gifts to his Companions (ra). When Makh-rama heard this, he said to his son, “Let us also go and get one from the

⁹ MŞ37510, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Fitan, 2.

¹⁰ BS15162, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 486.

¹¹ IM4217, Ibn Maja, *al-Zuhd*, 24.

¹² T2305, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Zuhd*, 2.

¹³ NM8566, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, VIII, 3051 (4/513).

¹⁴ HM9673, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

¹⁵ M173, Muslim, *al-Iman*, 74.

¹⁶ MU1698, *al-Muwatta*’, *Sifat al-Nabi*, 10; M2379, Muslim, *al-Zakat*, 90; B6017, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Adab*, 30.

¹⁷ M6689, Muslim, *al-Birr*, 143.

¹⁸ MŞ30350, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, *al-Iman wa ‘l-Ru’ya*, 6.

¹⁹ B6019, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Adab*, 31.

Prophet (saw).” When he arrived at the Prophet’s presence, the Prophet (saw) said, “*I reserved one for you,*” and gave him the gift.²⁰

The Companions (ra) followed suit and showed the same propriety and sensitivity to create good neighborly relations. For example, Ibn ‘Abbas warned Ibn Zubayr (ra) about stinginess and reminded him of the *ḥadīth*, “*Those who have a good night’s sleep while their neighbors are hungry are not from us.*”²¹

The Prophet (saw) said that a person is not a true believer as long as he does not aspire for his neighbor the same things that he aspires for himself.²² The Prophet (saw) recommended avoiding all kinds of harmful words and deeds directed against neighbors. He said that whosoever is patient with the insults of his neighbors is among those whom Allah (swt) loves.²³ This is because human beings are tested with their family, children, and property, as well as with their neighbors.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) pointed out that the neighbor who is nearest to us has more rights on us. To that ‘A’isha (ra) asked, “O Messenger of Allah! I have two neighbors. With which of them should I begin?” the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Begin with the one whose door is nearer to you.*”²⁵ If there was a scheduling conflict with regard to an organized event, the Prophet (saw) recommended that we participate in the event of the nearest neighbor.²⁶ It has been attested that even if the nearest neighbor was a non-Muslim, they still had priority. One of the commentators from the generation of the Followers (of the Companions (ra)), Mujahid, said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *Jibril continued to advise me about (treating) the neighbors so (kindly and politely), that I thought he would order me (from Allah) to make them heirs.*”²⁷

Neighbors also have priority in buying and selling things (*shuf‘a*). This is because the Prophet (saw) recommended offering his share of house and land first to the neighbors,²⁸ and he did not want to sell it before asking the neighbors.²⁹ Taking this advice seriously, a manumitted slave of the Prophet (saw), Abu Rafi, first offered his house to his neighbor, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (ra), before selling it. When Abu Waqqas said that he was not interested, al-Miswar b. Makhrama (ra) strongly recommended that Abu Waqqas buy the property. Abu Sa’d said that he could pay only 4,000 dirhams (silver coins) by installments. Abu Rafi said, “I have been offered five hundred dinars (gold coins) and had I not heard the Prophet (saw)

²⁰ B6132, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 82; M2432, Muslim, al-Zakat, 130.

²¹ B6132, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 82; M2432, Muslim, al-Zakat, 130.

²² M170, Muslim, al-Iman, 71.

²³ HM21863, Ibn Hanbal, V, 175.

²⁴ B525, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 4; M7268, Muslim, al-Fitan, 26.

²⁵ D5155, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 122-123; B2595, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 16.

²⁶ D3756, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 9; HM23860, Ibn Hanbal, V, 408.

²⁷ T1943, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 28.

²⁸ B6978, al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 14; D3516, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 73.

²⁹ IM2493, Ibn Maja, al-Shuf’a, 1.



say, “*The neighbor has more right than anyone else because of his nearness,*” I would not give them to you for four-thousand (dirhams) while I was being offered five-hundred dinars.”³⁰ Giving priority to the neighbor in selling a property does not mean that one needs to sell it underpriced. It rather means to give priority to the neighbor in case he is willing to pay the same amount. Abu Rafi‘ chose to sell his house at a much lower value because of his sensitivity about the rights of neighbors.

The Prophet (saw) asked neighbors not to retain water that could be used by others,³¹ and he also did not approve of selling the water, if any was left.³² He asked property owners to let their courtyards be used by neighbors, and make way for them so that they could have access to their own properties.³³ He even suggested leaving a path between the two properties as wide as seven feet.³⁴ Although the Prophet (saw) asked Muslims to let their neighbors attach wooden pegs to their walls, some Muslim developed different attitudes about this issue. Abu Hurayra (ra) reminded these Muslims of the *ḥadīth*, “*No one should prevent his neighbor from fixing a wooden peg in his wall.*”³⁵ Then, he added, “*By Allah, I’ll put that wooden peg between your shoulders.*”³⁶

The Prophet (saw) said, “*The most virtuous neighbor in the eyes of Allah is the one who treats his neighbor nicely.*”³⁷ He pointed out that being remembered courteously by neighbors would be a reason that Allah (swt) would forgive people for their sins, he said, “*After the death of a Muslim, if three of his neighbors give testimonials that he was a good man, then Allah Almighty would say, ‘I accept the testimonials of my servants, and I forgive what I know about him as well.*”³⁸

The importance of neighbors’ testimonials in the eyes of Allah (swt) could be important in determining whether one’s deed was good or bad. When a Companion asked the Prophet (saw), “How can I know when I have done well and when I have done something bad? he said, “*If you hear your neighbors saying that you have done well, then you have done well, and if you hear them saying that you have done something bad, then you have done something bad.*”³⁹

Those believers who take the Messenger’s warnings and recommendations about neighbors seriously will not give them any harm, and wish for them the things that they want for themselves. Thus, in dealing with others, neighbors get priority and they have rights upon us. When ‘Abd

³⁰ B2258, al-Bukhari, al-Shuf’a, 2.

³¹ HM10578, Ibn Hanbal, I, 506.

³² M4008, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 38.

³³ HM2867, Ibn Hanbal, I, 313.

³⁴ HM2098, Ibn Hanbal, I, 235

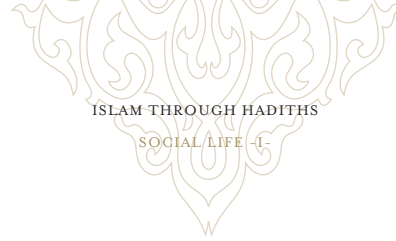
³⁵ HM2914, Ibn Hanbal, I,

³⁶ M4130, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 136; B2463, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 20.

³⁷ DM2467, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 3; T1944, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 28.

³⁸ HM9284, Ibn Hanbal, II, 409.

³⁹ IM4223, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 25; HM3808, Ibn Hanbal, I, 402.



Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) asked what the major sin was in the eyes of Allah, the Prophet (saw) replied by saying that the greatest sin in the eyes of Allah was associating partners with Allah (swt), killing newborn offspring due to financial hardships, and sleeping with the neighbor's wife.⁴⁰

The Prophet (saw) was praised as a great neighbor himself.⁴¹ He asked Muslims to visit their neighbors and take good care of them. At the same time he frowned upon disclosing their private life and secrets to the public.⁴² The Muslim is a person who should not refuse his neighbor's requests, visit the ill, and share their pleasant and difficult moments. Whenever someone dies, a Muslim should offer to help the family of the deceased in every way.⁴³

Establishing good neighborly relations would provide us with peace of mind in this world, and rewards in Hereafter. Drawing our attention to the importance of this fact, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Get a neighbor before buying a house; make friends before you set out on a journey.*"⁴⁴

⁴⁰ M257, Muslim, al-Iman, 141; B6001, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 20.

⁴¹ IM1899, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 21.

⁴² IM1899, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 21.

⁴³ BŞ9560, al-Bayhaqi, *Su'ab al-Iman*, VII, 83.

⁴⁴ MK4379, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, IV, 268.



FRIENDSHIP

A MAN FOLLOWS THE MORALITY OF HIS FRIEND

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ؛ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْمُؤْمِنُ مَالِفٌ، وَلَا خَيْرَ فِيمَنْ لَا يَأْلَفُ وَلَا يُؤْلَفُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A believer is a kindhearted person. Those who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near to them are not people of good character.”

(HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْجَلِيسِ السَّوِّءِ، كَحَامِلِ الْمِسْكِ وَنَافِخِ الْكَبِيرِ،
فَحَامِلُ الْمِسْكِ، إِمَّا أَنْ يُحْدِثَكَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَبْتَاعَ مِنْهُ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْهُ رِيحًا
طَيِّبًا، وَنَافِخُ الْكَبِيرِ، إِمَّا أَنْ يُحْرِقَ ثِيَابَكَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ رِيحًا خَبِيثَةً.“



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا تُصَاحِبْ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا وَلَا يَأْكُلْ طَعَامَكَ إِلَّا تَقِيًّا.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”خَيْرُ الْأَصْحَابِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِصَاحِبِهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْجِيرَانِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
خَيْرُهُمْ لِجَارِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْأَرْوَاحُ جُنُودٌ مُجَنَّدَةٌ، فَمَا تَعَارَفَ مِنْهَا ائْتَلَفَ، وَمَا تَنَافَرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَفَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A man will follow the religion of his close friend, so let each of you look to whom he takes as a close friend.”

(T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45; D4833, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 16)



According to Abu Musa (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying the musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some of it from him, or at least you will acquire through smell a fine fragrance from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will receive a bad odor from him.”

(M6692, Muslim, al-Birr, 146; B5534, al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 31)



According to Abu Sa'id (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Do not keep the company of anyone except a believer and make sure no one eats your food except a person of piety (taqwā).”

(T2395, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 55; D4832, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 16)



According to 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The best of companions according to Allah are those who are best to their companion and the best of neighbors according to Allah are those that are best to their neighbor.”

(T1944, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 28; DM2467, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 3)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The human spirits are like a community. Whosoever gets along well in that community decides to live together; whosoever does not get along well chooses to depart from each other.”

(M6708 Muslim, al-Birr, 159)



Once, while our beloved Prophet was leaving the Mosque and Anas b. Malik (ra) was next to him,¹ Dhu al-Khuwaysira al-Yamani (ra) approached and asked him when the Last Hour would arrive. As a reply to this question —a question that had been occupying people’s minds for thousands of years— the Prophet (saw) said, “*What preparations have you made for the Last Hour?*” Al-Yamani, with his sincerity, said “Love of Allah and his Messenger (that is my preparation for the Last Hour)” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) gave him the glad tiding by saying, “*You will be with the one whom you love.*” Malik reported that nothing made the Muslims happier than hearing this glad tiding. Malik went on to also say that he loved Allah, his Messenger, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) and, even if he was not as virtuous as they were, he expected to be with them in the eternal life.²

When the Prophet (saw) was asked about a person who loved a group of people, but was not able to be together with them, he said, “*People will be with the ones whom they love.*”³ Those who love a person without seeing him, and pledge loyalty to him will be together with him in the world to come; if one loves somebody, he will be ready to make all kinds of sacrifices for him and give all priority to him in this life.

Friendship is beyond an ordinary relationship and requires much deeper mutual love and respect; this is part of the human condition. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A believer is a kindhearted person. Those who do not have good relations with other people, and do not let others near to them are not people of good character.*”⁴ Furthermore, by saying, “*A man will follow the religion of his close friend, so let each of you look to whom he takes as a close friend,*”⁵ the Prophet (saw) warned believers about the importance of choosing a friend prudently. The notion that friends might have good or bad influence on each other was also mentioned in the Holy Qur’an. On the Day of Judgement, an unbeliever will say in misery and regret, “*Woe*

¹ M6715, Muslim, al-Birr, 164.

² M6713, Muslim, al-Birr, 163; IF10/555, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 555.

³ B6169, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 96; M6718, Muslim, al-Birr, 165.

⁴ HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.

⁵ T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45; D4833, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 16.



is me! If only I had not taken so and so as a friend—he led me away from the Revelation after it reached me. Satan has always betrayed mankind.”⁶ On that day, those who seemed to be friends in this world are going to act like strangers under this difficult circumstance. Those who had friends in this world with the consent of Allah (swt) are going to remain together with their friends forever.⁷

The Prophet (saw) emphasized the importance of the influence of friends through the following parable: *“The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying the musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some from him, or at least you will acquire through smell a fine fragrance from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will receive a bad odor from him.”*⁸ Moreover, knowing the effect of friendship on our religion, life style, and points of view, our Lord said, *“The believers should not make the disbelievers their allies rather than other believers — anyone who does such a thing will isolate himself completely from Allah — except when you need to protect yourself from them. Allah warns you to beware of Him: the Final Return is to Allah.”*⁹ In like manner, the Prophet (saw) said, *“Do not keep the company of anyone except a believer and make sure no one eats your food except a person of piety (taqwā).”*¹⁰ This is because having a friendship, whereby two people eat together and share values together, makes a strong bond between two people. Thus, a believer can truly only establish such a precious bond with a person who shares the same principles. In the Holy Qur’an Allah says, *“[Prophet], you will not find people who truly believe in Allah and the Last Day giving their loyalty to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers, sons, brothers, or other relations...”*¹¹

Our religion suggests that genuine friendship can only be established between people who believe in, and have *taqwā* toward Allah.¹² The Holy Qur’an criticizes those who act against this principle, *“If they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet (saw), and in what was sent down to him, they would never have allied themselves with the disbelievers, but most of them are rebels.”*¹³ Furthermore, in the Holy Qur’an another verse reads, *“You who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as your allies showing them friendship when they rejected the truth you have received, and have driven you and the Messenger out simply because you believe in Allah, your Lord...”*¹⁴ However, these verses in the

⁶ Al-Furqan, 25:28-29.

⁷ Al-Zukhruf, 43:67.

⁸ M6692, Muslim, al-Birr, 146; B5534, al-Bukhari, Sayd, 31.

⁹ Al ‘Imran, 2:28.

¹⁰ T2395, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 55; D4832, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 16.

¹¹ Al-Mujadala, 58:22.

¹² T2395, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 55; D4832, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 16.

¹³ Al-Ma’ida, 5:81.

¹⁴ Al-Mumtahina, 60:1.

Holy Qur'an should not be interpreted to mean the exclusion of members of different faiths. Still, these verses refer to those who are relentless enemies of Islam and to those Muslims who are willing to misplace the opportunity of gaining friendships among Muslims. On this point, Allah Almighty says, "But Allah forbids you to take as allies those who have fought against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and helped others to drive you out: any of you who take them as allies will truly be wrongdoers"¹⁵ and "You who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies: they are allies only to each other. Anyone who takes them as an ally becomes one of them."¹⁶ According to these verses, while befriending members of other religions is frowned upon based upon certain contexts, continuing to have relations with them on a civilized level is not proscribed.

Our beloved Prophet gave the glad tiding to those who genuinely love each other for the sake of Allah (swt) that they will be provided shade by Allah on the Day of Judgement when there will be no screen to protect people from the blazing sun.¹⁷ Therefore, real friendship is walking together arm in arm on Allah's path; free from jealousy, arrogance, and pride. Such a genuine friendship would lead to Allah eventually because the Holy Qur'an states that the real friend for believing hearts is Allah,¹⁸ and the believers' good deeds foster this friendship.¹⁹ The fact that the Prophet (saw) called himself the "Friend of Allah" should be understood in this context.²⁰ For example, he referred to Abu Bakr (ra), who had been with him since the early days of Islam, as "my brother and friend."²¹ He said that it was Abu Bakr who helped him the most in his mission. With the following statement, the aim of the Prophet (saw) was to increase social solidarity and sensitivity among the brotherhood of Muslims: "If I were to have taken a close friend, I would have chosen Abu Bakr, but the brotherhood of Islam is better."²²

Our Supreme Lord said, "Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend."²³ By bolstering an attitude among Muslims that would create social peace, the Prophet (saw) use to say that Muslims who socialize with people and are patient with them are more righteous than Muslims who live in seclusion.²⁴ Aptly, in the second half of the previously mentioned verse, Allah Almighty emphasized this patience as a virtue: "but only those who are steadfast in patience, only those who are blessed with great righteousness, will attain to such goodness."²⁵

¹⁵ Al-Mumtahina, 60:9.

¹⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5:51.

¹⁷ B1423, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 16; M2380, Muslim, al-Zakat, 91.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:257.

¹⁹ Al-An'am, 6:127.

²⁰ M6175, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 6; T3655, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 14.

²¹ M6172, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 3; B3656, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 5.

²² M6170, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 2; B466, al-Bukhari, al-Salat 80

²³ Al-Fussilat, 41:34.

²⁴ BS20754, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, X, 149.

²⁵ Al-Fussilat, 41:35.



Caliph 'Ali (ra) said, "Be careful in your love of a person, because he might turn into your enemy one day. Be careful in your dislike of a person, because he might turn into your friend one day."²⁶ This statement reflects the possibility for the believer, who adopts patience, sacrifice, and brotherhood, to be deceived by a sinister and hypocritical person and as a result be harmed materially and spiritually. Our Prophet warned us about naivete and gullibility with regard to making friends by saying, "A *believer should not be bitten twice from the same place.*"²⁷ Friendship is only sustainable through mutual respect and love. Here the famous maxim "Those who do not give the same value as you give to them cannot be your good friend"²⁸ is very apt and indicates that one needs to be diligent and selective in selecting one's friends.

The Prophet (saw), who built his relations on tolerance, politeness, and friendliness, considered smiling a charity,²⁹ and he himself became the best example, showing how a friendship could be established and sustained.

Jabr b. 'Abd Allah (ra), who is known to have said that the Prophet (saw) never refused him anything after converting to Islam, stated, "He always smiled at me whenever he saw me."³⁰ The Prophet (saw) listed the necessary elements that would sustain friendship as follows: "There are three qualities; whosoever has those qualities Allah will give them a break on the Day of Judgement."³¹ When the Companions (ra) asked what those qualities were, he replied, "Giving to the ones who do not give to you, forgiving the ones who harm you, and visiting those who do not visit you." When the Companions (ra) asked, "What goodness do we acquire from these deeds?" the Prophet (saw) said, "You will have an easy time on the Day of Judgement, and you will enter Paradise with the grace of Allah."

Among the most favorable things in the eyes of Allah (swt) is a friend who treats other friends well.³² Concerning this subject the Prophet (saw) said, "When a man becomes the brother of another man, then let him ask about his name and his father's name and who he is, for indeed it shall nurture affection."³³ One day, the Prophet (saw) asked Ibn 'Umar (ra) whether he knew the person who asked something from him. When Ibn 'Umar said that he knew him, the Prophet (saw) wanted to learn his name. Ibn 'Umar told him that he did not know it. The Prophet (saw) asked him, "Where is his house?" and Ibn 'Umar (ra) again replied that he did not know. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, "This is not how you know someone."³⁴ Perhaps this

²⁶ MŞ35865, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Awail, 1; BŞ6593, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, V, 260.

²⁷ M7498, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 63; B6133, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 83.

²⁸ BŞ9502, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, 19/491.

²⁹ T1956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 36.

³⁰ B6089, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 68; M6364, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 135.

³¹ BS21695, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 396.

³² T1944, al-Tirmidhi, 28; DM2467, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 3.

³³ T2392, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.

³⁴ BS20980, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 211.

was because such information was the most basic knowledge that could help us determine whereabouts of our friends in case of emergency, such as sickness or death.³⁵

Life without friends is a life without support and confidants. If a person observes the Prophetic principle of “*gaining neighbors before buying a house, or making friends before setting out on a journey,*”³⁶ then he does not have to shoulder life’s hardships alone. However, it is important to recognize that sustaining friendship is more important than establishing new relationships. Caliph ‘Umar (ra) emphasized the importance of calling loved ones by name, showing respect to them in case they visited, and greeting them when encountering them on the road. He said that such things would strengthen friendships.³⁷

The Prophet (saw) is reported to have said that among the “*the best of the good deeds*” are the ones that one could do for the friends of the father, indicating that friendship is not limited to only two individuals. With this statement the aim of the Prophet (saw) was for people to understand that friendship expands to families and makes them stronger.³⁸ Heeding this principle, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) let a bedouin sit on his mount and he put his own turban on his head on the way to Mecca simply because this bedouin had been a friend of his father. One of the people next to Ibn ‘Umar (ra) asked him, “Would it have not been enough to give him a few dirhams?” Thereupon Ibn ‘Umar (ra) reminded them the words of the Prophet (saw), “*Take care of your father’s friend. Do not disconnect your relationship with him. Otherwise, Allah may darken your light.*”³⁹

The Prophet (saw) asked us to stay away from attitudes and behaviors that would harm friendships; and concerning this issue he warned us by saying, “*Do not argue with your brother, do not mock him, and do not make a promise only to not fulfill it.*”⁴⁰ He prohibited two people from talking privately with one another when three people were present because such behavior might upset the third person.⁴¹ Knowing the Prophet’s sensitivity about this, Mujahid, the famous commentator from the generation of the Followers did not approve of anybody who would bother his friends with looks, or harass them with such questions as “Where are you coming from?” and “Where are you going?”⁴² The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not permit any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days,⁴³ and praised those who took the first step to make peace.⁴⁴

³⁵ BŞ9023, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, 6/492.

³⁶ MK4379, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, IV, 268.

³⁷ MA19865, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 44.

³⁸ M6514, Muslim, al-Birr, 12.

³⁹ EM40, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 29.

⁴⁰ T1995 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

⁴¹ M5697, Muslim, al-Salam, 38; T2825, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 59.

⁴² EM1157, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 396.

⁴³ B6065, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6534, Muslim, al-Birr, 26.

⁴⁴ M6532, Muslim, al-Birr, 25; B6077, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62



Friendship cannot be turned into a permanent relationship without effort and sacrifice. Genuine friendship begins with simply getting acquainted but continues with the union of spirits. Because of this, the Prophet (saw) said, “*The human spirits are like a community. Whosoever gets along well in that community decides to live together; whosoever does not get along well chooses to depart from others.*”⁴⁵ Getting familiar and friendly with someone becomes even more meaningful when the individual parties face challenges and hardships in their relationships. Those who overcome such challenges can create enduring friendships in the long run. For this, one needs to have time to experiment with the friendship. A good example of this process was reflected in a conversion that took place between Caliph ‘Umar (ra) and a person who wanted to give testimony.

Caliph ‘Umar (ra) said the following to a person who was going to give testimony in a legal case: “I do not know you. The fact that I do not know you does not matter in determining the eligibility for the testimony. In any case bring me someone who knows you.” Someone from the gathering said that he knew the witness. When the Caliph asked this man how the witness was as a person, he replied that he was a fair and honorable man. Caliph ‘Umar went onto ask, “Do you know any of his neighbors?” The man said, “No.” ‘Umar continued his inquiry by asking, “Did you travel with him so that you could make sense of his moral integrity.” The man again replied, “No.” ‘Umar concluded this conversation by saying to him that he did not know the witness well enough. This was because, for ‘Umar, knowing someone meant more than simply being acquainted with the person. Finally, ‘Umar (ra) turned towards the witness and said, “You may go and get someone who knows you.”⁴⁶

Friendships, which require integrity, solidarity, and sacrifice, should reflect the personality and identity of a person. By saying, “*A believer is the mirror of the other believer,*”⁴⁷ the Prophet (saw) pointed out that true friends resemble each other, as they see themselves in each other’s identity. The famous maxim “You tell me who your friend is, and I will tell you who you are” is apt in explaining the above statement and unambiguously demonstrates the reality of true friendship. Furthermore, the Prophet’s tradition, “*A man will follow the religion of his close friend...*”⁴⁸ refers to the religious and cultural identities of a person. Thus, Muslims establish friendship for the sake of Allah; they have *taqwā* toward Allah (swt) and their choice of friends is based upon the ultimate reality that “the real friend is Allah.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ M6708, Muslim, al-Birr, 159.

⁴⁶ . BS20982, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 212.

⁴⁷ D4918, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 49.

⁴⁸ T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45; D4833, Abu Da’ud al-Adab, 16.

⁴⁹ Al-Shura, 42:9



SALUTATION SPREAD SALUTATIONS AMONG EACH OTHER

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا، وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا، أَوْلَا
أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمُوهُ تَحَابَبْتُمْ؟ أَفَشُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love among you.”

(M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ سِتٌّ. قِيلَ: مَا هُنَّ؟ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! قَالَ: ”إِذَا لَقِيْتَهُ
فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا دَعَاكَ فَأَجِبْهُ، وَإِذَا اسْتَنْصَحَكَ فَاَنْصَحْ لَهُ، وَإِذَا عَطَسَ فَحَمِدَ
اللَّهَ فَسَمِّتْهُ، وَإِذَا مَرِضَ فَعُدَّهُ، وَإِذَا مَاتَ فَاتَّبِعْهُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ:
”أَيُّ الْإِسْلَامِ خَيْرٌ؟“ فَقَالَ: ”تُطْعِمُ الطَّعَامَ، وَتَقْرَأُ السَّلَامَ عَلَى مَنْ عَرَفْتَ
وَمَنْ لَمْ تَعْرِفْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى مَنْ بَدَأَهُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ.“



قَالَ أَنَسٌ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”يَا بُنَيَّ! إِذَا دَخَلْتَ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ فَسَلِّمْ يَكُونُ بَرَكَتَةً عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim.*” He was asked, “Allah’s Messenger, what are these?” Thereupon he said, “*When you meet him, offer him greetings; when he invites you to a feast, accept it; when he seeks your council, give it to him; and when he sneezes and says, “All praise is due to Allah,” say yarhamuka Allāh (may Allah show mercy to you); and when he falls ill, visit him; and when he dies, follow his bier.*”

(M5651, Muslim, al-Salam, 5)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), a man asked the Prophet (saw), “What sort of deeds or (what qualities of) Islam are good?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know.*”

(B12, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 6)



According to Abu Umama (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Those who are nearest to Allah are they who are first to give a salutation.*”

(D5197, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 132-133)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him, “*O my little son! When you enter your family [home] then salute them, it will be a blessing for you and upon the inhabitants of your house.*”

(T2698, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 10)



The Battle of Bu'ath was the last battle in a long history of battles between 'Aws and Khazraj tribes. The human cost on both sides had been great and the war ended in a stalemate just a few years before the Hijra.¹ Nonetheless, the animosity and tension between the two tribes continued. In the absence of a power structure the Jewish tribes had begun to compete in an effort to dominate the political and cultural scene of Yathrib (Medina). The city was filled with hatred, skepticism, and evil deeds. Amid this chaos, a new hope for the future began to flourish among some people of Medina. These people were the ones who gave their pledge to the Prophet (saw) at 'Aqaba, and promised to protect him under all circumstances.² These genuine Muslims had been looking forward to welcoming the Prophet (saw) to Medina. In the meantime, other people had also grown curious about the Prophet (saw). Just before his arrival, everyone went to the entrance of the city in order to see him in person. Some of them waited on the path that led into the city, and some of them were standing on the rooftops of houses to witness his arrival.³ Upon entering the city under the curious eyes of bystanders, the Prophet (saw) addressed the crowd as follows: *"O you people! Spread salutations, feed (others), and perform ritual prayer while people are sleeping; you will enter Paradise with (the greeting of) salām."*⁴ This was advice for both believers and unbelievers. In the long run, everyone would understand that the greeting of *salām* was a necessary component for creating a peaceful and civilized society.

After Allah Almighty created Adam, He asked him to go and salute the angels, and He said to him, *"Listen to what they will say in reply to you for that will be your greeting and the greeting of your offspring."* Adam (went and) said, *"al-salāmu 'alaykum* (peace be upon you)." The angels replied, *"al-salāmu-'alayka wa rahmatullāh* (peace and Allah's mercy be on you)"⁵ This greeting became an essential component of human communication

¹ ST4/383, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, IV, 383.

² HS2/290, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 290-291.

³ M7522, Muslim, *al-Zuhd* wa 'l-Raq'a'iq, 75.

⁴ T2485, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 42; IM3251, Ibn Maja, *al-At'ima*, 1.

⁵ B6227, al-Bukhari, *al-Isti'dhan*, 1; M7163, Muslim, *al-Janna*, 28.



for future generations. Although it changes from language to language and culture to culture, the goal of the salutation is to convey a peaceful message to the other person.

In pre-Islamic Arab society, the salutation could include other phrases of greetings, such as “May Allah grant you a long life,”⁶ “May Allah grant light to your eyes,” and “Have a wonderful morning.”⁷ Although these salutations were common in that society, they were subject to some rules and regulations; saluting slaves, people from the lower class, or upper class differed in format.⁸

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty said, “When those who believe in Our revelations come to you [Prophet], say, ‘Peace be upon you.’”⁹ This salutation, taught by Allah (swt), became the common salutation for all Muslims, including men and women, rich and poor, free and slave. The word “*salām*” originates from the root meaning “peace, salvation, and surrender.” It also means being protected from all kinds of open and secret evil deeds. Mentioned several times in the Holy Qur’an, this word was used with the meanings of *tahīyyāt*, salutation,¹⁰ peace and salvation,¹¹ and sometimes with the meaning of supplication.¹² Paradise is also known as “*Dar al-Salām*.”¹³ Moreover, “*al-Salām*” is one of the names of Allah (swt), meaning the source of salvation, free from all kinds of deficiencies and change.¹⁴ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said that “*al-Salām*” was a name of Allah,¹⁵ and he supplicated at the end of his worship, saying, “O Allah! You are the peace, and you are the source of redemption.”¹⁶ In some verses, the salutation is referred as “*tahīyya*.”¹⁷

The word “*al-salām*” is more than a simple greeting or salutation. It is an all-encompassing word, consisting of all possible good wishes. Perhaps this is the reason the Messenger of Allah (saw) preferred to greet in general people with “*al-salāmu ‘alaykum*,”¹⁸ although he is known to have greeted his daughter, Fatima and his cousin, Umm al-Hani (ra) with the word “*marḥaba*” once in a while.¹⁹ According to the Qur’anic verses, Allah (swt) returned salutations to His prophets²⁰ and believing subjects,²¹ and the angels saluted the prophets²² and believers in Paradise with the word “*salām*.”²³ Furthermore, we are told that this is the way in which believers will salute each other in Paradise.²⁴ In the Holy Qur’an it is related that Allah (swt) and the angels salute the Prophet (saw), and asks believers to salute him as well in order to elevate his status in this world and in the Hereafter.²⁵ According to another account, when the Prophet (saw) met

⁶ FM10/167, al-Razi, *Tafsir*, X, 167.

⁷ D5227, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 150-151.

⁸ *Kur’an Yolu*, II, 107.

⁹ Al-An’am, 6:54.

¹⁰ Al-Nur, 24:61; Yunus, 10:10.

¹¹ Al-Anbiya’, 21:69; Hud, 11:48

¹² Al-Ahzab, 33:56.

¹³ Al-An’am, 6:127; Yunus, 10:25.

¹⁴ Al-Hashr, 59:23.

¹⁵ T3507, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 82; M897, Muslim, al-Salat, 55

¹⁶ M1334, Muslim, al-Masajid, 135.

¹⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:86; al-Mujadala, 58:8.

¹⁸ HS2/214, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, III, 214.

¹⁹ B6176, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 98.

²⁰ Al-Saffat, 37:79.

²¹ Ya Sin, 36:58.

²² Al-Hijr, 15:52.

²³ Al-Ra’d, 13:24.

²⁴ Ibrahim, 14:23.

²⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:56.

Allah in the *Mi'rāj*, he gave his salutations to Allah by saying, "*al-taḥiyyāt li'llāhi wa al-ṣalawāt wa al-tayyibāt* (all kinds of salutations, glorification and praise belong to Allah). Allah (swt) returned his salutations with the following words, "*al-salāmu 'alayka ayyuhā al-nabiyyu wa raḥmat Allāhi wa al-barakātuhu*" (O Prophet, may Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you). At that juncture the Messenger of Allah (saw) added his community to this beautiful prayer by saying, "*al-salām 'alaynā wa 'alā 'ibād Allāhi al-ṣāliḥīn*" (may peace be upon us as well as upon the righteous servants of Allah). This prayer and conversation were completed with the testimony of the angels,²⁶ and later became known as the "*al-taḥiyyāt*" prayer. The Prophet (saw) taught this prayer to his Companions (ra) as if it were a Qur'anic verse.²⁷ Since then it has been the salutation of the community for the Lord, His Messenger, and for the prayer of the believers.

Thus, when Muslims meet they begin their conversations with a *salām*. This etiquette is summarized in the maxim "*al-salām qabla al-kalām*" (salutation before conversation).²⁸ When you salute someone with *al-salāmu 'alaykum*, it means that no harm is going to be coming to them from you. That is why the Prophet (saw) describes the Muslim as someone from whose hands and tongue no one need fear any harm.²⁹ The *salām* is like a code word for Muslims. If two strangers greet each other with Allah's *salām*, then they understand that they are both Muslims. Once, a man from the Jews greeted a group of Companions (ra) with *al-salām*. Because the Companions (ra) assumed that he was an enemy and he was using *al-salām* in order to disguise himself, they killed him. Allah Almighty then sent a verse, saying that those who salute with *al-salām* should be treated as Muslims.³⁰ The Messenger of Allah (saw) also told his Companions (ra) that it was impossible to know what was in people's heart; therefore, it was necessary to accept the statement of a person who said that he was a Muslim.³¹

Those who greet others with *al-salām* should ask the best for them, and make supplications for them. Allah Almighty asks that this supplication be mutual: "*But [even in battle] when you [believers] are offered a greeting, respond with a better one, or at least return it.*"³² Our Prophet also emphasized the importance of adding nice words to *al-salām*, and said that those who added "*wa raḥmat Allāhi wa barakātuhu wa magfirātuhu*" (mercy, blessings, and forgiveness of Allah) would gain additional rewards in the eyes of Allah.³³ When believers get together they greet each other with these mean-

²⁶ KC3/425, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, III, 425.

²⁷ B6265, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 28.

²⁸ T2699, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 11.

²⁹ M162, Muslim, al-Iman, 65.

³⁰ M7548, Muslim, al-Tafsir, 22; T3030, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 4; al-Nisa', 4:94.

³¹ M277, Muslim, al-Iman, 158.

³² Al-Nisa', 4:86.

³³ D5195, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 131-132.

ingful prayers that create a bond of love and compassion among them. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following on this point: “*You will not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love among you?*”³⁴ In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) warned that jealousy and ill-feelings had led to the destruction of former communities. In order to strengthen peace in society, he said, one needs to spread *al-salām* among people.³⁵ The Prophet (saw) said that greeting each other was a duty for each Muslim,³⁶ and stressed that one should greet strangers as well. Once, the Prophet (saw) was asked what was the best behavior in Islam, and he replied, “*To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know,*”³⁷ and he further said that limiting the salutation to acquaintances only would be a portent of the last days.³⁸ The aim of the Prophet (saw) with these suggestions and warnings was to create a peaceful Muslim society based on love and brotherhood. For that purpose, he recommended that the people of Medina spread *al-salām* among themselves,³⁹ and laid the foundation for an exemplary society. By giving so much importance to salutations,⁴⁰ the Prophet (saw) indicated that the one who greeted the other first was more virtuous in the eyes of Allah (swt).⁴¹ He also emphasized that, when two believers who were not talking to each other met, whoever greeted the other first would be seen to be more virtuous in the eyes of Allah.⁴² Therefore, the Prophet (saw) implied that the greeting of *al-salām* was a key to peace.

Considering the salutation as a charity,⁴³ the Prophet (saw) was keen to greet everybody he saw, including men, women, the elderly and young. By giving *al-salām*, especially to women⁴⁴ and children,⁴⁵ he set an example for his Companions. Whenever he made his greetings at night, he was careful not to wake up people who were asleep.⁴⁶ Whereas at other times he repeated his greetings three times in order to make sure that he was heard.⁴⁷ He always replied to *al-salām* that was directed to him, and made supplication for those who did so.⁴⁸ Sometimes he visited the graveyards in Medina and said, “*Peace be upon you, abode of a people who are believers. What you were promised will come to you tomorrow you will be receiving it after some delay; and we will join you Allah willing. O Allah, grant forgiveness to the inhabitants of al-Baqi (the name of the cemetery).*” This is how the tradition of sending *al-salām* to the deceased was initiated.⁴⁹

³⁴ M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93.

³⁵ T2510, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56; HM1412, Ibn Hanbal, I, 164.

³⁶ M5651, Muslim, al-Salam, 5; B1240, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 2.

³⁷ B12, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 6; M160, Muslim, al-Iman, 63.

³⁸ HM3848, Ibn Hanbal, I, 405.

³⁹ T2485, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 42; IM3251, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 1.

⁴⁰ M5388, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-Zina, 3; B6222, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 124; B1240, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 2.

⁴¹ D5197, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 132-133.

⁴² B6077, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62.

⁴³ D1285, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 12.

⁴⁴ D5204, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 136-137; T2697, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 9.

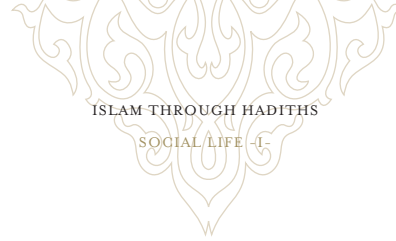
⁴⁵ M5663, Muslim, al-Salam, 14.

⁴⁶ M5362, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 174.

⁴⁷ B95, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 30.

⁴⁸ D5231, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 153-154.

⁴⁹ M2255, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 102.



The Prophet (saw) was eager to follow Allah’s command, “When you enter any house, greet one another with a greeting of blessing and goodness as enjoined by Allah. This is how Allah makes His messages clear to you so that you may understand.”⁵⁰ This verse advises believers to enter houses with prayers, and greetings.⁵¹ Anas b. Malik (ra), who spent his childhood with the Prophet (saw) and received prophetic edification, heard the Prophet (saw) say to him, “O my little son! When you enter your family [home] then salute them, it will be a blessing for you and upon the inhabitants of your house.”⁵² This way of thinking was emphasized in the Holy Qur’an as well, “Believers, do not enter other people’s houses until you have asked permission to do so and greeted those inside—that is best for you: perhaps you will bear this in mind.”⁵³ This verse was revealed because, at the time of the Prophet (saw), houses and their doors were not as sturdy and guarded as today. Therefore, giving *al-salām* and asking permission before entering houses was a necessary precaution to let the people who were inside the house know who was entering and to make themselves descent for any visitors. One of the Companions, ‘Abd Allah b. Busr (ra), described the way in which the Prophet (saw) entered someone’s house as follows: “When the Messenger of Allah came to some people’s door, he did not face it squarely, but faced the right or left corner, and said, ‘Peace be upon you, peace be upon you.’ That was because there were no curtains on the doors of the houses at that time.”⁵⁴ The Prophet (saw) asked his visitors to follow the same rule.⁵⁵ Understanding the importance of greetings, the Companions (ra) developed a similar attitude. For example, it was reported that ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), who was famous for his loyalty to the Prophet (saw), used to go to the market in order to greet people, though he was not fond of shopping.⁵⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw), by saying that the young should greet the old, the passerby should greet the one who was sitting, and the small group of persons should greet the large group of persons,⁵⁷ taught the etiquette of greetings to his Companions (ra). He also thought that it was acceptable to have one person from a group greet the other group, and one person from the other group reply to the greeting.⁵⁸ He also advocated for the individual to offer *al-salām* while leaving a group.⁵⁹ He advised against greeting people who were busy because of the call of nature or were in an inappropriate situation.⁶⁰ Since he thought it was inappropriate to recall the name of Allah (swt) in such instances, he himself never replied to greetings

⁵⁰ Al-Nur, 24:61.

⁵¹ D5096, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 102-103.

⁵² T2698, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 10.

⁵³ Al-Nur, 24:27.

⁵⁴ D5186, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 127-128.

⁵⁵ T2710, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 18.

⁵⁶ MU1764, al-Muwatta’, al-Salam, 4.

⁵⁷ B6231, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 4; M5646, Muslim, al-Salam, 1.

⁵⁸ D5210, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 140-141.

⁵⁹ D5208, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 138-139; T2706, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 15.

⁶⁰ IM352, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 27.



while was at the water closet.⁶¹ In the early days of Islam, the Messenger of Allah (saw) returned greetings while worshipping, but later he deemed it improper to reply to such greetings.⁶² Thus it was deemed inappropriate to greet people who were reciting the *adhān* or giving a sermon.

Al-salām in Islam is the symbol of peace, trust, and good intentions. Muslims, with this beautiful and meaningful phrase, pray to Allah (swt) that He protects them, as well as their brothers and sisters in Islam who have passed on. In like manner, through the words “*ṣalawāt*” and “*salām*,” Muslims create a bond with the Messenger of Mercy, whom they never saw, and offer their deep love and loyalty to him.⁶³ With the *al-taḥiyyāt* prayer that the Prophet (saw) taught them, Muslims ask for peace and salvation for all believers, act in accordance with the principles of the exemplary Islamic society based on brotherhood, complete their worship by saluting angels, and confirm that Allah (swt) is the “only source of salvation.”⁶⁴

Al-salām, which has many meanings and a unique role in the life of a Muslim, seems to have begun to lose its importance in modern times. With the rise of individualism and the weakening of social ties, the tradition of greeting each other has become an empty exercise. The days in which the neighborhood was like one big warm house are gone; people have ceased to greet strangers and disregard those with whom they are acquainted. People have become alienated from each other, and trust has been replaced by skepticism in human relations. Creating a civilized and healthy society depends on love, respect, brotherhood, and genuineness among people. Therefore, greetings, accompanied by nice words or confirmatory bodily gestures, which are the first stage of communication, must be spread. Saluting friends with nice words strengthens the love and respect between the parties. Using the word “*al-salām*,” which consists of all good wishes and intentions, provides special blessings and mercy to these relationships. Greeting strangers gives them a sense of trust which in turn creates a foundation for real friendship. When someone ventures into the street and sees that people greet him and extend their best wishes to him, that person feels comfortable and secure. That feeling also saves him from loneliness and gives him self-confidence. Places which have such people have societies which are civilized, well-balanced, and healthy.

⁶¹ M823, Muslim, al-Haidh, 115; D330, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 122

⁶² M1201, Muslim, al-Masajid, 34.

⁶³ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

⁶⁴ D618, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 73.



GIFT GIVING A WAY TO STRENGTHEN LOVE

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”تَهَادَوْا فَإِنَّ الْهَدِيَّةَ تُذْهِبُ وَحَرَ الصَّدْرِ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet said, “Give each other gifts, for indeed the gift removes bad feelings from the chest.”

(T2130, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wala', 6)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَجِيبُوا الدَّاعِيَ، وَلَا تَرُدُّوا الْهَدِيَّةَ...”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَا نِسَاءَ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ، لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ جَارَةً لِبِجَارَتِهَا وَلَوْ فَرَسَنَ شَاةٍ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ لِي جَارَيْنِ فإِلَى أَيِّهِمَا أُهْدَى؟ قَالَ:
”إِلَى أَقْرَبِهِمَا مِنْكَ بَابًا.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ سَأَلَكُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَأَعْطُوهُ، وَمَنْ دَعَاكُمْ فَأَجِيبُوهُ، وَمَنْ أَهْدَى لَكُمْ فَكَافِئُوهُ، فَإِنْ
لَمْ تَجِدُوا مَا تُكَافِئُوهُ فَادْعُوا لَهُ.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Once you are invited, respond to it, once you are given a gift, do not refuse it!”*

(HM3838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 405)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“O Muslim women! None of you should look down upon the gift sent by her female neighbor even if the gift is just the trotters of the sheep (fleshless part of legs).”*

(B2566, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 1; M2379, Muslim, al-Zakat, 90)



‘A’isha (ra) reported, *“Once I said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, I have two neighbors and would like to know to which of them I should give presents.’ He replied, ‘To the one whose door is nearer to you.’”*

(B2259, al-Bukhari, al-Shuf‘a, 3)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If anyone asks something from you in the name of Allah, give it to him; if you are invited, respond to it; if you are given a gift, return a gift to him. If you do not have anything to give, then make a prayer for him.”*

(HM5703, Ibn Hanbal, II, 96)



It was the 24th of September, 622 C.E., and on the Islamic calendar the 13th of Rabi' al-Awwal, a Friday. The journey that had begun in Mecca on the 27th of Safar ended in the Najjar neighborhood of Medina after two excruciatingly long weeks. Then, the Messenger of Allah (saw) accepted the invitation of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (ra) to stay at his house.¹ The people of the city of Yathrib, now being called the city (Medina) of the Prophet (saw), were trying their best to accommodate the travel-weary Prophet and to forego anything to give him comfort. Zayd b. Thabit (ra), who was at the age of eleven at that time, gave the following account of that day: "While the Messenger of Allah (saw) was at the house of Abu Ayyub, the first food offered to the Prophet (saw) was a tray of bread, milk and butter. I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, my mother sent this to you.' He said, 'May Allah bless you for this.' At that point he invited his Companions (ra) to eat the food with him. In a short while, Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) brought more food for them. During the seven months that the Prophet (saw) stayed at that house, a few people were always present at the gate guarding him, and also bringing, in turn, food for him."²

To present gifts or offer provisions to the Prophet (saw), who had honored Medina by residing in it, were among the most proud acts of the Muslims. This was because the Prophet (saw) said, "Give gifts, for indeed the gift removes bad feelings from the chest."³ In return, the Prophet (saw) was very generous to present gifts to his benefactors.⁴ When he emigrated to Medina in order to be able to spread the message of Islam, he left all of his property in Mecca. While he was in Medina, he lived on an income that derived from the date trees which had been given to him as a gift. This state of affairs continued until the conquest of the lands of the tribes of Qurayza and Nadir.⁵ Throughout his life the Prophet (saw) never accepted charity but he did receive gifts.⁶ In return, he gave better gifts to those who had offered him gifts.⁷

¹ "Hicret," *DIA*, XVII, 461.

² ST1/237, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 237.

³ T2130, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wala', 6.

⁴ B2585, sl-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 11; D3536, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (Ijara), 80.

⁵ B4030, sl-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 14.

⁶ D4512, Abu Da'ud, al-Diyat, 6; HM8699, Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

⁷ M521965, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Buyu' wa 'l-Aqdiyya, 253.



The Messenger of Allah (saw), by being a role model in gift giving, was also teaching Muslims about generosity, altruism, loyalty, and giving—characteristics which would strengthen ties of friendship and brotherhood. He was teaching them how to gain goodness of heart by offering material goods to people, and that through such actions one may gain the blessings of Allah (swt). He said, “*Shake hands, so that bad feeling can be removed from your chest. Exchange gifts so that animosity between you can be eliminated.*”⁸ According to this prophetic tradition, when two Muslims meet, they first greet each other, then shake hands, and then exchange gifts in order to establish strong friendship. These gestures prevent the emergence of bad feelings between the parties.

Gift giving is a sign of deep love and, because of that, belittling the one who gives gifts or the gift itself by looking at its size or value is against the etiquette of gift giving. The Prophet (saw), who had high ethical standards such as humility, modesty, and gentleness, said, “*Once you are invited, respond to it, once you are given a gift, do not refuse it!*”⁹ Following his own advice, the Prophet (saw) said that he was willing to go to a place even if he was invited to drink tripe soup, and willing to accept a gift even if it was just a trotter.¹⁰ The holy Messenger rebuked, for example, our mother ‘A’isha (ra), who refused to receive a gift from a poor woman. One day, he saw a woman leave ‘A’isha’s house carrying something with her. He asked, “*What is that?*” The woman replied, “*I presented this to ‘A’isha (ra) as a gift, but she did not accept it.*” The Prophet (saw) entered ‘A’isha’s house and said to her, “*I wish you had accepted her gift.*” ‘A’isha (ra) replied, “*O Messenger of Allah, she was a needy person, and she needed it more than I did.*” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Could you not have accepted it and then given her something more valuable in return?*”¹¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended to his followers that they accept the gifts of poor people, and make sure that they give them something better in return. In another *hadith*, he said, “*O Muslim women! None of you should look down upon the gift sent by her female neighbor even if the gift is just the trotters of the sheep (fleshless part of legs).*”¹² and asked them not to turn down gifts however small they were. The Prophet (saw) did not mind receiving gifts from members of other religions as well. For example, he accepted a gift presented by a Jewish woman.¹³

Accepting a gift and asking something from someone are not the same

⁸ MU1651, *al-Muwatta’*, Husn al-Khalq, 4.

⁹ HM3838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 405.

¹⁰ B5178 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 74.

¹¹ MA19670, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 449.

¹² B2566, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 1; M2379, Muslim, al-Zakat, 90.

¹³ D4512, Abu Da’ud, al-Diyat, 6; DM68, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 11.

thing. We understand this from the following account of the manumitted slave of our mother, Maymuna, ‘Ata b. Yasar (ra): “The Messenger of Allah (saw) sent a gift to ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, and ‘Umar returned it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*Why did you return it?*’ He said, ‘Messenger of Allah, did you not tell us that it is better for us not to take anything from anyone?’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*That is by asking. Provision which Allah gives you is different from asking.*’ ‘Umar b. al-Khattab said, ‘By the One in whose hand is my life, I will not ask anything from anyone, and anything that comes to me without my asking for it, I will accept.’”¹⁴

When our prophet received something he used ask whether it was “a gift or *zakāt*?”¹⁵ If it was *zakāt*, then he sent all of it to the people of al-Suffa who had neither family nor property. If it was a gift, then he used some of it and then sent the rest to the people of al-Suffa.¹⁶

Our Master the Prophet (saw) paid special attention to exchanging gifts with people who were poor materially but rich spiritually. The following account of Anas b. Malik (ra) on this matter is quite revealing: “There was a man called Zahir, from the people of the desert. Zahir used to bring something each time he visited the Prophet (saw). When he was leaving the Prophet (saw) he used to fill his sacks with tidbits from the city. The Prophet (saw) said, ‘*Zahir is our village, and we are his town.*” By this the Prophet (saw) meant to say that Zahir used to bring various herbs and aromatic plants from the desert, and in return the Muslims of the town would give him items produced in Medina that he needed.¹⁷ Thus, the gift had a special place in the Prophet’s world no matter if it was presented by a slave or a rich person.

It has been reported that one can break a *nāfila* (supererogatory) fast, if he is offered food with good intentions. ‘A’isha (ra) reported the following incident: “[At certain times] when the Prophet (saw) used to enter my home he would ask, ‘*Do you have any food prepared?*’ When I replied in the negative he would say, ‘*I am fasting.*’ One day he entered upon us, and we said, ‘Messenger of Allah, some date pudding has been presented to us and we have kept it for you.’ He said, ‘*Bring it to me.*’ Although he had begun a fast in the morning, he broke his fast (that day).”¹⁸

Barira, the concubine, who was bought and manumitted by ‘A’isha (ra), brought a piece of meat as a gift, which was given to her by somebody else, to the house of the Prophet (saw). When he was told that the meat

¹⁴ MU1852, al-Muwatta’, al-Sadaqa, 2.

¹⁵ B2576, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 7; T656, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 25.

¹⁶ B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17; T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 36.

¹⁷ HM12676, Ibn Hanbal, III, 162; MA19688, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 454.

¹⁸ D2455, Abu Da’ud, al-Siyam, 72; N2326, al-Nasa’i, al-Siyam, 67.



was given to Barira (ra) as *ṣadaqa*, he said, “*This might be a ṣadaqa for her, but it is gift for us.*”¹⁹

Those who wanted to present a gift to the Messenger of Allah (saw) preferred to give it to him while he was at the house of his beloved wife, ‘A’isha (ra), because they knew of his attentiveness to her.²⁰ At certain times there was no food at the Prophet’s home.²¹ When someone brought food to the house, ‘A’isha (ra) became very happy, and that pleased the Prophet (saw). Clearly, in such an instance, the value of the gift increased twofold .

The Companions (ra) saw that all kinds of gifts and food were brought to the house of the Prophet (saw) at any time of the day by his neighbors and others. Some of the foods did not suit the palate of the Prophet (saw), but he never returned any of it. Once Ibn ‘Abbas’ aunt, Umm Hufayda (ra) brought dried yogurt, butter, and cooked lizard (which the Arabs used to eat). The Prophet (saw) ate the yogurt and the butter, but did not touch the lizard because it did not suit his taste.²²

If the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not use gifts for a religious reason or for another necessity, then he either politely returned it by giving a reason, or gave it to the needy. For example, when he received some silk fabric as a gift, he gave it to ‘Ali (ra) for distribution among the women so that they could make scarfs out of it.²³ Whenever he was given gifts of gold and silk he did not use them because they were not befitting men to wear. Once a silk kaftan was given to him. He put it on, and went to worship. After worship, he took it off, and said, “*This does not befit a righteous man.*”²⁴ In another instance, when he found a golden ring among the gifts sent to him by the Nagus, he presented it to his granddaughter, Umama.²⁵

Our Master Prophet received many gifts from the leaders and kings of neighboring countries in the course of their political relations. For example, the Egyptian al-Muqawqis, the Persian Khusraw, the Byzantian Emperor,²⁶ the Yemenite King,²⁷ the Roman governor of ‘Amman,²⁸ the King of ‘Aqaba,²⁹ and the Commander of the castle of Dumat al-Jandal³⁰ were some of those rulers. Qadi ‘Iyad, an Andalusian *ḥadīth* scholar and a Maliki judge, wrote that the Prophet (saw) accepted all of these gifts but then he distributed them among the needy.³¹

The close Companions (ra) of our Master the Prophet (saw) always offered him gifts both during the time of poverty as well as during the time of wealth. In like manner, he made his companions happy by offering gifts

¹⁹ B1495, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 62; M2486, Muslim, al-Zakat, 171.

²⁰ B2581, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 8.

²¹ HM25138, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 94.

²² B2575, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 7; M5039, Muslim, al-Sayd, 46.

²³ IM3596, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 19.

²⁴ B375, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 16; M5427, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 23

²⁵ D4235, Abu Da’ud, al-Khatam, 8; IM3644, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 40.

²⁶ T1576, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 23; HM1235, Ibn Hanbal, I, 145.

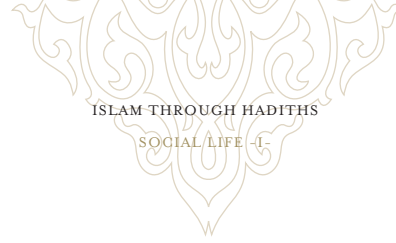
²⁷ DM2522, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 53; D4034, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 5.

²⁸ ST1/281, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 281; M4612, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 76.

²⁹ B1481, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 54; M5948, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 11.

³⁰ B2616, al-Bukhari, Hiba, 28; M5422, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 18.

³¹ KŞ1/123, Qadi ‘Iyad, *Shifa*, I, 123.



to them at every possible occasion. When he received gifts, he could not help but distribute them among his beloved. As Anas (ra) reported, one day the Prophet (saw) received a cup full of fresh dates as a gift. He sat cross-legged on the ground, divided the dates and sent Anas with them to his wives.³² According to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) once received some honey as a gift, and he invited the people around him to eat the honey.³³ In another occasion, he was given a purse full of pearls as a gift, and he gave them to the women around him.³⁴ On yet another occasion, he gave a bunch of grapes to Nu‘man b. Bashr (ra), who was then a child, and said, “*Take this bunch of grapes and give it to your mother.*” But little Nu‘man in his innocence ate them all before he could take them to his mother.³⁵

Our Master the Prophet (saw) never forgot those close to him who had passed on. By giving gifts to the friends and families of the deceased, he commemorated their names. ‘A’isha (ra) said, “I have not ever been jealous of any woman more than Khadija.” This incident took place when the Prophet (saw) sacrificed a sheep and sent some of its meat to the friends of Khadija (after she had died) out of his love for her.³⁶

The merciful and altruistic attitude of the Prophet (saw) in gift giving and gift sharing had a trickling down effect on his family members. The Messenger of Allah (saw) confirmed and reconfirmed that the genuine offer of a gift would always be rewarded by Allah (swt) in abundance. Once a needy person asked for some help from the mother of the believers, ‘A’isha (ra), who was fasting on that day. ‘She did not have anything in the house except a loaf of bread. She said to her manumitted slave girl, “Give the bread to the needy!” When the freed slave girl said that she did not have anything else to break the fast, ‘A’isha (ra) repeated, “Give the bread to her.” The freed slave girl said, “I did what I was instructed to do. In the evening, someone else brought us a bread wrap with mutton. The mother of the believers called me and said, ‘Eat this! Is it not better than your bread.’”³⁷

The Prophet (saw) also had a habit of giving gifts to people other than his close relatives. His principle of gift giving was explained in his conversation with our mother ‘A’isha (ra), “O Allah’s Messenger! I have two neighbors and would like to know to which of them I should give presents. He replied, “*To the one whose door is nearer to you.*”³⁸

The proper etiquette with regard to receiving gifts, and responding to

³² ST1/393, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 393.

³³ ĪM3451, Ibn Maja, *al-Tibb*, 7.

³⁴ D2952, Abu Da’ud, *al-Imara*, 13-14; HM25775, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 160.

³⁵ ĪM3368, Ibn Maja, *al-At’ima*, 61.

³⁶ B6004, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Adab*, 23; M6277, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 74.

³⁷ MU1848, *al-Muwatta’*, *al-Sadaqa*, 1.

³⁸ B2259, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Shuf’a*, 3.



them was described by the Prophet: “If anyone asks something from you in the name of Allah, give it to him; if you are invited, respond to it; if you are given a gift, return a gift to him. If you do not have anything to give, then make a prayer for him.”³⁹ The Prophet (saw) said the following to Zayd b. Thabit who had brought food for him: “May Allah bless and multiply this for you.”⁴⁰

From the Prophetic accounts we understand that gift giving without expecting a gift in return is a virtuous act. It is an act done with love and genuine interest, with the hope of strengthening the bond between parties. Nevertheless, some people may abuse the practice of gift giving because they may have a different agenda in mind. The following tradition highlights such a practice. It was reported that a Bedouin once gave a young female camel as a gift to the Messenger of Allah (saw), who, in turn, gave the Bedouin six young she-camels. However, the bedouin was not satisfied with his gifts. When the news concerning his disappointment reached the Prophet (saw), he praised Allah (swt) and expressed gratitude to Him. Then said, “Indeed so-and-so gave a camel to me as a gift, so I reciprocated for that with six young she-camels, yet he became upset. So I decided that I would not accept a gift except from a member of the Quraysh, or an Ansari, or a Dawsī.”⁴¹ The tribes that the Prophet (saw) mentioned were those who knew the proper etiquette in social life and gift exchange. The fact that the Prophet (saw) was upset and made the aforesaid remark about whom to exchange gifts with indicates that he was very critical towards those who abused gift giving for their own objectives.

In the context of gift giving, the most abhorrent thing for the Prophet (saw) was the use of gifts for the purpose of bribing someone or securing a privilege. A tax collector, Ibn al-Lutbiyya, upon the returning from one of his trips, went to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Allah’s Messenger! This (amount of *zakāt*) is for you, and this (the other amount) was given to me as a present.” The Prophet (saw) scolded him by saying, “Why didn’t you stay at your father’s or mother’s house and see if you would be given presents or not?”⁴² This was because gifts given in light of one’s position would not strengthen the bonds of love between the individuals. On the contrary, this would turn it into an abusive practice as an inducement or bribe. Equating bribery to usury, the Prophet (saw) said, “If anyone intercedes for his brother and he presents a gift to him for it and he accepts it, he approaches a great door among the doors of usury.”⁴³ He conveyed the same principle in trade by saying, “If

³⁹ HM5703, Ibn Hanbal, II, 96; N2568, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 72

⁴⁰ ST1/237, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 237.

⁴¹ T3945, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 73; D3537, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyū’ (Ijara), 80.

⁴² B6636, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-Nuzur, 3; M4738, Muslim, al-Imara, 26.

⁴³ D3541, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyū’ (Ijara), 82.

anyone borrows something, then gives (the lender) a gift or gives him a ride on his riding-beast, the lender should not accept the gift or the ride, unless these two were used to treating each other in that manner beforehand.”⁴⁴ The Messenger of Allah (saw) made this warning for those who lend something in order to gain something else, or for those who would like to turn lending into usury. After paying off a debt one can freely give a present to the debtor without any strings attached. By saying, “*The most virtuous among you is the one who pays off his debt in the most proper manner,*”⁴⁵ the Prophet (saw) in a way encouraged the debtor to give a present to the lender. For example, the Prophet (saw) borrowed about 100 kg. of food from someone. When the person came to ask for the food back, the Prophet (saw) gave him about 200 kg. of food, and said, “*This is what I owe you, and this is what I give you as a present.*” When he borrowed something similar from someone else, he did the same thing.⁴⁶

While the practice of gift giving can establish social peace and harmony, it can also be a source of transgression and abuse in the form of bribery. In that case, it loses its positive effect and turns into a “social security issue.” In state institutions, in particular, in which justice is expected to be observed in the most diligent manner, it could lead to the abuse of power for personal gain, and illegitimate actions. The Prophet (saw) indicated this possible danger by saying, “*Accept the gift as long as it is meant to be a gift. If it turns to bribery, then avoid taking it.*”⁴⁷ Caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz is reported to have said, “Gift meant gift in the time of the Prophet (saw). It means bribery today.”⁴⁸ It is clear from this statement that if the term “gift” does not retain its original meaning then, during corrupt times, it can unfortunately be used at the service of powerful and rich people to tarnish the concept of justice.

The Prophet (saw) accepted gifts without hesitation in order to strengthen his bond with the people. Moreover, he handed out countless gifts to people in order for them to gain the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). At the Battle of Badr, he girded his armor and sword, named, ‘*adb* (sharp), sent to him by Sa’d b ‘Ubada (ra).⁴⁹ At the Battle of Hunayn, he rode the mule, sent by Farwa b. Nufatha al-Judhami.⁵⁰ In the ninth year of the Hijra, Ka’b b. Zuhayr, the poet, went to Medina and converted to Islam. He also composed an eulogy called “*Banat Su’ad*” for the Prophet (saw). While he was reciting the verse “Surely the Prophet (saw) is the one with whom we are

⁴⁴ İM2432, Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqat, 19.

⁴⁵ B2305, al-Bukhari, al-Wakala, 5.

⁴⁶ MZ6691, al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*, IV, 251; BZ8922, al-Bazzaz, *Musnad*, II, 474.

⁴⁷ MS749, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Saghir*, II, 42; MK17361, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XX, 90.

⁴⁸ Al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 17 – Chapter title–.

⁴⁹ TD4/213, Ibn ‘Asakir, *Ta’rikh Dimashq*, IV, 213-215.

⁵⁰ M4612, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 76.



enlightened, and he is one of the swords of Allah,” the Prophet (saw) took of his Yemenite vest and gave it to him.⁵¹ Over the centuries, this precious gift was passed down to the Ottomans, and then to the Republic of Turkey.

The Prophet (saw) gave presents to some people in order to save them from the path to Hell; and sometimes he gave presents to people in order to gain their hearts towards Islam. Sometimes he preferred giving gifts to pagans over Muslims.⁵² When they received war spoils from Bahrain, he set aside a good amount for some, but ignored others. He explained the reason for this as follows: *“By Allah, I may give to a man and ignore another, although the one whom I ignore is more beloved to me than the one to whom I give. But I give to some people as I feel that they have no patience and no contentment in their hearts and I leave those who are patient and self-content with the goodness and wealth which Allah has put into their hearts.”*⁵³

Safwan b. Umayya, a pagan notable in Mecca, was admiringly staring at the war spoils that were collected in the Jirana valley after the Battle of Hunayn. The Messenger of Allah (saw) watched him from a distance. At one point, he said, *“O Wahb! Did you like what you have seen?”* When he said, *“Yes,”* the Prophet (saw) made him an irresistible offer: *“You can have all of those things in the valley.”* At that point Safwan accepted Islam.⁵⁴ The rest of this tradition was reported by Safwan (ra) himself. He said, *“When the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to give to me on the Day of Hunayn, he was of the most hated creatures to me. But he did not stop giving to me until he was the most beloved creature to me.”*⁵⁵ Securing people by giving them gifts in order to accept Islam was one of the most effective ways that the Prophet (saw) used to open the sealed doors of the polytheists’ hearts.

During the Jahiliyya period, there was a man, named ‘Abd Allah b. Juda, who was celebrated for being generous, hospitable, and having good relations with his families and friends. When ‘A’isha (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) whether these qualities would spare him from Hell, he said, *“No, because he never asked for forgiveness from Allah on the Day of Judgement.”*⁵⁶ As emphasized in the Holy Qur’an several times, like other deeds, exchanging gifts will have an effect on the Day of Judgement but only if the person is a man or woman of faith and gives gifts for nothing other than earning the pleasure of Allah (swt).

While he was on his death bed, the Messenger of Allah (saw), referred to his struggle in spreading his message and described the delegations that

⁵¹ EÜ4/449, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, IV, 449-451.

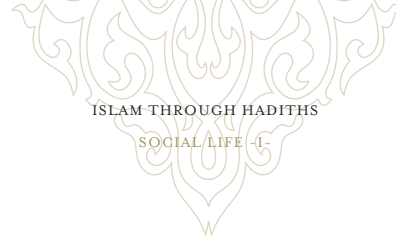
⁵² B1478, al-Bukhari, *al-Zakat*, 53; M2433, Muslim, *al-Zakat*, 131.

⁵³ B923, al-Bukhari, *al-Jum’ā*, 29.

⁵⁴ VM2/854, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 854-855.

⁵⁵ T666, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Zakat*, 30.

⁵⁶ HM25404, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 120.



came to visit him. In the course of this, he drew the attention of his Companions (ra) to the importance of exchanging gifts, which was one of his last legacies, and said, “*Respect and give gifts to foreign delegations as you have seen me dealing with them.*”⁵⁷

When the Pride of the Universe, the Prophet (saw) departed, he left the greatest gifts behind, the Holy Qur’an and the Sunna. These invaluable treasures are our guidelines for preparing gifts that will be given to our Lord on the Day of Judgement. As Jalaluddin Rumi so eloquently said,

“To go with empty hands and visit friends long missed, is like a man who goes to the mill without his grist. On the Day of Judgement Allah Almighty will ask His creatures, ‘What gifts have you brought to meet your Maker? Say! Alone and empty-handed? Is it thus you come? Just as We first created you?’⁵⁸ Tell me, on this Day of Judgement, what did you bring Me as a gift?”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ B4431, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 84; M4232, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 20.

⁵⁸ Al-An ‘am, 6:94.

⁵⁹ Jalaluddin Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 1/3171- 3174.



VISITING THE ILL THE RIGHT OF THE AILING BROTHER IN ISLAM

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ الوُضُوءَ وَعَادَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ مُحْتَسِبًا، بُوعِدَ مِنْ
جَهَنَّمَ مَسِيرَةَ سَبْعِينَ خَرِيفًا.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra),
the Prophet (saw) said, “If anyone performs the wudu’ well and pays a visit to
his (ill) Muslim brother seeking his reward from Allah, he will be removed
a distance of seventy years (kharif) from Hell.”

(D3097, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 3)



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا عَادَ الرَّجُلُ الْمَرِيضَ خَاضَ الرَّحْمَةَ حَتَّى إِذَا قَعَدَ عِنْدَهُ قَرَّتْ فِيهِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ عَادَ مَرِيضًا لَمْ يَحْضُرْ أَجْلُهُ فَقَالَ عِنْدَهُ سَبْعَ مَرَارٍ: أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ رَبَّ
الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَشْفِيكَ، إِلَّا عَافَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْمَرَضِ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا عَادَ مَرِيضًا يَقُولُ:
”أَذْهَبِ الْبَاسَ، رَبِّ النَّاسِ، اشْفِهِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي، لَا شِفَاءَ إِلَّا شِفَاؤُكَ،
شِفَاءَ لَا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ فَنَفْسُوا لَهُ فِي أَجْلِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَا يَرُدُّ شَيْئًا
وَيُطَيِّبُ نَفْسَهُ.“



عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِذَا دَخَلْتَ عَلَى مَرِيضٍ فَمُرْهُ أَنْ يَدْعُو لَكَ. فَإِنَّ دُعَاءَهُ كَدُعَاءِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ.“



According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“When a man visits an ailing person, he is immersed in mercy to such an extent that when he sits with the patient it settles inside him, or the like of that.”*

(MU1731, Muwatta', al-'Ayn, 7)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If anyone visits an ill person whose time (of death) has not come, and says with him seven times, ‘I ask Allah, the Almighty, the Lord of the mighty Throne, to cure you, Allah will cure him from that disease.’”*

(D3106, Abu Da'ud, al-Jana'iz, 8)



According to 'Aisha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said the following when he visited an ill person, *“O Lord of the people, grant him health, heal him, for You are a Great Healer. There is no healer, but You with whose healing power one is healed and illness is removed.”*

(M5709, Muslim, al-Salam, 47)



According to Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“When one of you visits the ill, then reassure him regarding his lifespan. Indeed that will not fend off anything, but it will comfort his soul.”*

(T2087, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 35)



According to 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“When you enter upon one who is unwell, tell him to pray for you, for his supplication is like the supplication of the angels.”*

(IM1441, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 1)



When our beloved Prophet was in the company of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, Abu Waqqas and ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), someone from Medina approached and greeted him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*O brother of the Ansar, how is my brother Sa‘d b. ‘Ubada?*” He said, “He is better.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) looked around and said, “*Who among you would visit him?*” ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) described this incident as follows: “The Prophet (saw) stood up and we also got up with him, and we were more than ten people. We had neither shoes, or socks, or caps, or shirts. We walked on the barren land until we came to him. The people around him kept away until the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his Companions (ra) came near him.¹ Upon seeing the crowd around Sa‘d, the Prophet (saw) asked, ‘*Has he died?*’ They said, ‘Messenger of Allah, it is not so.’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) wept. When the people saw him weeping, they also began to weep. He said. ‘*Listen, Allah does not punish for the tears that the eye sheds or the grief the heart feels, but He punishes for this (pointing to his tongue), or He may show mercy.*’”²

The Messenger of Allah (saw) had a genuine interest in the well-being of his Companions (ra). Seeing them in misery put him in distress.³ He spent time with them, and shared his moments of happiness and sadness with them. Just as he had wept and cared for Sa‘d b. ‘Ubada, the Prophet (saw) took good care Sa‘d b. Mu‘adh (ra), who had been injured in the Battle of the Khandaq. He requested that a tent be built inside the mosque for him.⁴ Still, despite all of his efforts, Mu‘adh died because of excessive loss of blood.⁵

The Prophet (saw) maintained that visiting the ill was a responsibility of Muslims.⁶ Regardless of their level of illness, he never failed to visit the unwell. Sometimes he visited them more than once. For example, he went to visit Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), but found him unconscious because of

¹ M2138, Muslim, al-Jana‘iz, 13.

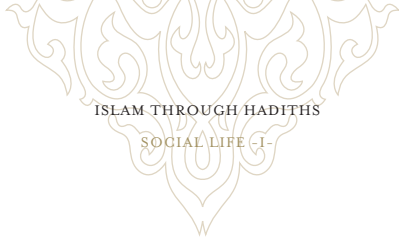
² M2137, Muslim, al-Jana‘iz, 12.

³ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

⁴ M4598, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 65; D3101, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jana‘iz, 4.

⁵ B463, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 77.

⁶ T2737, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 1; N1940, al-Nasa‘i, al-Jana‘iz, 52.



the severity of his illness. Then the Prophet (saw) visited him again in the company of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra).⁷

Being so keen on visiting the ill among the Companions (ra), the Messenger of Mercy did not even hesitate to visit ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, when he fell ill.⁸ He visited the ailing child of his Jewish helper at their house. While there, he invited the child to the religion of Islam. With the permission of his father, the child accepted Islam. Afterward, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was very delighted and praised Allah.⁹

In his role as an exemplar, the Prophet (saw) also bade his Companions (ra) to visit people who were ill.¹⁰ Thus his recommendation to “*feed the hungry, visit the ill, and set free the captives*” should be seen as guidance for individual happiness, social integrity and peace.¹¹ Moreover, Muslim women also joined men in visiting the ill.¹² Concerning these visits to ailing people (*ziyārat al-marīd*), the Prophet (saw) gave the following good news: “*If anyone performs the wudu’ well and pays a visit to his (ill) Muslim brother seeking his reward from Allah, he will be removed a distance of seventy years (kharīf) from Hell.*”¹³ He also informed them that an angel would speak the following words to the visitors of the ill during their visit: “*May you have goodness, may your livelihood be good, and may you dwell in the abode of Paradise.*”¹⁴

In explaining the importance of visiting the ill, the holy Messenger told them that Allah (swt) would consider it as if it was a visit to Him. According to the Prophet (saw), on the Day of Resurrection, the following conversation will take place between Allah and His servant with regard to visiting the ill: “*O child of Adam! I became ill and you did not visit me! The person will say, ‘O my Lord! How could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds!’ Thereupon Allah will say, ‘Did you not know that My servant ‘so and so’ became ill, and you did not visit him? Did you not know that if you had visited him, you would have found Me with him?’*”¹⁵ The Prophet (saw)’s recommendation for the Muslims of his time, and in general, was to spend some time with the ill, rather than visiting him. He said, “*When a man visits an ailing person, he is immersed in mercy to such an extent that when he sits with the patient it settles inside him.*”¹⁶ With this recommendation, the Prophet (saw) taught us not only the necessity of visiting the ill, but also the etiquette of the visit. In another *ḥadīth*, he said that one who visits the

⁷ T2097, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fara’id, 7.

⁸ HM22101, Ibn Hanbal, V, 202.

⁹ HM12823, Ibn Hanbal, III, 175.

¹⁰ B1239, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 2.

¹¹ B5649, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 4.

¹² EM530, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 187.

¹³ D3097, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 3.

¹⁴ T2008, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 64.

¹⁵ M6556, Muslim, al-Birr, 43.

¹⁶ MU1731, al-Muwatta’, al-Ayn, 7.

ill is in fact like one who continues to be in the harvest of Paradise until he returns home.¹⁷ Such a glad tiding without doubt encourages Muslims to visit the ill.

The fact that the most merciful and graceful Allah (swt) considers visiting the ill as a visit to Himself gives a sacred meaning to the act. Considering the special circumstances and condition of a sick person, it is also important not to ask inappropriate questions, and make the visit so long that it begins to disconcert him. Furthermore, it is very improper for Muslims to invade the privacy of the house of the ill by looking around with prying eyes during the visit. An example from an incident concerning a Companion is appropriate to relate here. One day ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud went to visit an ill person. Another man was also visiting and was sitting next to him. When ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) realized that the man next to him was prying and eyeing the home inappropriately, he cautioned him and reprimanded him by saying, “May your eyes be gouged out, as this would be even better than what you are doing now.”¹⁸

When the Prophet (saw) was with ill people he was in the habit of making supplications and emphasized the importance of a specific supplication by saying, “*If anyone visits an ill person whose time (of death) has not come, and says with him seven times, ‘I ask Allah, the Almighty, the Lord of the mighty Throne, to cure you, Allah will cure him from that disease.’*”¹⁹ Once, while visiting a sick person, he prayed, “*Lord of the people! Remove the disease, cure him, for You are the great Curer, there is no cure but through Your healing power, which leaves nothing of the disease.*”²⁰ Following suit, the Companions (ra) never failed to make these supplications for ill people.²¹

In addition to praying to Allah (swt) for a cure for ill people, the Prophet (saw) gave the following advice through a prayer to those who were unwell in order to encourage them to perform virtuous deeds: “*O Allah! May you give him the cure so that he may give harm to your enemy, and participate in a funeral in Your name.*”²² In order to lift the morale of an ill person, he advised people in the following manner: “*When one of you visits the ill, then reassure him regarding his lifespan. Indeed, that will not fend off anything, but it will comfort his soul.*”²³ Furthermore, he encouraged people to spend any amount of time with those who were ill.²⁴

Our Prophet’s recommendation to supplicate to Allah (swt) was not only aimed at the visitor but also the person who was unwell; he counseled

¹⁷ M6552, Muslim, al-Birr, 40.

¹⁸ EM1305, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 442.

¹⁹ D3106, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Jana‘iz*, 8.

²⁰ M5709, Muslim, al-Salam, 47.

²¹ EM527, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 186.

²² D3107, Abu Da‘ud, *al-Jana‘iz*, 8.

²³ T2087, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Tibb*, 35.

²⁴ HM15890, Ibn Hanbal, III, 461.



people who were ill to beseech Allah to heal them.²⁵ Even if one was in extreme pain, the Prophet (saw) forbade any prayer for death that would release them from their suffering.²⁶ He recommended that an ill person pray to Allah for themselves and also for others. He said, “*When you enter upon one who is unwell, tell him to pray for you, for his supplication is like the supplication of the angels.*”²⁷ Thus, this way both the visitor and the ill person would obtain relief and respite with these supplications.

Just as the Prophet (saw) visited the ill, who were near or far, the Companions (ra) visited him when he fell ill.²⁸ Even in such a state, the Prophet (saw) continued to give counsel to his Companions (ra). When ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) visited the Prophet (saw) and said, “You have a high fever. Is it because you will have a double reward for it?” He replied, “*Yes, for no Muslim is afflicted with any harm but that Allah removes his sins as leaves of a tree fall down.*”²⁹

Our beloved Prophet told us that all the sufferings and calamities that befall believers are occasions that expiate their sins.³⁰ One day he and Anas b. Malik (ra) visited Zayd b. Arqam (ra), who had a problem with his eyes. The Prophet (saw) told him, “*If you endure this suffering, and patiently wait for Allah’s healing, then you may go to Allah without any sin.*”³¹

There is an opportunity for those who soberly endure all their sufferings and are thankful to Allah (swt) when they see those who have even more afflictions³² to expiate all their previous sins. When the Companion Shaddad b. Aws (ra) visited the ill, he said, “Be glad that your sins are going to be expiated because I heard the Prophet (saw) say that Allah said, ‘*When I test My servant with an affliction, and he endures those hardship and thanks Me during the interlude, then he will leave the bed sinless as if he was born yesterday...*’”³³

This consciousness, which was created by the Messenger of Allah (saw), asks us to be patient and accept that both the pleasant and the unpleasant are from Allah (swt). Nevertheless, it is vital to know that the Prophet (saw) also asked believers not to hesitate to visit physicians in order to get medical treatment.³⁴ Once someone asked him if it was a sin not to seek treatment, and the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Seek treatment, O servants of Allah! For Allah has let no disease exist without providing for its cure, except for one ailment, namely, old age.*”³⁵

According to the traditions of the Prophet (saw), illness can be transformative and lead to blessings. Hence, the boost in morale which the

²⁵ HM16383, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 22.

²⁶ B6349, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 30.

²⁷ IM1441, Ibn Maja, al-Jana‘iz, 1.

²⁸ HM14254, Ibn Hanbal, III, 301.

²⁹ B5647, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 2.

³⁰ M6568, Muslim, al-Birr, 52

³¹ HM12614, Ibn Hanbal, III, 156.

³² . M7430, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 9.

³³ HM17248, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 124.

³⁴ D3874, Abu Da‘ud, al-Tibb, 11.

³⁵ IM3436, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 1.

ill person may achieve from a visit during his ailment may result in his general betterment. Furthermore reminding a patient of the good deeds he could do while ill could help him after his recovery. Therefore, it is very important to say things to the patients that would make them want to hold onto life. The Companion Khabbab b. al-Arat told Haritha b. Mudarrif, (ra) who came to visit him while he was ill, “My illness is taking so long. Had I not heard the Messenger of Allah (saw), saying, ‘Do not wish for death,’ I would have asked for death (to emancipate me from my suffering.)”³⁶ The Prophet (saw) was never happy with people who were excessively bad-tempered, impatient, or did not put their trust in Allah when they were ill. When the Prophet (saw) once visited an old bedouin, he told him that with the permission of Allah (swt) his illness would expiate his sins. The bad-tempered and impatient old man instead kept on complaining about his illness and said that it would take him to his death. Disappointed with what he had heard, the Prophet (saw) simply said, “Sure. If you say so...”³⁷

The Prophet (saw) counseled believers that, when they visited the ill, they should stand near them and to ask about their health while holding their hand or putting their hand gently on their forehead.³⁸ Furthermore, in case the patient wanted something, the Prophet (saw) suggested trying their best to meet his. Once he asked a patient, “Do you want something? Do you want something sweet?” and the ill person said, “Yes.” So they looked for something sweet for him.³⁹

In another instance, the Prophet (saw) asked a sick person, “What do you long for?” He said, “I long for wheat bread.” The Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever has any wheat bread, let him send it to his brother.” Then the Prophet (saw) said, “If any ill person among you longs for something to eat, then feed him.”⁴⁰

Still, the Messenger of Allah (saw) also recommended not forcing the ill person to eat, unless he wanted to do so.⁴¹ If he did not see any signs of recovery in the ill person, he considered it a calamity, and asked the ill person’s relatives to remain calm⁴² and recite the verse, “Verily we belong to Allah and surely we return to him.”⁴³ By saying, “If Allah wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials..”⁴⁴ he also wanted us to put our trust in Allah’s will.

Believers are supposed to visit each other and visiting an ill believer is more meaningful. This was considered to be one of the criteria for being

³⁶ T2483, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 40.

³⁷ B5656, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 10.

³⁸ HM2259, Ibn Hanbal, V, 259.

³⁹ IM3441, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 2.

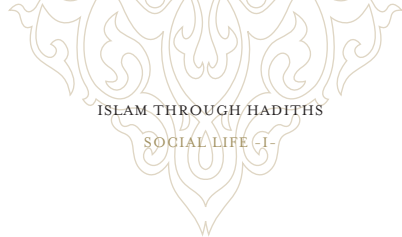
⁴⁰ IM1439, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 1Z.

⁴¹ T2040, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 4.

⁴² D3111, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 11.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:156.

⁴⁴ B5645, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 1.



a good person in a Muslim society. Once, Caliph ‘Umar (ra) asked delegations from other regions whether their rulers visited people that fell ill.⁴⁵ This was because visiting a believer was a virtue and being visited was an honor. That’s why the Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) counseled the general public not to visit people who fell ill as a result of unacceptable causes, such as alcohol consumption.⁴⁶ Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) also used to advise the public not to visit ill people who used to speak mockingly about destiny.⁴⁷ In fact, putting a restriction on someone in this way was seen as a form of social exclusion and excommunication.

Truly, visiting the ill is a duty in the brotherhood of Islam and a right of the Muslim who is ill. This duty gives moral support to the ill and strengthens the social solidarity of Muslims. In addition, it reminds the visitor about the Day of Judgement,⁴⁸ and helps him to contemplate and organize his own life. A person needs to appreciate his health before illness befalls him, and by visiting the ill he may begin to appreciate his own health more genuinely.⁴⁹ In short, being sensitive and caring with regard to people who are ill are virtues and matters of contemplation for the visitor, and matters of right and honor for the person who is ill.

⁴⁵ BS20877, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* X, 182

⁴⁶ EM529, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 187.

⁴⁷ BS21480, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 341.

⁴⁸ HM11198, Ibn Hanbal, III, 23.

⁴⁹ MS34308, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 6.



RULERS AND SUBJECTS TWO PILLARS OF THE SOCIAL ORDER



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“...إِذَا أُسْنِدَ الْأَمْرُ إِلَى غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ.”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “...When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday)...”

(B6496, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَرْبَعَةٌ يُغْضِبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: الْبَيَّاعُ الْحَلَّافُ، وَالْفَقِيرُ الْمُخْتَالُ، وَالشَّيْخُ
الزَّانِي، وَالْإِمَامُ الْجَائِرُ.“



قَالَ عَمْرُو بْنُ مُرَّةٍ لِمَعَاوِيَةَ: إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَا مِنْ إِمَامٍ يُغْلِقُ بَابَهُ دُونَ ذَوِي الْحَاجَةِ وَالْخَلَّةِ وَالْمَسْكِنَةِ، إِلَّا أَغْلَقَ اللَّهُ أَبْوَابَ
السَّمَاءِ دُونَ خَلَّتِهِ وَحَاجَتِهِ وَمَسْكِنَتِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ، يُقَاتَلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيَتَّقَى بِهِ. فَإِنْ أَمَرَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
وَعَدَلَ، كَانَ لَهُ بِذَلِكَ أَجْرٌ. وَإِنْ يَأْمُرُ بِغَيْرِهِ، كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ، فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ، إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ،
فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ، فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are four whom Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, hates: The vendor who sells his wares by means of false oaths, the poor man who shows off, the adulterous old man and the imām (ruler) who is unjust.”*

(N2576, al-Nasa'i, al-Zakat, 77)



‘Amr b. Murra told Mu‘awiya (ra) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *“No imām closes his door on one in need, dire straits, and poverty, except that Allah closes the gates of the Heavens from his need, dire straits, and poverty.”*

(T1332, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 6)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“A commander (of the Muslims) is a shield for them. They fight behind him and they are protected (by him from tyrants and aggressors). If he enjoins fear of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a (great) reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it redounds on him,”*

(M4772, Muslim, al-Imara, 43)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen (to the ruler appointed over him) and obey him whether he likes it or not, except that he is ordered to do a sinful thing. If he is ordered to do a sinful act, a Muslim should neither listen to him nor should he obey his orders.”*

(M4763, Muslim, al-Imara, 38)



The Messenger of Allah (saw) used to send some of his Companions (ra) to newly conquered places as governors. When these newly appointed governors were leaving for their new posts, after saying farewell to the Prophet (saw), their friends, and families, other Companions (ra), who saw these Companions (ra) being granted new positions, began to want similar positions. Abu Dharr was one of those Companions (ra); sometimes the notion that he could be a good governor crossed his mind. One day he decided to share this idea with the Prophet; he approached him and said, “O Messenger of Allah, will you not appoint me to a public office?” The Prophet (saw) then touched his shoulder with his hand and said, “*Abu Dharr, you are weak and authority is a trust and on the Day of Judgement it is a cause of humiliation and repentance except for the one who fulfills its obligations and (properly) discharges the duties attendant thereon.*”¹

In another incident, the Prophet (saw) said to Abu Dharr (ra), “*Abu Dharr, I find that you are weak and I like for you what I like for myself. Do not rule over (even) two persons and do not manage the property of an orphan.*”² The Prophet (saw) knew his Companions (ra) very well. He knew their abilities and appointed them to different roles in accordance with their abilities. The reason why our Master did not appoint certain Companions (ra) to official posts was not because of their moral deficiencies. On the contrary, Abu Dharr, for example, was a favorite Companion of the Prophet (saw).³ About him, our Master said, “*There is no one on earth, or under the sky, who speaks more truthfully than Abu Dharr.*”⁴ Therefore, the Prophet (saw) did not choose to not appoint him to an official administrative post because of his moral deficiency but because of his inability to perform administrative tasks. This was because, for an administrative duty, moral integrity alone is not a sufficient trait; an administrator needs to have additional qualities in order to cope with the challenges he encounters. Furthermore, making

¹ M4719, Muslim, al-Imara, 16.

² M4720, Muslim, al-Imara, 17.

³ T3718, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 20; IM149, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11.

⁴ IM156, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11; T3801, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 35.



wrong decisions in this position carries weighty consequences for that person on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) that abusive and incompetent rulers will have many regrets on the Day of Judgement: *“You people will be keen to have the authority of ruling, which will be a thing of regret for you on the Day of Resurrection. What an excellent wet nurse it is, yet what a bad weaning one it is.”*⁵

Being a ruler is a serious undertaking which entails a lot of responsibility. Our Prophet defined this responsibility as follows, *“All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care. The imām (i.e., ruler) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them and a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it. A servant is the guardian of his master’s belongings and is responsible for them.”* He also said, *“A man is the guardian of his father’s property and is responsible for it. All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care.”*⁶ Taking responsibility for people is not something that everybody can do well and because of that the Prophet (saw) was very keen to appoint appropriate rulers. He warned them that if the ruler did not use his authority in Allah’s path then this position would be a reason of regret both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Hence, to the Messenger of Allah (saw), rulership was a matter of trust.⁷ With trust comes responsibility and the Prophet (saw) did not miss an opportunity to remind his Companions (ra) about this. In fact, while speaking about this subject, he made a reference to the following verse: *“Allah commands you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners, and, if you judge between people, to do so with justice: Allah’s instructions to you are excellent, for He hears and sees everything.”*⁸ The best way to perform the task of rulership is to be a just ruler and justice can only be achieved as long as the ruler has an ability to implement it. Thus the Prophet (saw) endlessly emphasized the need to entrust duties to the appropriate people who merited them.

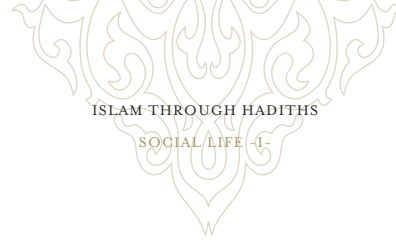
At one point when the Prophet (saw) was giving a sermon in the mosque, a Bedouin came and asked him, *“When will the Last Hour take place?”* Allah’s Messenger continued his sermon because the question was not related to the subject that he had been addressing. During the sermon some people began to say to each other that Allah’s Messenger had heard

⁵ B7148, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 7.

⁶ B893, al-Bukhari, al-Jum’a, 11; B2409, al-Istiqrād, 20.

⁷ B59, al-Bukhari, al-’Ilm, 2.

⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4:58.



the question but did not like what the Bedouin had asked, whereas others began to say that Allah's Messenger had not heard it and this was the reason that he did not respond to it. Finally, when the Prophet (saw) finished his sermon, he said, "*Where is the questioner, who inquired about the Hour (Doomsday)?*" The Bedouin said, "I am here, O Allah's Apostle!" Then the Prophet (saw) said, "*When honesty is lost, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday).*" The Bedouin said, "How will that be lost?" The Prophet (saw) said, "*When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday.)*"⁹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) determined that the most important criterion for being a just ruler was to have the right abilities. Moreover, he showed displeasure towards people who volunteered themselves for roles of authority. Knowing the Prophet's attitude on this issue, many of his Companions (ra) acted accordingly. However, not all the Companions (ra) had the same level of awareness about the Prophet's attitude. For instance, one day, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) went to see the Prophet (saw) with two of his cousins who wanted to meet the Prophet (saw). Abu Musa was unaware of his cousins' true intentions. During the meeting with the Prophet (saw), his cousins began to express their interest in becoming governors. The Prophet (saw) turned to Abu Musa and asked him, "*What do you say about this matter, Abu Musa?*" Abu Musa at that point was feeling embarrassed and shameful because of what had just happened. At first he was speechless and did not know what to say. After a brief interval, he turned towards the Prophet (saw) and said, "*By Him, Who sent you with the Truth, these two men did not tell me what was in their hearts and I did not realize that they were seeking employment.*" Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, "*We never (or, we do not) appoint for our affairs anyone who seeks to be employed.*"¹⁰ In another report, the Prophet (saw) said, "*We do not assign the authority of governing to those who ask for it, nor to those who are keen to have it.*"¹¹ After this conversation he assigned Abu Musa, who had not asked for anything for himself, to the governorship of Yemen.¹²

It is clear that the reason the Prophet (saw) prohibited requests for official state positions was to prevent possible abuse of the authority that comes with such posts. Our Prophet knew intimately human nature and the urge for worldly gain. He knew that admiration, fame, material gain, praise, and many other worldly benefits came with positions of high rank.

⁹ B59, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 2; B6496, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35

¹⁰ M4717, Muslim, al-Imara, 14; M4718, Muslim, al-Imara, 15; B6923, al-Bukhari, Istitabat al-Murtaddin, 2.

¹¹ B7149, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 7; M4717, Muslim, al-Imara, 14.

¹² B6923, al-Bukhari, Istitabat al-Murtaddin, 2; M4718, Muslim, al-Imara, 15.



Thus said, “Two wolves roaming freely among sheep are less destructive to them than the desire for wealth and honor is to a person’s religion.”¹³ Throughout history rulers have had a predisposition toward worldly gratification and pleasure. They became the slaves of their own insatiable desires, oppressed and tortured their people, and shed blood for their own benefit. In so doing, they ruined not only themselves but also to their societies and religions.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) prohibited people, who wanted to have positions of authority in order to satisfy their egocentric interests, from requesting such employment. Nevertheless it is also possible that some people may compete to obtain such posts in order to prevent the wrong people from obtaining them. As reported in the Holy Qur’an, when Joseph was released from prison, he said to the King, “Put me in charge of the nation’s storehouses: I shall manage them prudently and carefully.”¹⁴ Because the King knew that Joseph was a man of knowledge and talent, he accepted his request.

Our Prophet cautioned his Companions (ra) that only those who were chosen for a post based upon merit would receive aid from Allah (swt), while those who asked to be assigned to a post would receive no assistance from Allah.¹⁵ Those who were appointed to an important position based upon merit would certainly face challenges in resolving various issues but they would overcome those challenges with the help of Allah. However, those who were assigned to a post not because of their merit but because of their connections and requests would be deserted by Allah. As should be expected, such people will not be successful in their duties, and will unfortunately ruin the peace and wealth of the society that they wished to govern. From such governance, injustice and oppression become widespread, and the social structure eventually collapses.

The assistance of Allah (swt) can manifest itself in various ways; having a worthy administrator can be one form of such assistance. The Messenger of Allah (saw) explained the importance of having such support in the following manner: “When Allah has a good purpose for a ruler, He appoints for him a sincere minister who reminds him if he forgets and helps him if he remembers; but when Allah has a different purpose from that for him, He appoints for him an evil minister who does not remind him if he forgets and does not help him if he remembers.”¹⁶

¹³ T2376, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 41; DM2758, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 21.

¹⁴ Yusuf, 12:55-56.

¹⁵ B6722, al-Bukhari, Kafarat al-Ayman, 10; M4715, Muslim, al-Imara, 13.

¹⁶ D2932, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 4.

When someone is offered a position, he has a right to turn down the offer. However, after accepting the offer, he is expected to comply with the responsibilities of the post by performing the required duties and avoiding what is not relevant to his post. Otherwise, the person betrays the position with which he has been entrusted. It is clear that the Prophet (saw) held this matter to be of vital importance and took much time to explain the principles of governorship in detail to his Companions (ra).

The first thing that the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked from governors was to be just in their administration. His statement, *“When I meet Allah, none of you will have any claim on me for an injustice regarding blood or property,”*¹⁷ was the epitome of justice and fairness. Our Prophet demonstrated to his Companions (ra) how to be just through his words and deeds. Let alone being unfair, even thinking of injustice used to make him upset. For instance, at one point a woman from the tribe of the Banu Makhzum committed the crime of theft. Upon the request of the Quraysh, Usama (ra) went to the Prophet (saw) to ask forgiveness for the women. However, he scolded Usama by saying, *“Do you intercede about a penalty that is of Allah’s penalties?”* Then he turned around and addressed the people around him, saying, *“Those before you were only destroyed because they used to leave a noble person if he stole. And if a weak person stole they would establish the penalty upon him. And by Allah! If Fatima bint Muhammad stole, then I would cut off her hand.”*¹⁸

By always being a just leader, the Prophet (saw) emphasized the concept of the just ruler. He also conveyed the important good news about the status of just rulers. In one of his traditions the Prophet (saw) said that the just ruler will be one of the seven people (if not the first) who will be protected under the shade of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgement when there will be no other shade.¹⁹ In another incident, the Prophet (saw) mentioned the just ruler among those whose supplication will be accepted on that day.²⁰

While praising just rulers, the Prophet (saw) admonished unjust rulers. He said that unjust rulers will be treated harshly by Allah on the Day of Judgement: *“There are four whom Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, hates: the vendor who sells his wares by means of false oaths, the poor man who shows off, the adulterous old man and the imām who is unjust.”*²¹

To our Prophet justice was the principal key to safeguard the social order. Thus he counseled newly selected governors about establishing jus-

¹⁷ D3451, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 49; T1314, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 73.

¹⁸ T1430, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 6; M4410, Muslim, al-Hudud, 8.

¹⁹ B660, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 36.

²⁰ T3598, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 128; IM1752, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 48.

²¹ N2576, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 77.



tice before sending them to newly conquered territories. A case in point, while preparing to send Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) to Yemen as a governor, the Prophet (saw) said to him, "...Don't pick up (as a share of zakāt) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between them and Allah."²²

The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned his governors about things that would weaken the idea of justice. Although gift giving normally would strengthen the bond of love and interest between people and our beloved Prophet encouraged gift giving in general,²³ he recommended that administrators refuse any gifts offered in order to avoid favoritism and conflict of interest. When 'Abd Allah b. Lutbiyya (ra), a tax collector, came to the presence of the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Allah's Messenger! This (amount of zakāt) is for you, and this (the other amount) was given to me as a present." The Prophet (saw) scolded him by saying, "Why didn't you stay at your father's or mother's house and see if you would be given presents or not?"²⁴ With this reaction, the Prophet (saw) forbade ways in which tax collectors could receive bribes under the disguise of gifts.

In addition, the Prophet (saw) frequently asked governors and administrators to treat their subordinates well. Considering that authority was entrusted to the leaders, the Prophet (saw) determined that they did not have a right to behave inappropriately towards their people. The Prophet (saw) himself was never overbearing towards his people who gave him their pledge, and never burdened them with more than they could carry. He also requested that they comply with their pledges according to the merciful condition of "as much as you are able."²⁵

'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) explained the attitude of the Prophet (saw) on this issue in the following manner: "We were with the Prophet (saw). He never forced us to do things. He used to ask us to do a thing once, and we used to do it."²⁶ The Prophet (saw) asked the administrators to have a similar attitude. One day, while he was with our mother 'A'isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) made a plea to Allah: "O Allah, whosoever (happens to) acquire some kind of control over the affairs of my people and is hard upon them—You be hard upon him, and whosoever (happens to) acquire some kind of control over the affairs of my people and is kind to them—You be kind to him."²⁷

Those who are administrators and in authority are expected to address people's difficulties; because in accordance with the Prophetic tradi-

²² M121, Muslim, al-Iman, 29.

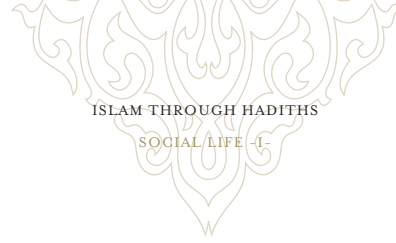
²³ T2130, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wala', 6; MU1651, al-Muwatta', Husn al-Khalq, 4.

²⁴ B6636, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa 'l-Nuzur, 3; M4738, Muslim, al-Imara, 26.

²⁵ T1593, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 34; IM2868, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 41.

²⁶ B2964, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 111.

²⁷ M4722, Muslim, al-Imara, 19.



tion a ruler is expected to take care of his people, i.e., to serve his people. The Prophet (saw) asked those in authority to work for their people. Once, he said, *“A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of Muslims but does not follow up on this, and does not sincerely involve himself concerning their welfare will not enter Paradise along with them.”*²⁸

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) called upon administrators to be concerned about the well-being of their subordinates. He said that Allah (swt) put leaders in charge in order for them to safeguard the well-being of their subjects and he warned them that if they failed to perform this function they will be in great despair on the Day of Judgement. He said, *“Any man whom Allah has given the authority to rule some people, and he does not look after them in an honest manner, will never sense even the scent of Paradise.”*²⁹

Leaders have been put in charge of ordering their subjects to do good deeds, and prohibit them from doing bad deeds. It is the responsibility of a ruler to prevent harmful deeds, sin, and crime in a society. On this subject the Prophet (saw) told the following parable: *“The example of the person abiding by Allah’s order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, ‘Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from being troubled.’ So, if the people in the upper part had let the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would have been destroyed, but if they had prevented them, both parties would have been safe.”*³⁰

The people travelling on the upper deck could be likened to the people of authority or rulers, and those travelling on the lower deck could be likened to the subjects. If the ruler does not intervene and resolve the problems of the ruled, then not only the ruled but the entire society pays the price. Therefore the ruler ought to look after the needs of everyone in society. Ignoring the problems of his subjects would bring the end to the reign of the ruler.

It is very important for a ruler or an administrator to consult with his advisors. This is a practice that the Prophet (saw) persistently asked the people in authority to observe. Allah Almighty commanded that this practice be observed, saying, *“Seek consultancy with them!”*³¹ After this divine command, the Messenger of Allah (saw) regularly consulted with his Com-

²⁸ M366, Muslim, al-Iman, 229.

²⁹ B7150, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 8.

³⁰ B2493, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 6; B2686, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 30.

³¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.



panions (ra) on important matters, and made his decisions accordingly. Despite the fact that he was the Messenger of Allah (saw), and received revelations, he preferred to deal with social and political issues through consultation.³² Affirming this, Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “I have never seen someone keener on consulting his Companions (ra) than the Prophet (saw).”³³

In addition to consulting his Companions (ra) regarding social and political affairs,³⁴ the Prophet (saw) deemed it necessary to consult on all kinds of matters, “*When your leaders are the best among you, your wealthy are the most generous among you, and your affairs are decided by mutual consultation, then the surface of the earth is better for you than its belly.*”³⁵

The Messenger of Allah (saw) also clarified actions that rulers were not expected to do; committing a sin and a crime while on duty were treason, and those who committed them would face severe punishment on the Day of Judgement.

Our Prophet considered it inappropriate for a person in authority to receive even a small gift, and informed his listeners that this could be a criminal act. On this he warned administrators as follows: “*Whosoever from you is appointed by us to a position of authority and he conceals from us a needle or something smaller than that, it would be misappropriation (of public funds) and will (have to) produce it on the Day of Judgement.*”³⁶

Our Master, the Prophet (saw) did not hesitate to exhibit his non-negotiable attitude on this issue on every possible occasion, and warned even his prominent Companions (ra) about it. Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra) related one of his recollections on this subject as follows: “The Messenger of Allah (saw) dispatched me to Yemen. When I had left, he sent a message to bring me back, so I returned and he said, ‘*Do you know why I sent a message to you? Do not take anything without my permission, for that will be treason, and whosoever commits treason, he comes on the Day of Judgement with what he took. This is why I called you, so now go and do your work.*’”³⁷

A healthy relationship between the ruler and the subject can only be possible through mutual trust. The subject can have trust in his ruler only if the ruler acts as a trustworthy person and does not deceive. This is because wherever there is deception it is impossible to establish trust and righteousness. Being a trustworthy ruler was one of the criteria that the Prophet (saw) emphasized repeatedly. He pointed out that if one begins to lie then very soon this person becomes addicted to telling lies and contin-

³² B7176, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 26; B4178, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 36.

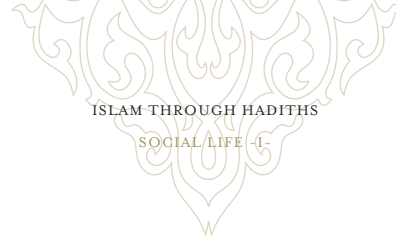
³³ T1714, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 35.

³⁴ T169, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 12.

³⁵ T2266, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 78.

³⁶ M4743, Muslim, al-Imara, 30.

³⁷ T1335, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 8.



ues to lie all the time.³⁸ Moreover, the Prophet (saw) warned that Allah will never speak to a deceitful ruler on the Day of Judgement.³⁹

Our beloved Prophet asked those in authority not to cheat their subjects under any conditions, and warned them, *“If Allah appointed anyone ruler over a people and he died while he was treacherous to his people, Allah would forbid his entry into Paradise.”*⁴⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked rulers not to treat their subjects as potential criminals. Pointing out the danger of such an attitude, he said, *“When a ruler seeks to make imputations against the people, he corrupts them.”*⁴¹

One treacherous thing that a ruler could do is to close the doors to the needy and the poor. For those rulers and administrators, the Prophet (saw) said, *“No Imam closes his door on one in need, dire straits and poverty, except that Allah closes the gates of the Heavens from his need, dire straits, and his poverty.”*⁴²

If one contemplates the counsels and warnings given by the Prophet (saw) to the rulers, it is clear that people in authority are under a heavy burden of responsibility. The only way to carry out these responsibilities in the best manner is through just governance. The Prophet (saw) asserted in the following statement that just rulers will be rewarded for their service: *“A commander (of the Muslims) is a shield for them. They fight behind him and they are protected by (him from tyrants and aggressors). If he enjoins fear of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a (great) reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it redounds on him.”*⁴³ Consequently, with such governance a just ruler will be praised for his service in this world, and he will, by Allah’s will, be able to sustain a peaceful reign for a long time. Moreover, his good deeds as a just ruler will be rewarded in the Hereafter.

The just ruler whom the Prophet (saw) described in the statement above is one who listens to his subjects, finds solutions for their problems, meets their needs, treats them equally and well regardless of who they are, and does not show any favoritism to anyone among them. He does not receive anything that he does not deserve, does not lie, and sincerely gains the trust of his people. A society based on such justice would have peace and tranquility; and rebellion, chaos, and terror would be avoided.

In the absence of justice, oppression and injustice fill the void. Tyranical and rapacious rulers would follow their egos, and oppress their people

³⁸ M6639, Muslim, al-Birr, 105.

³⁹ M296, Muslim, al-Iman, 172.

⁴⁰ M4729, Muslim, al-Imara, 21.

⁴¹ D4889, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 37; HM24316, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 4.

⁴² T1332, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 6; HM16037, Ibn Hanbal, III, 481.

⁴³ M4772, Muslim, al-Imara, 43; N4201, al-Nasa’i, al-Bi’a, 30.



in order to run their regimes as they pleased. In such cases, it would be hard to speak of the existence of peace and prosperity, social and economic development, and scientific progress.

Nevertheless, the role of the subjects or citizens in securing social peace is as important as that of the leaders. Like the leaders, the subjects or the citizens have rights and responsibilities in this matter. They are supposed to be loyal to their leaders and help them in every way. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, "*You who believe, obey Allah and the Messenger, and those in authority among you.*"⁴⁴ Reinforcing the same line of reasoning, the Prophet (saw) pointed out the need to obey leaders, "*Whoever is loyal to a leader, he would be considered loyal to Me; whoever rebels against him, would be considered against Me.*"⁴⁵

The Messenger of Allah (saw) addressed a large gathering during the Farewell Pilgrimage and said, "*O you people! Have piety towards Allah. If a mutilated Abyssinian slave is put in command over you, then listen to him and obey him, as long as he upholds the Book of Allah among you.*"⁴⁶

The subjects of citizens are expected to be sincere in their relations with the leaders.⁴⁷ In other words, the citizens should be able support as well as criticize and warn the leaders. These are the responsibilities of the citizens. Our Prophet considered sincerity towards leaders as one of the most important natural qualities of humans.⁴⁸ He also said that expressing the truth to tyrannical rulers was the most virtuous *jihād*.⁴⁹ Once, while he was riding a camel, a man asked him, "Which *jihād* is best?" and he replied, "*A word of truth spoken to an unjust ruler.*"⁵⁰

Without having supporters, unjust rulers could not continue their oppression. Some people give their support to their rulers for personal gain, and in so doing they help unjust rulers stay in power. In turn, unjust rulers begin to imagine that they are doing the right thing because they have the support of the people. The Prophet (saw) told Ka'b b. 'Ujra (ra) about counseling and warning subjects who support unjust rulers with these words, "*I seek refuge in Allah for you O Ka'b bin 'Ujra from leaders who will be after me. Whosoever comes to their doors to approve of their lies and supports them in their oppression, then he is not of me and I am not of him, and he will not meet me at the Hawd (pool in Paradise). And whosoever comes to their doors, or he does not come, and he does not approve of their lies and he does not support them in their oppression, then he is from me and I am from him, and he will meet me at the Hawd.*"⁵¹

⁴⁴ Al-Nisa', 4:59.

⁴⁵ M4747, Muslim, al-Imara, 32.

⁴⁶ T1706, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 28; B7142, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 4.

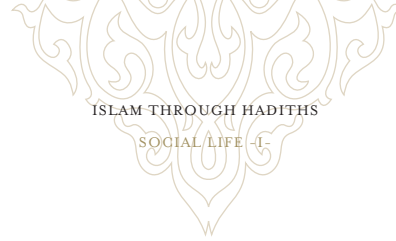
⁴⁷ M196, Muslim, al-Iman, 95.

⁴⁸ T2658, a-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 7; IM3056, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 76.

⁴⁹ T2174, Al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 13; N4214, al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 37.

⁵⁰ N4214, al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 37; IM4012, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.

⁵¹ T614, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jum'a, 79; N4213, al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 36.



The issue of obedience to leaders is mentioned many times in the traditions. Is it necessary to obey all the commands that leaders issue? What are the limits of obedience? Is it possible to observe all their orders? Our Prophet's reaction to the incident below should give us an indication of the boundaries of obedience.

The Prophet (saw) sent an army unit (on campaign) and appointed 'Abd Allah b. Hudhayfha from the Ansar as its commander and ordered them (the soldiers) to obey him. (During the campaign) for reason the soldiers annoyed their commander. Thereupon, he mockingly said, "Did not the Prophet (saw) order you to obey me?" They replied, "Yes." Then he said, "I order you to collect wood and make a fire and then throw yourselves into it." So they collected the wood and made a fire, but when they were about to throw themselves into it they started looking at each other, and some of them said, "We follow the Prophet (saw) to escape from the fire. How should we enter it now?" So while they were in that state, the fire went out and their commander's anger abated. This event was mentioned to the Prophet (saw) and he said, "*If they had entered it (the fire) they would never have come out of it, for obedience is required only in what is good.*"⁵²

The Prophet (saw) was reported to have said, "*There is no submission in matters involving Allah's disobedience or displeasure.*"⁵³ Emphasizing that obedience to leaders can only be possible in what is good (and reasonable), he said, "*One who has a governor appointed over him and he finds that the governor indulges in an act of disobedience to Allah, he should condemn the governor's act as disobedience to Allah, but should not withdraw himself from his obedience.*"⁵⁴

In conclusion, the rulers or leaders and the subjects or the citizens are the two essential components in establishing a social order. For a peaceful order, both the leaders and the citizens have responsibilities. The leaders should accept their appointments as opportunities entrusted to him, and try their best to observe all the requirements of being good leaders. The citizens should obey the legitimate orders of the leaders, and not hesitate to help them to the best of their ability. This is the structure and social order that the Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted to establish for his people. This is why the Prophet (saw) said that the best rulers were those whom their subjects loved and they loved their subjects. The subjects prayed for them, and they prayed for their subjects.⁵⁵

⁵² B7145, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 4 M4766, Muslim, al-Imara, 40; HS6/53, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat* VI, 53.

⁵³ M4765, Muslim, al-Imara, 39.

⁵⁴ M4763, Muslim, al-Imara, 38.

⁵⁵ M4805, Muslim, al-Imara, 66; T2264, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 77.



JUSTICE

THE PILLAR OF POWER



عَنْ حَاجِبِ بْنِ الْمُفَضَّلِ بْنِ الْمُهَلَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ
النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“اعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ أَبْنَائِكُمْ، اِعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ أَبْنَائِكُمْ.”

Hajib b. al-Mufaddal b. al-Muhallab said that his father said that al-Nu'man b. Bashir (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) said,
“Act equally between your children; act equally between your sons.”

(D3544, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (al-Ijara, 83)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ، يُفَاتَلُ مِنْ وِرَائِهِ، وَيَتَّقَى بِهِ، فَإِنْ أَمَرَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ [عَزَّ وَجَلَّ]
وَعَدَلَ، كَانَ لَهُ بِذَلِكَ أَجْرٌ، وَإِنْ يَأْمُرُ بِغَيْرِهِ، كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ: الْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ...“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى مَنَابِرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ عَلَى يَمِينِ الرَّحْمَنِ، الَّذِينَ
يَعْدِلُونَ فِي حُكْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَا وَلُوا.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A commander (of the Muslims) is a shield for them. They fight behind him and they are protected by (him from tyrants and aggressors). If he enjoins fear of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a (great) reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it redounds on him.”

(M4772, Muslim, al-Imara, 43)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah will give shade to seven on the Day when there will be no shade but His. (These seven persons are) a just ruler...”

(B660, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 36)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Those who are just and fair will be with Allah, Most High, on thrones of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful; those who are just in their rulings and in their dealings with their families and those whom they are in charge of.”

(N5381, al-Nasa’i, Adab al-Qudat, 1)



Mecca had just recently been conquered and the Messenger of Allah (saw) and all the Muslims were very joyful and jubilant. However, very soon they heard that the tribe of the Hawazin, who had been agitating the Muslims for some time, was preparing for battle. The Messenger of Allah (saw) sent his scouts to verify the news and when the news was confirmed, war became inevitable.¹ The Prophet (saw) did not lose any time and deployed his armed forces to the region known as Hunayn. At the beginning of the battle, known as the Battle of Hawazin or Hunayn, the Muslims were overconfident and relied mistakenly on the larger size of their armed forces; therefore they did not take the enemy seriously.² Thus, at one point they were about to lose the battle and were even forced to retreat.³ Nevertheless, with the encouragement and impetus of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his loyal Companions (ra), the Muslims were able to rally their forces, and begin to fight back. Eventually they won the battle.⁴

The Hawazin had come to the battle ground with all of their families and property. Once they lost the battle, all of their property fell into the hands of the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gathered his army in the Jirana region, located fifteen kilometers from Mecca, and began to distribute the spoils of war among the Companions (ra).⁵ While this was happening, Dhu al-Khuwaysira, a bedouin from the tribe of the Banu Tamim approached the Prophet (saw) and said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, be just.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was very disappointed by this statement, replied, “*Woe upon you! Who would do justice, if I do not do justice? You would be unsuccessful and incurring a loss, if I did not do justice.*”⁶ According to another account, after this incident the Prophet (saw) said the following: “May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses, for he was harmed more (in a worse manner) than this; yet he endured patiently.”⁷

¹ ZE2/571, al-Dhahabi, *Ta'rikh al-Islam*, II, 571-572.

² AV7/194, al-'Azimabadi, *'Awn al-Ma'bad*, VII, 194; HS5/113, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, V, 113.

³ Al-Tawba, 9:25-26.

⁴ B4337, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 57.

⁵ ZE2/599, al-Dhahabi, *Ta'rikh al-Islam*, II, 599-600.

⁶ M2456, Muslim, al-Zakat, 148.

⁷ M2447, Muslim, al-Zakat, 140; B3405, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 28.



At the time of the distribution of the war booty, our Prophet allocated more shares to the Meccan leaders and to the newly converted Muslims, such as Abu Sufyan b. Harb, Sawfan b. Umayya and ‘Uyayna b. Hisn (ra),⁸ in order to make their hearts come closer to Islam. Dhu al-Khuwaysira objected to this practice because he believed it would be just to distribute the spoils of war equally to everyone. Generally, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did distribute the spoils of war on such equal terms but this time the situation was different. Prominent enemies of Islam had recently accepted Islam during the conquest of Mecca, an event that had made the new religion much more potent and powerful. Moreover, only seventeen days after their conversion these prominent people who had suffered a great defeat agreed to participate in a battle with the Prophet (saw). Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted to strengthen their ties to Islam and he did this by allocating additional spoils of war to them; there was nothing unusual about this practice because even Allah Almighty endorsed the notion of giving *zakāt* to people among the newly converted in order to make their hearts come closer to Islam.⁹ As envisaged, in due course those who were given additional shares of the war booty became very passionate Muslims. One of these Meccan leaders was Safwan b. ‘Umayya, who admitted the following on a later date: “(On the day of Hunayn) Allah’s Messenger gave me what he gave me (and my state of mind at that time was) that he was the most detested person among people in my eyes. But he continued giving to me up to now and he is the dearest of people to me.”¹⁰

One of the most important personal traits of the Prophet (saw) was his adherence to justice. He witnessed first-hand the reality of injustice, discrimination, oppression, and inequality in the Jahiliyya society and he assumed the divine duty to build a society in which inequity would end. He devoted his life to establishing justice in his society.

The basic definition of justice is that it is “a moral virtue which ensures social and personal peace and order, based on the principles of equality and equity.” In order to maintain social peace and integrity, justice should be established in society. Establishing equity is the ultimate goal of all legal systems, rules, and regulations. This is because the just and proportionate distribution of property, rights, and responsibilities among people can be realized by protecting the honor and the dignity of the human being, and through implementing justice.

⁸ M2443, Muslim, al-Zakat, 137.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:60.

¹⁰ M6022, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 59.

However, it is important to acknowledge that justice does not necessarily mean absolute equality. Rather, it is an approach that allows people to receive what they genuinely earn and deserve. Because each person has a different mental and physical ability, and different cultural background, a strict egalitarian attitude would create injustice rather than serving the concept of justice. It is true that equality should be observed at court where everyone must have equal rights and responsibilities. The message that the Prophet (saw) gave towards the end of his life was quite telling in this regard: “O people! Know that your Lord is One and your father is One. The Arabs have no superiority over non-Arabs, non-Arabs over Arabs, white over black, or black over white.”¹¹ In Islam, everybody is equal.¹² Everybody, regardless of their ethnicity, race, family, tribe, class, color, religion, and language are equal before the law. While aiming to establish justice among people, Islam advises the spread of such virtues as altruism, charity, and compassion.¹³

The purpose of justice is to guarantee that people receive what they deserve without any discrimination. On various occasions, the Prophet (saw) said, “Give the right due to everyone deserving a right.”¹⁴ This should be the guiding principle in this matter. According to this principle, it is important to give everyone what he deserves, while staying within the boundaries set by Islam. Giving somebody what he deserves, including reward and punishment, is important for the character development of that person. Various practices of the first two caliphs after the Prophet (saw) indicate that there is more than one way to implement justice. For example, while Caliph Abu Bakr (ra) followed the Prophetic tradition of distributing the annual sums to the Muslims on equal terms, Caliph ‘Umar (ra), who was notorious for being a just ruler, distributed them in accordance with their merit.¹⁵

Al-‘Adl (The Just) and al-Muqsit (The Equitable) are two beautiful names of Allah (swt). These names indicate that Allah, who represents absolute justice, created the universe with justice and because of that Allah asked human beings, whom He gave responsibility, to act with the principle of justice. In the Qur’anic verse, “He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance: weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance,”¹⁶ Allah informs us that He created the universe with balance and justice, and He asks that human relations be built on the same principles. Moreover, with the following Qur’anic verse,

¹¹ HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

¹² MB195, al-Quda’i, *al-Musnad al-Sibah*, 1/145.

¹³ Al ‘Imran, 3:92; al-Nahl, 16:90; al-Hashr, 59:9.

¹⁴ B1968, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 51; T2121, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wasaya, 5.

¹⁵ BS13272, BS13274, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VI, 574, 575.

¹⁶ Al-Rahman, 55:7-9.



*“Your generous Lord, who created you, shaped you, proportioned you,”*¹⁷ Allah Almighty emphasizes that human beings, both materially and spiritually, were created in a balanced way. Allah created the universe and the human being with balance and order. In the following Qur’anic verse Allah (swt) asks humans to adopt the principle of justice in all of their affairs including administration and jurisprudence: *“Allah commands justice, doing good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive. He teaches you, so that you may take heed.”*¹⁸

Those rulers, who gain the reputation of being tyrants, because of the violation of human rights, will be punished severely on the Day of Judgement. They are will want to sacrifice all of their belongings, as well as all the wealth of the world, to spare themselves from this agony. However, the position of the Highest Court is clear, *“They will be judged with justice and will not be wronged. It is to Allah that everything in the heavens and the earth truly belongs: Allah’s promise is true, but most people do not realize it.”*¹⁹

Allah (swt) promises that He will judge people with balance and justice on the Day of Judgement, *“The earth will shine with the light of its Lord; the Record of Deeds will be laid open; the prophets and witnesses will be brought in. Fair Judgement will be given between them: they will not be wronged”*²⁰ and *“We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection so that no one can be wronged in the least, and if there should be even the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it out—We take excellent account.”*²¹

In Islam, no person can claim to have the ultimate freedom to do anything concerning himself or others. In Islam every human being is responsible to be just, even with himself. The acts of worship and prayers should be understood in this regard. Our own self has rights as well as our Lord, guests, and families. Moreover, everyone is responsible to give due rights to people according to their merit and rights.²²

Couples in particular have rights on each other, and they should treat each other justly. In several accounts it is clear that the Prophet (saw) was very vigilant in this matter.²³ This was because the concept of justice was primarily formed within the family. It could be argued that people who grow up in families where justice is equitably applied within the boundaries of divine rules will certainly be just people throughout their lives. This is the reason why the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Fear Allah”* or *“Be*

¹⁷ Al-Infitar, 82:7.

¹⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:90.

¹⁹ Yunus, 10:54-55.

²⁰ Al-Zumar, 39:69

²¹ Al-Anbiya’, 21:47.

²² T2413, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 63.

²³ D2134, D2135, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 37-38.

mindful of Allah” and immediately after that he said, “*Act equally between your children.*”²⁴ This is because the fear and mindfulness of Allah and the idea of justice are so closely intertwined to each other that they are virtually inseparable. Furthermore, as pointed out in another *hadith*, those fathers who are keen to establish justice among their children will be guaranteed a place in Paradise.²⁵

Because the family is the place where the notion of justice is developed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) paid special attention to the behavior of family members, and did not approve of activities within the family that were against the notion of equity and equality. The Prophet (saw)’s reaction to a Companion who was planning to allocate some of his inheritance to only one of his children is an excellent example to illustrate this point. ‘Amra bint Rawaha, the mother of al-Nu‘man b. Bashir (ra), asked for some property from al-Nu‘man’s father for her son. The father stalled her for a year or so without giving her any worthwhile response. However, she did not give up on her demand. Eventually, al-Nu‘man’s father agreed to give some money and property to his son. At that point, al-Nu‘man’s mother informed him that she would not believe his word unless he made his assurance before the Prophet (saw). The father, with his young son, went to the Prophet (saw) and told him what had happened, “O Messenger of Allah, the mother of this child wants you to be the witness to the contribution that I make to this child.”²⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) immediately asked, “*Do you have other children?*” When he said, “Yes,” the Prophet (saw) asked again, “*Have you done the same with every son of yours?*” He said, “No.” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Then, I cannot testify to this act because I will not be a witness to an injustice.*” Then, the Prophet (saw) asked again, “*Would you not ask your children to treat you fairly in doing favors to you?*” The father replied, “Of course, I would.” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*This is not the way it should be.*”²⁷ *Observe equity in case of your children.*²⁸ *They have rights on you, so you should do justice to them, as you have rights on them and they should be good to you.*²⁹ A child growing in such a family environment will treat himself as well as others with justice throughout his life. Regardless of his occupation or responsibility, he will hold the same standards for everyone. No matter if he is a top administrator or a laborer, he will have the sense of equity, equality, and justice as well as the feeling of mindfulness and fear of Allah (swt).

²⁴ D3544, Abu Da‘ud, al-Buyu‘ (al-Ijara), 83; B2587, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 13.

²⁵ D5146, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 120-121.

²⁶ M4182, Muslim, al-Hiba, 14.

²⁷ M4185, Muslim, al-Hiba, 17.

²⁸ M4186, Muslim, al-Hiba, 18.

²⁹ D3542, Abu Da‘ud, al-Buyu‘ (al-Ijara), 83.



The larger part of the responsibility in establishing and implementing justice in society falls on the shoulders of the rulers and the leaders. With the *ḥadīth*, “*Be just in passing Judgement on any issue!*”³⁰ the first interlocutor of the Holy Qur’an and the guide of humankind set the standards for the decision makers. On several occasions, the Messenger of Allah (saw) repeated his remarks on the importance of being a just ruler. A just state is the basis of a peaceful society, in which a trustworthy bond is created between the leader and the citizens. On this the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*He who obeys me, obeys Allah, and he who disobeys me, disobeys Allah. He who obeys the chief, obeys me, and he who disobeys the chief, disobeys me. The imām is like a shelter for whose safety the Muslims should fight and where they should seek protection. If the imām orders people with righteousness and rules justly, then he will be rewarded for that, and if he does the opposite, he will be responsible for that.*”³¹

According to the good news that the Prophet (saw) brought, the just leader or ruler was among the three groups of people whose prayers would not be declined.³² Consequently, in this world, the just ruler sees the positive results of his just government based on law, equity, and equality. In a government in which the governing principle is justice, one could see nothing but peace, integrity, and order. Still, the just ruler gets his real reward in the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah (saw) referred to the just ruler as one of the seven people whom Allah (swt) will safeguard on the Day of Judgement.³³ This is because the just leader is the most virtuous person in the eyes of Allah, and because of that he is positioned closest to Allah. On the other hand, on that Day the most hated people in the eyes of Allah will be the unjust rulers who oppressed their people and they will be subject to the severest torments.³⁴

It is perhaps needless to say that the judiciary is the locus of justice. In Islam, the judiciary and the courts are the most important institutions for dispensing justice. They strike a balance and harmony among the members of a society, prevent potential animosities, and make sure that rights and responsibilities are not divided in accordance with personal whims and interests. Concerning this issue, Allah Almighty cautioned even his Messenger, “*If they come to you [Prophet] for Judgement, you can either judge between them or decline—if you decline, they will not harm you in any way, but if you do judge between them, judge justly.*”³⁵ This principle is also applicable to other

³⁰ ME5735, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VI, 40-41.

³¹ B2957, al-Bukhari, *al-Jihad*, 110; M4772, Muslim, *al-Imara*, 43.

³² HM8030, Ibn Hanbal, II, 305.

³³ B660, al-Bukhari, *al-Adhan*, 36.

³⁴ HM11192, Ibn Hanbal, III, 23.

³⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5:42.

people: *“Allah commands you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners, and, if you judge between people, to do so with justice.”*³⁶ The following incident illustrates the way in which the Prophet (saw) dealt with the issues of justice and Judgement. There was a woman, named Fatima bint al-Aswad, a member a prestigious tribe, the Banu Mahdum.³⁷ Trusting that her family ties would protect her, she became involved in some illegal business. By invoking the names of some prominent people, she borrowed money from several men.³⁸ However, when it came to pay back the debt, Fatima was unable to repay it. The Lender went to the people whose names were used as references by Fatima and found that these people were unaware of what had happened. Upon investigation it became evident that Fatima had been lying, and that she had exploited people’s names and prestige without their knowledge. When they charged her she denied the allegations. The lenders did not have an option but to relate the event to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He ruled that what she did was cheating and theft and asked for the woman to be punished by law.³⁹ However, her tribe did not consent to the punishment. The elders of the tribe searched for a solution to save Fatima from the punishment. They convinced Usama (ra), who was the beloved manumitted slave of the Prophet (saw), to intercede. Upon his unexpected request, coming from a beloved Companion, the Prophet (saw) made his point unequivocally by referring to the Qur’anic verse, *“Do you want to revoke a punishment which was assigned by Allah?”*⁴⁰

Then he gathered people and addressed them as follows: *“What destroyed the nations preceding you were that if a noble among them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person among them stole, they would inflict Allah’s legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand.”*⁴¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) tried hard to establish and institute justice in his society throughout his life. ‘Ubada b. Samit (ra), who went to Mecca from Medina before the Hijra and gave his pledge with other people to the Prophet (saw), said that they gave their pledge because he did not hesitate to speak about justice wherever he was, without worrying about the opinions of other people.⁴² This demonstrates how much the Prophet (saw) tried to establish justice in his own society. On this matter, Allah Almighty says: *“You who believe, uphold justice and bear witness to Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives. Whether the person*

³⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:58.

³⁷ IBS931, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Isti’ab*, 931.

³⁸ N4902, al-Nasa’i, *Qat’ al-Sariq*, 6.

³⁹ IF12/90, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, XII, 90.

⁴⁰ Al-Ma’ida, 5:38

⁴¹ B3475, al-Bukhari, *al-Anbiya’*, 54.

⁴² N4158, al-Nasa’i, *al-Bi’a*, 4.



is rich or poor, Allah can best take care of both. Refrain from following your own desire, so that you can act justly—if you distort or neglect justice, Allah is fully aware of what you do.”⁴³

The establishment of justice in society depends on the unbiased and principled attitude of judges towards justice. Therefore a judge cannot act upon his own personal convictions and feelings during a trial. For instance, he should not grapple with a legal case nor issue a verdict if he is emotionally compromised.⁴⁴ The judge or the jury should not have any preconceived ideas regarding the people involved in a legal case. For instance, a grudge against one of the people involved in a legal case should not cloud the reasoning behind the verdict.⁴⁵ Hence, the judge must be objective and a person of moral compass. Therefore, in all cases the judge is obliged to attentively listen to both sides during the trial.⁴⁶ Moreover, the judge is obligated to continue his investigation concerning the case until a ruling is made; and if there are witnesses, the judge must listen to them judiciously. Even on the Day of Judgement, Allah (swt) will ask the prophets and other witnesses to come forward to give their testimonies about His subjects. In this way people can have no doubt about the divine verdict.⁴⁷

Witnesses are also obligated to be fair, just, and principled. Thus, Allah Almighty connects the duty of judges and witnesses to the issue of faith, “O believers, be steadfast in your devotion to Allah and bear witness impartially: do not let hatred of others, lead you away from justice, but adhere to justice, for that is closer to awareness of Allah.”⁴⁸ Even more importantly, administering justice should not be limited to friends and families but should also include enemies.

According to the Prophet (saw), the judges who take these principles into consideration will have a place in Paradise. The Prophet (saw) said, “If anyone seeks the office of judge among the Muslims until he gets it and his justice prevails over his tyranny, he will go to Paradise; but the man whose tyranny prevails over his justice will go to Hell.”⁴⁹ Thus, anyone who takes up this weighty responsibility should behave accordingly. Based upon the above warnings of the Holy Qur’an and the traditions, both plaintiff and defendant should tell the truth, the witnesses should relate only what they witnessed, and the judge should pass his verdict objectively. Through such practices and actions the society as a whole can contribute to the establishment of justice.

⁴³ Al-Nisa’, 4:135.

⁴⁴ B7158, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 13; D3589, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 9.

⁴⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5:8.

⁴⁶ D3582, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 6.

⁴⁷ Al-Zumar, 39:69.

⁴⁸ Al-Ma’ida, 5:8.

⁴⁹ D3575, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 2.

The practice of Caliph ‘Umar “the Just” (ra) is a good example to illustrate this point. A disagreement between him and Ubayy b. Ka’b arose. In order to resolve it they went to Zayd b. Thabit (ra), who was acting as a judge. Zayd welcomed his guests. He treated ‘Umar a bit more favorably and made a space for him to sit. However, ‘Umar did not like this treatment, and intervened by saying, “You made the first mistake in your decision-making process. I am going to sit at the same place where Ubayy sits.” When Ubayy presented his claims, ‘Umar did not accept them. In such a legal case, ‘Umar should have been the one to take an oath. Whereas Zayd, addressing Ubayy, said, “Do not make the Caliph take an oath. I would not make such a concession if had he been any other person besides the caliph.” ‘Umar did not accept this privileged treatment, and took the oath. Moreover, ‘Umar could not help make the following remarks about Zayd, “As long as ‘Umar is not equal to another Muslim [at the court] in the eyes of Zayd b. Thabit (ra), he cannot perform his job correctly.”⁵⁰ By not accepting these privileges, Caliph ‘Umar contributed to the establishment of justice. It was said that because of this ‘Umar (ra) was among those benefited from the following good news brought by the Prophet: “*Those who are just and fair will be with Allah, Most High, on thrones of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful; those who are just in their rulings and in their dealings with their families and those of whom they are in charge.*”⁵¹

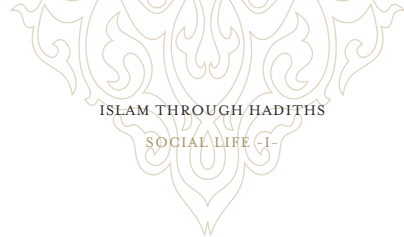
Justice is not only served in courthouses. It should be established in every sphere of life. Government officials should treat the people justly, administrators should treat their subordinates justly, fathers should treat their children justly, teachers should treat their students justly, merchants should treat their customers justly, employers should treat their employees justly, landlords should treat their tenants justly, in short, everyone should treat each other with justice. Therefore, everyone in society can be a source of justice in one context and a petitioner of justice in another.

Establishing justice based on equity and equality would result in a felicitous and virtuous society. Those who understand, adopt, and absorb justice are honorable and virtuous people. The actions of such people can create a happy and virtuous society. In contrast, those who do not accept and adopt justice at an individual and societal level are incomplete and imperfect people. In the Holy Qur’an, such unjust and unfair people are described as, “*mute, imperfect and incompetent.*”⁵²

⁵⁰ BS21049, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 229.

⁵¹ N5381, al-Nasa’i, *Adab al-Qudat*, 1; M4721, Muslim, *al-Imara*, 18.

⁵² Al-Nahl, 16:76.



By having justice, a society can make sure that people live comfortably and with security. When those who attack the dignity of other people's life, family, and property are fairly judged and punished, their and other people's tendencies to commit crimes are curbed. The implementation of justice through proper mechanisms deters such people from seeking personal revenge and the creation of family feuds. It prevents the escalation of animosity between various groups in society.

In conclusion, the concept of justice is a highly esteemed virtue that everyone needs in order to govern their relationships; be they towards Allah (swt), oneself, or other people. Justice in society brings together such values as balance, equity, equality, modesty, and moderation. It thus makes the creation of society possible.



RESPECTING THE RIGHTS GIVING RIGHTS TO THE ONE WHO MERITS THEM

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ عَامَ حَجَّةِ
الْوَدَاعِ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَدْ أَعْطَى لِكُلِّ ذِي حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ...»

Abu Umama al-Bahili (ra) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say the following during the Farewell Pilgrimage: *“Indeed Allah, the Most Blessed and the Most High, has given the right due to everyone deserving a right.”*

(T2120, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wasaya, 5)



عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ: كُنْتُ رَدَفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَلَى حِمَارٍ يُقَالُ لَهُ عَفِيرٌ...
قَالَ: ”فَإِنَّ حَقَّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا يُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَحَقُّ الْعِبَادِ
عَلَى اللَّهِ [عَزَّ وَجَلَّ] أَنْ لَا يُعَذِّبَ مَنْ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِهِ [شَيْئًا].“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ بَعَثَ إِلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ فَجَاءَهُ فَقَالَ:
”...فَإِنَّ لِأَهْلِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنَّ لَضَيْفِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ
عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا...“



أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ خَمْسٌ: رَدُّ السَّلَامِ، وَعِيَادَةُ الْمَرِيضِ، وَاتِّبَاعُ
الْجَنَائِزِ، وَاجَابَةُ الدَّعْوَةِ، وَتَشْمِيتُ الْعَاطِسِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لِأَخِيهِ فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهَا...“



Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) said, "I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (saw) on a donkey known as an 'Ufayr... The Prophet (saw) said, *"The right of Allah over His servants is that they should worship Allah and should not associate anything with Him, and the right of His servants from Allah, the Glorious and the Sublime, is that He does not punish anyone who does not associate anything with Him."*

(M144, Muslim, al-Iman, 49)



'A'isha (ra) related that the Prophet (saw) summoned 'Uthman b. Maz'un, who had withdrawn from the world, and said, "...*Uthman, your wife has a right on you, your guest has a right on you, and your self has a right on you.*"

(D1369, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 27)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"The rights of a Muslim over the Muslims are five: To respond to the salām, to visit the sick, to follow funeral processions, to accept an invitation, and to reply to those who sneeze."*

(B1240, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 2)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Whoever has wronged his brother, should ask for his pardon (before his death)"*

(B6534, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48)



During one day the Messenger of Allah (saw) was in the company of his Companions (ra). He began his conversation with a rhetorical question, which was characteristic of him, “*Do you know who is poor?*” The Companions (ra) said, “A poor person among us is one who has neither dirham nor wealth,” but the Prophet (saw) corrected them by saying, “*The poor person in my umma would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasts and zakāt but (he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) because he hurled abuse upon others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully consumed the wealth of others, shed the blood of others and beat them; his virtues would be credited to the account of the one (who suffered at his hand). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire.*”¹

This is how the Holy Prophet described a person who would be poor and bankrupt on the Day of Judgement. All the efforts of the bankrupt person will be for naught and his good deeds will be swept away by his bad deeds; and instead of reward, he will receive punishment. Hence, the lesson is that, in order to receive rewards from Allah (swt), it is vital to be free from violating the rights of other people. According to Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra), our Master, the Prophet (saw) said, “*The believers, after being saved from the (Hell) Fire, will be stopped at a bridge between Paradise and Hell and accounts will be settled among them regarding wrongs they have committed in the world against one another. After they are cleansed and purified (through settling accounts), they will be admitted into Paradise.*”² In another tradition the Prophet (saw) said, “[*On the Day of Judgement*] there will be no dinar or dirham. If the wrongdoer has any reward, it will be taken from him, and if he has no reward, then some of his (brothers’) bad deeds will be levied upon him.”³ This is how the final Judgement will be implemented. The Messenger of

¹ M6579, Muslim, al-Birr, 59.

² B6535, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48.

³ T2419, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 2.



Allah (saw) gave this subject so much importance that he went onto say, “I hope that when I meet Allah, none of you have any claim on me for wrongdoing regarding blood or property.”⁴

In the Holy Qur’an, the word “truth (*ḥaqq*)” means many things including the true word,⁵ the true path,⁶ the true belief and knowledge,⁷ justice,⁸ responsibility and vocation,⁹ and genuine understanding.¹⁰ Because of its rich plethora of meanings, it was even used to refer to the Holy Qur’an¹¹ and Islam.¹² “Truth” is the antonym of the word “falsehood (*bāṭil*),” referring to beliefs, judgements and thought against the Truth.¹³ The word “*al-Ḥaqq*” is also one of the names of Allah.¹⁴

In the following *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) used the word “*ḥaqq*” to refer to the veracity of prophethood, Paradise, Hell, the Day of Judgement and so on: “*You are the Truth, and Your Promise is the Truth, and Your Speech is the Truth, and meeting You is the Truth, and Paradise is the Truth and Hell (Fire) is the Truth and all the prophets are the Truth and the Hour is the Truth.*”¹⁵ In like manner, in the following *ḥadīth* this word came to mean to give something to others when the Prophet (saw) said, “*It is the right (ḥaqq) of Allah to help the one who does jihād in the name of Allah, the one who tries to gain his independence, and the one who wants to get married in order to avoid adultery.*”¹⁶

In another *ḥadīth* the same word is used in the sense of responsibility. The Prophet (saw) said, “*It is the right (ḥaqq) of Allah upon every Muslim that he should take a bath (at least) on one day (Friday) during the seven days (of the week) and he should wash his head and body.*”¹⁷

The term “*ḥaqq*” can also mean “the authority, privilege, and responsibility” of a person. Therefore, the most important issue with regard to *ḥaqq* is to determine what it is and is not. According to Islam, Allah is the One who defines what is the truth and what is not. As our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “*Indeed Allah, Most Blessed and Most High, has given the right due to everyone deserving a right.*”¹⁸ Allah (swt) is the One who provides his servants with moral guidance and direction. As mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, “*Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him.*”¹⁹ Thus, Allah, who creates everything²⁰ and owns everything,²¹ is the One who defines what is *ḥaqq*.

Allah Almighty grants rights and responsibilities to people not in accordance with their personal interest and whims but in accordance with the principles of justice and balance. In the Holy Qur’an, Allah says, “*If the*

⁴ D3450, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 49.

⁵ Al-A’raf, 7:169.

⁶ Yunus, 10:35.

⁷ Yunus, 10:36.

⁸ Al-A’raf, 7:89.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:236.

¹⁰ Yusuf, 12:51.

¹¹ Al-Isra’, 17:105.

¹² Al-Isra’, 17:81.

¹³ Al-Nisa’, 4:105; al-Ma’ida, 5:77.

¹⁴ Yunus, 10:30; al-Hajj, 22:62.

¹⁵ B7499, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35.

¹⁶ IM2518, Ibn Maja, al-Itq, 3.

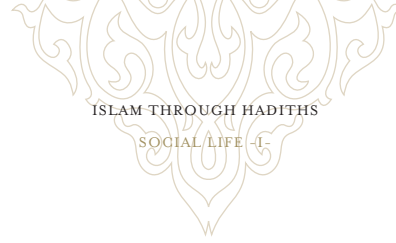
¹⁷ M1963 Muslim, al-Jum’a, 94r5.

¹⁸ T2120, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wasaya, 5.

¹⁹ Ibrahim, 14:2; al-Nahl, 16:52.

²⁰ Al-An’am, 6:120; al-Ra’d, 13:16.

²¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:26.



truth was in accordance with their desires, the heavens, the earth, and everyone in them would disintegrate.”²² If rights were distributed in accordance with the desires of certain individuals or groups, then conflict and injustice would be inescapable. In distributing rights and responsibilities, Allah Almighty does not want rights to be insufficient and responsibilities to be heavy. Rather, He gives priority to individual and to social integrity.²³

In Islamic thought, rights are divided into two as “the rights of Allah” and “the rights of individuals.” The former refer to the rights between Allah (swt) and man; and the latter refers to the rights among people. What is famously called “human rights” in modern times used to be called “the rights of the servants (of Allah)” in the Islamic tradition. While the modern concept of human rights deals only with relationships among humans, “the rights of the servants” deal with the relationship between Allah and people as well as among people. Therefore, the latter covers a much wider area than the former. The Prophet (saw), while he was travelling with Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra), explained the relationship between Allah and man in a succinct way. He said to Mu’adh, “Do you know what right Allah has over His servants?” Mu’adh replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Then the Prophet (saw) said, “Verily the right of Allah over His servants is that they should worship Him, not associating anything with Him.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Do you know what rights servants have upon Allah in case they do it [worship Him, not associating anything with Him].” Mu’adh replied by again saying, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Then the Prophet (saw) remarked, “That He would not torment them²⁴ and send them to Paradise.”²⁵

The rights of Allah (swt) include not only acts of worship, but also all other things which are connected to individual and social matters. For example, the verses that ask people to testify in order to prevent an injustice or ascertain rights²⁶ would belong to this category. Furthermore, all punishments that aim to keep social order are considered Allah’s rights. In addition, the Prophet’s commands about the necessity of paying *zakāt* are in this category.²⁷

Islam strikes a balance between the rights of Allah (swt) and human rights. Being a role model in every issue for Muslims, the Prophet (saw) did not tolerate dismissing or abusing the rights of other people, even if it was done with the intention of being loyal to Allah. The counsel the holy Prophet gave to one of his young Companions, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra),

²² Al-Mu’minun, 23:71.

²³ SB2/39, al-Shatibi, *Muwafaqat*, II, 39-40.

²⁴ M144, Muslim, al-Iman, 49.

²⁵ HM22423, Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.

²⁶ Al-Talaq, 65:2; al-Nisa’, 4:135.

²⁷ M2295, Muslim, al-Zakat, 26; T1652, al-Tirmidhi, *Fada’il al-Jihad*, 18.



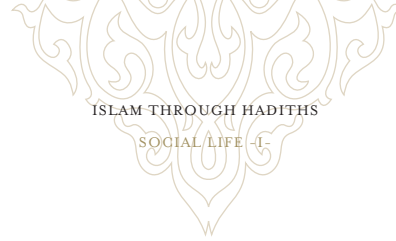
demonstrates how important he took the matter of *ḥaqq*. He thought highly of ‘Abd Allah who was very diligent in observing the prayers. For a believer, one of the most virtuous things to do is to observe the commandments and perform the prayers, but everything has its limit. Because ‘Abd Allah began to fast all the time, and kept worshipping day and night, he failed to perform his daily responsibilities, and ignored his wife and children. When the Prophet (saw) heard about this situation, he summoned ‘Abd Allah and said, “*I have been informed that you fast continuously and recite every night. Do not do so because your eyes have rights on you, your body has rights on you, and your family has rights on you. It suffices for you that you should observe additional fasts and worship once in a while. Moreover, don’t forget to get the right amount of sleep.*” After hearing the words of the Prophet (saw), ‘Abd Allah said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, I am capable of doing more than this.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*So observe the fast of David!*” ‘Abd Allah asked, “What is the fast of David?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*He used to fast one day and did not fast the other day. And when he met with the enemy, he did not run away.*” Alarmed with this answer, ‘Abd Allah understood what the Prophet (saw) meant, and said, “(As long as I am hungry and weak) who can guarantee that I may not try to escape from the battleground?” The Prophet (saw) then repeated the following statement three times: “*Fasting three days back to back would not be an acceptable behavior for a believer!*”²⁸

As understood from the Qur’anic verse, “*I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me,*”²⁹ performing acts of worship is the main purpose of humankind. Nevertheless, despite its unqualified importance, Allah Almighty asked human beings to perform their acts of worship in such a way that they would not exceed their abilities. Thus, the aim was to limit the responsibilities given to humankind in order to make sure that each person has incontrovertible basic rights.

According to Islam, the most basic right of a person, regardless of his religion, race, gender, and nation, is the right to live. In fact, this right is granted to people when they are in the wombs of their mothers. The fetus has rights, and those rights cannot be taken away. The only exception for abortion is a medical necessity with regard to the mother’s life, and here again the main issue is about the mother’s right to life. After its birth, a baby has new rights, such as having good care, a beautiful name, and protection of its inheritance. In the early stages, a child is a recipient in

²⁸M2734, Muslim, al-Siyam, 186.

²⁹Al-Dhariyat, 51:56



every sense of the term. A person needs to be rational and mature enough in order to be held responsible for his actions. When a child matures to adulthood after puberty so that he can differentiate between good and bad, and useful and harmful, then he begins to have certain rights and responsibilities at the same time. After this point, one needs to meet the requirements of rights and responsibilities, without ignoring any of them. Allah Almighty confirmed that the right to live is one of the most basic rights by saying in the Holy Qur'an, "If anyone kills a person—unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land—it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind."³⁰

In addition, protecting material things such as property, and personal values such as honor and dignity, are other basic rights. Addressing the whole of humankind, the Prophet (saw) said, "Verily! Your blood, property and honor are sacred to one another (i.e., Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this city of yours. It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent because those who are absent might comprehend (what I have said) better than the present audience."³¹

The *haqq* is something that a conscious Muslim should be mindful of everywhere and at all times; and something that needs to be protected in case it is being transgressed. The Messenger of Allah (saw) indicated that speaking the truth before a tyrannical ruler would be the most virtuous *jihād*.³² Thus, Muslims should not hesitate to give up their property and life in order to protect basic rights for themselves and for others. Islam gives importance to the rights of Allah (swt) and people so much that it praises all kinds of efforts in observing them, and considers those who die in the name of guarding such values as life, property, family, and religion as martyrs.³³ As stated by our Master the Prophet (saw), Allah will forgive all the sins of someone who wages *jihād*, and is killed on the battlefield. However, if someone has a right on that person, then his sins would not be expiated.³⁴ Therefore, a person cannot be fully redeemed as long as he does not pay his dues to other people.

One day, a man, rumored to be Jewish,³⁵ rudely asked the Prophet (saw) to return the camel that he had loaned to him. Some of the Companions (ra) who disliked the behavior of that man wanted to scold and harass him, but the holy Prophet stopped them by saying, "The owners of rights have a right to speak."³⁶

³⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5:32.

³¹ B67, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 9; M4384, Muslim, al-Qasama, 30.

³² IM4012, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.

³³ T1421 al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 21

³⁴ N3157, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 32.

³⁵ H14/117, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, IV, 117.

³⁶ M4110, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 120.



The rights of husbands and wives towards each other are another important area to mention. Allah Almighty states that couples have rights and responsibilities to each other in the family which is the abode of peace, love, and security.³⁷ One of the most important rights is to secure love and mercy in the family,³⁸ and another is to get along with partners.³⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized those rights and gave the following advice in his Farewell Pilgrimage, “*You have rights over your women and your women have rights over you. Your rights over your women are that they are not to allow anyone whom you dislike to tread on your bedding (furniture), nor allow anyone whom you dislike to enter your houses. And their right over you is that you should treat them kindly with regard to their clothing and food.*”⁴⁰ Also, he wanted to make sure that husbands pay the bride-gift,⁴¹ so that the social rights of women could be guaranteed. Furthermore, in addition to material rights, Muslim women gained non-material rights, such as receiving love, respect, and mercy, and support for their body and spirit thanks to the teaching of the Prophet (saw).

³⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:228.

³⁸ Al-Rum, 30:21.

³⁹ Al-Nisa’, 4:19.

⁴⁰ IM1851, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 3.

⁴¹ M3472, Muslim, al-Nikah, 63.

⁴² Al-Kahf, 18:46.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:233.

⁴⁴ M2731, Muslim, al-Siyam, 183.

⁴⁵ B2586, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 12.

⁴⁶ B5623, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 22.

⁴⁷ T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33.

⁴⁸ T1906, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 8.

⁴⁹ N611, al-Nasa’i, al-Mawaqit, 51.

⁵⁰ T1899, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3.

⁵¹ B6138, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

⁵² B5991, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 15.

⁵³ B5984, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 11.

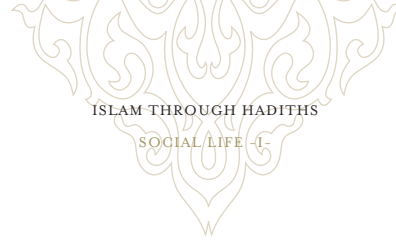
⁵⁴ B6136, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

Children, who are the ornament of their families, have rights as well.⁴² Our Lord states that every child has a right to be taken care of starting from birth.⁴³ When the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Your child has a right on you,*”⁴⁴ he meant the exact same thing. All the children in a family should be granted equal rights;⁴⁵ be taken care of equally and fairly,⁴⁶ and be given a moral and religious education.⁴⁷

Those children who are granted equal rights in a family will grow more responsible towards their families. As the Prophet (saw) said, “*A son can never do enough for his father [and parents].*”⁴⁸ Emphasizing parents’ rights, the Prophet (saw) constantly advised children to help their parents, and be respectful to them at all times.⁴⁹ This was because, “*The Lord’s pleasure is in the parent’s pleasure, and the Lord’s anger is in the parent’s anger.*”⁵⁰

One also needs to pay attention to the rights of the relatives. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should strengthen the bond of kinship.*”⁵¹ He praised those who continued to offer help to relatives, even if they were disconnected from him.⁵² By saying, “*Whoever disconnects from his relatives would not enter paradise,*”⁵³ the Prophet (saw) asserted the importance of having good relations with relatives.

Neighbors too have special rights. By saying, “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt his neighbor,*”⁵⁴ the Prophet (saw) stressed



the important nature of this relationship. He said that a neighbor has the right to be the first buyer if one sells his house or land.⁵⁵ Based on this tradition, we understand that neighbors should get priority in economic transactions as well as in invitations to celebrations and parties.

All in all, a Muslim has responsibilities towards his family, relatives, neighbors, and other members of society. As described by the Prophet (saw), believers in an Islamic society are like “a building that was constructed with rightly secured bricks,”⁵⁶ or “...resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it”⁵⁷ Thus, Islam enthusiastically recommends the observance of principles that bind believers and establish the integrity of society. On this matter, the Prophet (saw) said, “The rights of a Muslim over Muslims are five: to respond to the salām, to visit the ill, to follow funeral processions, to accept an invitation, and to reply to those who sneeze.”⁵⁸

Islam asks everyone to observe their rights and responsibilities so that Islamic society can function in the best manner. Islam puts rights at the core of every affair, from simple daily transactions to social administration. In this regard, the divine command, “Weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance,”⁵⁹ not only tries to prevent individual abuses, but also to warn against potential dangers that could ruin all of society. It is clear that those who disrespect the law and the truth will not hesitate to violate and abuse other peoples’ rights for the sake of personal gain. In such a society, where this is freely allowed, a society will be created in which those who are cheated and victimized will look for opportunities to oppress and victimize others in order to regain their own lost rights. This will create a vicious circle within the society. Therefore, it is the first and foremost responsibility of the rulers in a society to prevent such abuses. Establishing a sane and healthy society is a legal and social requirement. The primary task of the people who are in charge of ruling and safeguarding a society is to make sure that rights are being granted to those who deserve them.

Rights bring responsibilities and they go hand in hand. In societies where rights and responsibilities are fairly distributed, it is possible to see fewer unjust and unfair practices, because people respect each other’s rights and the law. Social relations based on truth and justice can bring peace and wealth in this world, and happiness in the world to come. In contrast, falsehood and injustice bring chaos in this world and catastrophe

⁵⁵ D3516, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 73.

⁵⁶ B6026, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 36.

⁵⁷ B6011, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27.

⁵⁸ B1240, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 2.

⁵⁹ Al-Rahman, 55:9.



in the world to come. The following *ḥadīth* succinctly summarizes this matter, “Avoid oppression! Because oppression will bring darkness in the world to come.”⁶⁰

In observing rights, the benefits are not limited to human beings. Animals, which have been given to us for our service, have rights as well. We have to feed them and treat them well. If we slaughter or sacrifice them for food, we are still obliged to do that in the most painless manner⁶¹ because they were entrusted to us by Allah (swt). One needs to take the real owner of the animals into consideration in dealing with them. Harming an animal would mean to transgress the rights of Allah. That is the reason Allah will make those who harm animals for pleasure accountable for their crimes.⁶²

Inanimate objects also deserve to be respected. Indicating that the plants have rights to be protected, the Prophet (saw) banned the cutting of trees, reminding us that they provide animals with shade in time of drought.⁶³ In like manner, when he gave orders during war to his army to not kill the elderly and not destroy places of worship, he also ordered them not to cut down trees.⁶⁴ Our Prophet said that even public roads had some rights. For example, those who sat by a road should not harass and insult the passerby, should respond to their greetings, and should enjoin good and prohibit evil.⁶⁵

In the context of the struggle between truth and falsehood, it is obvious what is truth for believers. As stated by Allah, “*The truth has come, and falsehood has passed away: falsehood is bound to pass away.*”⁶⁶ Islam is recognized as the only true religion, and the Holy Qur’an, being the words of the Truth, should be understood in this context. Accepting these words is a matter of faith and confirmation. There have always been people who accepted the Truth, and there have always been people who with a conscious effort denied the Truth.

In social life, especially in the realm of justice, everyone seeks his rights. However, it is difficult at times to differentiate truth from falsehood in this realm. In such instances, even those who believe in the rule of law, and struggle to establish justice in life, may make mistakes. The supplication of our Prophet demonstrated this complexity when he prayed, “*Show me the truth in cases of disagreement!*”⁶⁷

Sometimes, it is possible to violate the truth consciously or unconsciously. In compliance with the Prophetic order, “*Whoever has wronged*

⁶⁰ M6576, Muslim, al-Birr, 56.

⁶¹ T1409, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 14.

⁶² M5061, Muslim, al-Sayd, 59.

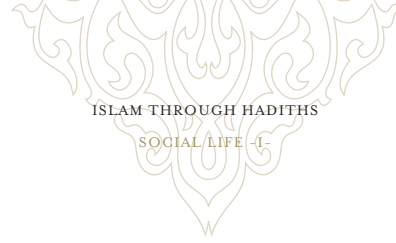
⁶³ MA9381, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 201.

⁶⁴ MA9430, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 220.

⁶⁵ B2465, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 22.

⁶⁶ Al-Isra’, 17:81.

⁶⁷ M1811, Muslim, al-Musafirun, 200.



*his brother, should ask for his pardon!*⁶⁸ it is important to settle this kind of responsibility with the victim, and ask his pardon before it becomes punishable in the presence of Allah (swt). It is perhaps possible to secure this world by violating others' rights, but it should not be forgotten that this wrong doing will lose this person's eternal happiness.⁶⁹ Because it is such a just balance that on the Day of Judgement, Allah will even call the ram with horns to account for the insult that it gave to the ram without horns.⁷⁰ On that day, everyone who obeyed or disobeyed the truth and justice in this world will be rewarded or punished for all of their large and small deeds.

Every person has rights, responsibilities, and debts towards the animate and inanimate things with which he is in contact and all of these rights, responsibilities, and debts are mutual. A person can have some responsibilities towards one person in one context, but can have rights from him in another at the same time. This is an essential aspect of human existence. Regardless of the subject matter, those who respect the rights of others will be closer to the Truth. Therefore we must side with the Truth, and support it in all circumstances throughout life.

“O Lord! Show us the real nature of things. Let us know the Truth and observe it; and let us know falsehood, and avoid it.”

⁶⁸ B6534, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48.

⁶⁹ IM3966, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 11.

⁷⁰ M6580 Muslim, al-Birr, 60.



PEACE
SAFETY AND SERENITY



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا سَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”اللَّهُمَّ! أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ، تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following (at the end of ritual prayer) when he said al-salam, “[*Allāhumma anta al-salām wa minka al-salām, tabārakta yā dhā al-jalāli wa al-ikrām.*] O Allah, You are al-Salām, and from you is al-Salām. You are blessed, O One of Magnificence and Generosity.”

(D1512, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 25)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
«لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ، وَسَلُّوْا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ...»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
«أَلَا مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا مُعَاهِدَةً لَهُ ذِمَّةُ اللَّهِ وَذِمَّةُ رَسُولِهِ فَقَدْ أَخْفَرَ بِذِمَّةِ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَرِيحُ
رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ...»



عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَنَّ أَهْلَ قُبَاءٍ اقْتَتَلُوا حَتَّى تَرَامُوا بِالْحِجَارَةِ، فَأُخْبِرَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ ﷺ بِذَلِكَ فَقَالَ: «إِذْهَبُوا بِنَا نُصَلِّحْ بَيْنَهُمْ.»



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, the Messenger of Allah (saw)
(peace and blessings be upon him) said,
“Do not wish to encounter the enemy instead ask for peace from Allah.”
(DM2470, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 6; B7237, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 8)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Indeed, whoever kills a mu‘ahid [a non-Muslim who has a treaty of protection with Muslims], who has a covenant from Allah and a covenant from His messenger, has violated the covenant with Allah and the covenant of His messenger, so he shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise.”*
(T1403, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 11)



Sahl b. Sa‘d (ra) said, *“Once the people of Quba’ fought with each other until they threw stones at each other. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was informed about it, he said, ‘Let us go to bring about reconciliation between them.’”*
(B2693, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 3)



On the ninth year of the Hijra, also known as the year of the Delegations (630-631), the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent a letter to the Christians in Najran. In that letter, he invited them to Islam. If they did not, the letter asserted, they had to pay the *jizya* (a poll-tax) or prepare for war. Upon receiving the letter, the Christians sent a delegation of sixty people, including four prominent leaders, to Medina in order to make peace. At the end of the talks, they did not accept Islam, but agreed to pay the *jizya* in return for peace.¹ According to their agreement, the Christians would pay two thousand pieces of cloth in two installments in the month of Safar and Rajab. Moreover, in case of conflict with the Yemenites, the Christians promised to send thirty sets of armor, thirty horses, thirty camels, and other materials to the Muslims and the Muslims would take care of the entrusted things until the end of the conflict. In return, their churches would not be demolished, their men of religion would be untouched, and, as long as they were peaceful and did not become involved in usury, their life, religion, and property would be protected.²

When this treaty was signed, the Muslims were powerful enough to destroy the Christians in Najran if they wished and appropriate all of their property. Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) chose to make a peace treaty with them. According to this treaty, the life, property, language, and religion of all the Christians who lived under Islam would be undisturbed, and all of their valueables would be under the guaranty of the Muslims. In return, they would pay the *jizya*. The practice of the Prophet (saw) in this matter demonstrates that he chose peace over war unless war was inevitable.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was the Prophet of the divine faith of Islam. The word “Islam” originated from the root of the words “*silm*” and “*salām*,” meaning, “submission, loyalty, peace, and security.” *Silm* means

¹ ST1/357, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 357.

² D3041, Abu Da’ud, *al-Imara*, 29-30.



“peace and security” and *salām* means “well-being and safety.”³ It is clear that the objective of a religion which is based upon peace, safety, security, tranquility, and happiness is to replace violence, chaos, conflict, terror, and war with peace, serenity, happiness, and mutual respect.

In the Holy Qur’an, in addition to the word “*Islām*,” the concepts of conciliation (*ṣulh*) and covenant (*ahd*) are used to denote peace. The word *ṣulh*, meaning to make peace and reconciliation, is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an several times.⁴ For example, in one verse, it is suggested that people should make *ṣulh* between quarrelling and fighting couples.⁵ Moreover, the word *ṣulh* is used in reference to self-adjustment,⁶ establishing peace between warring parties,⁷ and making peace between siblings.⁸ With these verses, it is emphasized that everyone is supposed to live in peace with himself, his Lord, the society in which he lived, and even with the enemy.

In the Holy Qur’an the word “*ahd*,” meaning “to promise, to make a contract, and to grant assurance,” was used in the context of the agreement between Allah (swt) and his servants,⁹ and people were asked not to violate this contract.¹⁰ Those who kept their promises would be rewarded,¹¹ and those who violated their promises would be known as transgressors.¹² One of the beautiful names of Allah is *al-Salām*. Our Almighty Lord is the source of peace and safety.¹³ After each prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) praised Allah with this name, “[*Allāhumma anta al-salām wa minka al-salām, tabārakta yā dhā al-jalāli wa al-ikrām.*] O Allah, You are *al-Salām*, and from you is *al-Salām*. You are blessed, O One of Magnificence and Generosity.”¹⁴

When a Muslim submits to Allah (swt), he connects to the source of peace and safety, and attains peace and tranquility in his inner world. Turning into a peaceful person, he brings peace and serenity to the world that surrounds him. By obeying the Holy Qur’an, which was sent to humankind as a guide, a believer attains ultimate peace and serenity.¹⁵ For believers, Allah has a home of peace and serenity known as Paradise and He invites believers to His Paradise.¹⁶ All the angels and the guardians of Paradise convey their *salām* to believers when they enter this everlasting home,¹⁷ which is known in Arabic as *Dār al-Salām* (the Abode of Peace).¹⁸

Our Almighty Lord created different races, tribes, and nations so that they could meet,¹⁹ know, and communicate with each other in order to establish a peaceful life and society. Therefore Allah Almighty indicated that humankind has the ability to coexist peacefully. Still, many times people

³ LA23/2080, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, XXIII, 2080.

⁴ LA28/2479, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, XXVIII, 2479.

⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:128.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:160.

⁷ Al-Hujurat, 49:9.

⁸ Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

⁹ Ya Sin, 36:60.

¹⁰ Al-Nahl, 16:91.

¹¹ Al-Fath, 48:10.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:27.

¹³ Al-Hashr, 59:23; D1512, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 25.

¹⁴ D1512, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 25; M1334, Muslim, al-Masajid, 135.

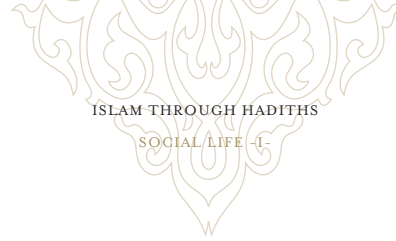
¹⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5:16.

¹⁶ Yunus, 10:25.

¹⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:46; al-Ra’d, 13:24.

¹⁸ Al-An’am, 6:127.

¹⁹ Al-Hujurat, 49:13.



become the victims of their own violent and bloodthirsty nature,²⁰ and destroy the peaceful, tolerant, and brotherly environment.

In human history, it was Cain, the son of the first human and the first prophet, who was taken over by this evil embedded in his nature, and became the first transgressor who shed blood.²¹ After this incident, history witnessed many wars, genocide, and various other violent acts. People were humiliated, their honor was violated, and their right to live was taken away from them because of their religion, language, skin color, or race. Allah Almighty intervened in this bloodstained history several times, and sent humankind messengers and scriptures in order to warn them and assist them to create a decent and honorable society. He crowned this series of messengers with our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) Mustafa. Allah invited all of humankind to peace with the words, “*O believers, enter into peace in entirety.*”²² Our Prophet built his teaching on peace, tolerance, mutual respect and safety; and suggested the following to his Companions (ra) and all of humanity: “*Do not wish to encounter the enemy, instead ask for peace from Allah.*”²³

The Prophet (saw) recommended peace not war; in his famous letters that he sent to invite people to Islam he always emphasized peace, and wrote that whoever accepted Islam would obtain peace and tranquility.²⁴ With the divine principle “*No coercion in religion,*”²⁵ Islam protected the life, property, and religion of the non-Muslims who live in the lands of Islam. In this regard, the duty of the Prophet (saw) was to simply convey Allah’s messenger.²⁶ In the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet (saw) was described as someone who warns and brings good news,²⁷ but he never forced people into Islam.²⁸ The Qur’anic verse, “*Your religion is to you, and my religion is to me,*”²⁹ became a principle in creating peaceful and respectful coexistence with other religions at both local and international levels.

Islam asks individuals and nations to get along and live in peace. Our Prophet stressed that we are all brothers and sisters because we are all the children of Adam.³⁰ In his Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (saw) intimated the framework of peaceful coexistence by referring to the “*immunity of life, property, and honor of people.*”³¹ Peace is the main principle in Islam. War is allowed only if the sacred values are being desecrated, religious freedom is being eliminated, and people are being attacked and displaced.³² It is important to note that war is a temporary state of being in Islam. The main

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:30.

²¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:30.

²² Al-Baqara, 2:208.

²³ DM2470, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 6; B7237, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 8.

²⁴ M4607, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 74.

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:256.

²⁶ Al-Taghabun, 64:12.

²⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:45.

²⁸ Al-Ghashiya, 88:22.

²⁹ Al-Kafirun, 109:6.

³⁰ D5116, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 110-111.

³¹ B67, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 9.

³² Al-Baqara, 2:190; al-Nisa’, 4:75.



thing in Islam is the state of peace, reconciliation, agreement, and mutual respect. The ultimate goal of Islam, which means peace and safety, is the salvation of all humankind.

It is important to understand that, in order to establish a peaceful world and to carry out activities for the benefit of all humankind, it is not required that everyone be a Muslim. What is imperative is that everyone agrees to create a peaceful world; this means to respects the rights and freedoms of people, and not violate their rights related to religion and even wealth. Thus, Muslims should be able to cooperate with everyone, regardless of their religious convictions, as long as the relationship is based on justice and goodness. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty says, "*He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes.*"³³

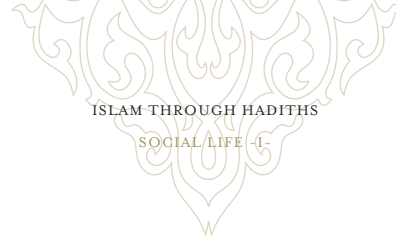
The main goal of the Prophet's foreign policy was to create a peaceful environment in order to disseminate the Message of Islam. The main purpose of the prophethood was to elevate the message of Allah and pass His message to humankind. In order to reach this goal, every opportunity was used. In this respect, the term "*jihād*" came to mean the dissemination of the message, not through war but through peace. For instance, during the period that the Prophet (saw) lived in Mecca, he acted with patience, but, when he found it impossible to keep the peace, he did not hesitate to go to war—a decision that was permitted by Allah.³⁴

The following incident clearly demonstrates that the Prophet (saw) wanted to continue his relations with others based upon peace and respect. In the sixth year of the Hijra, in the month of Dhu al-Qa'da, when waging of war was forbidden, the Prophet (saw) took one thousand four hundred emigrant Muslims to Mecca in order for them to visit their hometown and to perform the 'Umra.³⁵ After a tiring journey, they arrived at al-Hudaybiyya, and camped right outside Mecca. The Meccan pagans did not want them to come to Mecca and perform the 'Umra. The Muslims became very upset that the Meccan pagans did not allow them to visit the town where they were born and raised. The tension and enmity could have turned this situation volatile, but the Prophet (saw) intervened and looked for ways in which they could find a peaceful solution. Eventually, in order to make a peaceful agreement with the pagans, a treaty was signed between the parties. In order to keep his commitment to the peace talks, the Prophet (saw)

³³ Al-Mumtahana, 60:8.

³⁴ Al-Hajj, 22:39.

³⁵ M4811, Muslim, al-Imara, 71; VM2/572, al-Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 573.



even accepted some impertinent requests from the Meccan pagans, such as removing the “*Basmala*” and the phrase “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (saw)” from the treaty document before its ratification.³⁶

Some Companions (ra) were very displeased with the language of the treaty, which seemed to disfavor the Muslims. In addition, while the treaty was being prepared, an incident occurred which was very painful for the Muslims to bear. Abu Jandal, who was one of the first Muslims in Mecca and the son of Suhayl b. ‘Amr (ra), the signatory of the Quraysh in the treaty, escaped from Mecca and came to al-Hudaybiyya with his hands shackled in chains. His father had chained him up and tortured him because of his conversion to Islam.³⁷ During the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, Abu Jandal had found a way to escape from Mecca and tried to take refuge with the Muslims. When his father saw him among the Muslims, he slapped him in the face and knocked him down. He turned towards the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Muhammad! This is the very first term with which we make peace with you, i.e., you shall return Abu Jandal to me.”³⁸ The Prophet (saw) accepted his argument and returned his son to him. Suhayl started to pull his son by his chains to take him back to Mecca. Meanwhile, Abu Jandal asked the Muslims for assistance with the following heart-breaking words: “O Muslims! Will I be returned to the pagans though I have come as a Muslim? Do you not see how much I have suffered?”³⁹ Under the sad and helpless looks of the Muslims, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “O Abu Jandal! Have patience and ask your reward from Allah; for Allah will soon provide for you and others who have been persecuted a way out of your suffering. We have entered into a treaty of Peace with the Quraysh and we have exchanged with them a solemn pledge that we cannot violate.”⁴⁰ Eventually the Prophet’s prediction came true and the treaty that seemed disadvantageous to the Muslims turned advantageous, and the Prophet’s commitment to the peace treaty brought them certain victory.⁴¹

According to the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, which was signed between two groups on the brink of war, the Muslims and the polytheists would not wage war against each other for ten years. Nevertheless, the pagans violated this agreement and so the validity of the treaty lasted only two years. The Holy Qur’an referred to the Hudaybiya treaty as a great victory.⁴² The bloodless conquest of Mecca two years after the treaty was an indisputable sign of this victory and so was the fact that during the two years of

³⁶ M4632, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 93.

³⁷ EU6/53, Ibn al-Athir, *Uṣd al-ghaba*, VI, 53.

³⁸ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

³⁹ B2731 al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

⁴⁰ MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 330; HM19117, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 324.

⁴¹ B4150, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 36.



peace, based purely upon the Hudaibiya treaty, Islam grew as the fastest religion in the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, the Prophet (saw) always prioritized creating an environment in which everyone could live in peace and safety. This message is very clear in the Holy Qur'an when Allah says, "If they incline towards peace, you [Prophet] must also incline towards it..."⁴³ With this principle, Muslims are advised not to fight the enemy if the enemy is predisposed to making peace.

It was neither the intention nor the practice of the Prophet (saw) to disseminate Islam and gain Muslims through force and coercion. His goal was to conquer the hearts and minds of people. Although he had the ability to conquer cities with armed force, the Prophet (saw) did not choose this path. Concerning the fate of the Jewish tribe of the Banu Nadir, it is important to note that they were punished by law because of their treachery and betrayal during the Battle of Khandaq. In response to the punishment given to the Banu Nadir, the Jewish tribe at Khaybar began to prepare for an attack on Medina with the help of the Jewish tribes of Fadaq and Tayma'. Learning of the plot through his scouts, the Prophet (saw) and his army attacked these Jews on the way back from the conquest of Khaybar. After the Muslim victory, the people of Fadaq and the villages nearby made peace treaties similar to those that the Prophet (saw) had made with the people of Khaybar. The Muslim armies also besieged another tribe in the same area and when they offered peace, they made an agreement with them as well.⁴⁴ These peace agreements demonstrate that the Prophet of Mercy preferred peaceful methods of conquest, rather than through war, in which he could earn great war booty.

The Prophet (saw), who gave importance to peace between factions, also asked everyone to be extremely vigilant in abiding with their treaties. Islam is the embodiment of the Prophetic tradition and he never pardoned those who violated their word. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty asked believers to be loyal to treaties, and gave ultimatums to the polytheists who frequently violated their treaties.⁴⁵ As for those of them who did not violate their agreements, Allah described in the Holy Qur'an how Muslims should treat them, "As for those who have honored the treaty you made with them and who have not supported anyone against you: fulfil your agreement with them to the end of their term. Allah loves those who are mindful of Him."⁴⁶

On the day of the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, the Prophet (saw) exemplified

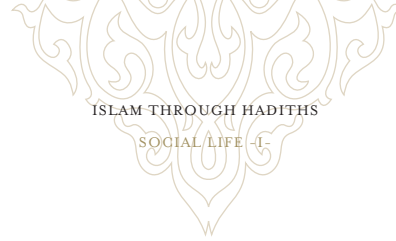
⁴² Al-Fath, 48:1.

⁴³ Al-Anfal, 8:61.

⁴⁴ D2971, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 18-19; VM2/706, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 706-707; VM2/710, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 710-711.

⁴⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:1.

⁴⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:4.



how to honor a treaty. The following incident conveyed the significance of that treaty. It was reported that Mu'awiya made a peace agreement with the Romans, but he decided to launch a new expedition towards them before the end of the agreed term. In the meantime, a rider appeared, shouting, "Allāhu akbar! Allāhu akbar! Treaties are there not to be broken but to be honored!" This man was no other than 'Amr b. 'Abasa (ra), who was one of the first Muslims who came to settle in Mecca.⁴⁷ Impressed by his candidness, Mu'awiya summoned him to appear in his presence, and asked him about his reaction. He said that he had heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, "When one has a covenant with people he must not strengthen or loosen it until its term comes to an end or he brings it to an end in agreement with them (to make both the parties equal)." On hearing this, Mu'awiya changed his mind.⁴⁸

Our beloved Prophet created a mechanism which guaranteed protection of the life, property, and religion of those who took refuge with the Muslims; this included the non-Muslims who were living in Muslim lands. For instance, the Messenger of Allah (saw) affirmed the decision of Umm Khani, the daughter of his uncle Abu Talib, who granted immunity to someone. She went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Allah's Messenger! My brother 'Ali has declared that he will kill a man to whom I have granted asylum. The man is so and-so Ibn Hubayra." Allah's Messenger said, "O Umm Khani! We will grant asylum to the one whom you have granted asylum."⁴⁹

In this regard, an order that Caliph 'Umar (ra) sent to one of his army commanders is quite instructive. He wrote, "I have heard that it is the habit of some of your men to chase an unbeliever until he takes refuge in a high place. Then one man tells him in Persian not to be afraid, and when he comes up to him, he kills him. By Him in Whose hand is my soul, if I knew someone who had done that, I would strike off his head."⁵⁰ The importance given by Caliph Umar to this issue should not be thought of as being separate from the Prophet's commitment to peace and treaties. The attitude, words, and practices of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in this matter are the guiding principle for all Muslims. The Prophet (saw) said, "Indeed, whoever kills a Mu'ahid [a non-Muslim who has a treaty of protection with Muslims] who has a covenant from Allah and a covenant from His Messenger, has violated the covenant with Allah and the covenant of His Messenger, so he shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise."⁵¹

⁴⁷ EU4/239, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, IV, 239.

⁴⁸ D2759, Abu Da'ud, *al-Jihad*, 152; T1580, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Siyar*, 27.

⁴⁹ B3171, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Jizya*, 9.

⁵⁰ MU973, *al-Muwatta'*, *al-Jihad*, 4.

⁵¹ T1403, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Diyat*, 11; N4752, *al-Nasa'i*, *al-Qasama*, 14-15.



In addition to having the aim of establishing a peaceful and safe environment for members of other religions, our religion also envisions Muslims forming their relationships within the framework of brotherhood. Thus the Prophet (saw), upon arrival in Medina, declared brotherhood between the Muhajirun and the Ansar.⁵² Prior to that, he established the peace and brotherhood of Islam between the two major tribes of Medina, Aws and Khazraj, who had been fighting each other for years because of a blood feud. The Holy Qur'an refers this matter as follows: "*Hold fast to Allah's rope all together; do not split into factions. Remember Allah's favor to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace.*"⁵³ With this Islamic understanding of brotherhood, the Messenger of Mercy ended age-old blood feuds, clashes, tears, and misery. Our religion declared that we, humans, are all brothers and sisters,⁵⁴ and it invites us to strengthen ties of brotherhood. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) forbade Muslims to harbor any bad feeling towards each other for more than three days.⁵⁵ He said that reconciling a conflict between two people was more virtuous than *nāfila* fasting and other acts of worship. He also indicated that driving a wedge between people could be as dangerous as destroying concord.⁵⁶ When he heard that the people of Quba' were fighting, he immediately reacted by saying, "*Let us go to bring about a reconciliation between them.*"⁵⁷ It is well known that Allah Almighty in the Qur'an asks Muslims to intervene and reconcile people who are in conflict.⁵⁸

Hitherto this discussion has confirmed that the main Islamic principle in human relations, including national and international relations, is to establish peace and maintain tranquility. The main goal is to make sure that every human being lives in peace regardless of religion, language, race, nation, and country. Today, humankind needs this Islamic understanding of peace, mercy, love, and tolerance, as much as they did in the past. Humankind has witnessed numerous local and global wars, and millions of innocent people have lost their lives in these wars. In our time, war plagues many countries, where blood and tears continue to flow; children, pregnant women, and elderly people are showered with lethal bombardments every day. We are living in a world in which there is not a moment when human blood does not flow, or people are not murdered.

⁵² B2294, al-Bukhari, al-Kafala, 2.

⁵³ Al 'Imran, 3/103.

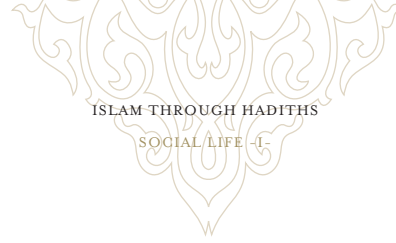
⁵⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49: 10.

⁵⁵ T1932, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 21; M6526, Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

⁵⁶ D4919, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 50.

⁵⁷ B2693, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 3.

⁵⁸ Al-Hujurat, 49:9.



The more people look for happiness in the material world, the more their life becomes empty and worthless. It is important to remember that Allah Almighty considers human life sacred, and gives the utmost importance to it. He said that if anyone kills a person unjustly, it is as if he killed all of humankind, while if anyone saves a life it is as if he saved the lives of all humankind.⁵⁹

In light of our discussion above it could be argued that human salvation, wealth, and peace do not lie in war but peace, not in conflict but in cooperation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all humankind to cooperate in establishing civilized peace and coexistence, regardless of people's religion, language, color, and race. They should follow the common principle of "loving creatures for the sake of the Creator." They should all stand up against oppression, tyranny, and terror. If they want to have a better future for their children, free from blood and tears, then they should establish peace and mutual tolerance and respect. Humans, as vicegerents of Allah (swt) on earth, should not race to acquire and fight their enemies but instead heed the following call of the Messenger of Allah (saw), "*Do not long to meet your enemy, and beseech Allah for safety (from all sorts of evil).*"⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5:32.

⁶⁰ B7237, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 8.



VIOLENCE A THREAT TO UNITY AND PEACE



عن عَائِشَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ؛ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَا عَائِشَةُ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ، وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرَّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطَى
عَلَى الْعُنْفِ، وَمَا لَا يُعْطَى عَلَى مَا سِوَاهُ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“O ‘A’isha (ra), verily Allah is kind and He loves kindness, and He rewards for
kindness what is not granted for harshness, and He does not reward anything
else like it (kindness).”

(M6601, Muslim, al-Birr, 77)



عَنْ أَبِي صِرْمَةَ صَاحِبِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ ضَارَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ، وَمَنْ شَاقَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ حَكِيمِ بْنِ حِزَامٍ قَالَ: مَرَّ بِالشَّامِ عَلَى أَنَسٍ، وَقَدْ أُقِيمُوا فِي
الشَّمْسِ، وَصَبَّ عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمُ الزَّيْتُ، فَقَالَ مَا هَذَا؟ قِيلَ: يُعَذَّبُونَ فِي الخَرَاجِ،
فَقَالَ: أَمَا إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُعَذِّبُ الَّذِينَ يُعَذِّبُونَ النَّاسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْئًا قَطُّ بِيَدِهِ، وَلَا امْرَأَةً، وَلَا
خَادِمًا، إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِشَيْخٍ يُهَادَى بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ فَقَالَ:
”مَا بَالُ هَذَا؟“ فَقَالُوا: نَذَرْنَا أَنْ يَمْشِيَ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ تَعْدِيبِ هَذَا
نَفْسَهُ، مُرَّهُ فَلْيَرْكَبْ.“



According to Abu Sirma (ra) the Companion of the Prophet (saw), the Prophet (saw) said, “*If anyone harms (others), Allah will harm him, and if anyone shows hostility to others, Allah will show hostility to him.*”

(D3635, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 31)



‘Urwa reported on the authority of his father that Hisham b. Hakim b. Hizam (ra) happened to pass by some people in Syria who had been made to stand in the sun and olive-oil was being poured upon their heads. He said, “What is this?” He was told, “They are being punished for (not paying) the *kharāj* (the government tax).” Thereupon he said, “I bear testimony to the fact that I heard Allah’s Messenger say, ‘*Allah would torment those who torment people in the world.*’”

(M6657, Muslim, al-Birr, 117)



‘A’isha (ra) said the following:

“The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not strike anyone except when he was on *jihād*. He hit neither a woman nor a slave.”

(M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) came to a man who was being supported by two others and said, ‘*What is the matter with him?*’ He was told, ‘He vowed to walk to the Ka’ba.’ He said, ‘*Allah does not benefit from him torturing himself.*’ And he told him to ride.”

(N3884, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 42)



Abu Mas'ud al-Badri, who was from the Ansar, was severely beating his slave with a lash. From behind someone called him and said, "Know, O Abu Mas'ud!" Because Abu Mas'ud was furious, he did not hear who was calling, and continued beating his slave. The person, coming from behind again said, "Know, O Abu Mas'ud!" When Abu Mas'ud turned around, he realized that it was the Messenger of Allah (saw) who was calling. He dropped the lash at once. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, "Know, O Abu Mas'ud that Allah has more power over you than you have over him." Abu Mas'ud (ra) was so embarrassed that he promised that he would not beat any of his slaves again, and said "O Messenger of Allah! I will free this slave for Allah's sake."¹

Although Abu Mas'ud (ra) was one of the first to accept the religion of mercy and tolerance, he still resorted to violence against his servants. In fact, violence has been part and parcel of human experience from the beginning of humankind. The story of Abel and Cain was the earliest example of bloodstained violence in history.² The Holy Qur'an gives several other examples of violent moments from the time of other prophets and nations. Abraham was thrown in a pit of fire,³ infant Jewish boys were killed by a Pharaoh,⁴ and many believers were thrown and killed in pits of fire by the People of the Trench (*al-Ukhdu'd*), in order to force the believers to renounce their religion.⁵ These examples demonstrate the extent to which people were willing to resort to violence. All of these incidents support the statement of the angels who said to Allah (swt) when He first created man, "How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed?"⁶

The word "violence" means "brutality, harshness and destructiveness." It also means "to use force, cruelty and brutality with the aim of harming somebody." In this regard, violence could be physical in the form of beating and hitting; psychological in the form of insulting, belittling, blackmailing,

¹ M4306, Muslim, al-Ayman, 34; D5159, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 123-124.

² Al-Ma'ida, 5:27-31.

³ Al-Anbiya', 21:68-70.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:49; al-A'raf, 7:141.

⁵ Al-Buruj, 85: 4-10.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:30.



and dishonoring; sexual in the form of raping; or economic in the form of harming the financial well-being of a person. In fact, using violence is a natural behavior for self-preservation and self-protection. Under the influence of such feelings as resentment, anger, jealousy and greed, or with the aim of establishing authority and economic gain, it can easily turn into destructive and an undesirable behavior. This said, being created in the best possible form,⁷ and being the most honorable creature,⁸ man deserve all kinds of respect and veneration. Allah Almighty, whose mercy was more encompassing than his wrath,⁹ asked his beloved Messenger, whom He sent to humankind as a sign of His mercy and compassion,¹⁰ to be good to other people.¹¹ This was because He did not want violence, which was naturally embedded in human nature, to dominate human relations. The Prophet (saw) gained the hearts of the people through his good manners and beautiful words, and created a peaceful and brotherly community. Allah Almighty clearly stated that the Prophet's good behavior kept his community together, "*By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them—had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you—so pardon them and ask forgiveness for them.*"¹²

Violence as a social issue can be observed in every society with its physical, psychological, sexual, and economic dimensions. This unjust act, which aims to reach a desired goal through torturing and oppressing people, is completely unacceptable in Islam, regardless of who applies it to whom and the circumstances. In the early years of Islam, several Muslims were subjected to violence and torture by the Meccan pagans who forced them to renounce Islam.¹³ It was mostly the poor and underprivileged family members and slaves who were subjected to torture. For example, these poor Muslims were force to wear iron armor and were left on the hot sand. When the polytheists could not convince Bilal to renounce his new religion, they gave him to children and the riffraff, who dragged him on the Meccan streets and then on mountain roads.¹⁴ The family of Yasir (ra) went through similar horrible treatment. They were left on the hot sand for days without water and food. Their bodies were covered with hot charcoal, and then they were beaten with sticks. Once the Prophet (saw) saw them being tortured and he said, "*How fortunate are the 'Imran and Yasir families. You are going to enter Paradise.*"¹⁵ Sumayya was brutally killed by Abu Jahil.¹⁶ Her husband, Yasir, lost his life in the same manner.

⁷ Al-Tin, 95:4.

⁸ Al-Isra', 17:70.

⁹ B7404, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 15; M6971, Muslim, al-Tawba, 16.

¹⁰ Al-Anbiya', 21:107.

¹¹ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

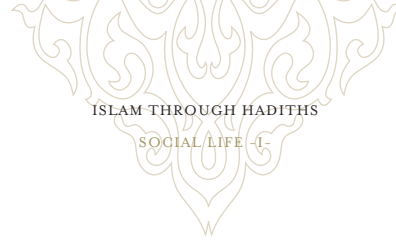
¹² Al 'Imran, 3:159.

¹³ B4815, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Mu'min) 1; ST3/248, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, 3/248.

¹⁴ IM150, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11.

¹⁵ NM5666, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, VI, 2075 (3/389).

¹⁶ ST3/233, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, 3/233.



Their son, ‘Ammar b. Yasir changed his words and said nice things about the pagan gods in order to spare himself from further torture. When the Prophet (saw) heard this, he said to ‘Ammar, “*If they torture you again, do the same thing!*”¹⁷ In another instance, he praised Ammar (ra) by saying, “*Ammar’s heart overflows with faith.*”¹⁸

During the same period, the Companion Khabbab b. al-Arat (ra) was suffering financially through the hands of the Polytheists. They refused to pay him what they owed him because he had accepted Islam. Once when Khabbab asked for his money back from them, they mockingly said that he would get his money when al-‘Asi b. Wa’il was resurrected.¹⁹ The pagans boycotted the Muslims in every sense, and they excluded them from society. They discriminated against them, and if possible they starved them to death. They did not allow them to meet or marry other people. Moreover, they forced them to emigrate from Mecca to other places. During the thirteen years of suffering and persecution in Mecca, the Prophet (saw) continuously advised against using violence. He asked the Muslims to be patient and resilient. Aptly, most of the Meccan verses were about being patient and thus the Prophet (saw) did not retaliate against the Polytheists and pretended to not hear their humiliating words. When he heard the pleas and screams of the poor people, he tried to console them with comforting words. He gave them examples of the previous generations, reminding them that they did not renounce their religion, even if they were cut into two with a saw, or their limbs were scraped of flesh with iron combs. He gave hope to the Muslims, saying that Islam would be spread in such a way that one day a person could travel from San’a’ to Hadramawt without any concern for security.²⁰ When he was asked to curse the Polytheists, he said, “*I was not sent as denouncer.*”²¹ When he became both a political and religious leader in Medina after the Hijra, he used his authority not to exercise violence on people, but to make people coexist peacefully regardless of their religious and tribal affiliations.

The Prophet (saw) did not resort to violence even against his fierce enemies. He asked the Muslims to do the same. The Prophet (saw) did not even let Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) scold their own daughters, who were the wives of the Prophet (saw), when they distressed him. At one point the wives asked for some things from the Prophet (saw), and a domestic dispute with the wives occurred. Still, the Prophet (saw) tolerated their be-

¹⁷ ST3/248, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 249.

¹⁸ IM147, Ibn Maja, *al-Sunna*, 11; N5010, *al-Nasa’i*, *al-Iman*, 17.

¹⁹ B4734, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Tafsir*, (Maryam) 5.

²⁰ B3852, *al-Bukhari*, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 29; B6943, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Ikrah*, 1.

²¹ M6613, *Muslim*, *al-Birr*, 87.



havior and told them that he was sent not as a tyrant or a violent man, but as a teacher and enabler.²² In another instance, when a Jewish delegation told the Prophet (saw), “Death be upon you!” ‘A’isha (ra) quickly reacted by saying, “Death and Allah’s curse be upon you!” The Prophet (saw) asked ‘A’isha (ra) to be patient and said, “Allah loves kindness in every affair.”²³ All of these accounts suggest that Muslims ought to be kind and polite in their affairs. In the above incident, our mother ‘A’isha (ra) reported what the Prophet (saw) said to her, “‘A’isha (ra), verily Allah is kind and He loves kindness, and He rewards for kindness what is not granted for harshness, and He does not reward anything else like it (kindness).”²⁴ The Prophet (saw) also said, “If anyone harms (others), Allah will harm him, and if anyone shows hostility to others, Allah will show hostility to him.”²⁵

Renowned for enjoining good and prohibiting evil, the Companion Hisham b. Hakim (ra) came across some farmers who were forced to stand under the sun with their heads oiled. This happened during the last years of Caliph ‘Umar’s governance. Hisham asked the reason why these people were forced to stand up under the sun, and learned that they were being punished because they neglected to pay their taxes. Thereupon he said, “I heard Allah’s Messenger say, ‘Allah would torment those who torment people in the world.’”²⁶ Hisham reported this incident to the governor of Palestine, ‘Umayr b. Sa’d (ra), under whose order their punishment was revoked.²⁷

Because violence was usually carried out by unjust and unfair rulers, Caliph ‘Umar (ra) felt a need to warn his governors about it. In one of his sermons, in which he emphasized that violence could not be used by Muslim rulers, he addressed people, saying, “By Allah, I do not send my governors to beat you, or confiscate your property unfairly. On the contrary, I send them to you to teach you how to live by your religion. If any of you receives different treatment, let me know about it immediately. By Allah (swt), if any of my governors commits this crime, I am going to retaliate against him (I shall punish him in the same manner).” ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra) stood up and said, “O Commander of the believers! If a Muslim ruler beats his subject in order to correct his behavior, would you punish him as well?” ‘Umar, said, “Yes. By Allah, I would punish him. Because I saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) applying retaliation even upon himself.” And he continued, “Don’t ever beat Muslims, and put yourself in misery! Do not keep them (soldiers) in their barracks, so that they would quarrel and fight

²² M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29; HM14569, Ibn Hanbal, III, 328.

²³ B6024, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 35; M5656, Muslim, al-Salam, 10

²⁴ M6601, Muslim, al-Birr, 77.

²⁵ D3635, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 31.

²⁶ M6657, Muslim, al-Birr, 117.

²⁷ M6659, Muslim, al-Birr, 118.

among themselves. And do not violate their rights and lead them astray!”²⁸

As understood from these words of the Caliph ‘Umar (ra), if a ruler resorted to violence to subject people or alter their behavior this would not comply with the peaceful spirit of the religion that was brought by the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Securing peace and enabling people to coexist peacefully are major goals of Islam. In order to realize this, the ruler needs to treat all of his subjects equally, and respect their rights and freedom. The Messenger of Allah, let alone resorting to violence, treated everyone with mercy and compassion regardless of their religion, ethnicity, and gender. Confirming this, ‘A’isha (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not strike anyone except when he was on *jihād*. He hit neither a woman nor a slave.”²⁹

Being the best educator, the Prophet (saw) never recommended violence as part or instruction. For example, when some Companions (ra) became furious at a man who had come to mosque and relieved himself by a wall, he pacified them and advised them to exhibit constructive politeness.³⁰ In another instance, some Companions (ra) overreacted towards Mu’awiya b. Hakam al-Sulami, who scolded a man for sneezing during the prayer. The Prophet (saw) simply cautioned him politely. Impressed by his politeness and understanding, Mu’awiya said the following: “May my parents be sacrificed for him. I haven’t seen any better instructor before or after him. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (saw) neither scolded me, nor beat me, nor insulted me. He only said, “*Speaking to people is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness and recitation of the Holy Qur’an or words to that effect.*”³¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was especially careful about domestic violence. Through his own behavior and advice to his Companions (ra), he constantly pointed out the importance of this matter. This was because, although people became enlightened with the glory of Islam, their mind was still tainted by some of the unacceptable ideas and practices of the Jahiliyya period. Although the Messenger of Allah (saw) never laid a hand on his wives, Abu Bakr (ra), who was a very tranquil person, at one point seemed to intend to slap his daughter because she raised her voice to the Prophet (saw), but the Prophet (saw) stopped him.³² The Messenger of Allah (saw) said that women were entrusted to men by Allah.³³ In one of his sermons, he indignantly said, “*How it is possible for anyone of you to lash his wife like a*

²⁸ HM286, Ibn Hanbal, I, 42.

²⁹ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.

³⁰ T147, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112; D380, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 136.

³¹ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

³² D4999, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 84.

³³ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.



slave when he might sleep with her the same evening.”³⁴ He summoned Thabit b. Qays b. Shammās (ra), who had beaten his wife to the extent that he had broken her arm, and asked him to divorce her.³⁵ Unlike the common practice, the Prophet (saw) did not say, “Such things take place in a family and should be kept within the family,” and he did not leave victimized women in the hands of their cruel husbands.

Like women, during the time of the Prophet (saw), other weak members of society, such as children, slaves, and servants were subject to mistreatment and violence. The cruel Jahiliyya practice of burying infant girls alive was ended by the advent of Islam, but gender discrimination was still in effect. Beating children and slaves was socially acceptable. The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned his Companions (ra) several times in order to correct this behavior. He asked us to be aware of the existence of the Creator and act accordingly by saying, “If one of you beats his servant then he (should) remember Allah and, withhold his hands.”³⁶

The Prophet (saw) said, “Beware, if anyone wrongs someone, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I shall not plead for him on the Day of Judgement.”³⁷ With this, he explained clearly that non-Muslims should also not be treated unjustly and unfairly. Once, a Muslim and a Jew, quarreled in the market place. The Muslim said, “By Him Who gave Muhammad superiority over all the people!” And the Jew said, “By Him Who gave Moses superiority over all the people!” At that the Muslim raised his hand and slapped the Jew on the face. The Jew, being under state protection, went to the Prophet (saw) and informed him of what had happened. The Prophet (saw) became very angry at the Muslim and gave compensation to the Jew.³⁸ In another instance, Salama b. al-Akwa` (ra) chased some thieves who stole his she-camels, and recovered his camels. After bringing back the camels, he asked the Prophet (saw) to send an army against those who stole the camels. However, the Prophet (saw) asserted once again that he was against all kinds of violence by saying, “O son of al-Akwa`, you have gained power (over your enemy), so forgive (them).”³⁹

Just as he did not allow people to resort to violence to humiliate their fellow men during time of peace, the Prophet (saw) warned his people about how violence could be used during war. In encountering the enemy, the Prophet (saw) first of all asked Muslims to find peaceful ways

³⁴ B4942, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Shams) 1.

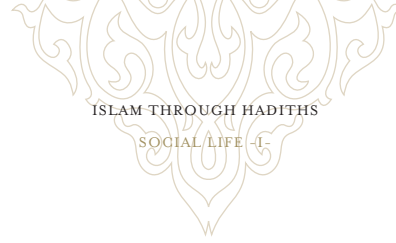
³⁵ N3527, al-Nasa'i, al-Talaq, 53.

³⁶ T1950, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 32.

³⁷ D3052, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 31-33; BS19243, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, IX, 342.

³⁸ M6151, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 159; B2411, al-Bukhari, al-Khusumat, 1.

³⁹ B3041, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 166; M4677, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 131.



to end the conflict. If war was still inevitable, then he asked Muslims to spare children,⁴⁰ women, and men of religion.⁴¹ The Prophet (saw) always wanted to contain and minimize the level of violence in war. For example, he banned the practice of dismembering the dead, which was common among the Arab tribes.⁴²

The first thing that comes to mind when speaking of violence is physical aggression. Nevertheless, there are other types of violence, including psychological violence, whose harm on people can be tremendous. Insulting, belittling, mocking, and name-calling are all forms of psychological violence. Such violence, which impairs personal development and keeps the “other” under constant pressure, is not acceptable in Islam. Allah Almighty, by saying, “*Woe to every fault-finding backbiter,*”⁴³ unequivocally banned mocking, belittling, and looking for faults in people.⁴⁴

In the famous *ḥadīth* which states “*al-ḥayā* (shame, shyness) is from faith, and faith is in Paradise. Obscenity is from rudeness, and rudeness is in the Fire,”⁴⁵ the Prophet (saw) emphasized that hurting people with words and gestures was not a characteristic of a Muslim. ‘Abd Allah b. Mubarak, who was notorious for being righteous and an ascetic, defined good character, saying, “It is a smiling face, doing one’s best in good, and refraining from harm.”⁴⁶

Insulting people and looking down on them are completely unacceptable in our religion. Dishonoring and despising people, who are Allah’s most honorable creatures, are not good even if they are done with good intentions. As reported by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra), while our Master was circumambulating the Ka’ba, he passed a person leading another person by a hair-rope attached to a ring in his nose. The Prophet (saw) simply cut this hair-rope and directed the man to lead him instead by his hand.⁴⁷

Violence does not only manifest itself against other people. In some instances, people may use violence against themselves. For example, this kind of violence can be seen when someone devotes himself to prayers in such a way that he neglects his material well-being. Our Almighty Lord, who did not burden us with any more than what we could carry,⁴⁸ asked us to take good care of our body which was entrusted to us by Him. Therefore, it is not allowed to engage in activities that would harm the body either through ignorance or misunderstanding the faith. The Prophet (saw), being the best role model for us, asked us to avoid things that could harm

⁴⁰ B3014, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 147; M4547, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 2

⁴¹ HM2728, Ibn Hanbal, I, 301.

⁴² D2613, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad 82; T1617, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 48.

⁴³ Al-Humaza, 104:1.

⁴⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49:11.

⁴⁵ T2009, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 65; HM10519, Ibn Hanbal, II, 502.

⁴⁶ T2005, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

⁴⁷ B6703, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-Nuzur, 31; D3302, Abu Da’ud, al-Nuzur, 19.

⁴⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:286.



our health. For example, someone made an oath that he would reach Mecca to perform Hajj by walking and not riding. However, after walking for a long time he reached a point when he could no longer walk. At that point he asked two people to help him walk. When the Prophet (saw) saw these men helping the man, he asked, “*What happened to this man?*” He was told that the man had intended to walk to Mecca. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “*Allah does not need this man’s self-infliction. Order him to ride.*”⁴⁹

In another instance, while he was addressing people, the Prophet (saw) saw a man standing under the sun. When he asked why a man would stand under the sun in such heat, he was told, “It is Abu Isra’il who has vowed that he will stand and never sit down, and he will never come under the shade, or speak to anybody, and he will fast.” The Prophet (saw) said to them, “*Order him to speak and let him come under the shade, and make him sit down, but let him complete his fast.*”⁵⁰

Our Prophet treated everyone with mercy and compassion regardless of religion, color, and nation because he was sent as a mercy to the entire world.⁵¹ His compassion was not limited to people. He asked believers to treat other creatures with mercy and compassion. By saying, “*Do not take anything with a soul as a target,*”⁵² he banned hunting of animals for sport.⁵³ The Prophet (saw) gave the nickname “the father of kittens”⁵⁴ to Abu Hurayra (ra) because his fondness of cats. He reported that the Prophet (saw) said that a woman from a previous community starved a cat to death, and this crime was such that it led this person to hell.⁵⁵

By saying, “*Those who do not show kindness would be deprived of grace,*”⁵⁶ the Prophet of Mercy informed Muslims that Allah asks us to be nice and morally upright in our affairs with His creatures. In this respect, he asked us to slaughter animals without giving them much pain.⁵⁷ For example, when the Prophet (saw) saw a man dragging a sheep by its ears, he told him to hold its neck, not the ears.⁵⁸ In another instance, he counseled our mother ‘Aisha (ra), who was trying to move her sluggish camel by force, that she needed to be gentle with it,⁵⁹ and he said, “*Kindness would make a deed beautiful, and lack of it would make it ugly.*”⁶⁰

The words and deeds of our Prophet clearly show that violence was not a way to resolve problems. In Islam, all kind of violence, from harming one’s self to damaging interpersonal relations, and from exerting violence on families and friends to exerting violence on institutions and societies,

⁴⁹ N3884, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 42.

⁵⁰ B6704, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-Nuzur, 31; D3300, Abu Da’ud, al-Nuzur, 19.

⁵¹ Al-Anbiya’, 21/107.

⁵² IM3187, Ibn Maja, al-Dhaba’ih, 10; HM2705, Ibn Hanbal, I, 298.

⁵³ IM3186, IM3188, Ibn Maja, al-Dhaba’ih, 10.

⁵⁴ T3840, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 46.

⁵⁵ M6679, Muslim, al-Birr, 135.

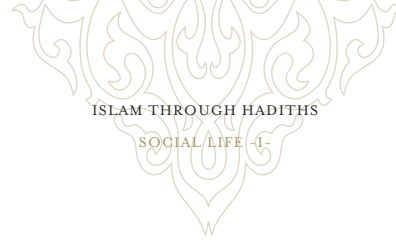
⁵⁶ M6598, Muslim, al-Birr, 74.

⁵⁷ M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; T1409, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 14.

⁵⁸ IM3171, Ibn Maja, al-Dhaba’ih, 3.

⁵⁹ M6603, Muslim, al-Birr, 79.

⁶⁰ M6602, Muslim, al-Birr, 78.



is frowned upon. It is shocking to see some Muslims resorting to violence for various purposes, although their religion bans such violence even on the battlefield. Nothing can legitimize violence against family members, students at school, or workers at the working place for personal gain. Stopping, curbing, and eliminating violence can be realized primarily through education; and this is possible by placing in the hearts and minds of people the idea of human rights, belief in the Hereafter, and religious and moral values. Only after developing such standards can legal, social, and economic regulations create a peaceful, safe, and secure world in which love and respect are the main norms. For such a society to exist, the meaning of the following *ḥadīth* must be understood at all levels of society, “*The Muslim is the one from (the harm of) whose tongue and hand (other) Muslims are safe, and the believer is the one with whom the people trust their blood and their wealth.*”⁶¹

⁶¹ T2627, al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 12; N4998, al-Nasa'i, al-Iman, 8.



AMR BI AL-MA'RUF WA AL-
NAHY 'AN AL-MUNKAR
ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING
EVIL

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: ... سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ رَأَى مُنْكَرًا فَاسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَغْيِرَهُ بِيَدِهِ فَلْيَغْيِرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ
يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَوْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.“

According to Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra),
the Prophet (saw) said, “He who observes an evil deed should change it with
his hand if he can do so; if he cannot do so, (he should change it) then with his
tongue; if he still cannot do so then (he should change it) with his heart,
and that is the weakest form of faith”

(D1140, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 239-242)



عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوَقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَأْمُرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.“



حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ بْنِ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ
قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ صَدَقَةٌ“، قَالُوا: فَإِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ؟ قَالَ: ”فَيَعْمَلُ بِيَدَيْهِ فَيَنْفَعُ
نَفْسَهُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُ“، قَالُوا: فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ أَوْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ؟ قَالَ: ”فَيُعِينُ ذَا الْحَاجَةِ
الْمَلْهُوفَ“، قَالُوا: فَإِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ؟ قَالَ: ”فَلْيَأْمُرْ بِالْخَيْرِ، أَوْ قَالَ: بِالْمَعْرُوفِ“،
قَالَ: فَإِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ؟ قَالَ: ”فَلْيُمْسِكْ عَنِ الشَّرِّ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ.“



عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ بْنِ الْيَمَانِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوَنَّ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ
أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْهُ ثُمَّ تَدْعُوهُ فَلَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ.“



عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جَرِيرٍ عَنِ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ بِالْمَعَاصِي هُمْ أَعَزُّ مِنْهُمْ وَأَمْنَعُ لَا يُغَيِّرُونَ إِلَّا
عَمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِعِقَابِهِ.“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas, the Messenger of Allah (saw) (peace and blessings be upon him) said, *“He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, respect our elders, and enjoin good and forbid evil.”*

(T1921, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15)



Sa‘id b. Abi Burda b. Abi Musa al-Ash‘ari said that his father said that his grandfather (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) said, *“On every Muslim there is enjoined (compulsory) sadaqa (alms). They (the people) said, “If one has nothing?” He said, “He should work with his hands so that he may benefit himself and give in charity.” They said, “If he cannot work or does not work?” He said, “Then he should help the oppressed unhappy person (by word or action or both).” They said, “If he does not do it?” He said, “Then he should enjoin what is good (or what is acceptable).” They said, “If he does not do that.” He said, “Then he should refrain from doing evil, for that will be considered for Him as a sadaqa (charity).”*

(B6022, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 33)



According to Hudhayfa b. al-Yaman (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“By the One in Whose hand is my soul! Either you command good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, but He will not respond to you.”*

(T2169, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 9)



As ‘Ubayd Allah b. Jarir (ra) said that his father said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If a community does not curtail evil deeds when they are able to do so, then Allah will send a plague upon them all.”*

(HM19466, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 366)



After the Hijra, the Messenger of Allah (saw) established the foundation of a new society. While he was building his community based on love and brotherhood, he was also trying to strengthen it. Towards that end, he asked his Companions (ra) to enjoin good to solidify good relations among people, and forbid evil deeds and words which could harm social unity and integrity. He required the Companions (ra) to recommend to their brothers in religion that they enjoin good and forbid evil and despicable things. With this command his wish was to create a strong community which was self-reflective and self-sufficient. One day, he explained to his community that the destruction of the Israelites was because of their abandonment of the duty of “enjoining good and forbidding evil.” When one of them saw another person committing evil deeds, he would first say, “Fear Allah and abandon what you are doing, because this is unlawful for you.” But if that person kept engaging in the evil deed, it would not deter the other person from having relations with him. As a result, Allah (swt) made the Israelites akin to each other in their deeds. Because they increased in their bad deeds, rebelled against Allah, and transgressed the boundaries set by Allah, their prophets cursed them. The Holy Qur’an relates their stories to us so that we can take lessons from their errors. After relating these stories of the Israelites, the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained how they prepared their end with their own hands and then said to his Companion, “By no means, I swear by Allah, you must enjoin what is good and prohibit what is evil, prevent the wrongdoer, bend him into conformity with what is right, and restrict him to what is right.”¹

The principle of “Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil” (*al-Amr bi ‘l-ma’rūf wa ‘l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*) found its place in the Qur’anic verses of the Meccan period. It was also emphasized by the Prophet (saw) himself so much that it became an essential pillar of Islam. Dictionaries define the

¹ D4336, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 17; T3048, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5; al-Ma’ida, 5/78-81.



word “*ma’rūf*” as something to be “known and accepted.” In other words, it was a practice that was accepted by the people. In ancient Arab society, it also meant, “goodness, generosity, and offering.”² These meanings of the word were also found in the Holy Qur’an and Ḥadīth,³ where the word was also used interchangeably with *urf* (custom).⁴ Later, this term gained new meanings in Islam. All the words and deeds that would facilitate approaching Allah (swt), that were not against reason and religion, and that were acceptable by people were called “*ma’rūf*.”⁵ Everything that was against reason and religion was called as “*munkar*,” meaning, “unknown, troublesome, and inappropriate.”⁶ A conversation between the Prophet (saw) and Harmala b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) demonstrated the way the Prophet (saw) used the term. When he came to ask the Prophet (saw) what he could recommend to increase his knowledge, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Observe ma’rūf, and avoid munkar.*” Confused with this answer, Harmala repeated his question, and got the same answer.⁷ The Prophet (saw) told him that he had to be mindful about people’s reactions, and continue to do those things that people would esteem and avoid the things that they would condemn.⁸

Because of the rich meanings of the terms “*ma’rūf*” and “*munkar*,” the principle of *al-Amr bi ‘l-ma’rūf wa ‘l-nahy ‘an al-munkar* has been understood in the widest sense. This principle, which was mentioned nine times in the Holy Qur’an, is not limited to any word or deed. Therefore, it can be understood to mean encouraging people to do things that would comply with the consent of Allah and the interests of other people, and to discourage people from words and deeds that would displease Allah (swt). In this regard, it is possible to consider all the words, deeds and warnings of the Prophet (saw), who was sent as the “cautioner,”⁹ as part of *‘al-Amr bi ‘l-ma’rūf wa ‘l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*. Upon reflecting on the Prophet’s insistence on enjoining good and forbidding evil, Harmala (ra) realized that this principle included all the deeds and words of religion.¹⁰

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty says, “[Believers], you are the best community singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah.”¹¹ In other verses, He refers to the principle of “enjoining good and prohibiting evil” as an essential characteristic of Muslims.¹² The Messenger of Allah (saw) made the connection between this principle and faith by saying, “*He who observes an evil deed should change it with his hand if he can do so; if he cannot do so, (he should change it) then with his*

² LA32/2899, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXII, 2899.

³ M2328, Muslim, *al-Zakat*, 52; D5109, Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 107-108.

⁴ *Al-A’raf*, 7:199.

⁵ RM9, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 999; LA32/2900, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXII, 2900.

⁶ ZT14/290, Murtada al-Zabidi, *Taj al-‘arus*, XIV, 290.

⁷ EM222, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 87.

⁸ BŞ11130, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, VII, 501.

⁹ Saad, 38:65.

¹⁰ EM222, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 87.

¹¹ *Al-‘Imran*, 3:110.

¹² *Al-Tawba*, 9:71, 112.

tongue; if he still cannot do so then (he should change it) with his heart, and that is the weakest form of faith.”¹³ Through this *ḥadīth* the Messenger of Allah (saw) indicated that those who were not bothered with evil deeds did not have even a fraction of faith in their hearts.¹⁴ A believer in Allah cannot be indifferent to evil. He has to try to eradicate the evil to the best of his ability, and if he cannot manage to do so then he should at least feel distressed and apprehensive about it. As the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, if a person is not able to eliminate the evil, but condemns it inside his heart, then this would be considered as if he did not partake in it. However, if a person hears about an evil deed, and is pleased about it, then this would be considered as if he partook in it and will be held responsible.¹⁵ The Messenger of Allah (saw) reminded believers that, “*Those who do not enjoin good and forbid evil are not from us.*”¹⁶ He even advised people who assembled and conversed by the roadside to enjoin good and forbid evil.¹⁷ In so doing, believers would gain rewards as if they were giving charity.¹⁸ Moreover, if the people responsible for the evil deeds responded positively to the call, then the reward of those who advised them would be even more. As our Prophet said, “*Whoever leads [someone] to good, he is like the one who does it.*”¹⁹

The Prophet (saw) frequently recommended that we treat parents,²⁰ neighbors,²¹ other people,²² animals,²³ and plants²⁴ in the best manner. He also said that Allah (swt) demanded that we keep the standard of goodness in every matter.²⁵ Following the suggestions of the Prophet (saw), the Companions (ra) did their best to implement the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil in every segment of their lives. After the death of the Prophet (saw), they tried to observe the principles that they received from him, and considered new ideas and practices that were against the Holy Qur’an and Sunna as *bid‘a* (blameworthy innovations). And they tried to prevent the *bid‘a* from take root in society.²⁶ They did not hesitate to warn rulers in the name of eliminating wrong and establishing the truth in society,²⁷ because the Prophet (saw) had said, “*The most virtuous jihād is to tell the truth to a tyrannical ruler.*”²⁸ Some Companions (ra) like Hisham b. Hakim (ra) were known for their diligence in observing the principle of “enjoining good and forbidding evil.” Once, when Caliph ‘Umar (ra) was informed of a bad deed committed by some people, he replied, “As long as Hisham and I live, such things will not happen.” It is also reported that

¹³ D1140, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 239-242; M177, Muslim, al-Iman, 78.

¹⁴ M179, Muslim, al-Iman, 80.

¹⁵ D4345, Abu Da‘ud, al-Malahim, 17; AV11/336, ‘Azimabadi, ‘Awn al-Ma‘bud, XI, 336.

¹⁶ T1921, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15; HM2329, Ibn Hanbal, I, 257.

¹⁷ M5563, Muslim, al-Libas, 114.

¹⁸ M2329, Muslim, al-Zakat, 53.

¹⁹ T2670, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 14, HM23415, Ibn Hanbal, V, 357.

²⁰ M254, Muslim, al-Iman, 139.

²¹ M176, Muslim, al-Iman, 77.

²² B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.

²³ B2363, al-Bukhari, al-Musaqat, 9.

²⁴ MA9430, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, V/220.

²⁵ M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; al-Nahl, 16/90.

²⁶ T244, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 66.

²⁷ BN7/192, Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, VII, 192.

²⁸ D4344, Abu Da‘ud, al-Malahim, 17.



Hisham travelled from town to town in order to encourage people to do good things, and avoid evil deeds.²⁹

It is important to assign the right people to posts in which good is enjoined and evil is deterred. Examining the verses on this issue reveals that implementing this principle is the moral duty of all Muslims.³⁰ As indicated in the following Qur'anic verse, Muslims need to observe this commandment: *"The believers, both men and women, support each other; they order what is right and forbid what is wrong; they keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms."*³¹ If conditions permit, a Muslim is supposed to eradicate evil with his own hands. If he is not able to do so, then he is supposed to warn the person who engaged in the evil deed. For example, during the time of Marwan, the Umayyad Caliph, someone warned him about one of his errors, which was that he had moved the pulpit (*minbar*) to a new place during a major holiday prayer, and gave a sermon before performing the act of worship. This person warned him, saying that, during the time of Prophet, neither was the pulpit moved nor was the sermon given before the act of worship.³² If a Muslim did not have the power to express his displeasure by word or deed, he should at least disapprove of the evil deed in his heart, and express his feelings through his gestures.

Those who enjoy good and forbid evil are known as good and trustworthy in their circles. Those people who are frowned upon by others cannot have a strong influence on them. Those who recommend that others do good things and avoid evil must first of all look at themselves and see if they practice what they say in their own lives. The fact that the Prophet (saw) was called "Trustworthy" (*al-Amin*) in his earlier life was instrumental in his ability to spread Islam among the people. In explaining Allah's commands and prohibitions, he internalized and practiced them first. This is why he was called a "living Qur'an"³³ and served as a role model. Believers, who loved and trusted him deeply, followed his words, deeds, and tacit approvals closely, and upheld his Sunna in the best possible manner. The Messenger of Allah (saw) indicated that avoiding bad deeds and asking other people to avoid them was a charity.³⁴ Furthermore he warned people that they would be punished on the Day of Judgement if there was a discrepancy between what they said and what they did, *"A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown in Hell-Fire and his intestines will pour forth in Hell and he will go round along with them, as an ass goes round the*

²⁹TK30/194, al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, XXX, 194-195.

³⁰Al 'Imran, 3:104; al-Hajj, 22:41.

³¹Al-Tawba, 9:71.

³²D1140, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 239-242; iM1275, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-Salat, 155.

³³M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

³⁴B6022, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 33.

mill stone. The denizens of Hell would gather round him and say, ‘O, so and so, what has happened to you? Were you not enjoining us to do what was reputable and forbidding us to do what was disreputable?’ He will say, ‘Of course, it is so; I used to enjoin (upon people) to do what was reputable but did not practice that myself. I had been forbidding people to do what was disreputable, but practiced it myself.’³⁵

Our Almighty Lord demands that those who enjoin good and forbid evil should practice what they say in their own lives first, and warn those who ask other people to do things that they do not do or do not adopt in their own lives by saying, “How can you tell people to do what is right and forget to do it yourselves, even though you recite the Scripture? Have you no sense?”³⁶ and “You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them? It is most hateful to Allah that you say things and then do not do them.”³⁷

In enjoining good and forbidding evil, the manner and style of doing so are very important. Those who intend to act should do so in a gentle way,³⁸ invite people to the message with wisdom and beautiful words,³⁹ and treat people with kindness, mercy, and tolerance. For example, when a Bedouin relieved himself in a corner of a mosque, some of the Companions (ra) intended to punish him, but the Prophet (saw) held them back, saying, “Leave him and pour a bucket or a tumbler of water over the place where he passed the urine. You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult.”⁴⁰ In the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty reminded the Prophet (saw) to be gentle and nice to people in disseminating his message, by saying, “By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them-had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you.”⁴¹ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) recommended similar things to his envoys and messengers who travelled to other regions to invite people to Islam.⁴² As the Turkish proverb says, “Nice words may lure a snake out of his pit.” Those who enjoin good and forbid evil should not be overindulgent or overbearing. They should be mindful of other people’s capacities. For example, the Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) used to give religious lectures every Thursday in which he advised people to hold on to good and avoid evil. Once, a man said to him that he would like to listen to his words every day. Mas‘ud responded, “The only thing which prevents me from doing so is that I hate to weary you, and, no doubt, I take care in preaching to you by selecting a suitable

³⁵ M7483, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 51.

³⁶ Al-Baqara,

³⁷ Al-Saff, 61:2-3.

³⁸ M4526, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 7.

³⁹ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

⁴⁰ B220, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 58; T147, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112.

⁴¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

⁴² M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 6.



time just as the Prophet (saw) used to do with us, because otherwise he feared he would wear us out.”⁴³

It should not be forgotten that everyone is responsible for enjoining good and forbidding evil in accordance with their ability and authority. If something exceeds the ability and authority of a believer then his responsibility is to convey the matter to those who have authority. For example, when Hisham b. Hakim (ra) saw farmers being punished because they had not paid the *jizya*, he related this to the governor of Damascus, ‘Umayr b. Sa’d, and got them freed.⁴⁴ In another instance, someone warned Marwan about one of his practices, and Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) said that this person had performed his duty. Al-Khudri’s opinion here demonstrates that the person mentioned above was not responsible for correcting the problem physically at that time.⁴⁵ If people try to impose their ideas of good and bad on others, even if they do not have the authority, and resort to violence in doing this, the result would be social chaos. Unfortunately, in Islamic history there were many instances in which various people or groups wanted to practice the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil in order to prevent sedition, but instead they began to fight with each other, and ironically this led to further sedition.⁴⁶ As indicated in the Qur’anic verse below, Islam accepts that there is a designated entity which will execute this responsibility, “*Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones.*”⁴⁷ This understanding created the institution of “*hisba*” in Islamic history. In the interest of public order, this institution was given the authority to execute this principle, and was asked to convey problematic issues to the courts if they went beyond the capacity and authority of the person in charge of this institution.⁴⁸

Every evil deed leaves a black spot in our hearts. If a person understands his mistake, regrets it, and repents, then this black spot will disappear. If he does not repent, and continues what he does, then those black spots will cover the whole heart. One who has such a heart will sink into the abyss of sin, and darken not only his place in this world but also his place in the Hereafter. Societies are similar to this. If a bad deed can be prevented in an appropriate manner within a society, then its harm on that society would be minimized. Otherwise, like the waves created by a pebble thrown into a pond, the evil could be spread from family to neigh-

⁴³ B70, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 12.

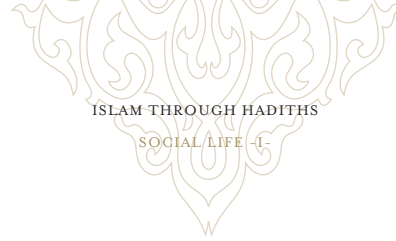
⁴⁴ M6657, Muslim, al-Birr, 117; M6659, Muslim, al-Birr, 118

⁴⁵ D1140, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 239-242.

⁴⁶ “Emir bi’l-m a’ruf nehiy ani’l-münker,” *DIA*, XI, 139-140.

⁴⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3:104.

⁴⁸ “Hisbe”, *DIA*, XVIII, 133-134.



borhood, from neighborhood to town, and from town to country; and everybody, innocent or guilty, would be harmed by it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave an example of this in the story of two groups of people on a ship. While one group resided on the upper deck, the other group resided on the lower deck. The people who were on the lower deck decided to drill a hole in the boat in order to extract some water. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The example of the person abiding by Allah’s order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a ship. Some of them got seats on the upper part, and the others on the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, ‘Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them.’ So, if the people on the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.”*⁴⁹

Furthermore, if those who have more knowledge and power do not strive to fix the mistakes of others, they will meet the same horrible end. In this regard, Allah Almighty gives the example of the Israelites who transgressed His boundaries, *“Why do their rabbis and scholars not forbid them to speak sinfully and consume what is unlawful? How evil their deeds are,”*⁵⁰ and then He warns Muslims about the same issue, *“Beware of discord that harms not only the wrongdoers among you: know that Allah is severe in His punishment.”*⁵¹ In addition, the Messenger of Allah (saw) pointed out that the prayer of those who do not enjoin good and forbid evil will not be accepted by Allah.⁵² He said, *“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! Either you command good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, but He will not respond to you.”*⁵³ It is important to point out here that this duty does not contradict the Qur’anic verses which declare that everyone is responsible for his own deeds,⁵⁴ and that everyone should begin by mending their own ways.⁵⁵ Right after the death of the Prophet (saw), some people began to interpret the Qur’anic verse, *“You who believe, you are responsible for your own souls; if anyone else goes astray it will not harm you so long as you follow the guidance; you will all return to Allah, and He will make you realize what you have done,”*⁵⁶ in such a way that they began to argue that everyone need only be mindful of his own business, and the principle of “enjoining

⁴⁹ B2493, al-Bukhari, al-Shirkat, 6.

⁵⁰ Al-Ma’ida, 5:63.

⁵¹ Al-Anfal, 8:25

⁵² IM4004, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.

⁵³ T2169, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 9.

⁵⁴ Al-An’am, 6:164.

⁵⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:44.

⁵⁶ Al-Ma’ida, 5:105.



good and forbidding evil” should be abandoned. Knowing that this interpretation was in opposition to the reality of Islam, Abu Bakr (ra) warned people, saying, “O people, you misinterpret this verse.”⁵⁷ A *hadith* of the Prophet (saw), reported by Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah, clarified the issue further, “If a community does not curtail evil deeds, when they are able to do so, then Allah will send a plague on them all.”⁵⁸

Islam calls for the souls and consciences of people, who are already endowed with the sense of justice, fairness and goodness, to act responsibly in treating everything and everyone they encounter with justice and fairness and in spreading goodness and preventing evil. The society of the Jahiliyya stood for all that was unjust and corrupt and this was why the Messenger of Allah (saw) detested it and was determined to rescue his people from all its evil.

Today, Muslims should not be oblivious to the problems of their individual societies. They should not say, “Why should I care?” because a Muslim is a member of a religion which requires him to be sensitive to his surroundings, as indicated in the following *hadith*: “Do not go to sleep while your neighbor is hungry.”⁵⁹ Our religion asks us to be empathetic and to be able to feel the pains of Muslims who live in different corners of the world just as if one of our own limbs was aching.⁶⁰ Muslims are responsible for enjoining good and forbidding evil in accordance with their power, authority, talent, knowledge, and capacity. For example, a writer might enlighten people by using his pen in explaining what is good and what is bad; and a scientist might enlighten them by explaining the harm of evil things. Creating a self-critical and self-corrective society is possible only through encouraging people to have this awareness. A strong society, in which the people have solidarity and self-sufficiency, can endure both internal and external challenges.

Although the responsibility of enjoining good and forbidding evil belongs to all Muslims; those who have power and authority have greater responsibility in this regard. In light of the allegory of the ship mentioned above, it can be said if a believer withdraws from this responsibility, then, because of the faults of others, he will drown when the ship -on which we all sail- sinks. In short, everyone is obliged to devote himself to performing this duty according to his ability.

⁵⁷ AV11/328, ‘Azimabadi, *‘Awn al-Ma’bud*, XI, 328.

⁵⁸ HM19466, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 366.

⁵⁹ MŞ30350, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Iman wa ‘l-Ru’ya, 6.

⁶⁰ M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66.



JIHAD

THE STRUGGLE IN THE PATH OF ALLAH (FI SABILILLAH)

عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ مَالِكِ الْجَنْبِيِّ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي فَضَالَةُ بْنُ عُبَيْدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ: قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ:
“...الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ...”

‘Amr b. Malik al-Janbi said,
“Fadala b. ‘Ubayd (ra) told me that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the
following in his Farewell Pilgrimage: ‘The *mujāhid* (one who engages in
jihād) is the one who struggles with his own ego to obey Allah.’”

(HM24458, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 22)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”جَاهِدُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَالسِّنِّتِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ، كَلِمَةٌ عَدْلٍ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ.“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ خَالِدِ الْجُهَيْنِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ جَهَّزَ غَازِيًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ غَزَا، وَمَنْ خَلَفَهُ فِي أَهْلِهِ بِخَيْرٍ فَقَدْ غَزَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ :
”أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَفْضَلُ؟“ قَالَ: ”إِيمَانٌ بِاللَّهِ وَجِهَادٌ فِي سَبِيلِهِ.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Perform jihād with your hands, words, and property.*”

(N3194, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 48)



According to Abu Sa'īd al Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*The most valuable jihād is the one to tell the truth in front of a tyrannical ruler.*”

(IM4011, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20; D4344, Abu Da'ud, al-Malahim, 17)



According to Zayd b. Khalid al-Juhani (ra),
the Prophet (saw) said, “*He who prepares a soldier going in Allah's cause is (given a reward equal to that of) a soldier; and he who looks after the property of the dependents of a soldier going in Allah's cause is (given a reward equal to that of) a soldier.*”

(M4902, Muslim, al-Imara, 135; B2843, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38)



Abu Dharr (ra) said, “I asked the Prophet (saw) what was the most virtuous act. He said, ‘*Believe in Allah and do jihād in His cause.*’”

(B2518, al-Bukhari, al-'Itq, 2)



In the early days of his prophethood in Mecca, the Prophet (saw) faced many challenges. Some believers had to emigrate to Abyssinia.¹ Against all odds, the Prophetic message began to find more and more receptive ears, and the new religion reached beyond the borders of Mecca. A group of twelve people from Medina met with the Prophet (saw) at the ‘Aqaba region, where today pilgrims stone the devil;² and the year after, another seventy men met the Prophet (saw) and pledged their loyalty to him.³ In the meantime, the persecutions and sufferings of the Muslims in Mecca steadily increased.

“By Allah who sent you to us, we can attack the people of Mina tomorrow and decimate them with our sword, if you ask us to do so.” This suggestion came from ‘Abbas b. ‘Ubada (ra), who was one of the twelve people who gave their pledge to the Prophet (saw). After the pledge, ‘Abbas did not return to Medina and stayed with the Prophet (saw) in Mecca. When they emigrated from Mecca to Medina, he was honored to be a Companion of both Mecca and Medina.⁴ After the second Pledge of ‘Aqaba, the people of Medina promised to protect the Prophet (saw) under all circumstances. Fearing a possible attack from the polytheists, ‘Abbas, representing the Medinan people, gave his support to the Prophet (saw) as his suggestion above indicates. However, the Prophet’s response to this suggestion was negative. He said, “*I am not commanded to do so (yet).*”⁵ The Muslims from Medina then made another proposal to the Prophet (saw) in order to protect the Meccan Muslims from persecution; they invited them to come to Medina. Instead of waging *jihād*, the Prophet (saw) accepted this proposal and went to Medina.

During the years of persecution, violence, and suffering, Allah Almighty, through the Holy Qur’an, always asked the Prophet (saw) to be patient, and to stay away from the polytheists.⁶ With patience and resilience,

¹ IS247, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, 247-251.

² B18, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 11; HS2/279, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 279.

³ HS2/290, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 290.

⁴ HI3/630, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, III, 630.

⁵ HM15891, Ibn Hanbal, III, 461.

⁶ Al-An’am, 6:33-5; Mu’min, 40:55; al-Dharyyat, 51:52-4.



the Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra) tried to win their struggle for existence. Against all odds, they patiently and tirelessly did their best to explain their beliefs and practices to other people. After the Hijra, they created a new city state, under the leadership of the Prophet (saw). In order to secure their freedom in Medina, they were commanded to wage *jihād* against their enemies, “*Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged—Allah has the power to help them.*”⁷

This command clearly indicates that *jihād* was a communal obligation, and that the Muslims were supposed to wage defensive war in order to protect their religion and society. War was an effective way of *jihād*, but *jihād* was never limited to armed struggle. Trying to live in accordance with the will of Allah (swt), spreading Allah’s message, eliminating all stumbling blocks between Allah and humankind, and enjoining good and forbidding evil were some of the other forms of *jihād*.

Jihād was not a foreign concept to pre-Islamic society. The Arabs had been using this term to denote their verbal and physical struggles against their enemies.⁸ However, these struggles were done for personal or tribal gain, and most of the time they were carried out with excessive anger and violence. Islam gave a new meaning to *jihād*, stripped it of personal gain, and prioritized Allah’s consent. Accordingly, *jihād* was supposed to be waged in order to gain Allah’s favor,⁹ and promote Allah’s message.¹⁰ This could sometimes be done with sheer physical power, sometimes with actions, sometimes with words,¹¹ and sometimes with self-sacrifice.¹² Most importantly *jihād* started with the struggle against one’s own ego, because our Almighty Lord said, “*Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire fueled by people and stones.*”¹³

A Muslim’s *jihād* against his own ego begins by eliminating his ignorance of religious matters. Learning about Islam and living according to it are the personal dimensions of *jihād*. Clearly, there are some challenges in learning and implementing religious commands and prohibitions. The prime challenge to a man observing religious commandments is his own ego.¹⁴ This is why the Prophet (saw) said, “*The mujāhid is the one who struggles against his ego to obey Allah.*”¹⁵ It is very hard to give up on transitory worldly affairs, and live a life in accordance with Allah’s consent. If one succeeds in his fight against his ego, then he would succeed in his *jihād* against the enemies of Islam.

⁷ Al-Hajj, 22:39; N3087, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 1; T3172, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 22.

⁸ LA9/710, Ibn Mansur, *Lisan al-Arab*, IX, 710.

⁹ D2515, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad 24; N3190, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 46.

¹⁰ B123, al-Bukhari, al-’Ilm, 45; M4919 Muslim, al-Imara, 149.

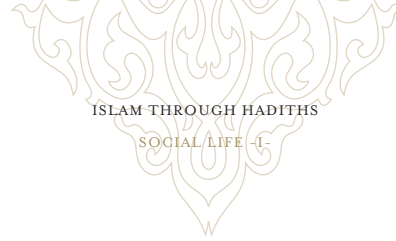
¹¹ N3098, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 1.

¹² D1449, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr 12; D2504, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 17.

¹³ Al-Tahrim, 66:6.

¹⁴ Yusuf, 12:53.

¹⁵ HM24458, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 22; T1621, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 2.



In addition to the *jihād* against the ego, there is also a *jihād* against society. This includes the struggle to spread Allah’s message, starting with those near us,¹⁶ to all of society. This corresponds to the commandments that Allah Almighty gave to the Prophet (saw) in his struggle to spread the message, “[Prophet], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching”¹⁷ and “Do not give in to the disbelievers: strive hard against them with this Qur’an.”¹⁸ After the Prophet (saw), it is the duty of each Muslim to continue to spread Allah’s message to people. This form of *jihād* begins with the necessary education of family members. If all believers provided their families with a good education, this would erase much of the ignorance at the societal level. This is a form of *jihād* which would protect their family in this world and in the Hereafter.

As indicated by our Master the Prophet (saw), “Strive in *jihād* with your hands, your tongues, and your wealth.”¹⁹ This means that our wealth and words can be used in *jihād*. *Jihād* with words could be carried out in various ways. For example, at a time when poetry was greatly valued, the Prophet (saw) used the poems of Hassan b. Thabit, ‘Abd Allah b. Rawaha, and Ka’b b. Malik (ra) in the name of *jihād*.²⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) encouraged Hassan b. Thabit, saying, “Lampoon them (i.e., the pagans) and Jibril is with you.”²¹ When the verse, “[He] who readily lends an ear to them, and most of them are liars,”²² was revealed, Ka’b b. Malik went to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “Allah revealed this verse. What do you think about this matter?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “Verily a believer engages in *jihād* with both his sword and his words,”²³ and emphasized the role of words in *jihād*. Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said, “The most valuable *jihād* is the one to tell the truth in front of a tyrannical ruler.”²⁴

Being a role model in spreading Islam is more effective than just talking about it. The life of a believer should be according to Islam. If a Muslim internalizes the Islamic way of life, then he can play a role in eliminating misperceptions about Islam.

Another form of *jihād* is to offer property or wealth. For example, providing soldiers with equipment or taking care of a soldier’s family can be considered *jihād*. Our Prophet said, “He who prepares a soldier going in Allah’s cause is (given a reward equal to that of) a soldier; and he who looks after the property of the dependents of a soldier going in Allah’s cause is (given a re-

¹⁶ Al-Tahrim, 66:6.

¹⁷ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

¹⁸ Al-Furqan, 25:52.

¹⁹ N3194, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 48.

²⁰ IBS620, Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Isti’ab*, p. 620.

²¹ B3213, al-Bukhari, *Bad’ al-Khalq*, 6; M6387, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 153.

²² Al-Shu’ara’, 26:224.

²³ HM15877, Ibn Hanbal, III, 456.

²⁴ IM4011, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20; D4344. Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 17.



ward equal to that of) a soldier.”²⁵ For the reward of *jihād* performed through wealth and property, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “He, who spends twice the value of his property in Allah’s cause, will surely be invited to Paradise by the guardians of paradise.”²⁶ Once a man came to the Prophet (saw) with a saddled camel and said, “May this [camel] be sacrificed in Allah’s cause.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “In return for this, you will be rewarded with seven hundred saddled camels in the Hereafter.”²⁷

Another form of *jihād* is war. This is to take up arms in the name of protecting the faith, existence, borders and freedom of a nation. Wars of freedom against aggressive enemies are in this category. This form of *jihād* has been waged in order to establish peace; to protect religion, country, and people; and to secure religious freedom. But war is not limited to armed struggle. There is also political, technological, economic, and psychological warfare. Psychological war carried out through media is perhaps the most effective one. Having a good knowledge of these forms of warfare is necessary in order for Muslims to carry out their *jihāds* in modern times. They should be vigilant against those who try to intimate them; who create chaos in Islamic societies; who make Muslims look weak, lazy, and stupid; and who fabricate news to misrepresent Islam and Muslims.

Having armed forces in order to be prepared for war is important for Muslims in order to deter possible threats and insults against Muslims and Islam. Our Almighty Lord explained this to us by referring to the military capability of the Prophet’s army: “Prepare whatever forces you [believers] can muster, including warhorses, to frighten off Allah’s enemies and yours, and warn others unknown to you but known to Allah.”²⁸ In this command of our Lord, who asks us to be ready for war, the term “warhorses” is. In modern times, it should be understood as modern warfare, which includes the internet, TV, and other media tools.

Our Master the Prophet (saw) considered various forms of *jihād* as important in spreading and protecting Islam. When Abu Dharr (ra) asked him, “What is the most righteous act?” he answered, “Belief in Allah, and do *jihād* in Allah’s cause.”²⁹ The Prophet (saw) emphasized *jihād* so much that, when he spoke to those who came to give their pledge to him, he listed it as one of the most important duties for Muslims. Bashir b. Hassa’iyya,³⁰ of the Rabi’a tribe, was a Muhajir who came to give his pledge to the Prophet (saw). The beloved Prophet stipulated that he would accept his pledge only

²⁵ M4902, Muslim, al-Imara, 135; B2843, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38.

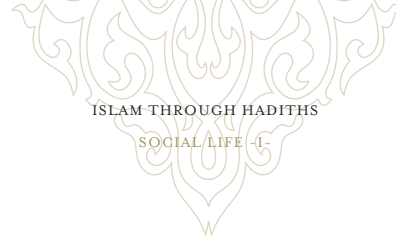
²⁶ M2433, al-Darimi, al-Jihad, 13; HM21685, Ibn Hanbal, V, 152.

²⁷ M4897, Muslim, al-Imara, 132.

²⁸ Al-Anfal, 8:60.

²⁹ B2518, al-Bukhari, al-’Itq, 2.

³⁰ EU1/396, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 396.



if he believed in the Oneness of Allah, in the prophethood of Muhammad, in performing prayers, giving *zakāt*, going on the Hajj, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and finally waging *jihād* in the name of Allah (swt). Thereupon, Bashir b. Hassa'iyya (ra), replied, "O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, I cannot perform two of these things: *jihād* and *zakāt*. This is because it is said that those who run away from battle would be inflicted by the wrath of Allah. If I am present in a battle, I would be scared and my ego would not want me to die. As for the *zakāt*, I have nothing but a small herd of sheep and ten camels. And my family's livelihood depends on them." The Prophet (saw) took hold of his hand, shook it, and said, "*No jihād, no zakāt. . . How are you going to enter Paradise?*" Seeing the seriousness of the Prophet (saw), Bashir said, "O Messenger of Allah, I give my pledge to you," and he accepted all the stipulations.³¹

The Prophet (saw) rebuked those who shied away from *jihād* and said, "*Those who die without waging any jihād in the name of Allah, or at least thinking about it, would die as a type of hypocrite.*"³² This is because avoiding *jihād* would mean to leave compatriots alone in defending their faith, country, and freedom.

Our beloved Prophet explained the virtues of *jihād* on every occasion in various ways, such as, "*A single endeavor (of fighting) in Allah's Cause in the forenoon or in the afternoon is better than the world and whatever is in it,*"³³ "*The person who participates in (holy battles) in Allah's cause and nothing compels him to do so except belief in Allah and His apostles, will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives), or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr)*"³⁴ and "*Allah guarantees to the person who carries out jihād for His cause and nothing compelled him to go out but the jihād in His cause, and belief in His words, that He will either admit him to Paradise or return him with his reward or the booty he has earned to his residence from where he set out.*"³⁵ Moreover the Prophet (saw) warned those who avoided *jihād* with the following words: "*Whoever meets Allah with no mark on him (as a result of fighting) in His cause, he will meet Him with a deficiency,*"³⁶ and he often emphasized that those who do not participate in *jihād*, and immersed themselves in the material world without any excuse³⁷ will surely pay for it one day.³⁸

When al-Nu'man b. Bashir³⁹ (ra) was a child he overheard a conversation next to the minbar during a Friday prayer service. As the congregation

³¹ HM22298, Ibn Hanbal, V, 224.

³² M4931, Muslim, al-Imara, 158.

³³ M4873, Muslim, al-Imara, 112; B2792, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 5.

³⁴ B36, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 26.

³⁵ B7457, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 28.

³⁶ IM2763, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 5.

³⁷ D3462, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (Ijara), 54.

³⁸ D3462, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (Ijara), 54.

³⁹ IBS723, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, p, 723-724.



was waiting for the Prophet (saw), someone said, “I would not mind if I did not do anything but provided water for pilgrims after I convert.” Another said, “I would not mind if I did not do anything but repaired the Holy Mosque.” Called *siqāya* and *‘imāra*, these two tasks were considered the most honorable jobs among people in that time. Upon hearing this conversation, someone else joined in and said, “Waging *jihād* in Allah’s cause is more than those responsibilities.” ‘Umar (ra) overheard the conversation and intervened, saying, “Do not raise your voices by the minbar of the Prophet (saw). Today is Friday. After worship I will go to the Prophet (saw) and ask his opinion on the issue that you disagree about.” The following verse was revealed on this occasion: “*Do you consider giving water to pilgrims and tending the Sacred Mosque to be equal to the deeds of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and who strive in Allah’s path? They are not equal in Allah’s eyes. Allah does not guide such benighted people.*”⁴⁰ In another instance, someone asked the Prophet (saw), “What is the most virtuous act?” and the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Believing in Allah, waging jihād in His cause, and performing Hajj.*”⁴¹

As the Messenger of Allah (saw), our beloved prophet not only encouraged his Companions (ra) to participate in *jihād* with his words but also personally led the armies which fought in Allah’s cause. We see him praying for the victory of his army at the Battle of Badr,⁴² or motivating Muslims when he said to Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas the archer (ra), “*Shoot! May my mother and father be sacrificed for you.*”⁴³ During the Day of Hunayn, when the archers of the Hawazin tribe were shooting arrows in abundance, he bravely stood out and shouted, “*I am the Prophet (saw). This is not a lie. I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib.*”⁴⁴

The most important issue in *jihād* is that it should be performed in Allah’s cause. Once someone asked the Prophet (saw), “What is your opinion about a person who engaged in *jihād* for both Allah’s cause and gaining personal fame? What would he earn?” The Prophet (saw) said, “*He will win nothing.*” The man insisted on repeating his questions three times and the Prophet (saw) finally replied, “*Allah would accept the acts that are being performed genuinely in His cause.*”⁴⁵ In another instance, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, a man is fighting for spoils of war, another is fighting for fame, and yet another is fighting for pretentiousness. Who is fighting for Allah’s cause?” Our Master the Prophet (saw) replied,

⁴⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:19, M4871, Muslim, al-Imara, 111.

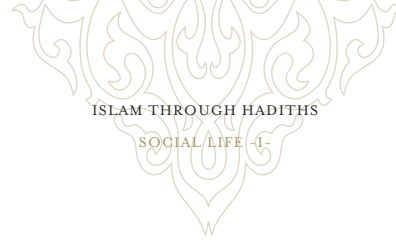
⁴¹ M248, Muslim, al-Iman, 135; B1519, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 4.

⁴² B3953, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 4.

⁴³ M6237, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 42; B4055, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 18

⁴⁴ B2874, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 61; M4615, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 78.

⁴⁵ N3142, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 24.



“Those who emphasize the kalimāt al-Tawhīd are the ones who are fighting for Allah’s cause.”⁴⁶

A successful soldier and commandment of the Prophet (saw), ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, the son of ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), said to the Prophet (saw), with the purpose of understanding the meaning of *jihād* fully, “O Messenger of Allah, tell me about *jihād* and fighting.” The Prophet (saw) replied: “O ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, if you fight with endurance seeking from Allah your reward, Allah will resurrect you with endurance and seeking your reward from Him, but, if you fight for vanity seeking to acquire much, Allah will resurrect you with vanity and seeking to acquire much. In whatever you fight or are killed, O ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, in that state Allah will resurrect you.”⁴⁷

Jihād is not an offensive struggle to destroy others. On the contrary, it is a defensive struggle, aiming to protect the identity and personality of a person in his own land and defend the rights of his nation against tyrants and oppressors. It is about upholding what is just and establishing the rule of law. Establishing justice and fairness can be realized sometimes through the pen and sometimes through the sword. However, there are other times when a believer cannot continue his struggle with his wealth, actions, or words. Being ready to sacrifice one’s own life in this path is the highest form of this struggle. Still, waging *jihād* is not something like taking up arms and blindly attacking the enemy. Indiscriminate individual acts of violence are by no means considered as *jihād*. Certain violent actions seen in recent years cannot be associated with the Islamic notion of holy *jihād*. Suicide bombings perpetrated by brainwashed people in the name of religion are by no means justifiable. Such violent acts do not befit the cherished moral values of Islam and humanity. These are horrible atrocities and crimes against humanity. In this regard, we should understand the parameters of Islamic principles concerning *jihād*, which were given by our Prophet when he advised his Companions on the way to war, “Do not wish to encounter the enemy. Ask for peace from Allah. When you encounter with them, be patient and resilient. Know that Paradise will be under the shadow of the swords.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ M4919, Muslim, al-Imara, 149.

⁴⁷ D2519, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 24.

⁴⁸ M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 20; B2966, al-Bukhari, al-Jihād, 112.



THE LAWS OF WAR PEACE IS THE NORM



عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: «الْغَزْوُ غَزْوَانِ فَأَمَّا مَنْ
ابْتَغَى وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأَطَاعَ الْإِمَامَ وَأَنْفَقَ الْكَرِيمَةَ وَيَأْسَرَ الشَّرِيكَ وَاجْتَنَبَ
الْفَسَادَ كَانَ نَوْمُهُ وَنُبُّهُهُ أَجْرًا كُلُّهُ وَأَمَّا مَنْ غَزَا رِيَاءً وَسُمِعَتْ وَعَصَى الْإِمَامَ
وَأَفْسَدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَرْجِعُ بِالْكَفَافِ.»

According to Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra),
the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Campaigns are of two types. As for the
one who seeks the face of Allah, obeys the imām, spends what is precious (for
him), is easy-going with his companion and avoids mischief, when he is asleep
and when he is awake, it will all bring reward. But as for the one who fights to
show off, and he disobeys the imām and does mischief in the land, he will not
come back the same as when he left.”

(N3188, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 46)



عَنْ أَبِي النَّضْرِ، عَنْ كِتَابِ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَسْلَمَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يُقَالُ لَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أَوْفَى، فَكَتَبَ إِلَى عُمَرَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حِينَ سَارَ إِلَى الْحُرُورِيَّةِ، يُخْبِرُهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، كَانَ فِي بَعْضِ أَيَّامِهِ الَّتِي لَقِيَ فِيهَا الْعَدُوَّ، يَنْتَظِرُ حَتَّى إِذَا مَالَتِ الشَّمْسُ قَامَ فِيهِمْ فَقَالَ: «يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ، فَإِذَا لَقَيْتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «الْحَرْبُ خُدْعَةٌ.»



عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا أَمَرَ أَمِيرًا عَلَى جَيْشٍ أَوْ سَرِيَّةٍ أَوْصَاهُ فِي خَاصَّتِهِ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خَيْرًا ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَغْزُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ أُغْزُوا وَلَا تَغْلُوا وَلَا تَغْدَرُوا وَلَا تَمْثَلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وَلِيدًا...»



عَنْ شَدَادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ قَالَ: ثِنْتَانِ حَفِظْتُهُمَا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَإِذَا قَاتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الْقِتْلَةَ...»



According to Abu al-Nadr, a man from the Aslam tribe, who was one of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) and called ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Awfa, wrote a letter to ‘Umar b. ‘Ubayd Allah (ra), when he was proceeding to al-Haruriya (the Harijites), and related the following: “Allah’s Messenger (saw), in a military expedition against the enemy, waited until the sun declined and then got up among the people and said, ‘O people! Do not wish to meet the enemy, and ask Allah for safety, but when you face the enemy, be patient, and remember that Paradise is under the shades of swords.’”

(M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 20; B3025, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 156)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “War is deceit.”

(M4540, Muslim, al-Jihad, 18; B3030, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 157)



According to Sulayman b. Burayda, his father (ra) said that, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment, he would especially exhort him to fear Allah and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say, “Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils (of war); do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (dead) bodies; do not kill children.”

(M4522, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 3)



Shaddad b. Aws (ra) said, “There are two things that I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘Allah has decreed that everything should be done in a good way, so when you kill (at war, or in slaughtering animals) use a good method (do it without giving too much pain).’”

(M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; D2814, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 10, 11)



Salman al-Farsi was a Persian Zoroastrian who set out on a journey in quest for the Truth. Ultimately he encountered the Prophet (saw).¹ After a long journey he arrived at Medina as a slave, but years later returned to his homeland as a military commander. At that time his unit began a siege against a castle in Iran. As a commander Salman (ra) was not in a hurry to storm the castle. Rather, as he had learned from the Prophet (saw), he was seeking ways to make peace with the enemy. However, the soldiers under his command were getting impatient and they began to ask him, “O Abu ‘Abd Allah, aren’t we going to attack them?” Salman replied, “Let us invite them to Islam first as the Prophet (saw) used to do.”

Salman approached the besieged Persians and said to them, “I am a Persian like you. Do you not see how these Arab soldiers obey my commands? If you accept Islam, you will have the same rights and responsibilities as them. If you refuse, and keep your religion, but are submissive, then we will leave you with it, and you will pay us the *jizya*. If you do not accept one of these choices, then we will fight you.” The Persians replied to Salman, “We do not accept giving the *jizya* to you. Instead, we intend to fight you.” Thereupon, his soldiers told Salman, “O Abu ‘Abd Allah, should we not attack them now?” Salman said, “No!” and he continued to invite them to Islam for three more days. At the end of the three days, he ordered his soldiers to attack. The war ended with victory for the Muslims.²

Salman al-Farisi (ra) acted in accordance with the command and advice of the Prophet (saw). Once the Prophet (saw) counseled the commander of an army, who was getting ready to go to war, as follows: “*When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them. Then invite them to emigrate*

¹ EU2/510, Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, II, 510-511.

² T1548, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Siyar*, I.



from their lands to the land of the Muhājirīn and inform them that, if they do so, they shall have all the privileges and obligations of the Muhājirīn. If they refuse to emigrate, tell them that they will have the status of Bedouin Muslims and will be subjected to the commands of Allah like other Muslims, but they will not get any share from the spoils of war or fay' except when they actually fight with the Muslims (against the disbelievers). If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them."³

The Prophet (saw)'s advice about keeping the peace reminds us of the following Qur'anic verses, "If they incline towards peace, you [Prophet] must also incline towards it, and put your trust in Allah"⁴ and "But as for those who seek refuge with people with whom you have a treaty, or who come over to you because their hearts shrink from fighting against you or against their own people, Allah could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you. So if they withdraw and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah gives you no way against them."⁵

The Qur'anic advice and the Prophet's instructions about the way to wage war strongly suggest that Islam prioritizes peace and safety over war. It is reported that during a battle, the Prophet (saw) waited for sundown, and then addressed his army with the following words: "O people! Do not wish to meet the enemy, and ask Allah for safety, but when you face the enemy, be patient, and remember that Paradise is under the shades of swords."⁶ Furthermore, by saying, "you do not know what war will bring for you,"⁷ the Prophet (saw) stressed the unpredictability of the results of war. Because both parties at war are in harm's way, there is no real winner in war. The fact that the Prophet (saw) insisted on looking for peaceful solutions until the last moment before battle was a sure sign of Muslims' genuine interest in peace. Nevertheless, our Almighty Lord informed us that a moment comes when war is inevitable in order to establish peace, and at that moment Muslims cannot avoid engaging in jihād, "Those believers who stay at home, apart from those with an incapacity, are not equal to those who commit themselves and their possessions to striving in Allah's cause. Allah has raised such people to a rank above those who stay at home—although He has promised all believers a good reward, those who strive are favored with a tremendous reward above those who stay at home—high ranks conferred by Him, as well as forgiveness, and mercy: Allah is most forgiving and merciful."⁸

³ M4522, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 3; IM2858, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 38.

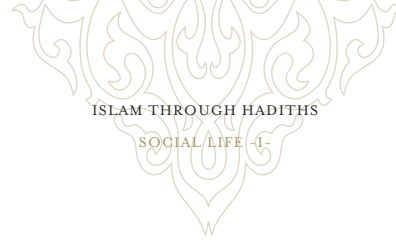
⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:61.

⁵ Al-Nisa', 4:90.

⁶ M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 20; B3025, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 156.

⁷ HM9185, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.

⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:95-96.



In addition to encouraging physical struggle if deemed necessary, the Prophet (saw) often reminded his Companions of one more thing, which was to not run away from the battlefield. He specified that running away from the battlefield was as blameworthy as not participating in war. He counseled his Companions (ra) to show resilience during war against all odds, and told them that if one fled from battle this was a grave sin that would lead to his destruction.⁹

Struggles against those who block the expansion and survival of Islam and who insult the lands of Islam, and struggles to eliminate all threats that endanger the unity, integrity, safety, and serenity of a nation are called *jihād*. These struggles should be in the name of Allah (swt). Historically, these kinds of struggles are different from other struggles because they are not carried out in the name of political and economic expansion, such as colonization, and the oppression and exploitation of various peoples and nations. For Muslims, peace and tranquility are the norm. Wars are waged only if they are necessary to establish peace; and they are ultimately about eliminating obstacles to the practice of Islam.

Thus, *jihād* should be carried out only in Allah's cause. Our Prophet warned his Companions (ra) often that they were only allowed to go to war to uphold and sustain truth and justice. Moreover, he said that those who went to war in the name of their tribe, family, or nation, and died in battle for these things, should be considered as the people of the Jahiliyya.¹⁰ During a battle it was reported to the Prophet (saw) that soldiers were breaking into the homes of civilians and looting. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) made his town criers announce that those who partook in pillaging and looting would not receive their material and spiritual shares at the end of the *jihād*.¹¹

Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), who was sent by the Prophet to Yemen as a governor, related that the Prophet (saw) addressed his Companions (ra) in the following manner: "*Campaigns are of two types. As for the one who seeks the face of Allah, obeys the imām, spends what is precious (for him), is easy-going with his companion and avoids mischief, when he is asleep and when he is awake, it will all bring reward. But as for the one who fights to show off, and he disobeys the imām and does mischief in the land, he will not come back the same as when he left.*"¹²

It was not the Prophet's first objective to destroy the enemy, if he had to engage in an unavoidable battle. He clearly made every effort to triumph

⁹ B2766, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 23; D2874-D2875, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 10.

¹⁰ N4120, al-Nasa'i, Muharaba, 28; IM3948, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 7.

¹¹ D2629, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 88.

¹² N3188, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 46; D2515, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 24.



during the battle, but at the same time he tried to minimize the damage on both sides. For example, he released the war captives after the Battle of Badr with the hope that they would come close to Islam one day.¹³ The fact that there were very few casualties in the wars in which he participated demonstrated how much he valued human life, and how he set rules and regulations about waging and executing battles. The first and foremost regulation was to invite the enemy to Islam before engagement. If they accepted Islam in mass, or they agreed to be subjects of *Dār al-Islam* then war became unnecessary. If any individuals from the enemy surrendered or accepted Islam, their lives are spared. These were important principles for waging and executing war in Islam.

Not harming the trust and safety in human relations, even with regard to the enemy, was part and parcel of the struggle of the believers. It is reported that once a shepherd greeted some Muslims soldiers who were on their way to *jihād*. Because the shepherd lived in an area belonging to the enemy, the soldiers reasoned that he greeted them with the purpose of saving his life and property, so they killed him, and his property was taken to the Prophet (saw). In the Holy Qur'an this incident was censured by Allah¹⁴ (swt) with the following verse: *“So, you who believe, be careful when you go to fight in Allah’s way, and do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, ‘You are not a believer, out of desire for the chance gains of this life—Allah has plenty of gains for you. You yourself were in the same position [once], but Allah was gracious to you, so be careful: Allah is fully aware of what you do.”*¹⁵

In addition, Allah Almighty addressed his beloved Messenger concerning the issue of peaceful relations during war time in a number of verses such as, *“If any one of the idolaters should seek your protection [Prophet], grant it to him so that he may hear the word of Allah, then take him to a place safe for him, for they are people with no knowledge [of it]”*¹⁶ and *“But as for those with whom you made a treaty at the Sacred Mosque, so long as they remain true to you, be true to them.”*¹⁷ Thus, Allah (swt) expanded the framework of trustworthiness. In another instance Allah revealed the following verse: *“He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: Allah loves the just. But Allah forbids you to take as allies those who have fought against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and helped others to drive you out: any of you who take them as allies will truly be wrongdoers.”*¹⁸ With this verse the parameters

¹³ M4588, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 58; HM2216, Ibn Hanbal, I, 247.

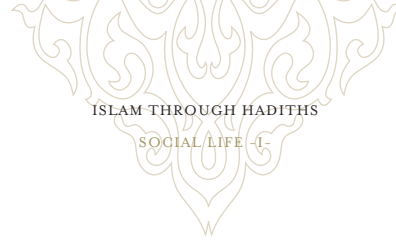
¹⁴ T3030, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 4; B4591, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Nisa') 17.

¹⁵ Al-Nisa', 4:94.

¹⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:6.

¹⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:7.

¹⁸ Al-Mumtahana, 60:8-9.



were set for our Prophet's relations with the polytheists. On this account, the Prophet (saw) advised his Companions (ra) with the following words: *"Indeed, whoever kills a mu'āhid who has a covenant from Allah and a covenant from His Messenger has violated the covenant with Allah and the covenant of His Messenger, so he shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise; even though its fragrance can be sensed from the distance of seventy autumns."*¹⁹

The tactics and strategies that the Prophet (saw) implemented in war played a great role in winning them in a swift manner, and thereby reducing casualties. He was extremely careful not to allow any disclosure of intelligence to the enemy. Towards that end, he sometimes did not disclose information about the destination of the expedition until the last minute,²⁰ and sometimes misinformed others about it.²¹ He also used secret codes in his communications with his men during the battle.²² By saying, *"War is deceit,"*²³ he justified using of stratagems and deceptive methods in order to win battles.²⁴

To achieve victory, the Prophet (saw) also blocked the communication channels of the enemy, and made sure to capture their scouts and spies.²⁵ The Messenger of Allah (saw) was careful to collect information about the enemy, their soldiers and equipment, and prepared for battle accordingly. For example, before the Battle of Khandaq, he sent Hudhayfa b. Yaman (ra) to the camp site of the Meccan pagans in order to collect information about their war preparations.²⁶ Likewise, he sent one of his close Companions, Zubayr b. al-'Awwam (ra), to the Jewish Qurayza tribe in order to gather intelligence about them.²⁷

The Messenger of Allah (saw) always waited for the best time to attack the enemy.²⁸ During the conquest of Mecca, while his army was camped outside that city, he set extra bonfires at night in order for his army to look more numerous than it was.²⁹ Furthermore, he always took advantage of the physical conditions, and in that regard, he took precautions in order for his forces not to be affected by the direction of the sun during battle.³⁰ With those tactics and strategies, the Prophet (saw) caught his enemies off guard several times, and won many battles with the least casualties.

The holy Prophet observed the laws of war even in the most distressing conditions and times. For example, although he became very angry at the statements of the two emissaries who brought the letter of the false

¹⁹ T1403, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 11.

²⁰ B2947, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 103; M7018, Muslim, al-Tawba, 54.

²¹ DM2479, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 14.

²² D2596, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 71.

²³ M4540, Muslim, al-Jihad, 18; B3030, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 157

²⁴ T1939, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26.

²⁵ B3051, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 173; D2653, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 100.

²⁶ M4640, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 99.

²⁷ B2846, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 40.

²⁸ B3160, al-Bukhari, al-Jizya, 1.

²⁹ B4280, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 49.

³⁰ B2965, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 112.



Prophet, Musaylima, he did not ask for them to be killed. It was reported that during this incident he even said to them, “I swear by Allah that were it not for the rule that messengers [envoys] are not to be killed, I would have cut off your heads.”³¹

Sometimes the Prophet (saw) waged war against groups who broke their word and betrayed Muslims; and exiled them to other regions.³² In so doing, he always stayed within the legal and moral boundaries and, because of his forgiving nature and peaceful principles, many people came to him and adopted Islam, or signed a peace treaty with him.

He never approved of inhuman, savage, or vindictive behavior during war. He advised his Companions (ra) who were going on *jihād* that they had to be careful to not transgress the boundaries, and not to resort to violence and torture. He warned them especially to not harm the parties who did not engage in war, such as the elderly, women and children.³³

Another cruel Jahiliyya practice that the Prophet (saw) prohibited in war was *muthla*, i.e., torture and dismemberment of the dead. During the Battle of Uhud, the ears and noses of the Muslims, including Hamza (ra), were cut off, and their internal organs were crushed by the polytheists. This was agonizing and upsetting for the Muslims. Some of the Ansar swore oaths, saying that they would do the same to the polytheists at the first opportunity.³⁴ During the conquest of Mecca, the Muslims finally got the opportunity that they had been longing for, but, the Prophet of Mercy prohibited such inhuman and dishonorable behavior. By hearing and obeying the verse, “Fight in the name of Allah and in the path of Allah (*fi sabilillah*), and with him who disbelieves in Allah fight and do not be treacherous and do not be dishonest about booty and do not deface (in killing) and do not kill a child,”³⁵ the Muslims who had sworn the oaths took hold of their anger and did not torture the polytheists.

Caliph Abu Bakr (ra), who was the closest Companion of the Prophet (saw) and the first ruler of the Muslims after his death, followed in his footsteps in this matter. While he was sending an army to Damascus, he reminded his lieutenant to not kill the men of religion, and said, “Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels except for food. Do not burn bee hives and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the booty, and do not be cowardly.”³⁶

³¹ D2761, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 154.

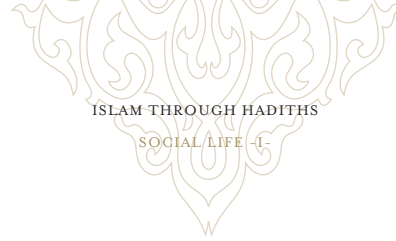
³² M4592, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 62; D3005, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 22, 23.

³³ M4685, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 138; T1617, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 48.

³⁴ T3129, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 16.

³⁵ M4522 Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 3; D2613, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 82; MU972, al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 3

³⁶ MU971, al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 3.



Caliph 'Umar (ra), in a letter to a lieutenant of an army which he had sent on campaign, employed even a sharper language on this matter. He wrote, "I have heard that it is the habit of some of your men to chase an unbeliever until he takes refuge in a high place. Then one man tells him in Persian not to be afraid, and when he comes up to him, he kills him. By Allah in whose hand is my soul, if I knew someone who had done that, I would strike off his head."³⁷

According to the Sunna of the Prophet of Grace and Mercy, and the essential principles of Islam, war is an undesirable state of affairs for Muslims. Nevertheless Muslims ought to be ready for war as a deterrent against those who are the enemy of religious, national, and human values. As our Almighty Lord informs us, as long as weapons are not used against innocent people, it is justifiable to own the most advanced weaponry in order to deter and repel a potential enemy, "*Prepare whatever forces you [believers] can muster, including warhorses, to frighten off Allah's enemies and yours, and warn others unknown to you but known to Allah. Whatever you give in Allah's cause will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.*"³⁸ In order to prevent rapacious attacks on innocent people, it imperative for Muslims to have a strong army, as well as strong political, economic, and technological power.

Inspired by the above verse, the Prophet (saw) made preparations for future battles. For instance, he encouraged his Companions (ra) to excel in the fields of archery and horsemanship. He also held horse and camel races,³⁹ so that his soldiers could be ready for battle.⁴⁰

"*I am the Messenger of Mercy,*"⁴¹ said our Master the Prophet (saw). He had principled attitudes towards his enemies during battle as indicated in the following *hadith*: "*Allah has decreed that everything should be done in a good way, so when you kill (at war, or in slaughtering animals) use a good method (do it without giving too much pain)... When you slaughter an animal, do it nicely. Sharpen your knife properly, and do not let the animal suffer.*"⁴² Thus, his practices were always duty-bound by mercy and compassion.

³⁷ MU973, al-Muwatta' al-Jihad, 4.

³⁸ Al-Anfal, 8:60.

³⁹ T1700, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 22; N3615, al-Nasa'i, al-Khayl wa 'l-sabq wa 'l-ramy, 14.

⁴⁰ D2513, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 23.

⁴¹ T5368, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama'il, 167.

⁴² M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; D2814, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 10, 11.





THE LAW OF PRISONERS OF WAR FREEDOM FOR ALL

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”فُكُّوا الْعَانِي، وَأَجِيبُوا الدَّاعِيَ، وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ.“

According to Abu Musa (ra),
the Prophet (saw) said, “*Set the captives free, accept the invitation (to a
wedding banquet), and visit patients.*”

(B5174, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 72)



عَنْ أَبِي عَزِيزِ بْنِ عُمَيْرٍ، أَخِي مُصْعَبِ بْنِ عُمَيْرٍ، قَالَ: كُنْتُ فِي الْأَسَارَى
يَوْمَ بَدْرٍ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: اسْتَوْضُوا بِالْأَسَارَى خَيْرًا وَكُنْتُ فِي نَفَرٍ مِنَ
الْأَنْصَارِ، وَكَانُوا إِذَا قَدَّمُوا غَدَاءَهُمْ وَعَشَاءَهُمْ أَكَلُوا التَّمْرَ وَأَطْعَمُونِي الْخُبْزَ بِوَصِيَّةِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِيَّاهُمْ.



عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ فَرَّقَ بَيْنَ وَالِدَةٍ وَوَلَدِهَا فَرَّقَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ أَحِبَّتِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



عَنْ عَلِيِّ قَالَ: وَهَبَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ غُلَامَيْنِ أَخَوَيْنِ فَبِعْتُ أَحَدَهُمَا فَقَالَ لِي
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”يَا عَلِيُّ! مَا فَعَلَ غُلَامُكَ؟“ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ: ”رَدَّهُ رَدَّهُ.“



Abu 'Aziz b. 'Umayr, the brother of Mus'ab b. 'Umayr (ra), said, "I was among the captives after the Battle of Badr. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Treat captives well!*" I was a captive in the hands of a group from the Ansar. Heeding the order of the Prophet (saw), they fed me every morning and evening, and offered me their food. In the meantime they ate dates only."

(MK19497, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 393))



According to Abu Ayyub (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Whoever separates a mother from her child, then Allah will separate him from his beloved on the Day of Judgement.*"

(T1566, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Siyar*, 17; HM23895, Ibn Hanbal, V, 413)



'Ali b. Abi Talib (ra) said, "the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave me two slave boys who were brothers, so I sold one of them, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to me, 'O, 'Ali! *What happened to your boy?*' So I informed him, and he said, '*Return him, return him.*'"

(T1284, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Buyu'*, 52; IM2249, Ibn Maja, *al-Tijarat*, 46)



The holy Prophet sent some mounted troops towards Najd and on their way back they brought a man from the tribe of Banu Hanifa, the leader of the Yemenites, who was called Thumama b. Uthal. They fastened him to one of the pillars of the Mosque. The Prophet (saw) visited him for three days. On the first day, he said, “*What do you think, O Thumama?*” He replied, “I have got a good thought, O Muhammad! If you should kill me, you would kill a person who has already killed somebody, and if you should set me free, you would do a favor to one who is grateful, and if you want property, then ask me whatever wealth you want.” The next day, Thumama said the same thing with the hope that he would be released. When he said the same thing on the third day, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Release Thumama.*”

After his release, Thumama went to a garden of date-palm trees near the Mosque, took a bath, and then entered the Mosque and said, “I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and I also testify that Muhammad is His Messenger! By Allah, O Muhammad! There was no face on the surface of the earth more disliked by me than yours, but now your face has become the most beloved face to me. By Allah, there was no religion more disliked by me than yours, but now it is the most beloved religion to me. By Allah, there was no town more disliked by me than your town, but now it is the most beloved town to me. Your mounted troops detained me (at the time) when I was intending to perform the ‘Umra, and now what do you think?”

The Messenger of Allah (saw) then gave him good tidings (congratulated him)¹ and asked him to perform the ‘Umra. So when he came to Mecca, someone asked him, “You have become a Sabian?” Thumama (ra) replied, “No! By Allah, I have embraced Islam with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (saw). No, by Allah! Not a single grain of wheat will come to you from al-Yamama unless the Prophet (saw) gives his permission.”²

¹ ŞN12/89, al-Nawawi, *Sharh ‘ala Muslim*, XII, 89.

² B4372, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 71; M4589, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 59.



The way the Messenger of Allah (saw) treated the captured Thumama is an excellent example to show the tolerant attitude of Islam towards prisoners of war. Thumama, who was dwelling in the darkness of paganism, was very much impressed by the treatment of the Prophet (saw) and embraced Islam. In a time when prisoners of war were burned at stakes, tortured, mutilated, or sold to enemies to be killed, the attitude of the Prophet (saw) was ahead of his time in terms of moral and human values.

The goal of the Messenger of Mercy, who treated captives humanely, was not to capture more slaves, and it was not to gain glory by having more captives. Our beloved Prophet asked us to treat captives within a moral and fair framework during and after war. He did not abrogate the existing practices regarding captives but improved upon them.

With regard to prisoners of war, Islam established certain standards, emphasizing the centrality of human dignity, and asked Muslims to abide by those standards. The holy Prophet released captives with ransom, and, sometimes when the Muslims were strong, without ransom, except for captives who were guilty of serious crimes or because of certain special conditions related to the captive. The following Qur'anic verse sheds light on how to treat prisoners of war, *"When you meet the disbelievers in battle, strike them in the neck, and once they are defeated, bind any captives firmly-later you can release them by grace or by ransom-until the toils of war have ended. That [is the way]. Allah could have defeated them Himself if He had willed, but His purpose is to test some of you by means of others."*³

The holy Prophet counseled his Companions (ra) by saying, *"Set the captives free, accept the invitation (to a wedding banquet), and visit patients."*⁴ With these principles in mind, the Messenger of Allah (saw) released all the captives after the conquest of Mecca. Even though he had an opportunity to enslave those people who had tortured and assaulted Muslims for years, he simply said to them, *"Now you go. You are all free."*⁵ Likewise, he led his people in releasing six thousand soldiers during the Hunayn military expedition.⁶ Allah Almighty mentions slaves as group to whom *zakāt* could be given in order for them to achieve their manumission.⁷ Thus, by saying that helping to manumit slaves was a most virtuous act, Allah (swt) encouraged Muslims to manumit their slaves.⁸

Sometimes, slaves were manumitted as a result of their conversion to Islam. With conversion, a slave attained the highest glory in his life, and

³ Muhammad, 47:4.

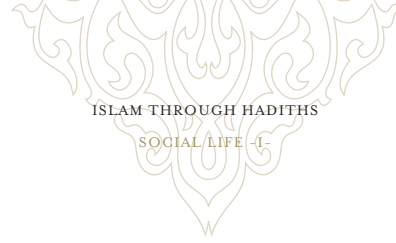
⁴ B5174, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 72.

⁵ B518785, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 195; TB2/161, al-Tabari, *Ta'rih*, II, 161.

⁶ ST2/155, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, II, 155.

⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:60.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:177.



also gained his freedom. The holy Prophet did not enslave Muslims, and freed most of the slaves who converted to Islam. For instance, when the Muslim armies captured prisoners and war spoils from the Hawazin tribe during battle, and later the rest of the Hawazin people embraced Islam, they came to ask for the members of their tribe who were prisoners and their property. As expected, the Messenger of Allah (saw) demanded that the Hawazin either give up the prisoners as slaves or their property, and they chose to give up their property. Afterwards, the Messenger of Allah (saw) stood up among the Muslims, and said, “*Now then, these brothers of yours have come to us with repentance, and I see it as logical that I should return the captives back to them, so whoever of you likes to do that as a favor then he can do it, and whoever among you likes to stick to his share, let him give up his prisoners and we will compensate him from the very first fay’ (i.e., war booty received without fighting) which Allah will give us.*” Most of the Companions (ra) then agreed to return the captives without compensation.⁹ To those who were not willing to return captives for free, the generous Prophet promised to give six camels.¹⁰

The Companion Sakhr b. al-‘Ayla (ra) joined in the Prophet’s raid against the Thaqif tribe in the eighth year of the Hijra.¹¹ When he found that the Prophet (saw) had returned and he did not conquer (Ta’if), Sakhr made an oath to Allah that he would not depart from that fortress until they (the inhabitants) surrendered at the command of the Messenger of Allah (saw). After they did so, Sakhr wrote a letter to the Prophet (saw), “Thaqif have surrendered to your command, O Messenger of Allah, and I am on my way to them. They are on their horses, right before me.”

The Messenger of Allah (saw) then ordered congregational prayers to be offered. He prayed for Sakhr’s heroic tribe ten times, “*O Allah, send blessings on the horses and the men of (the tribe of) Ahmas.*” After a while, the Thaqif tribe went to visit the Prophet (saw). Al-Mughira b. Shu’ba from the tribe said to him, “O Prophet of Allah, Sakhr took my paternal aunt after she had embraced Islam like other Muslims.” The Prophet (saw) called Sakhr and said, “*Sakhr, when people embrace Islam, they have security of their blood and property. Give back to al-Mughira his paternal aunt.*” So he returned his aunt to him and asked the Messenger of Allah (saw), “What about the Banu Sulaym who have run away for (fear of) Islam and left that water? O Messenger of Allah, allow me and my people to settle there.” The Prophet

⁹ B3131, al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khumus, 15.

¹⁰ N3718, al-Nasa’i, al-Hiba, 1.

¹¹ AV8/221, ‘Azimabadi, ‘Awn al-Ma’bud, VIII, 221-222.



(saw) allowed him to settle there. The Banu Sulaym then embraced Islam and they went to Sakhr. They asked him to return their water to them but he refused. So they went to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, we embraced Islam and went to Sakhr so that he might return our water but he has refused.” The Prophet (saw) called him and said, “*When people embrace Islam, they secure their property and blood. Return to the people their water.*” Sakhr (ra) replied to the Prophet (saw), “Yes, [I will return it] O Messenger of Allah.”¹²

After the Battle of Badr, the holy Prophet consulted with his Companions (ra) about the prisoners of war, and asked, “*What should we do with these captives?*”¹³ ‘Umar (ra) suggested killing them, but the Prophet (saw) listened to Abu Bakr (ra) who suggested releasing them for ransom, and he assigned four thousand dirhams for each captive.¹⁴ As for those captives who did not have money, he released them on condition that they should teach ten Muslims how to read and write.¹⁵ The holy Prophet made the same offer to his uncle who was among the captives, “O ‘Abbas! Pay ransom for yourself, your nephews ‘Akil b. Abi Talib, Nawfal b. al-Harith, and ‘Utba b. Jahdam, who was one of the Banu al-Harith b. Fihr, with whom you have a covenant, as you are rich man.”¹⁶ Later, Allah Almighty revealed a verse that seemed to be supportive of ‘Umar: “*It is not right for a prophet to take captives before he has conquered the battlefield. You [people] desire the transient goods of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter [for you]—Allah is mighty and wise, and had it not been preordained by Allah, a severe punishment would have come upon you for what you have taken.*”¹⁷ This was because for a fledgling community, it could have been dangerous to release a formidable enemy.

If the enemy had Muslim captives, then the Prophet (saw) used to exchange his prisoners for them. In this transaction, the holy Prophet managed to get two¹⁸ or more Muslims in exchange for one enemy soldier. For example, Salama b. ‘Amr, a Companion who gave his pledge at al-Ridwan,¹⁹ participated in an expedition against the Fazara tribe led by Abu Bakr (ra). Salama managed to capture some children and women in the battle, and brought them to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr gave a very beautiful slave woman to Salama as a reward. When they returned to Medina, the Prophet (saw) insistently asked him three times “*Give me the woman, Salama*” and Salama said, “I swear by Allah, she is to my liking but I have not yet untied her garment, she is now yours.” The holy Prophet sent her

¹² D3067, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 34, 36.

¹³ 3084, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 8.

¹⁴ D2691, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 121.

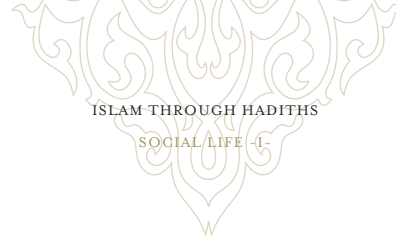
¹⁵ ST2/22, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, II, 22.

¹⁶ ST4/13, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, IV, 13-15; HM3310, Ibn Hanbal, I, 353.

¹⁷ Al-Anfal, 8:67-68; M4588, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 58.

¹⁸ DM2494, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 28.

¹⁹ HI3/151, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, III, 151.



to the people of Mecca who had (some Muslims) prisoners. They released them for this woman.²⁰

In the Jahiliyya period, the common practice was to enslave captives, whereas Islam did not think highly of this. On the contrary, it encouraged Muslims to free them. Our Prophet rarely enslaved captives, and he did not enslave them during major battles, such as the battles of Badr, Uhud, and al-Khandaq. He released them mostly in an exchange of ransom. Captives were always treated very humanely. Calling the slave a “brother,” the Prophet’s following historic statement showed the transformative power of his attitude towards slavery: *“Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.”*²¹

The Messenger of Allah, heeded the warning of Allah to not release captives until the Muslims were strong,²² and many of his formidable enemies were killed at the Battle of al-Khandaq. During that battle, Ibn Ariqa injured Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra) in the arms. The Prophet (saw) had a tent erected for him, and closely monitored his health. Sa’d b. Mu’adh made the following supplication to Allah: “O my Allah. Do not take my life without making me happy with [the downfall] of the Qurayza tribe.”²³ When the Muslims were victorious over the Qurayza, the Prophet (saw) delegated Sa’d b. Mu’adh to decide their fate. Both the Nadir and Qurayza tribes had broken their treaty with the Muslims, ratified by the Medina Covenant, and waged war against them. The Messenger of Allah (saw) exiled the Nadir tribe but let the Qurayza tribe live freely at their traditional abode. Nevertheless, the Qurayza broke the peace once more and attacked the Muslims in the Battle of al-Khandaq.²⁴ Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra), being the chosen arbitrator of the Qurayza tribe, judged in favor of executing their men, enslaving their women and children; and confiscating their property. The Messenger of Allah (saw) approved of Sa’d’s verdict, saying, *“You made the right decision with regard to Allah’s verdict about them.”*²⁵ Indeed, the verdict was in agreement with the rules of the Torah.²⁶ Under normal circumstance, the Prophet of Mercy never approved of such executions and because of that he had at first forgiven the Qurayza. However, when they broke their treaty for the second time, there was no other option for him. He considered captives as human beings, and treated them with hu-

²⁰ M4573, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 46; D2697, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 124.

²¹ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22.

²² Al-Anfal, 8:67.

²³ DM2537, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 66.

²⁴ M4592, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 62.

²⁵ M4598, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 65; T1582, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 29; al-Ma’ida, 5/33-34.

²⁶ Old Testament, Deuteronomy, XX, 10-15.



man dignity. The Holy Qur'an gave the glad tidings to those who treated captives well, "*The righteous will have a drink mixed with kafur, a spring for Allah's servants, which flows abundantly at their wish. They fulfil their vows; they fear a day of widespread woes; they give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves, saying, 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you. We fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day.'*"²⁷ The following incident that occurred to Abu 'Aziz, the brother of Mus'ab b. 'Umayr, who was martyred in the Battle of Uhud demonstrated how the Companions (ra) implemented this verse. Abu 'Aziz said, "I was among the captives after the Battle of Badr. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Treat the captives well!*" I was a captive in the hands of a group from the Ansar. Heeding the order of the Prophet (saw), they fed me every morning and evening, and offered me their food. In the meantime they ate dates only."²⁸

The holy Prophet met the basic needs of prisoners of war. For example, the Thaqif tribe captured two Companions (ra) and broke their peace treaty. In return, the Muslims captured a man from the Banu 'Ukayl tribe (which was allied with the Thaqif) and his camel, called al-Adba', and brought him to the Prophet (saw). When he saw the Prophet (saw), he said he was a Muslim. The Prophet (saw) said, "*Had you said it when you were free, you would have succeeded completely,*" and began to leave. One of the captives said, "O Muhammad, O Muhammad, I am hungry, so feed me. I am thirsty, so give me water." The Prophet (saw) replied to his request with the following words: "*These are your basic needs*" and then did whatever was necessary to fulfill his needs. In a while, the man was released in return for the two Muslim captives in the hands of the Thaqif.²⁹

The Prophet of Mercy paid special attention to women and children who were prisoners of war. He prohibited sexual relations with enslaved women as well as enslaved pregnant women.³⁰ Once he scolded a Companion who had disregarded this ban, "*I would like to condemn him so much so that he would go the grave with this condemnation. While she is unlawful for him, how could he own her; and make her work and abuse her.*"³¹

The fact that the Prophet (saw) treated captives well, and did not subject them to torture was exemplary behavior not only for his contemporaries, but also for modern times. In addition, the Prophet (saw) saw it as very important that the families slaves be united and not separated. This

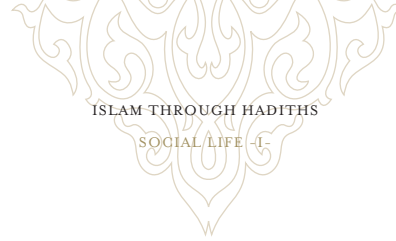
²⁷ Al-Insan, 76:5-10.

²⁸ MK19497, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXII, 393.

²⁹ M4245, Muslim, al-Nazr, 8; D3316, Abu Da'ud, al-Nuzur, 21; DM2533, al-Darimi, al-Siyar, 62.

³⁰ T1564, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 15.

³¹ NM2789, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, III, 1053 (2/195).



attitude was demonstrated, for example, by the Companion Abu Ayyub (ra) after a raid on Cyprus,³² when he saw that some soldiers were trying to take the child of a slave woman. He immediately intervened and returned the child to his mother. When he was asked about this behavior, he reminded them of the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (saw), “Whoever separates a mother from her child, then Allah will separate him from his beloved on the Day of Judgement.”³³

The Prophet of Mercy also did not separate prisoners of war who were sibling. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra) reported the following tradition: “The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave me two slave boys who were brothers, so I sold one of them, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to me, ‘O, ‘Ali! What happened to your boy?’ So I informed him, and he said, ‘Take him back, take him back.’”³⁴ Whenever the Prophet (saw) distributed war captives among his Companions (ra), he made sure that family members went to the same person.³⁵

Thus, the Prophet (saw) was far ahead of his time when he demanded fighting and killing in battle without torture³⁶ and treating war captives in a humane manner. He never humiliated his prisoners, and did not let others to do so. He did not approve of torturing or persecuting captives, and made sure that their basic needs were met. When he was sure that they could not pose any further threat to Islam or to Muslims, he would release them in return for ransom or in exchange for Muslim captives. There were also times in which he released them without any compensation.³⁷

When a fair person compares the conditions of tortured captives and slaves in different corners of the world in different times, and the conditions of captives in Muslims lands in which slaves were treated almost as family members, he can appreciate the difference between the two worlds. Impressed by the Muslims’ treatment of captives and slaves, the hearts of many people came close to Islam, and they eventually converted to Islam. With his words and deeds, the holy Prophet reminded the whole of mankind that he was sent as a mercy to the entire universe. Therefore, following the in footsteps of the Prophet (saw) in this matter, treating captives with respect and dignity and not denying their basic needs are essential and integral parts of the law governing prisoners of war in Islam.

³² “Kıbrıs,” *DİA*, XXV, 372, “Ebū Eyyüb,” *DİA*, X, 124.

³³ T1566, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 17; HM23895, Ibn Hanbal, V, 413.

³⁴ T1284, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 52; İM2249, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 46.

³⁵ İM2248, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 46; HM3690, Ibn Hanbal, I, 390.

³⁶ M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; D2814, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 10, 11.

³⁷ VM1/138, al-Waqidi, Maghazi, I, 138.



ISLAM THROUGH HADITHS

SOCIAL LIFE -I-



THE VETERANS EITHER A MARTYR OR A VETERAN



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَا مِنْ مَكْلُومٍ يُكَلِّمُ فِي اللَّهِ إِلَّا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَكَلْمُهُ يَدْمَى، اللَّوْنُ لَوْنُ
دَمٍ، وَالرَّيْحُ رِيحُ مِسْكِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “None is wounded in Allah’s cause but will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wound bleeding. The thing that will come out of his wound will be the color of blood, but its smell will be the smell of musk.”

(B5533, al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 31)



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَفْضَلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ ظِلُّ فُسْطَاطٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَمَنِيحَةُ خَادِمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ، أَوْ طَرُوقَةٌ فَحَلَّ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ خَالِدِ الْجُهَنِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ جَهَّزَ غَازِيًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ غَزَا، وَمَنْ خَلَفَهُ فِي أَهْلِهِ بِخَيْرٍ
فَقَدْ غَزَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ لَمْ يَغْزُ أَوْ يُجَهِّزْ غَازِيًا أَوْ يَخْلُفْ غَازِيًا فِي أَهْلِهِ بِخَيْرٍ، أَصَابَهُ اللَّهُ بِقَارِعَةٍ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْخَطْمِيِّ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْتَوْدِعَ الْجَيْشَ قَالَ:
”أَسْتَوْدِعُ اللَّهَ دِينَكُمْ وَأَمَانَتَكُمْ وَخَوَاتِيمَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ.“



According to Abu Umama (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The most virtuous of charitable spending is to provide the shade of a tent (for those on jihād) in the cause of Allah, or giving a servant (to work) in the cause of Allah, or a riding camel in the cause of Allah.”*

(T1627, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 5)



According to Zayd b. Khalid al-Juhaniyy (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Anybody who equips a warrior (going to fight) in the way of Allah (is like one who actually) fights. And anybody who looks after his family in his absence (is also well like one who actually) fights.”*

(M4902, Muslim, al-Imara, 135)



According to Abu Umama (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“He who does not join the warlike expedition (jihād), or equip, or look after a warrior’s family well when he is away, will be smitten by Allah with a sudden calamity.”*

(D2503, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 17)



According to 'Abd Allah al-Khatmiyy (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“I entrust to Allah your religion, that what you leave behind, and the result of your deeds.”*

(D2601, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 73)



It was the day after the Battle of Uhud. The elders of the Aws and Khazraj tribes spent the night in front of the house of the Prophet (saw) in order to make sure that the danger was over. The enemy was driven off but this did not mean that they could not come back. Therefore, the Prophet (saw) ordered his Companions (ra) to follow the army of the Meccan polytheists after the fajr prayer. According to the instruction given to Bilal, only those who joined in the Battle of Uhud were allowed to go on the expedition. Everyone, including the Messenger of Allah (saw), returning from the battle was injured, but this was not an important issue for those veterans who were ready to give up their lives in Allah's cause. Therefore, Usayd b. Hudayr, Ka'b b. Malik and many others (ra), despite their wounds, followed the Prophet's advice and joined the expedition. These chosen people were not only injured but also did not have mounts. Those who had been lightly injured helped the others, sometimes even carrying them on their backs. They were all working together so as to win the war. Sa'd b. 'Ubada and a few others (ra) tried to secure food for the people. Against all odds, seventy self-sacrificing men showed once more that they were ready to do anything. In the meantime, the holy Prophet was saying prayers for these heroic veterans who devoted their lives to Allah's cause.

The polytheists heard about the Muslims' mounted troops, camping at Hamra' al-Asad. They sent threatening messages to the Muslims, but these threats did not frighten the self-sacrificing Muslims who were resolutely waiting to meet the enemy. All they said was, "*ḥasbunā Allāh wa ni'mat al-wakīl* (Allah is enough for us: He is the best protector)." In the end the enemy did not have a courage to meet the Muslims and the believers returned from the expedition with Allah's flattering compliments, "*Those who responded to Allah and the Messenger after suffering defeat, who do good and remain conscious of Allah, will have a great reward. Those whose faith only increased when*



people said, 'Fear your enemy: they have amassed a great army against you,' and who replied, 'Allah is enough for us: He is the best protector,' returned with grace and bounty from Allah; no harm befell them. They pursued Allah's good pleasure. Allah's favor is great indeed."¹

After getting close to death, and appreciating the value of life after war, the believers, without getting any rest, would go to another war, perhaps to face death again. The motivation for this was the believers' dedication to *jihād* and martyrdom, because the Messenger of Allah (saw) had indicated that *jihād* was the most virtuous deed² and that martyrdom had no equal in the eyes of Allah (swt).³ Allah Almighty asks Muslims not to refer to those people who give up their lives as "dead" but, instead, to know that they were "alive" in the presence of Allah.⁴ Attaining this highest status in the eyes of Allah became the ultimate objective for Muslims. For example, 'Umar (ra) supplicated to Allah, "O Allah, I desire to be a martyr in your cause, and die in the lands of the Prophet (saw)."⁵ Even the Messenger of Allah (saw) repeatedly said that he desired to be a martyr.⁶ Martyrdom was one of the two beautiful things for Muslims who were ready to give up their lives in Allah's cause.⁷ Those who did not become martyrs and returned home were honored with the glory of being veterans.

Those who returned from war were called "*ghāzī* (warrior, veteran)," The word stems from the verb "*ghazā*," meaning "to wage war, to participate in *jihād* in the name of religion." In general, the word "*ghāzī*" is used as a title for those who fight in Allah's cause in order to protect sacred values, such as life, property, dignity and land.⁸ In Islam, the veterans are immensely valued because they fight in order to elevate the name of Allah, justice, and righteousness, and their deeds are considered to be the most virtuous acts, for they fight with their lives and wealth.⁹ Because their service, the veterans are considered more righteous than regular Muslims who abstain, without any justification, from the struggle with the enemy.¹⁰ This is because "*Allah truly loves those who fight in solid lines for His cause, like a well-compacted wall.*"¹¹ Allah Almighty is content with those who fight in His cause in the most difficult conditions, so much so that He said to his angels about those who continued to fight even when their friends fell, "*Look at My servant; he returned seeking what I have for him (i.e., the reward), and fearing (the punishment) I have, until his blood was shed.*"¹² He also gave the glad tidings of rewards for those virtuous veterans who, like the heroic

¹ Al 'Imran, 3/172-174; B4077, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 26; VM1/334, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, I, 334-338.

² Al-Tawba, 9/19-20; M4871, Muslim, al-Imara, 111.

³ B2795, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 6; MU994, al-Muwatta', al-Jihad, 14.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:154.

⁵ MU995, al-Muwatta', al-Jihad, 15.

⁶ B7227, al-Bukhari, Tamanni, 1.

⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:52.

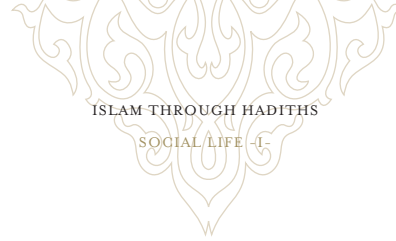
⁸ "Gazi," *DIA*, XIII, 443.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:19-20.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa', 4:95.

¹¹ Al-Saff, 61:4.

¹² D2536, Abu Da'ud, a-Jihad, 36; HM3949, Ibn Hanbal, I, 416.



Companions (ra) at Hamra' al-Asad, were ready to go participate in *jihād* even after they had been wounded in a previous struggle.¹³

The Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that those who went to war in Allah's cause would be rewarded all the time,¹⁴ and he called them "*The Emissaries of Allah*."¹⁵ Referring to the value of the blood and injuries of veterans in the eyes of Allah,¹⁶ the Prophet (saw) describes their status on the Day of Judgement in the following words, "*None is wounded in Allah's cause but will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wound bleeding. The thing that will come out of his wound will be the color of blood, but its smell will be the smell of musk.*"¹⁷

The words of praise and glad tidings from Allah Almighty and His beloved Messenger about *jihād*, martyrdom, and being a veteran have been such sources of inspiration and encouragement for Muslims that, throughout history, becoming a martyr or a veteran have been considered the most honorable and prestigious status in Islam.

Knowing that both the martyrs and the veterans would receive great rewards from Allah (swt),¹⁸ believers strove to participate in every war, and fought ferociously against the enemy. Although they were exempted,¹⁹ even handicapped Muslims such as 'Amr b. Jamuh²⁰ and Ibn Umm Maktum²¹ (ra) did not hesitate to go to war. Muslims sometimes fought for Allah's cause in severe cold weather,²² and sometimes while hungry.²³ They lost their most beloved before their eyes, and at times could not find shrouds to bury them.²⁴ Neither arrows and spears, nor anything else prevented them from participating in *jihād* in this cause. For example, in the Battle of Uhud, a prominent Companion, Abu Talha (ra), used his body to shield the Prophet (saw),²⁵ and an arrow wounded him and left him with one arm.²⁶ Anas b. Nadr (ra), the uncle of Anas b. Malik (ra), was upset because he could not join the Battle of Badr. Thus he fought passionately in the Battle of Uhud. When he became a martyr and his body was found, some eighty arrow wounds were discovered in his body.²⁷ Another Companion, Zubayr b. al-'Awwam (ra) said that no part of his body was spared from injury in wars,²⁸ and took pride in being a veteran.

Helping the veterans who fight in the name of Allah and meeting their needs are religious and national duties. The Prophet (saw) said that all the sins, except for debts to other people, of a veteran will be expiated.²⁹ He always supported them materially and spiritually, and encouraged Mus-

¹³ Al 'Imran, 3/172-174.

¹⁴ D2515, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 24; N3190, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 46

¹⁵ N3123, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 13; IM2893, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 5.

¹⁶ T1669, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 26.

¹⁷ B5533, al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 31.

¹⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:74.

¹⁹ Al-Nisa', 4:95; B4990, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 4.

²⁰ HM22920, Ibn Hanbal, V, 300.

²¹ HM12369, Ibn Hanbal, III, 132; EU4/251, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, IV, 251.

²² D146, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 57; HM22742, Ibn Hanbal, V, 278.

²³ B4101, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30; M4999, Muslim, al-Sayd wa 'l-Dhaba'ih, 18.

²⁴ B1274, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 25.

²⁵ B4064, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 18.

²⁶ B3724, al-Bukhari, Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 14.

²⁷ M4918, Muslim, al-Imara, 148.

²⁸ T3746, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 24.

²⁹ MU992, al-Muwatta', al-Jihad, 14; M4880, Muslim, al-Imara, 117.



lims to do the same. Addressing the poverty of some of the believers who were on the way to *jihād*, the Prophet (saw) said, “O group of Muhajirun and Ansar, among your brethren there are people who have neither property nor family. So one of you should take with him two or three persons.” Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) described the scene as follows: “I took two or three people with me. I also rode on my camel by turns like one of them.”³⁰ Wealthy Companions such as ‘Uthman (ra) provided the army with logistical needs,³¹ and others provided the soldiers with food for their homes.³² In other words, everyone contributed to the war effort in their own capacity. This was because the Prophet (saw) said, “The most virtuous of charitable spending is to provide the shade of a tent (for those on *jihād*) in the cause of Allah, or giving a servant (to work) in the cause of Allah, or a riding camel in the cause of Allah.”³³ Believing women did not generally participate in war directly, but they provided the army with food and water; took care of the property of those who engaged in war; treated the wounded;³⁴ and helped carrying the wounded and martyrs to town.³⁵ The following scene in the Battle of Uhud, described by Anas b. Malik (ra), may demonstrate the role of women on the battlefield: “(On that day) I saw ‘A’isha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, and Umm Sulaym both lifting their dresses up so that I was able to see the ornaments of their legs. They were carrying water skins on their arms in order to pour water into the mouths of thirsty people. Then they would return to fill them and come again to pour water into the mouths of people.”³⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) praised those who helped a warrior in the following words: “Whoever provides a warrior with a tent, Allah will provide a shelter for him in the Day of Judgement. Whoever equips a warrior in the cause of Allah until he is fully equipped, he will have a reward like his, until he dies or returns.”³⁷

During *jihād* in the name of Allah, every Muslim did his best to help the Muslim warriors to the best of his ability. Still, the real assistance for the warriors came from their Lord. Allah Almighty never left the warriors alone who were fighting in His cause; and with material and spiritual assistance He always made himself felt that He was with them. As the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, the warriors who were fighting in the name of Allah (swt) were under the protection of Allah until they exchange their life for Paradise or returned home.³⁸ Our Almighty Lord placed tranquility into their hearts,³⁹ gave them assurance, and comforted them with rain.⁴⁰ Sometimes, He made the enemy seem few in number;⁴¹ and sometimes He

³⁰ D2534, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 34; HM14924, Ibn Hanbal, III, 359.

³¹ B2778, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 33; T3699, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 18.

³² B4101, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30.

³³ T1627, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 5.

³⁴ M4690, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 142; B2882, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 67.

³⁵ B5679, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 2.

³⁶ B3811, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 18; M4683, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 136.

³⁷ IM2758, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 3; HM126, Ibn Hanbal, I, 21

³⁸ D2494, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 9.

³⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:26.

⁴⁰ Al-Anfal, 8:11.

helped them with an army of angels.⁴² Sometimes He consoled them, saying, “Do not be faint-hearted in pursuing the enemy: if you are suffering hardship, so are they, but you hope to receive something from Allah for which they cannot hope. Allah is all knowing and wise,”⁴³ and at other times He gave them hope, saying, “Do not lose heart or despair—if you are true believers you have the upper hand.”⁴⁴ He sometimes sent fear into the heart of the enemy,⁴⁵ and at other times He sent storms and invisible armies,⁴⁶ and incapacitated the enemy. He inspired Muslims so that if they patiently continued their struggle in Allah’s cause they would be able to gain victory over a much larger enemy.⁴⁷ After a battle, He awarded them with the spoils. By honoring them with these verses in His Holy Book, Allah (swt) immortalized their heroic efforts in His cause.⁴⁸

In addition to assisting warriors, Muslims have the responsibility of taking care of the families of warriors. The Prophet (saw) emphasized the importance of this, saying, “He who prepares a *ghāzī* going in Allah’s cause is (given a reward equal to that of) a *ghāzī*; and he who looks after the dependents of a *ghāzī* going in Allah’s cause properly is (given a reward equal to that of) a *ghāzī*.”⁴⁹ He also said that taking care of a warrior’s dependents day and night was dearer to him than anything else in this world.⁵⁰ This was because the families of those who went to war to protect religion and country were entrusted to the Muslims. The Prophet (saw) said, “The sanctity of the wives of the *mujāhids* is like the sanctity of their mothers for those who sit at home (i.e., do not participate in *jihād*). Anyone who stays behind looking after the family of a *mujāhid* and betrays his trust will be made to stand on the Day of Judgement before the *mujāhid* who will take away from his meritorious deeds whatever he likes. So what do you think (will he leave anything)?”⁵¹ Moreover, he demanded that those who did not go to war be the best protectors of the warriors’ families.⁵² In addition, he warned people who did not join military expeditions and did not take care of the families of the warriors that they would face a disaster, inflicted by Allah (swt).⁵³ Furthermore, taking care of the needs of the veterans is an obligation for the Muslims in gratitude for what they have done.

Our beloved Prophet called the Muslim troops who were on the way to defend religion and country “Emissaries of Allah,”⁵⁴ and while he was saying farewell to his army he used to make the following supplication: “I entrust to Allah your religion, that what you leave behind, and the result of

⁴¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:123-126.

⁴² Al-Anfal, 8:9.

⁴³ Al-Nisa’, 4:104.

⁴⁴ Al ‘Imran, 3:139

⁴⁵ Al-Anfal, 8:12.

⁴⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33:9.

⁴⁷ Al-Anfal, 8:65.

⁴⁸ Al ‘Imran, 3:172-174; al-Ahzab, 33:23; M4918, Muslim, al-Imara, 148.

⁴⁹ B2843, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38; M4902, Muslim, al-Imara, 135.

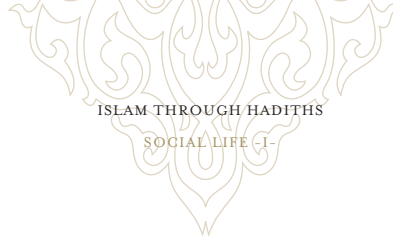
⁵⁰ IM2824, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 24; HM15728, Ibn Hanbal, III, 440.

⁵¹ M4908, Muslim, al-Imara, 139.

⁵² M4907, Muslim, al-Imara, 138.

⁵³ D2503, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 17; IM2762, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 5.

⁵⁴ N3123, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 13; IM2893, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 5.



*your deeds.*⁵⁵ Thus, Muslim armies have always set out on their perilous journeys with a lot of ceremony and their return was celebrated with joy and happiness. For instance, on the way back from the Tabuk expedition, the people and children of Medina greeted and welcomed the army of the Prophet (saw) at the “Farewell Hill” with joy and happiness.⁵⁶

The Islamic tradition of *ghazā* has been quite influential in all Muslim nations throughout the centuries. In history many heroes, such as Osman Ghazi and Battal Ghazi, were named after this tradition. All successful war heroes have been called “*ghāzī*.” At other times, people who fought and rescued children, infants and even cities from enemy occupation were also known as *ghāzīs*. In Turkic lands, the Turkish equivalents of the term “*ghāzī*,” “*alp*” and “*alperen*,” became part and parcel of history. These martyrs and veterans left such a deep imprint on our culture, literature, and music that a new literary genre known as the *Ghazavatname* became an important hallmark of our civilization.⁵⁷

Surviving to this today, this tradition is very much alive in modern Turkey. Young men who are ready to go to the army in defense of religion and country are bid farewell with ceremonies, *takbīr*, and prayers. On their return, they are welcomed with pride, happiness, and joy.

⁵⁵ D2601, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 73; IM2826, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 24.

⁵⁶ B3083, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 196.

⁵⁷ “Gazi,” *DIA*, XIII, 443-445



MARTYRDOM BEING IMMORTALIZED IN ALLAH'S CAUSE

عَنْ حُمَيْدٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَمُوتُ لَهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ يَسْرُهُ أَنْ يَرْجَعَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا
وَأَنَّ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا إِلَّا الشَّهِيدَ لَمَّا يَرَى مِنْ فَضْلِ الشَّهَادَةِ فَإِنَّهُ
يَسْرُهُ أَنْ يَرْجَعَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا فَيُقْتَلَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى.“

Humayd said, “I heard Anas b. Malik (ra) say that the Prophet (saw) said,
‘Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the Hereafter) would wish to
come back to this world even if he were given the whole world and whatever is
in it, except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like
to come back to the world and be killed again (in Allah’s Cause).”

(B2795, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 6)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، وَدِدْتُ أَنِّي أُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَأُقْتَلُ ثُمَّ أَحْيَا، ثُمَّ أُقْتَلُ ثُمَّ
أَحْيَا، ثُمَّ أُقْتَلُ [ثُمَّ أَحْيَا، ثُمَّ أُقْتَلُ ثُمَّ أَحْيَا].“



أَنَّ سَهْلَ بْنَ أَبِي أَمَامَةَ بْنَ سَهْلِ بْنِ حُنَيْفٍ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ
جَدِّهِ؛ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”مَنْ سَأَلَ اللَّهَ الشَّهَادَةَ بِصِدْقٍ، بَلَغَهُ اللَّهُ
مَنَازِلَ الشُّهَدَاءِ، وَإِنْ مَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جَبْرِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَادَ جَبْرًا
... فَقَالَ: ”...الْقَتْلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ شَهَادَةٌ، وَالْبَطْنُ شَهَادَةٌ، وَالْحَرْقُ شَهَادَةٌ،
وَالْغَرَقُ شَهَادَةٌ، وَالْمَغْمُومُ -يَعْنِي الْهَدْمَ- شَهَادَةٌ، وَالْمَجْنُوبُ شَهَادَةٌ، وَالْمَرَأَةُ
تَمُوتُ بِجَمْعِ شَهِيدَةٍ.“



عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ، وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ دِينِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ، وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ
دَمِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ، وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ أَهْلِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “By Him in Whose Hand is my life, I would love to fight in Allah’s cause and then be martyred and then be resurrected and then be martyred and then be resurrected and then be martyred, and then be resurrected and then be martyred and then be resurrected.”

(B7227, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 1)



Sahl b. Abi Umama b. Sahl b. Hunayf said that his father said that his grandfather (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) say, “Whoever genuinely wishes to be a martyr, he could be considered a martyr even if he dies in his bed.”

(M4930, Muslim, al-Imara, 157)



It was reported from ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Jabr that his father said (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) visited his grandfather (Jabr, when he was ill), and said, “...Being killed in the cause of Allah is martyrdom, dying of an abdominal complaint is martyrdom, being burned to death is martyrdom, drowning is martyrdom, being crushed beneath a falling wall is martyrdom, dying of insanity is martyrdom, and the woman who dies along with her fetus is a martyr.”

(N3196, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 48; IM2803, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 17)



According to Sa’id b. Zayd (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Whosoever is killed over his property is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his religion is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his blood is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his family is a martyr.”

(T1421, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 21)



One day, a bedouin came to visit the holy Prophet. He uttered the *Kalimāt al-Shahāda* and became a Muslim. Then he left his home and settled in Medina. He earned his livelihood as a shepherd. The Prophet (saw) told one of his Companions (ra) to look after him. During this time the Muslims won a battle and the Prophet (saw) distributed the spoils of war among them, sending a share to this bedouin as well. When the Bedouin received his share he said, “What is this?” He was told, “A share that the Prophet (saw) has allocated to you.” He took it and brought it to the Prophet (saw) and said, “What is this?” He said, “*I allocated it to you.*” He said, “It is not for this that I follow you. Rather I follow you so that I might be shot here—and he pointed to his throat—with an arrow and die and enter Paradise.” He said, “*If you are sincere toward Allah then He will fulfill your wish.*” Shortly after this conversation they had occasion to fight the enemy, and he became a martyr. His body was brought to the Prophet (saw) and he asked, “*Is it him?*” They replied, “Yes.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*He was sincere toward Allah and Allah fulfilled his wish.*” Then the Prophet (saw) shrouded him in his own cloak and stepped in front of his body and offered the ritual (funeral) prayer for him. During his supplication he prayed, “*O Allah, this is Your slave who went out as a emigrant (muhājir) for your sake and was killed as a martyr; I am a witness to that.*”¹

The term “*shahīd* (martyr)” means “to witness, and to be present.” It is said that such a person is one who does not have an ephemeral life but an eternal life. He is not dead but alive.² If needed, he gives up his own life and everything he values in this world in the name of protecting his religious and national values. As succinctly put by ‘Umar (ra), “He is the one who devoted himself to Allah.”³

As for those who do not hesitate to give up their life, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would be a witness for them both here and in the Hereafter.⁴

¹ N1955, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 61.

² Al-Baqara, 2:54.

³ MU996, al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 15.

⁴ B1347, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 75.



This is because those who participate in *jihād* in Allah's cause desire to attain one of two good things:⁵ to be either a *ghāzī* who will witness victory, or a martyr.

The virtue of being a martyr was so deeply engrained in the hearts of early Muslims that fathers and sons, and brothers competed in going to war and tasting martyrdom. Their faith in gaining eternal life by being a martyr or a veteran was so strong that death was a trivial issue for them.

Abu Sufyan was a leading figure in Mecca who assailed and troubled the Muslims continuously. When it became known that his caravan was on its way through the region of Badr, our Master the Prophet (saw) sent a scout to observe its movement. In the meantime, he asked his Companions (ra) to get ready for war, and they set out on campaign.

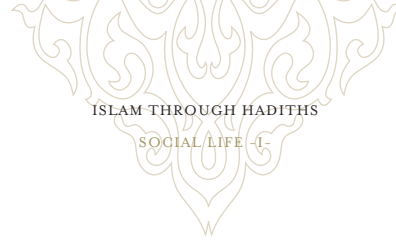
Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his Companions (ra) proceeded towards Badr and reached it in advance of the polytheists (of Mecca). When the polytheists arrived, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*None of you should step forward to (do) anything unless I am ahead of him.*" The polytheists (now) advanced on them, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Stand up to enter Paradise, which is equal in width to the heavens and the earth.*" 'Umayr b. al-Humam al-Ansari (ra) asked, "O Messenger of Allah, is Paradise equal in extent to the heavens and the earth?" He said, "Yes." 'Umayr then exclaimed, "My goodness!" The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked him, "*What prompted you to utter these words?*" He said, "Messenger of Allah, nothing but the desire that I be among its residents." He said, "*Thou art (surely) among its residents.*" 'Umayr took out dates from his bag and began to eat them and then he said to himself, "If I were to live until I have eaten all my dates, it would be a long life," so he threw the dates away and fought the enemy until he was martyred.⁶

It was common for Muslims to ask the Prophet (saw) about how martyrs were treated in the world to come. Furthermore, friends and relatives of martyrs questioned the Prophet (saw) about it. According to Anas b. Malik, Hartha b. Suraqa's mother, and aunt of Malik, Umm al-Rubayyi' bint al-Bara' (ra) went to the Prophet (saw) and asked similar questions.⁷ Her son was killed at the Battle of Badr. Umm al-Rubayyi' said, "O Messenger of Allah, you know the place of Hartha in my heart. If he is in Paradise now, I will not cry for him. If he is not in Paradise, then you will see what I will do [I will weep bitterly for him]." Thereupon, the Prophet (saw)

⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:52.

⁶ M4915, Muslim, al-Imara, 145

⁷ B4500, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 23.



said, “Have you lost your senses? Is there only one Paradise? There are many paradises, and he is in the highest Paradise of Firdaus.”⁸ Anas b. Malik related that his uncle, Haram b. Milhan (ra), who was stabbed on the day of Bi’r Ma’una, had triumphantly cried while sprinkling his blood over his face and his head, “I have succeeded, by the Lord of the Ka’ba.”⁹ Ordinarily, the Prophet (saw) was always interested in the affairs of his Companions (ra) but he had a special interest in the relatives of this Companion who faced martyrdom by running towards it. The holy Prophet was known to never have entered alone the house of another woman, except Anas’ mother, Umm Sulaym (ra). This was because she was the milk aunt of the Prophet (saw).¹⁰ When he was asked why he visited her more than others, he said, “I take pity on her as her brother (Haram b. Milhan) was killed in my company.”¹¹

Martyrs have different status depending on their intentions and deeds. For example, the Prophet (saw) mentioned the existence of four levels of martyrs. He told his Companions (ra) that the first one was for the believer who fought with faith in Allah (swt) on the battlefield until he was killed. Everyone would look up to that person on the Day of Judgement. It was reported that when the Prophet (saw) described that scene, he looked up so high that his turban fell off.

The second one was for a believing man whose faith was good (but he not as brave as the first), he meets the enemy, but out of fear he mistakes a thorn from an acacia tree for an arrow yet it kills him. The third level was for a believing man who mixed righteous and bad deeds. He meets the enemy and proves faithful to Allah until he is killed. The fourth level was for a believing man who had behaved wrongfully, but he meets the enemy and proves faithful to Allah (swt) until he is killed.¹² Although he sinned, a person who fights in Allah’s cause with good intention and is killed will attain the status of martyr, and his past sins would be expiated.¹³

It was before the Battle of Uhud. ‘Amr b. Thabit b. ‘Ukaysh,¹⁴ better known as ‘Usayrim had not yet embraced Islam. His face was covered with an iron mask. He went to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “O Allah’s Messenger! Shall I fight or embrace Islam first?” The Prophet (saw) said, “Embrace Islam first and then fight.” So he embraced Islam, and was martyred. Allah’s Messenger said, “He did very little (after embracing Islam), but he will be rewarded in abundance.”¹⁵ According to another account, ‘Usayrim had an interest based loan which he was expecting to receive from someone in

⁸ B6567, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 51.

⁹ B4092, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 29.

¹⁰ ŞN16/10, al-Nawawi, *Sharh ‘ala Muslim*, XVI, 10.

¹¹ B2844, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38; M6319, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 104.

¹² T1644, al-Tirmidhi, *Fada’il al-Jihad*, 14.

¹³ ‘Al ‘Imran, 3:195; al-Tawba, 9:52.

¹⁴ H14/608, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, IV, 608.

¹⁵ B2808, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 13.



the Jahiliyya period, and that is why he did not embrace Islam earlier. Nevertheless, he came to join the Muslims during the Battle of Uhud. On that day, he asked the Muslims the whereabouts of his cousins. They replied, “At Uhud.” He then put on his coat of mail and rode his horse following them. When the Muslims saw him, they said, “Keep away, ‘Amr.” He said, “I have become a believer.” He fought until he was wounded. He was then taken to his family wounded. Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra) went to his sister, “Ask him (whether he fought) out of partisanship, out of anger for them, or out of anger for Allah.” He said, “Out of anger of Allah and His Messenger.” He then died and merited entrance to Paradise, though he never offered any ritual prayer.¹⁶

Allah Almighty tells us that martyrs will enter Paradise because of their deeds.¹⁷ He warned people to not refer to them as “dead.” They are spiritually alive, but they cannot be seen with our mortal eyes.¹⁸ In the Holy Qur’an, Allah says, “[Prophet], do not think of those who have been killed in Allah’s way as dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for, happy with what Allah has given them of His favor; rejoicing that for those they have left behind who have yet to join them there is no fear, nor will they grieve.”¹⁹ Our Almighty Lord also promises the following things in His Book: “I will not allow the deeds of any one of you to be lost, whether you are male or female, each is like the other [in rewards]. I will certainly wipe out the bad deeds of those who emigrated and were driven out of their homes, who suffered harm for My cause, who fought and were killed. I will certainly admit them to Gardens graced with flowing streams, as a reward from Allah: the best reward is with Allah,”²⁰ and “To anyone who fights in Allah’s way, whether killed or victorious, We shall give a great reward.”²¹

Our beloved Prophet described the rewards of the martyrs in the following tradition: “The souls, of the martyrs live in the bodies of green birds who have their nests in chandeliers hung from the throne of the Almighty. They eat the fruits of Paradise from wherever they like and then nestle in these chandeliers. Once their Lord cast a glance at them and said, ‘Do you want anything?’ They said, ‘What more shall we desire? We eat the fruit of Paradise from wherever we like.’ Their Lord asked them the same question thrice. When they saw that they would continue to be asked and not left (without answering the question) they said, ‘O Lord, we wish that You may return our souls to our bodies so that we may be slain in Your way once again.’ When He saw that they had no need, they

¹⁶ D2537, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 37.

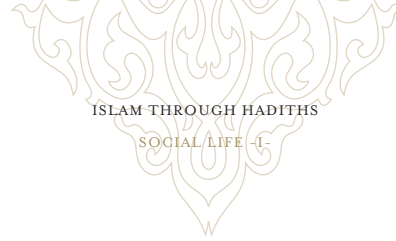
¹⁷ Muhammad, 47:4-6.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:154.

¹⁹ Al ‘Imran, 3:169-170.

²⁰ Al ‘Imran, 3:195.

²¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:74.



were left (to their joy in heaven).”²² In another *ḥadīth* on the same subject, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the Hereafter) would wish to come back to this world even if he were given the whole world and whatever is in it, except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like to come back to the world and be killed again (in Allah’s Cause).*”²³

The privilege that Allah (swt) grants to martyrs begins at the moment they die. They do not feel the pain of death. In the words of our Prophet, the pain of death is as light as a pinch for the martyr.²⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) tells us that the prayers and deeds of martyrs are assessed differently. For instance, the Prophet (saw) declared two men from Medina as symbolic brothers. Then, one of them fell as a martyr while the other died from natural causes. At the funeral of the one who died from natural causes, the congregation began to supplicate to Allah to place the deceased at the side of his martyred brother, but the Prophet (saw) intervened and said that there was a wide difference between the acts of worship and deeds of martyrs and those of others.²⁵ The following tradition of the Prophet (saw) describes other glad tidings that are promised to martyrs: “*The martyr has six things (in store) with Allah: He is forgiven from the first drop of his blood that is shed; he is shown his place in Paradise; he is spared the torment of the grave; he is kept safe from the Great Fright; he is adorned with a garment of faith; he is married to (wives) from among the wide-eyed houris; and he is permitted to intercede for seventy of his relatives.*”²⁶ Furthermore, he said, “*The flashing of the swords above his head is trial enough.*”²⁷²⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) summarized the value and status of martyrs in the eyes of Allah, saying, “*There is nothing equal to being killed in Allah cause...*”²⁹ He himself expressed his desire to be a martyr. Once while he was addressing his Companions (ra), he said, “*By Him in Whose hand is my life, I would love to fight in Allah’s cause and then be martyred and then be resurrected (come back to life) and then be martyred and then be resurrected and then be martyred, and then be resurrected and then be martyred and then be resurrected.*”³⁰

It is important to understand and fully comprehend that the *ḥadīths* that glorify martyrdom should not be taken to indicate that the Prophet (saw) always encouraged war. What he wanted was firmness and patience

²² M4885, Muslim, al-Imara, 121; D2520, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 25.

²³ B2795, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 6; T1643, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 13.

²⁴ DM2438, al-Darimi, al-Jihad, 17.

²⁵ D2524, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 27; N1987, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 77.

²⁶ IM2799, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 16.

²⁷ N2055, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 112.

²⁸ D2522, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 26.

²⁹ MU994, al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 14.

³⁰ B7227, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 1.



in holding to what was right. For example, he recommended his Companions (ra) not to initiate a war: “Do not wish to meet the enemy, but when you face the enemy, be patient.”³¹

The Companions (ra) who heard the glad tidings of Allah Almighty and our beloved Prophet, eagerly desired to attain this status. Following the in footsteps of the Prophet (saw), ‘Umar (ra) repeated the following supplication until the end of his life: “O Allah! I ask you for martyrdom in Your way and death in the city of Your Messenger!”³²

While the Prophet (saw) was explaining the sacred status of martyrdom, he emphasized the importance of the intention of the person; that the person needs to do his struggle for the sake of Allah (swt). Therefore, when he was asked about those who fought for personal reasons, bravery, boasting, or tribalism, the Prophet (saw) replied, “The one who fights that Allah’s word (Islam) should be superior, fights in Allah’s Cause.”³³ In another instance, the Prophet (saw) was informed that so-and-so was martyred and he angrily said, “No! I saw him in the fire because of the garment he pilfered from the spoils of war.”³⁴ From this we understand that the Prophet (saw) did not consider people martyrs if their intention was something other than Allah’s cause. In other traditions he emphasized the importance of a true intention and desire to be a martyr as being enough, “Whoever asks Allah for Martyrdom sincerely in his heart, Allah will grant the status of martyrdom for him, even if he were to die in his bed.”³⁵ For example, the brother of Salama b. al-Akwa’ (ra) accidentally killed himself in a war. The Prophet (saw) said that he was a martyr because of his good intention.³⁶

The status of the martyrs who lost their lives in the name of their national and spiritual values is different from that of other people in the Hereafter as well as in this world. According to the practice of the Messenger of Allah (saw), their corpses were not washed, and the clothes filled with blood were not removed.³⁷ This practice probably emerged because there was no time and opportunity to wash and shroud the corpses on the battle field. The Messenger of Allah (saw) mentioned this necessity beautifully in the following words: “Wrap them up with their blood, for there is no wound incurred in the cause of Allah, but that he will come with it on the Day of Resurrection bleeding with the color of blood, but its fragrance will be that of musk.”³⁸

Funeral prayer for the martyrs is another matter of debate. To some, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not hold funeral prayers for martyrs at

³¹ B3026, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 156; M4541, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 19.

³² MU995, al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 15

³³ B7458, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 28.

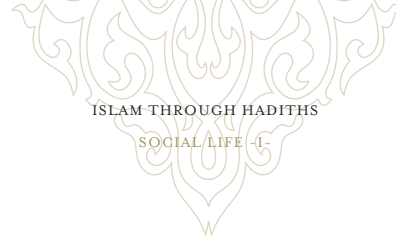
³⁴ T1574, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 21.

³⁵ M4930, Muslim, al-Imara, 157; T1653, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 19.

³⁶ M4669, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 124; D2538, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 38.

³⁷ D3134, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 26, 27.

³⁸ N3150, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 27.



the Battle of Uhud, except for Hamza.³⁹ After examining various accounts, however, one can see that later the Prophet (saw) changed this stance. For instance, according to one account, he held a funeral prayer for the martyrs of Uhud eight years later⁴⁰ and then he went to the Minbar and said, “*I am your predecessor before you and I am a witness over you.*”⁴¹

In various *hadiths*, it is also possible to find another category of martyrdom; the spiritual or symbolic martyrdom. The Messenger of Mercy told us that martyrdom was not limited to the battlefield. It is known that some Companions (ra) were woeful because, however much they desired, they could not attain the status of martyr. Then the Prophet (saw) consoled them by saying that those who died from incurable sicknesses and disasters were martyrs as well. For example, as it was reported by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Jabr that his father (ra) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) visited his grandfather (Jabr, when he was ill), and said, “*...Being killed in the cause of Allah is martyrdom, dying of an abdominal complaint is martyrdom, being burned to death is martyrdom, drowning is martyrdom, being crushed beneath a falling wall is martyrdom, dying of insanity is martyrdom, and the woman who dies along with her fetus is a martyr.*”⁴²

In addition to these cases, the Prophet (saw) said that people who died from epidemic diseases, such as plague, were also martyrs.⁴³ Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) specified that trials and tribulations in this life could be a rewarded for a believer. It is obvious that after learning about the benefits that martyrs will have in the Hereafter, the believer will desire to be one. The Messenger of Allah (saw) revealed that those who strive to be a good Muslim in the path of Allah (fi sabilillah), and those who do not rebel against Allah when they face trials and tribulations, would attain the status of martyr. These glad tidings give hope and consolation to those who are in distress. But it would be wrong to think that the rewards of these people and those of the people who were killed on the battlefield are the same. The latter indisputably have the highest status in the eyes of Allah. Nevertheless, the other martyrs will receive the boundless mercy of Allah (swt) in eternity.

Persecuted people who are oppressed and then killed unjustly are also considered as martyrs.⁴⁴ Against all odds, these people patiently observe Allah’s rules, and are thankful to Allah (swt) on all occasions.

Our beloved Prophet gave the glad tidings of martyrdom to those who

³⁹ D3137, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 26, 27.

⁴⁰ D3224, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 69, 71.

⁴¹ N1956, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 61:M5976, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 30.

⁴² N3196, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 48; IM2803, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 17.

⁴³ M4944, Muslim, al-Imara, 166.

⁴⁴ N4100, al-Nasa’i, Muharaba, 24.



were killed in defending universal human values, such as dignity, property, and life, “Whosoever is killed over his wealth is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his religion is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his blood is a martyr, and whosoever is killed over his family is a martyr.”⁴⁵

Our Prophet said that life, property, and dignity were as sacred as religion, and religion was there to protect them. Therefore, those who died defending them should be considered martyrs. Many such people have been immortalized in the defense of their homelands where life, property, dignity, religion, and the nation endures. These sacred principles are universal values that should be respected earnestly because of their capacity to prepare fertile ground for a secure and comfortable life for everyone.

Hence, martyrdom is the ability of people to give their mortal souls to Allah (swt) in exchange for sustaining cherished universal values, and gaining Allah’s pleasure. In the Holy Qur’an, Allah says, “Allah has purchased the persons and possessions of the believers in return for the Garden—they fight in Allah’s way: they kill and are killed—this is a true promise given by Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Holy Qur’an. Who could be more faithful to his promise than Allah? So be happy with the bargain you have made: that is the supreme triumph.”⁴⁶ In exchange for trading one’s life for Allah, one can earn Allah’s pleasure and Paradise. Consequently, believers have been going to battle through history as if they were entering a rose garden. Despite the fact that they lose their lives in defending their religion, country, honor, and dignity, they are re-united with their Lord, and they continue to be active agents in shaping our life in this world in order to transform it into a better place, “There are men among the believers who honored their pledge to Allah: Some of them have fulfilled it by death, and some are still waiting. They have not changed in the least.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ T1421, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 21.

⁴⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:111.

⁴⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:23.



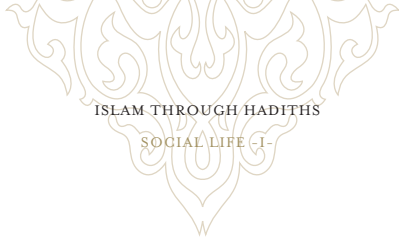
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