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On the Footsteps of the Prophet





The Presidency of Religious Affairs is the only official authority responsible for carrying out all religious services in Türkiye.



The Republic of Türkiye is a country established in 1923 as the continuation of an ancient civilization. The vast majority of the population of Türkiye, which is located at the crossroads of civilizations, is Muslim.



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THE BLESSED NAMES OF THE PROPHET

*A*bd al-Muttalib, who was a prominent member of Mecca, went to his son ‘Abd Allah’s marriage. However, it was fate that young ‘Abd Allah would not live long enough to see the birth of his son. ‘Abd al-Muttalib eased the pain of his son’s loss by embracing his grandson entrusted to him by his late son.

‘Abd al-Muttalib offered to sacrifice a ram to celebrate the birth of his beautiful grandson. Everybody was wondering by which name ‘Abd al-Muttalib would name his grandson. They asked, “What name have you given to this orphan whose birth you have celebrated by throwing this banquet?” ‘Abd al-Muttalib replied, “I have named him Muhammad.”

Those who were present there were not familiar with that name. That was why they asked ‘Abd al-Muttalib one more time: “O Abu al-Harith! Why did you name him Muhammad instead of naming him after one of your ancestors?” In



happiness of having such a beautiful grandson, ‘Abd al-Muttalib gave them the following learned response, “I wish him to be praised by Allah Almighty in the heavens and by people on earth.”¹



As stated by some scholars, Allah Almighty Himself had inspired ‘Abd al-Muttalib to give this name to his grandson because the name Muhammad, which means “praised, worthy of praises,” also has a meaning which comprises all good characteristics. The suitability between the name and the named was soon going to reveal itself like daylight. This wise and astute grandfather would realize his objective in a grander way than what he had anticipated. Allah Almighty Himself was going to protect this adorable orphan and show him the straight path. Allah (swt) was going to select this precious child as His Messenger and send him revelations. He was going to praise him not only in His final Book, but also had done so in the previous Divine Books. Indeed, Allah Almighty gave the good news of the arrival of His Messenger in the Gospels through the mouth of Jesus and also referred to him by one of his beautiful names: *“Jesus, son of Maryam, said, ‘Israelites, I am sent to you by Allah, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad.’ Yet when he came to them with clear signs, they said, ‘This is obviously sorcery.’”*²

¹ TD3/32, Ibn ‘Asakir, Ta’rikh Dimashq, III, 32.

² Saff, 61/6



According to a report from ‘Ali (ra), on one occasion, Allah’s Messenger almost certainly referred to this verse as well and expressed the fact that he was named ‘Ahmad,’ which were among the privileges given to him that were not granted to the earlier prophets.³

Allah Almighty referred to him by his name “Muhammad” in four places in the Holy Qur’an:

*“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”*⁴

*“Muhammad is only a messenger...”*⁵

*“But He will overlook the bad deeds of those who have faith, do good deeds, and believe in what has been sent down to Muhammad—the truth from their Lord—and He will put them into a good state.”*⁶

*“Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is Allah’s Messenger and the seal of the prophets: Allah knows everything.”*⁷

The phrase “*khatam al-nabiyyin* (the seal of the prophets)” mentioned in the last verse was one of his important features stated both in the Prophet’s own hadiths⁸ and in the sayings of the Companions (ra).⁹

On some occasions, Allah’s Messenger (saw) himself cited the name Muhammad. According to a narration by Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said in the face of some negative behavior of the Quraysh, “*Doesn’t it astonish you how Allah protects me from the Quraysh’s abuse*

³ HM763, Ibn Hanbal, I, 98.

⁴ Fath, 48/29

⁵ Al-i Imran, 3/144

⁶ Muhammad, 47/2

⁷ Ahzab, 33/40

⁸ B3535, Bukhari, Manaqib 18; T2219, Tirmidhi, Fitan, 43.

⁹ M3376, Muslim, Hajj, 507.



and affliction? Even though they abuse and curse me, I am Muhammad (the one who is praised).”¹⁰

The Companion Bara’ b. ‘Azib (ra) relates the discussion between the Prophet and the Meccan polytheists during the writing of the Treaty of Hudaibiyya regarding the Prophet’s name as follows: “The Prophet (saw) intended to perform the ‘umrah in the month of Dhu al-Qa’dah in the sixth year after the Hijrah. The people of Mecca did not let him enter Mecca until he settled the matter with them by promising to stay therein for three days only. When the document of the treaty was being written, the following was dictated: ‘These are the terms on which Muhammad, Allah’s Messenger, agrees (to make peace).’ The Meccan polytheists said, ‘We will not agree to this. If we believed that you are Allah’s Messenger, we would not prevent you entering Mecca. You are Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah.’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘I am Allah’s Messenger and also Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah.’ Then he said to ‘Ali to erase (the words) ‘Allah’s Messenger,’ but ‘Ali said, ‘No, by Allah, I will never erase your name.’ So, Allah’s Messenger took the document and had the statement, ‘This is what Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah has agreed upon,’ written into it.”¹¹

In a speech about his own lineage, Allah’s Messenger introduced himself as “*I am Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib.*”¹²

As known, everyone among the Arabs has a name, a kunya (patronymic), and a laqab (nickname, similar to a

¹⁰ B3533, Bukhari, Manaqib, 17; N3468 Nasa’i, Talaq, 25.

¹¹ B2699, Bukhari, Sulh, 6; HM19136, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 329.

¹² T3608, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1; HM1788, Ibn Hanbal, I, 209.



surname). A father would be known by his first-born son and given the kunya “the father of so and so.” The kunya of Allah’s Messenger was Abu al-Qasim or the father of al-Qasim after the name of his first-born son al-Qasim. Giving the same name and kunyas in the same community could sometimes lead to some confusion. This was especially true about the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) reported, “A child was born to a person among us and he gave him the name Muhammad. Thereupon his people said, ‘We will not allow you to give the name of Muhammad (to your child) after the name of Allah’s Messenger.’ He set forth with his son carrying him on his back and came to Allah’s Messenger, and said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! A son has been born to me and I have given him the name Muhammad after your name, but my people did not allow me to name my child after you.’ Whereupon Allah’s Messenger said, ‘*Give your children my name but do not give anybody my kunya, for I was sent as Qasim in the sense that I distribute (the things that need to be distributed) among you.*”¹³

Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) related another incident about giving the Prophet’s name to their children as follows: “A child was born in the house of a person among the Ansar, and he gave him the name al-Qasim. We said, ‘We will not allow you (to give the name) al-Qasim to your child (and thus adopt the kunya of Abu al-Qasim) and we will not even congratulate you. The man went to Allah’s Messenger

¹³ B6196, Bukhari, Adab, 109; M5588, M5591, Muslim, Adab, 3-5.



and told him what had happened. He said, “*Call your son ‘Abd al-Rahman.*”¹⁴

The following incident reported by Anas b. Malik (ra) explains why the Prophet (saw) needed such a ban: “The Prophet (saw) was in the market near the Baqi cemetery. Somebody called behind him, “O Abu al-Qasim.” The Prophet (saw) turned and looked at him. (Pointing out to another man,) the man said, “I did not mean you but this man.” Thereupon the Prophet said, “*Name yourselves by my name but not by my kunya (name).*”¹⁵

As understood from this report, the Prophet (saw) did not approve throughout his life the usage, in reference to him, of the kunya “Abu al-Qasim.” However, there was no obstacle and no issue in naming one’s first son al-Qasim and using the kunya “Abu al-Qasim” after his death. In fact, once ‘Ali said, “O Messenger of Allah! If I have a son after you, do you think I could name him after you and give him your kunya?” Allah’s Messenger said, “Yes.” For ‘Ali, this was a special permission given to him.¹⁶

In another ḥadīth transmitted by Jabir, the Prophet said, “*If anyone is called by my name, he must not be given my kunya, and if anyone uses my kunya, he must not be called by my name.*”¹⁷ What is understood from this saying was to avoid any confusion by using both the name and kunya of the Prophet. His ban in this respect aimed to prevent confusion, and was therefore limited to his lifetime. After his death, many Companions (ra) including not only ‘Ali

¹⁴ M5595, Muslim, Adab, 7; B6186, Bukhari, Adab, 105.

¹⁵ B2120, B2121, Bukhari, Buyu‘, 49.

¹⁶ T2843, Tirmidhi, Adab, 68; HM730, Ibn Hanbal, I, 95.

¹⁷ D4966, Abu Dawud, Adab, 67; HM9863, Ibn Hanbal, II, 454.



but also Abu Bakr, and Sa'd b Abi Waqqas gave their sons and grandsons the name Muhammad and al-Qasim.¹⁸ In a verse, Allah Almighty referred to His Messenger by His names, "A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses him: he is deeply concerned for you and full of raūf and raḥīm toward the believers."¹⁹ al-Raūf and al-Raḥīm, two of the beautiful names of Allah, mean "kind" and "merciful."

Allah Almighty addressed the Prophet sometimes as "O rasūl (Messenger),"²⁰ and sometimes as "O nabī (Prophet)."²¹ He also described His Messenger as "*al-nabī al-ummī* (illiterate prophet),"²² and "*raḥmatun li al-‘ālamīn* (mercy to the worlds)."²³ Based on such divine descriptions, Allah's Messenger sometimes used to call himself, "*the Prophet of Mercy*."²⁴ Likewise in many verses, the terms "*al-rasūl*," "*rasūl Allāh*," "*rasūlu*," and "*rasūlunā*" are used to refer to the Prophet. Similarly the Lord Almighty sometimes called him by stating, "*abdinā* (Our servant),"²⁵ and sometimes "*abdihi* (His servant)."²⁶ Allah's mentioning His Prophet by relating his status to Himself of course carries the meaning of sanctification of His Messenger. In some other Suras of the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty addressed His Messenger as "O *Muzzammil*! (You [Prophet], enfolded

¹⁸ BS19874, Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, IX, 511.

¹⁹ Tawbah, 9/128

²⁰ Ma'idah, 5/41, 67

²¹ Ahzab, 33/45; Talaq, 65/1; Tahrim, 66/1

²² A'raf, 7/157-158

²³ Anbiya, 21/107

²⁴ M6108, Muslim, Fadhā'il, 126.

²⁵ Baqarah, 2/23; Anfal, 8/41

²⁶ Isra, 17/1



in your cloak)”²⁷ and “O *Muddaththir!* (You, wrapped in your cloak!)”²⁸ These are references to the state of the Prophet (saw) who covered himself in his bed because of the anxiety and the exhilaration he felt when he received the first revelation.

Most of the descriptions mentioned in the Holy Qur’an come in the form of nouns and some of them are adjectives. There is a debate about whether the Prophet (saw) was referenced by some of these adjectives. For example, according to the majority of Muslim scholars, Amin (the one who is worthy of trust) mentioned in the verse, “*he is obeyed there and amin (worthy of trust)*,”²⁹ is Jibril, and according to others it is the Prophet.³⁰ Muslim exegetes interpret the word “*burhān* (the convincing proof) mentioned in the verse, “*People, burhān (convincing proof) has come to you from your Lord and We have sent a clear light down to you,*”³¹ as a reference to the Prophet (saw)³² while “the clear light” (nūr) is seen as a reference to the Holy Qur’an.³³

Sometimes Allah’s Messenger (saw) himself spoke about his names and attributes. According to a report transmitted by Abu Musa al-Ash’ari (ra), Allah’s Messenger enumerated his names as follows: “*I am Muhammad, Ahmad. al-Muqaffi*

²⁷ Muzzammil, 73/1

²⁸ Muddaththir, 74/1

²⁹ Takwir, 81/21

³⁰ TT24/259, Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, XXIV, 259; KC19/240, al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, XIX, 240.

³¹ Nisa, 4/174

³² TT9/427, Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, IX, 427; FM11/95, al-Razi, Tafsir, XI, 95; KC6/27, al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, VI, 27.

³³ TT9/427, Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, IX, 427-428; FM11/95, al-Razi, Tafsir, XI, 95; KC6/27, al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, VI, 27.



(the last in succession), *al-Hashir* (behind whom the people gather), the Prophet of repentance, and the Prophet of Mercy.”³⁴

According to another report transmitted by Jubayr b. Mut‘im (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “I have many names: I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am al-Mahi, through whom Allah obliterates unbelief, and I am al-Hashir (the gatherer) at whose feet people will be gathered, and I am al-‘Aqib (the one after whom no prophet will come).”³⁵

In some traditions, there is the statement, “and I am the Prophet of *malḥama*.”³⁶ Based on the information given by the great linguist Ibn Manzur the word *malḥama* is an auto-antonym meaning both “war,” “peace,” and “to make peace.”³⁷ However, for some reason the former meaning has been brought forward and this phrase is interpreted as “the Prophet of war” all along. Whereas when one takes the second meaning into account, the above mentioned statement would be translated as, “I am the Prophet of peace and I make peace among people.” It is a historical fact that Allah’s Messenger (saw) was forced to fight against the polytheists only after Allah (swt) gave him permission during the Medinan period of his prophethood.³⁸ Therefore, even though the Prophet (saw) can be described as “the Prophet of war,” it should not be forgotten that the Prophet of Mercy made those wars in order to establish peace and his mercy outweighed all other emotions both during the time of war and peace. According to some research, all of

³⁴ M6108, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 126.

³⁵ M6105, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 124; B3532, Bukhari, Manaqib, 17.

³⁶ MS31684, Ibn Abu Shayba, Musannaf, Fadhā’il, 1; HM19850, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 405.

³⁷ LA44/4012, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-‘Arab, XXXX, 4012.

³⁸ Hajj, 22/39



the Prophet's wars comprised only two percent of his thirty-three-year long life of prophethood. Accordingly, it would be more appropriate to call the Prophet who spent almost all his life in effort to establish peace as "the Prophet of Peace." Therefore, understanding the last part of the above mentioned ḥadīth as, "I am the Prophet of repentance, the Prophet of Mercy, and the Prophet of Peace," would be more suitable not only because of historical facts but also because the terms "repentance, mercy, and peace" are elements that complement each other.

In some traditions, it was reported that the Prophet's names and attributes mentioned in the Torah were investigated. When 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As (ra), a Companion who was familiar with the culture of the Old Testament, was asked about the names and attributes of the Prophet mentioned in the Torah, he said, "By Allah, he is described in the Torah with some of the qualities attributed to him in the Holy Qur'an as follows: "*O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, and a giver of glad tidings, and a warner³⁹ and guardian of the illiterates. You are My slave and My messenger. I have named you 'al-Mutawakkil (who depends upon Allah). You are neither discourteous, harsh nor a noisemaker in the markets and you do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness...*"⁴⁰

The Prophet (saw)'s attributes mentioned in this ḥadīth mostly overlap with the ones stated in the following verse: "*By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in*

³⁹ Ahzab, 33/45

⁴⁰ B2125, Bukhari, Buyu', 50.



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.”⁴¹

The names of the Prophet (saw) mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and ḥadīths are not as many as assumed. Some of his beautiful names show his distinguished place in the presence of Allah (swt). Later in Islamic cultural history, the verses and ḥadīths were collected and the names, the attributes of the Prophet, and the verbs and ways of addressing him, were compiled in books. There are scholars who listed ninety-nine names of the Prophet (saw), corresponding to the ninety-nine names of Allah, both in the above mentioned type of books, some of which are still in manuscript form, while others have been printed in the genre of “Dalā’il al-Khayrāt.” Some scholars took the list up to four hundred names and even to a thousand names. The data provided in such works, which were the result of the pursuit of love for the Prophet, should be read not as names but rather as the variety of attributes and characteristics that the Prophet (saw) possessed.

In such new and old research, which compiled the names of the Prophet, it is possible to see various adjectives such as bashīr (one who gives good news), nadhīr (warner),⁴² dā‘ī (inviter), sirāj (lamp), and munīr (illuminating)⁴³ which are mentioned in verses of the Holy Qur’an. Sometimes,

⁴¹ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/159

⁴² Baqarah, 2/119

⁴³ Ahzab, 33/45-46



certain names such as Mustafa, al-Mujtaba, and al-Hadi have been derived from the verbs used in the verses about the Prophet and thus the number of designations has increased. Moreover, there is also an interpretation that the letters like Ta-Ha, Ya-Sin, or Ha-Mim used at the beginning of some Suras of the Holy Qur'an refer to Allah's Messenger and they have been added to the list of his names. However, only Allah (swt) knows the meaning of such letters.

Throughout Islamic history, Muslims have shown extreme and unique care and respect to the names of Allah's Messenger. For instance, Turkish Muslims who have named their children Muhammad, as a precaution to possible disrespect toward the Prophet's name, pronounce it as "Mehmet," which is spelled exactly same when written with Arabic letters. Likewise, as a consequence of this sensitivity, the Prophet's name was never used in plain form but rather together with certain phrases of esteem and respect in the Ottoman literature. We should state that this practice, which was not observable during the early days of Islam, is not a religious necessity but in this case a cultural, literary, and courteous custom distinctive to Turkish culture. However, it needs to be emphasized that one should not go to extremes in this matter as all other matters of Islam.

In like manner, love for the Prophet (saw) has led to many literary works such as poems, hymns, eulogies, odes, etc. which emphasize his names. Thus, the poets who love the Prophet (saw) have expressed their love through his



names and many calligraphers whose hearts are filled with the Prophet's love have written his names.

In Turkish tradition, Muslims do not sit cross-legged when the Prophet's name is mentioned. If done, then the person pulls himself together as soon as his name is mentioned, the right hand is placed over the heart, and praises to him (ṣalawāt) are said. All these are different manifestations of respect to the Prophet (saw). This perception is based on various prophetic sayings criticizing those who do not say ṣalawāt when the Prophet's name is mentioned in a gathering.⁴⁴

When Muslims name their children after the Prophet (saw), they do not do so based on various fabricated sayings about the merits of naming their children with the names of Ahmad and Muhammad (saw),⁴⁵ but rather they prefer to do that because of their endless love and respect for the Messenger of Allah (saw). Of course, the desire and wish for their children to be like their Prophet and follow his footsteps is at the basis of this preference. The responsibility of the parents in this matter should be not only to give their children beautiful and meaningful names but also to raise them in the best manner. Hence, they should teach their children the responsibility of carrying the name of the Prophet (saw). Those who carry his name for a lifetime should adopt his character as an example and live in accordance with his teachings.

⁴⁴ T3545, Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 100; EM644, Bukhari, Adab al-mufrad, 224.

⁴⁵ CM1/157, Ibn al-Jawzi, Mawdu'at, I, 157; MM80, MM93, MM94, MM95, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Manar almunif, 57-61.

محمد



PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE PROPHET

*U*mm Ma'bad described the Prophet (saw) as follows:

“He was a man with obvious beauty and cleanliness, and had a glowing countenance. He was neither tall nor was he short. In complexion, he was neither very white like lime, nor very dark. He had a good and balanced disposition. He was a graceful person. He was overtly handsome and wholly beautiful, his eyes were wide, very white and black and his eyelashes were long. His voice was devoid of hoarseness. His eyebrows arch longitudinally and thinly (as if they) meet. He had extremely black hair and a long neck. He had full a beard. He was stately when silent, but elegant when speaking. His speech was sweet, clear, and decisive. It was neither vaguely short, nor boringly and pointlessly long. His words would flow forth like a perfect string of pearls. He was the most beautiful and striking man from far and the best and most beautiful from



close. He was of medium height. He was so that neither could contempt be elicited to avert him for shortness, nor aversion to him for excessive tallness. He was like a branch between two branches.”¹



*M*any Companions (ra) who had the opportunity to encounter the Prophet and share their life with him for a long time transmitted ample information about his physical appearance, personality, and character to the coming generations. Still, it was a female Companion who reported the most concise description of the Prophet’s physical appearance and personality after she saw him for the first time. This Companion whose original name was ‘Atiqa bint Khalid was usually known by her patronymic name Umm Ma’bad al-Khuzayya (ra). Umm Ma’bad, the sister of a Companion named Hubaysh (or Hunays) b. Khalid (ra) who was martyred during the conquest of Mecca,² used to live in a place between Mecca and Medina away from her tribe. She was an intelligent and chaste lady trusted and known for her mature disposition. She was also very generous. For many years, she used to raise her tent, which had become famous as “Umm Ma’bad’s Tent”³ and wait for the travelers in the desert in order to offer them food and drinks.

¹ SM3485, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, al-Ahad wa al-Mathani, V, 631; ST1/230, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 230- 231; MK3605, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-kabir, IV, 48; NM4274, Hakim, Mustadrak, V, 1604 (3/10).

² IBS190, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Isti’ab, p. 190.

³ IBS924, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Isti’ab, p. 924.



On such a day, at the time of migration Allah's Messenger (saw) together with his friend of the cave Abu Bakr, his servant 'Amir b. Fuhayra (ra), and their guide 'Abd Allah b. 'Urayqit stopped at Umm Ma'bad's tent to receive some nourishment on their way from Mecca to Medina. When Allah's Messenger asked Umm Ma'bad, "*Do you have any sheep?*" she brought him a milk producing sheep. However, the Prophet (saw) did not accept it. He saw a weak sheep next to the tent and asked her about it. She said that it was an old sheep and did not produce milk anymore. The Prophet (saw) asked her permission to milk the sheep in order to drink the milk. When the sheep was brought to him, Allah's Messenger supplicated to Allah, "*O Allah! Make this sheep blessed*" and began to milk the sheep and everyone present drank from the milk until they were all full. Finally, the Prophet (saw), together with his fellow travelers, left. Soon after they left, Umm Ma'bad's husband Abu Ma'bad (ra) returned. When he saw the container filled with milk, he was surprised and inquired its origin. Umm Ma'bad told her husband that a blessed man had come and everything that had taken place. Abu Ma'bad said, "By Allah! He is the man whom the people of the Quraysh are after," and asked his wife to describe the man in detail. Thereupon, Umm Ma'bad described the Prophet as follows:

"Of course. He was a man with obvious beauty and cleanliness, and had a glowing countenance. He was neither tall nor was he short. In complexion, he was neither very white like lime, nor very dark. He had a good and balanced disposition. He was a graceful person. He was overtly handsome and wholly beautiful, his eyes were wide, very



white and black and his eyelashes were long. His voice was devoid of hoarseness. His eyebrows arch longitudinally and thinly (as if they) meet. He had extremely black hair and a long neck. He had full a beard. He was stately when silent, but elegant when speaking. His speech was sweet, clear, and decisive. It was neither vaguely short, nor boringly and pointlessly long. His words would flow forth like a perfect string of pearls. He was the most beautiful and striking man from far and the best and most beautiful from close. He was of medium height. He was so that neither could contempt be elicited to avert him for shortness, nor aversion to him for excessive tallness. He was like a branch between two branches. He was the most radiant of the three people who were present and the most respected. He had Companions who surrounded him. When he spoke, they listened attentively to his speech, and when he commanded, they vied with each other to fulfill his commands. It was obvious that he was well-served and attended. Neither his acts nor his speeches were meaningless and useless.⁴

Still, another person who described the Prophet best was his step-son Hind b. Abi Hala (ra). Hind was the son of the Prophet's wife Khadijah from her ex-husband Abu Hala Malik b. Zurara.⁵ When one day 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas told Hind, "Describe Allah's Messenger to us for you are probably the one among us who knew him the best," Hind began his words by saying "May my mother and father be sacrificed for him" and then continued:

⁴ SM3485, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, *al-Ahad wa al-Mathani*, V, 631; ST1/230, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 230-231; MK3605, *al-Tabarani*, *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, IV, 48; NM4274, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, V, 1604 (3/10).

⁵ BM6553, Abu Nu'aym, *Ma'rifat al-sahaba*, V, 2751.



“Allah’s Messenger usually was silent, was always thoughtful and sad. He would speak little but concisely. He would neither beat around the bush nor cut it short. He would repeat (if necessary) what he had said. When he exhorted, he would become serious and sorrowful. When he was opposed, he would turn away, go, and comfort himself by talking to his Companions. He would respect the bounty of Allah even if it was little. He would not belittle any food. He would smile and when he laughed, his (white teeth) would (be seen) like hail stones.”⁶

In addition to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra), another Companion who asked Hind to describe the Prophet was Hasan. When Hasan asked Hind (ra), who was called *wassaf*, meaning the person who describes best, to describe the Prophet (saw)’s complexion, appearance, and form, Hind said (We present it by summarizing some repetitive expressions):

“He had great qualities and attributes in him and others held him in high esteem. His face shone like the full moon... His hair was slightly twisted. If his hair became parted naturally in the middle he left it so, otherwise he did not habitually make an effort to part his hair in the middle. When the hair of Allah’s Messenger was abundant, it used to pass over his ear-lobes... He had a wide forehead. He had dense and fine hair on his eyebrows. Both eyebrows were separate and did not meet each other in the middle, but were very close to each other. There was a vein between them that used to expand when he became angry, but could not be seen when he was calm. His nose was prominent

⁶ SM1231, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, al-Ahad wa al-Mathani, II, 418.



and had a light and luster on it... His beard was full and dense. His cheeks were plump and full of flesh. The mouth of Allah's Messenger was moderately wide. His teeth were thin and bright. His neck was beautiful and thin, like the neck of a (marble) statue shaved clean, the color of which was clear, shining and beautiful like silver. All the parts of his body were of moderate size, and fully fleshed. His body was proportionately jointed. His chest and stomach were in line. The palms and both feet were fully fleshed... When he walked, he lifted his legs with vigor, leaned slightly forward and placed his feet softly on the ground. He walked at a quick pace and took rather a long step. He did not take small steps. When he walked it seemed as if he was descending to a lower place. When he looked at something he turned his whole body toward it. He always looked down. His sight was focused more to the ground than toward the sky. While walking, he would ask his Companions (ra) to walk in front, and he himself walked behind. He would be the first one to greet whenever he met someone."⁷

Then Hasan asked his uncle Hind (ra) to tell him whatever he knew about the manner of Allah's Messenger's speech. Hind told Hasan similar things that he had told Ibn 'Abbas (ra). Hasan wanted to share what he had learned from his uncle about the Prophet's manner of speech with his brother Husayn (ra). However, when Hasan realized that his brother already knew this information, he asked his brother what else he knew. Husayn related to him the following knowledge which he received from his father Ali

⁷ TS8, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 11.



(ra) about the Prophet's manners inside and outside his home and his relationship with his Companions (ra):

27

“When Allah’s Messenger entered the house, he would divide his time into three portions; He spent a portion for worship, a portion for his family, and a portion for himself. He would then divide his personal time in two, one for himself to rest and one to accept the people into his presence. Through these distinguished people he would convey his messages to other people. They would transmit what they had learned from the Prophet to other people. Allah’s Messenger did not conceal anything from his umma. When he accepted people as guests with permission, it was his tradition to give preference to the people of merit and fear of Allah. He would divide the time that he reserved for his guests according to their religious superiority rather than according to their tribal and family relations. Those who came to his home would have various needs. Allah’s Messenger would respond to the questions asked either directly or through an intermediary to him in accordance with the benefit of his umma. He would then say, *‘Those who are present here should inform those who are not regarding these beneficial and necessary matters. You should inform me about the needs of those who cannot put forward their needs for some reason. Because on the Day of Resurrection, Allah Almighty will keep steadfast the person who informs the ruler about the need of another who is unable to put forward his needs.’* Nothing other than the important and beneficial matters would be discussed in the presence of the Prophet. Besides such topics, no wasteful or non-beneficial talk would be allowed in his assemblies. Those who attended the assemblies of



Allah's Messenger would come for religious knowledge and wisdom and depart satisfied. They would return from his assemblies as torchbearers of guidance and goodness."

"Allah's Messenger controlled his tongue and only spoke that which was necessary. He made those who came to visit him feel at home and he did not make them feel anxious or ill at ease. He respected and honored the prominent members of every community and appointed them as the leaders of their community. He warned the people of Allah's punishment. He always treated them with kindness and addressed them courteously. He was concerned for the affairs of his Companions and made sure to inquire about their welfare. He would ask the situation of the people he encountered. He would praise good deeds and encourage them. He would object to the bad deeds and explain their harmful effects. He followed the middle path in all matters. He never acted inconsistently, in other words said something at times and did something else at other times. He was always concerned about guiding his Companions in case they might be heedless and become disheartened in their religious affairs. He was ready for everything (he would find a solution for every problem). The best person in the eyes of Allah's Messenger was the one who did most goodness to everybody. The one with the highest status in the eyes of Allah's Messenger was that person who considered, comforted and helped the creation most."

"Allah's Messenger would begin and end all his assemblies with the remembrance of Allah. When he went to a gathering, he would sit down in the last empty space he found. He would instruct his followers to do so as



well. Allah's Messenger fulfilled the rights of every person present. That means, whatever right was due in talking and showing happiness, was fulfilled by him, so much so, that every person present would think that Allah's Messenger was honoring him the most. The person who came to sit by Allah's Messenger or came to him for some purpose, Allah's Messenger would remain seated until that person began to stand up. Whenever one asked him for something, he would kindly fulfill that request, and would not refuse it. (If he did not possess the thing) he would give a soft and humble answer. His generosity, cheerfulness, and pleasant manner were of such a level that he was like a father to them. All humanity were like equal children before him as far as their rights were concerned. His gatherings were assemblies where knowledge, modesty, patience, and honesty were taught. Voices would not be raised in his presence, nor was anyone degraded or disgraced. If anyone committed a fault, it was not made known publicly. All were regarded as equals among themselves. The virtue of one over the other was according to the piety they possessed. Everybody was humble. The young ones were shown mercy and the old ones were respected. The needy were given preference, and strangers and travelers were especially cared for by him and his Companions.⁸

When Husayn asked his father 'Ali (ra) about the relationship of Allah's Messenger with his Companions (ra), he replied, "Allah's Messenger was always happy, easy mannered, and polite. There was always a smile and a

⁸ TS226, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 97; TS337, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 151; TS352, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 160; MK18934, Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-kabir, XXII, 155.



sign of happiness on his blessed face. He was soft-natured and when the people needed his approval, he easily gave consent. He did not speak in a harsh tone nor was he stone-hearted. He did not scream while speaking, nor was he rude or spoke indecently. He did not seek other's faults. He never overpraised anyone nor went to excess while jesting, nor was he a miser. He would keep away from undesirable language and would pretend as if he did not hear anything. If he did not agree with the next person's wish he did not make that person feel disheartened, nor did he promise anything to that person. He carefully kept himself away from three things, from arguments, pride and senseless utterances. He prohibited people from these three things. He did not disgrace or insult anyone, nor look for the faults of others, and he only spoke of that from which spiritual rewards may be attained. When he spoke, those present bowed their heads in such a manner, as if birds were sitting on their heads. Only when he completed his speech would others begin to speak. The Companions would not argue before him regarding anything. Whenever one spoke in his presence, the other would keep quiet and listen until he would finish. The speech of every person was valued as if it was the speech of the first person. When the Companions laughed about something, he would laugh too. He would also show his surprise regarding the things that surprised the people. He would exercise patience in the face of the harshness and indecent questions of a traveler. Even if the Companions wanted to throw such travelers out of his assemblies, (he would not let them to do that and would exercise patience). Allah's Messenger would say,



‘When you see a person in need, then always help that person.’ If one did not exceed in praising him, he would keep silent. He did not interrupt someone talking and did not begin speaking when someone else was busy speaking. If one exceeded the limits, he would stop him by getting up and leaving that gathering.”⁹

There is detailed information about the complexion, physical appearance, and human features of the Prophet in the books about his life and the books of ḥadīth. Even though such information is found under various chapter headings, such as “Sifat al-nabi,” “Sifat rasul Allah,” “Manaqib,” and “Fadha’il,” the term “Shama’il,” which is the plural form of the word “shaml” meaning “nature, temper, character and disposition,”¹⁰ has become the term popularly used in respect to the Prophet’s human aspects, life style and personal life.¹¹ In addition to the term “Shama’il” in Islamic sources, the Prophet’s human and physical features have been examined under the title of “ḥilya.” This term means “adornment and embellishments” as well as “creation, character, appearance, and defining a person by physical features.”¹² It was used especially in the art of calligraphy regarding the physical characteristics of the Prophet (saw) and was often used to describe the features of the Messenger of Allah (saw) found in books and calligraphy boards during the Ottoman period.¹³

⁹ TS352, Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 160.

¹⁰ LA26/2332, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-‘Arab, XVI, 2332.

¹¹ Yardım, Peygamberimizin Şemâili, p. 29

¹² LA12/985, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-‘Arab, XII, 985.

¹³ “Hilye”, DİA, XVIII, 44.



Drawing the Prophet's physical portrait has never been approved in the Muslim world. Instead it has been preferred to introduce and describe Allah's Messenger (saw) based on the reports found in the sources of ḥadīth and life of the Prophet. In addition to the detailed accounts mentioned above, it would be beneficial to mention the reports transmitted through the Companions like 'Ali, Abu Hurayra (ra), al-Bara' b. 'Azib and especially Anas b. Malik (ra).

Allah's Messenger's

Name

Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Mahi, al-Hashir and al-'Aqib / al-Muqaffi; Nabi al-tawba and Nabi al-rahma.¹⁴

Face

He had a very beautiful smiling face, and an easy-going countenance.¹⁵

Height

He was neither very tall nor short-statured.¹⁶

Hair

His hair was neither very curly nor very straight, and sometimes hung over his shoulders and sometimes over his earlobes.¹⁷ He would sometimes let his hair fall upon his

¹⁴ M6105, M6108, Muslim, Fadha'il, 124-126.

¹⁵ M6071, Muslim, Fadha'il, 98.

¹⁶ M6066, Muslim, Fadha'il, 93; TS26, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 17.

¹⁷ M6067, M6069, Muslim, Fadha'il, 94-96.



forehead, and sometimes arrange it by parting it.¹⁸ He had a little white in his hair and beard.¹⁹

Hands

His hands were as soft and fragrant as brocade and silk. Sometimes when he cuddled the children on their cheeks, the fragrance of his hands would not go away for days.²⁰

Smile

He was never seen laughing out loud. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Harith (ra) said, “The laughter of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was all but smile.”²¹

Smiling, which was characterized by the Prophet as charity,²² would never be missing from his face. In fact, Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) said, “Allah’s Messenger did not screen himself from me since I embraced Islam, and whenever he saw me he would receive me with a smile.”²³

Sitting

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) sat, he sometimes had his knees drawn up supported by his hands,²⁴ and sometimes he sat cross-legged.²⁵ (When he rested in the mosque) he was seen lying down with one of his feet over the other.²⁶

¹⁸ M6062, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 90.

¹⁹ B3548, Bukhari, Manaqib, 23; M6073, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 100.

²⁰ M6052, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 80.

²¹ T3642, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 10; TS229, Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 99.

²² T1956, Tirmidhi, Birr, 36.

²³ B3035, Bukhari, Jihad, 162; TS231, Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 100.

²⁴ D4846, Abu Dawud, Adab, 22.

²⁵ D4850, Abu Dawud, Adab, 26.

²⁶ EM1185, Bukhari, Adab al-mufrad, 405.



Walking

He would walk so fast that people who were with him would have difficulty to catch up with him. His walk was like a man who had some business in the market and was not sluggish. He would not look behind when he walked.²⁷ When he walked, because of the speed and force of the legs, it seemed as if he was descending from a high place. He would not walk by swaying to the right and the left (in a prideful manner), but rather he would bend slightly forward as if he was descending from a high place.²⁸

Clothing

The clothing that he liked the most was the shirt.²⁹ The sleeves of his shirts would extend down to his hands.³⁰ Al-Bara' b. 'Azib (ra) said that the Prophet's red patterned clothing suited him.³¹

He lived like a normal person. For example, he would care for his own clothing, milk his sheep and do his own work.³²

He wore simple clothes.

Speaking

He would say the kindest, most concise and intelligible words. He would speak so clearly and unmistakably, that those who sat with him would memorize it.³³

²⁷ ST1/379, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 379.

²⁸ TS124, TS125, TS126, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 55.

²⁹ TS56, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 29; IM3575, Ibn Majah, *Libas*, 8.

³⁰ TS58, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 30.

³¹ TS65, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 32.

³² TS343, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 154

³³ T3639, Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 9; TS224, Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 97.



The meaning of his words were comprehensive, devoid of factitiousness and farfetchedness. He would criticize those who spoke pretentiously and stay away from them. He would speak for a long time when it was needed and give short speeches when it was needed. He would avoid using unknown and odd words. He would conscientiously avoid speaking with exciting and provoking modes of speech.

He spoke wisely, was protected and supported by divine blessings, and spoke with words which were simple and easy to understand. Allah Almighty bestowed love onto his words, and made them acceptable, easy to understand as well as adorned them with sweetness and grandeur. Just as they did not need to be repeated, the listeners did not request them to be repeated. There was neither a missing nor an extra word in his speech. Neither did it need reiteration nor was it possible to object to it.

No wordsmith could embarrass him. He delivered long statements with extremely brief words. He defeated his opponents by using a mode of speech that they could recognize and surrender to. He presented only the truth as evidence and gained superiority by expressing the truth. He did not hope for help from deception and did not attempt to cheat. He was neither slow in speaking nor hasty. He neither extended his speeches nor kept them short. Humanity has not heard any speech more beneficial, more orderly, more organized, more fluent, more exciting, more influential, more easy-flowing, more intelligible, and clearer than his speeches.³⁴

³⁴ CBS221, al-Jahiz, al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, p. 221.



Eating and Drinking

He would not eat while reclining and settled completely (as if he did not need to stand up).³⁵ He said, “*I eat like an ordinary servant and sit like an ordinary servant of Allah...*”³⁶ He would drink Zamzam water while standing.³⁷ He was observed to drink regular water while standing or sitting.³⁸ He used to breathe twice or thrice while drinking³⁹ and say, “*It is more thirst-quenching, healthier and more wholesome.*”⁴⁰

Character

Allah’s Messenger was the man who had the best character.⁴¹ He was the politest and most courteous person toward women,⁴² and most compassionate toward his family members. For instance, his son Ibrahim was entrusted to a foster-mother living in the highlands of Medina. Allah’s Messenger used to go to his house, which was filled with smoke as his foster-father was a blacksmith. The Prophet (saw) would take his son Ibrahim, kiss him and then come back.⁴³ He said that the emotion of mercy was taken out of the hearts of those who did not love and kiss their children and reminded people that Allah (swt) would not show mercy to those who did not show mercy.⁴⁴ Allah’s Messenger was more modest than a virgin behind

³⁵ D3769, Abu Dawud, At’imah, 16; MA5247, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, III, 184.

³⁶ MA19543, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, X, 415.

³⁷ B1637, Bukhari, Hajj, 76; M5280, Muslim, Ashribah, 117.

³⁸ T1883, Tirmidhi, Ashribah, 12; HM1140 Ibn Hanbal, I, 136.

³⁹ B5631, Bukhari, Ashribah, 26.

⁴⁰ M5287, Muslim, Ashribah, 123; TS211 Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 91.

⁴¹ M6017, Muslim, Fadha’il, 55.

⁴² M6036, Muslim, Fadha’il, 70.

⁴³ M6026, Muslim, Fadha’il, 63.

⁴⁴ M6027, M6028, Muslim, Fadha’il, 64-65.



her covers.⁴⁵ He never was immoderate in his talk and he never reviled others.⁴⁶

He never beat anyone with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, but only, in the case when he had been fighting in the cause of Allah.⁴⁷ Whenever he had to choose between two things, he would choose the easier one. He would stay away from sins as far as possible. Allah's Messenger never took revenge from anyone because of a personal grievance.⁴⁸ Allah's Messenger was the most sublime among people in character, the most generous among them, and the bravest of men.⁴⁹ It never came to pass that Allah's Messenger was asked for something and he said, "No."⁵⁰

He was a clear warner just like a man who tried to warn his people about an army which was about to attack them.⁵¹ Just like a person who tried to save the insects and moths from falling into the fire; he was a warner who tried to save humanity from the dangers of Judgement Day.⁵² He was the last brick of the building of prophethood,⁵³ and beneficial to people like fertile rain.⁵⁴

Even if one examines only his actions and behavior on the day of the conquest of Mecca regarding the level of his tolerance and modesty, it would be enough to recognize his perfect character and prophethood. The Meccans had

⁴⁵ M6032, Muslim, Fadha'il, 67.

⁴⁶ M6033, Muslim, Fadha'il, 68.

⁴⁷ M6050, Muslim, Fadha'il, 79.

⁴⁸ M6045, Muslim, Fadha'il, 77.

⁴⁹ M6006, Muslim, Fadha'il, 48.

⁵⁰ M6018, Muslim, Fadha'il, 56.

⁵¹ M5954, Muslim, Fadha'il, 16.

⁵² M5955, Muslim, Fadha'il, 17.

⁵³ M5959, Muslim, Fadha'il, 20.

⁵⁴ M5953, Muslim, Fadha'il, 15.



inflicted all kinds of torments on believers, and succeeded in killing their uncles, cousins, friends, and supporters after keeping them under sanctions for a long time in the streets of Mecca. They had wounded the Prophet himself, subjected him to all kinds of torments and collaborated in setting up a lethal trap for him. Still, when the Prophet entered Mecca against the will of the Meccans and conquered the city, he told them after thanking and praising Allah, *“I am telling you just like my brother Joseph did; you will hear no reproaches today. May Allah forgive you: because He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.”*⁵⁵

⁵⁵ CBS227, Jahiz, al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, p. 227.



THE MOST DISTINGUISHED SERVANT OF ALLAH

A man from the Ansar quarreled with Zubayr (ra) about the Harra canals, which were used for irrigating date-palms, in the presence of the Prophet (saw). These waters went through Zubayr's garden and then reached the Medinan man's garden. The man said to Zubayr, "Let the water pass," but Zubayr refused to do so. Thus, the case was brought before the Prophet (saw) who said to Zubayr, "*O Zubayr! Irrigate (your land) and then let the water pass to your neighbor.*" On that, the man from the Ansar got angry and said to the Prophet, "(Are you giving him priority) because Zubayr is your aunt's son?" On that, the color of the face of Allah's Messenger (saw) changed (because of anger) and he said, "*O Zubayr! Irrigate (your land) and withhold the water until it reaches the walls between the pits round the trees (then let it pass).*" Zubayr said that the following verse was revealed after this incident, "*By your Lord,*



they will not be true believers until they let you decide between them in all matters of dispute, and find no resistance in their souls to your decisions, accepting them totally.”¹

As seen by this incident, cases of disagreement between people were brought before the Prophet (saw) and he would resolve them. In the case of the irrigating dispute between Zubayr (ra) and the Medinan man, Allah’s Messenger asked Zubayr to act maturely and let the water flow onwards even before it reached to his rightful share. However, when he was offended by the man’s reaction to the verdict, the Messenger of Allah (saw) commanded Zubayr to use his right fully. The verse revealed after this incident demonstrated that the man’s reaction was far beyond being simply an act of disrespect to the Prophet but was related to belief in, and obedience to, the Prophet (saw), since after all, the person to whom the Medinan man had objected was not an ordinary man but the last Messenger of Allah. The fact that objection to the words and practices of the Prophet was a problem undoubtedly indicates the high value of his before Allah (swt).



*I*n many verses, belief in the prophets is mentioned along with belief in Allah.² Belief in Allah (swt) surely requires belief in His messengers and the statement expressing this belief also mentions the name of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The following tradition reported by the Prophet’s beloved uncle Ibn ‘Abbas (ra)

¹ Nisa, 4/65; B2359 Bukhari, Musaqat, 6.

² Al-i ‘Imrân, 3/179; Nisa, 4/136; Fath, 48/9.



demonstrates that belief can become complete only by confirming the Prophet (saw), *“One who accepts Allah as Lord, Islam as religion and Muhammad as a prophet-messenger of Allah enjoys the taste of faith.”*³

For Muslims, internalizing Muhammad (saw)’s prophethood through the heart and loving him more than anything or anyone else is the requirement of truly believing in him. According to Anas b. Malik (ra), Allah’s Messenger drew attention to this matter as follows: *“None of you will have faith until he loves me more than his father, his children and all of mankind.”*⁴ Allah Almighty commands believers to show respect and love for His Messenger and reminds them how much He values His Messenger and how high his status is in His presence, *“Allah and His angels bless the Prophet – so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.”*⁵ The notion of Allah blessing and greeting His prophet and the angels’ conveying their blessings on the Prophet (saw), reciting prayers on him, offering their greetings to him, and praising him should be understood as a type of compliment, an expression of mercy, and a place of honor whose real nature and limits cannot be fully explained.⁶ Furthermore, it is clear that Allah (swt) has commanded His servants to say their blessings and praises on His Prophet as a condition of faith. In fact, revering Allah and respecting His Messenger are mentioned side by side in the Holy Qur’an.⁷ Due to this status bestowed

³ HM1778 Ibn Hanbal, I, 208.

⁴ B15, Bukhari, Iman, 8.

⁵ Ahzab, 33/56.

⁶ Kur’an Yolu, IV, 359.

⁷ Fath, 48/9.



on His Messenger, Allah (swt) considers disrespect to His Messenger as disrespect to Him and says, “*Yet if you were to question them, they would be sure to say, ‘We were just chatting, just amusing ourselves.’ Say, ‘Were you making jokes about Allah, His Revelations, and His Messenger?’*”⁸ In addition, Allah Almighty defined assisting His Messenger as helping Him, even though He is clearly omnipotent and free from needing any help. The following statement emphasizes the value of His Messenger in His presence, “*You who believe! If you help Allah, He will help you and make you stand firm.*”⁹ The reference to helping Allah (swt) in this verse has been interpreted to mean helping His religion and His Prophet.¹⁰

This status and value given to the Prophet proves that obedience to him cannot be separated from the obedience to Allah, and that submission to him cannot be separated from the submission to Allah, and that belief in him is an inseparable part of believing in Allah. In fact, in a ḥadīth transmitted by Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet said, “*Whoso obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoso disobeys me disobeys Allah...*”¹¹ The path going to Allah (swt) passes through His Messenger, listening to his words and sincerely obey his words. The verse, “*Say, ‘If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; Allah is most forgiving, most merciful,’*”¹² informs us that adherence to the Prophet (saw) is the manifestation and proof of love for Allah as well as the condition to be purified of sins and

⁸ Tawbah, 9/65.

⁹ Muhammad, 47/7.

¹⁰ BL7/281, al-Baghawi, Ma‘alim al-tanzil, VII, 281.

¹¹ M4749, Muslim, Imara, 33; B2957, Bukhari, Jihad, 110.

¹² Al-i ‘Imran, 3/31.



to earn Allah's love. The Almighty Creator's attaching His love and mercy to the condition of adherence to the path of His Messenger manifests the greatness of the status and value that Allah has bestowed upon His Messenger and the distinguished place he has in His presence. Another verse that expresses the fact that obedience to the Prophet means observing the limits established by Allah and thus being obedient to Him reads as follows: *"These are the bounds set by Allah: Allah will admit those who obey Him and His Messenger to Gardens graced with flowing streams, and there they will stay—that is the supreme triumph."*¹³ This is why when the verses of the Holy Qur'an are examined it is clear that disobedience to the Messenger of Allah (saw) in a way means overstepping the boundaries established by Allah.¹⁴ Opposition to Allah's Messenger is also opposition to Allah Himself.¹⁵ Waging war against Allah's Messenger is waging war against Allah.¹⁶ A proclamation from the Messenger of Allah (saw) is a proclamation from Allah Himself.¹⁷ Prohibition by Allah's Messenger means prohibition by Allah.¹⁸ The Prophet (saw)'s giving things out of Allah's bounty is as if Allah Himself is giving.¹⁹ Pledging loyalty to Allah's Messenger means pledging loyalty to Allah.²⁰ In fact, *"Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah"*²¹ means that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was not talking from his own

¹³ Nisa, 4/13.

¹⁴ Nisa, 4/14.

¹⁵ Anfal, 8/13.

¹⁶ Ma'idah, 5/33.

¹⁷ Tawbah, 9/3.

¹⁸ Tawbah, 9/29.

¹⁹ Tawbah, 9/59.

²⁰ Fath, 48/10.

²¹ Nisa, 4/80.



desire and whatever he said was either a revelation sent by Allah (swt)²² or was under the control of revelation.²³ Therefore, obedience to the commands of this Messenger and staying away from what he prohibited²⁴ are creedal requirements for believers.

His priority before Allah was confirmed when he was chosen as a prophet by Allah when he was forty years old and sent revelation. It is clearly stated in the Holy Qur'an that the Prophet was not the father of someone from among them, but the seal of the prophets or khatam al-Anbiyā'.²⁵ When Allah Almighty sent Muhammad (saw) as His Messenger and gave him important tasks, He equipped him with the highest authority. From that moment, Muhammad (saw) was not just a man in the habit of secluding himself in a deserted cave, contemplating for days,²⁶ and purifying his soul but had become a proselytizer, a Messenger of Allah with the duty of inviting the whole of humanity to the divine message in order to cleanse them, and teach them whatever they did not know in their individual and social lives.²⁷

His primary responsibility was to transmit and explain the revelation he had received to people. Allah's Messenger (saw) gave explanatory information about verses on many subjects such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, lawful and prohibited deeds, trade, and acts of worship. For example, even though it is understood from the verse, "*Allah blights*

²² Najm, 53/2-4.

²³ D3586, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

²⁴ Hashr, 59/7.

²⁵ Ahzab, 33/40.

²⁶ B3, Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

²⁷ Baqarah, 2/151.



*usury, but blesses charitable deeds with multiple increases,*²⁸ that all kinds of business activities are lawful, Allah's Messenger prohibited the sale of the pig and alcohol²⁹ and limited the permission established by the verse.

In addition to the duty to explain the commands and prohibitions mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, Allah (swt) also gave His Messenger the authority to establish rulings in matters which were not discussed in the Holy Qur'an. The verse, *"...the Messenger who commands them to do right and forbids them to do wrong, who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful, and relieves them of their burdens, and the iron collars that were on them..."*³⁰ points out not only his responsibilities but also his authority. When Allah Almighty commanded His Messenger in the verse, *"Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: you are under Our watchful eye. Celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise,"*³¹ He (swt) was evidently expressing the fact that His Messenger was directly under Divine observation.

Furthermore, in matters in which the Prophet (saw) was not directly led by revelation, he acted in accordance with his personal views. According to a ḥadīth that 'Abd Allah b. Rafi' heard from Umm Salama (ra), Allah's Messenger said to two men who were disputing over inheritance and lost items, *"I decide between you on the basis of my opinion in cases about which no revelation has been sent down to me."*³² However, it should be evident that the Prophet's personal

²⁸ Baqarah, 2/275.

²⁹ M4048, Muslim, Musaqat, 71.

³⁰ A'raf, 7/157.

³¹ Tur, 52/48.

³² D3585, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.



opinions were not like those of an ordinary person. One day, 'Umar (ra) ascended the pulpit and expressed this fact as follows: "O people, the opinion is right if it belongs to the Messenger of Allah (saw), because Allah showed (i.e., inspired) him the right; but our personal views is sheer intellectual effort and conjecture."³³

Allah Almighty appointed the Prophet not only to enlighten the inner worlds of individuals and to purify them from sins but also to teach society to support goodness and to make good govern and triumph. He was a mercy to the universe in all these aspects.³⁴ While showing people the way to attain mercy, he was an embodiment of mercy. This mercy even encapsulated those who openly called for divine torment. In the face of what Allah's Messenger said, Abu Jahl said, "O Allah! If he is a truth coming from You, then send rocks upon us from the sky and inflict a great torment on us." After this statement, the following verse was revealed, "*But Allah would not send them punishment while you [Prophet] are in their midst, nor would He punish them if they sought forgiveness, yet why should Allah not punish them when they debar people from the Sacred Mosque, although they are not its [rightful] guardians? Only those mindful of Allah are its rightful guardians, but most of the disbelievers do not realize this.*"³⁵ Those mentioned in the verse as the people seeking forgiveness were the believers who stayed in Mecca among the polytheists after the Prophet emigrated to Medina.

³³ D3586, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

³⁴ Anbiya, 21/107.

³⁵ Anfal, 8/33-34; M7064, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 37.



His Lord always kept him under His care and protection. This was true since the beginning. His Lord sheltered him when he was an orphan, guided him when he was seeking the straight path, and made him wealthy when he was poor.³⁶ When he was only a six-month-old baby in his mother's womb, he lost his father and became an orphan. After he lost his mother when he was six-years-old, he was completely alone. The question, "*Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you?*" also points out that he was a unique pearl (durr al-yatīm).³⁷ The one who was brought up was not just a child, but also a strong character,³⁸ and a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning to humanity.³⁹ This was why he was under the constant protection of Allah and He always protected His Messenger from people's harm. By His mercy and help, Allah (swt) protected the Prophet (saw) from people leading him astray.⁴⁰ He and all believers were advised through his personality to surrender themselves to the divine will. The verse "*Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: you are under Our watchful eye. Celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise*"⁴¹ was only one of such suggestions.

Allah's Messenger once expressed his privileged place in creation with the following sentences: "*I am the first for whom the earth will be split, and then I will be adorned with garments from the garments of Paradise. Then I will stand at the right of the Throne. No one from the creation will be in*

³⁶ Duha, 93/6-8.

³⁷ Elmalılı, Hak Dini, VIII, 5898.

³⁸ Qalam, 68/4.

³⁹ Ahzab, 33/45-46.

⁴⁰ Nisa, 4/113.

⁴¹ Tur, 52/48.



*that place other than I.*⁴² What is symbolized by standing at the right side of the Throne is in fact the Prophet's closeness to Allah (swt). This is not a spacial closeness, but the Prophet's dignity and value in the presence of Allah. It is certainly the status of "maqām maḥmūd (praised status)." This is a blessing given to him in return for his preference of servanthood and the fruit of his desire and aspiration for servanthood, which is clearly expressed in the following verse: "*and during the night wake up and pray, as an extra offering of your own, so that your Lord may raise you to a [highly] praised status.*"⁴³

When Allah (swt) asked His Prophet to make a choice between worldly blessings and the blessings in His presence, Allah's Messenger did not hesitate at all by choosing the blessings in Allah's presence.⁴⁴ Five days before the Prophet's death he said, "*I stand acquitted before Allah that I took any one of you as friend (and thus find a second friend along with Allah's friendship), for Allah has taken me as His friend, as he took Ibrahim as His friend.*"⁴⁵ His final words were, "*O Allah! To the Most Exalted Friend.*"⁴⁶ Allah Almighty named him Ahmad and informed the Jews through the words of Jesus of his coming.⁴⁷ According to the statement of the Prophet's poet Hassan b. Thabit (ra), Allah made His Prophet remembered together with His own name.⁴⁸ Allah exalted the name and honor of His last Messenger. The

⁴² T3611, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1.

⁴³ Isra, 17/79.

⁴⁴ M6170, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-sahaba, 2.

⁴⁵ M1188, Muslim, Masajid, 23.

⁴⁶ M6297, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-sahaba, 87.

⁴⁷ Saff, 61/6.

⁴⁸ KC20/106, Qurtubi, Tafsir, XX, 106.



divine support and care for the Prophet was expressed as follows: “*Did We not relieve your heart for you [Prophet], and remove the burden that weighed so heavily on your back, and raise your reputation high?*”⁴⁹

Allah’s Messenger (saw) did not stray from the straight path and just like the previous prophets he fulfilled the mission of prophethood in the best way. Of course, all messengers of Allah were equal to each other regarding their task of prophethood. The verse, “*...We make no distinction between any of His messengers...*”⁵⁰ indicates that believers should express this as a requirement of their faith. Still, it is evident that the Prophet (saw), who was the final ring of the chain of the prophets, was sent to all of humanity and was distinguished from some of the other prophets who were sent only to their own individual communities. Whereas the Prophet’s statement, “*Nobody has the right to say ‘I am better than Jonah b. Matta (The Prophet Yunus),’*”⁵¹ demonstrates that all messengers were equal in the presence of Allah in terms of their prophethood, the Holy Qur’an speaks about some “*patient and resilient (‘ulūw al-‘azm)*” prophets, “*Be steadfast [Muhammad], like those messengers of firm resolve...*”⁵² This verse highlights that the Prophet was one of those praised prophets.

Allah’s Messenger fulfilled his mission with great determination and resolution. In his Farewell Sermon, he asked people to bear witness to this fact.⁵³ Allah (swt) was

⁴⁹ Sharh, 94/1–4.

⁵⁰ Baqarah, 2/285.

⁵¹ B4631, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ma’idah) 4.

⁵² Ahqaf, 46/35.

⁵³ M4386 Muslim, Qasama, 31.



a witness as well; He (swt) was surely pleased with him and he is well pleased with his Lord.⁵⁴ On the day they will not speak except for one whom the Most Merciful permits⁵⁵ he (saw) is the one who will speak,⁵⁶ will be people's spokesman and give them glad tidings whenever they give up hope.⁵⁷ Because his status is "maqam mahmud (praised status).

⁵⁴ Duha, 93/5.

⁵⁵ Naba', 78/38.

⁵⁶ B4712 Bukhari, Tafsir, (Israil) 5.

⁵⁷ T3610 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1.



HE WAS THE LIVING QUR'AN

*A*isha (ra) described the psychology of the Prophet on the first days after he received revelation as follows: “The commencement of the divine revelation to Allah’s Messenger was in the form of good dreams, which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go into seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family brought him back. He used to take with him prepared food for the journey for his stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadijah to take his food likewise again until suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira.

The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, *‘I do not know how to read.’* The Prophet added, *‘The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again*



asked me to read and I replied, "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, "I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?" Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, "Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."¹ Then Allah's Messenger returned with the revelation and with his heart beating severely he went to Khadijah b. Khuwaylid."²



*U*ntil the age of forty, he got along very well with everyone. He was called "Muhammad al-Amīn" (Muhammad the Trustworthy). But this does not mean that he was pleased with the Meccans' idolatrous, immoral, unjust, and violent behavior. He was tired of the lavish Meccan life-style that regarded worldly affairs as games and entertainment. It was unbearable to observe their practices and customs of the Jahiliyya and polytheism which infused every part of their life. He had reached a mature age and was searching for the true meaning of life but he was not certain what to do and where to look for such truth. Thus, he was unable to find what he had been looking for and he was not at peace with himself.³ Although he knew the

¹ Alaq, 96/1-5.

² M403, Muslim, Iman, 252; B3, Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

³ Duha, 93/7.



absurdity of idol-worship and had embraced the Abrahamic tradition, the time seemed to not be ripe for the full truth that he required. Therefore, he suffered because he was unable to find a way to exit from the disarray of his society.

During the process of soul-searching, Muhammad (saw) spent time in seclusion, and stayed in a cave and contemplated this world and the spiritual world. Moreover, he was able to take lessons from this process.⁴ In order to describe this type of worship, some of Muslim scholars have understood the word “tahannus” mentioned in the above-mentioned ḥadīth as “tahannuf” meaning, to become a “hanif.”⁵

As pointed out by Almighty Allah, the Noble Messenger was an illiterate person, who could neither read nor write anything, especially a book.⁶ He did not know anything about scripture or faith⁷ nor did he ever expect to receive any divine revelation. Allah Almighty, with His abundant mercy, granted him the revelation, the Holy Qur'an.⁸

His experience in the cave of Mount Hira was his introduction to the Holy Qur'an. It commenced with the first five verses of the Surah al-‘Alaq and the divine revelations continued to descend to him for another twenty-three years. The Qur'anic verses that were revealed in different times and places for various reasons educated the Prophet as well as the new Muslims and ended up creating a new society. For instance, by following the chronological order

⁴ B3, Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

⁵ HS2/68, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 68.

⁶ Ankabut, 29/48.

⁷ Shura, 42/52.

⁸ Qasas, 28/86.



of the verses it is possible to see how the people around the Prophet (saw) were transformed from the Jahiliyyah society to the new and pure society of Islam.

In fact, this gradual edification was part of the prophethood and Allah Almighty sent His Messenger to execute this task. In the Holy Qur'an Allah said, *"Allah has been truly gracious to the believers in sending them a Messenger from among their own, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow in purity, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom –before that they were clearly astray."*⁹

The word "purity" mentioned in the above verse refers to both material and spiritual cleanliness. Thanks to the Prophetic mission the people of the Jahiliyya society were civilized. The people of the Jahiliyya who had been so cruel that they used to bury their infant daughters alive created a new society in Medina where people developed abundant mercy for all living creatures. In other words, the term "purity" referred to creating a virtuous society composed of virtuous people. Moreover, it was the Messenger of Allah (saw) who was instrumental in developing such a society. He was able to transform the Jahiliyya society into a virtuous society. History witnessed how these cruel, wild, and coarse polytheists turned into exemplary and upright people because of the guidance of Allah and the purification of the Prophet. As some scholars put it, "His Companions (ra) were enough of a miracle for him."¹⁰ The Messenger of Allah (saw) brought about this transformation because of the Holy Qur'an, and he entrusted it to his ummah.

⁹ Al-i 'Imran, 3/164.

¹⁰ FH4/305, al-Qarafi, Furuq, IV, 305.



One of the most important missions of the Prophet (saw) was to recite and proclaim the verses and sūras that were revealed to him.¹¹ Allah (swt) cautioned the Prophet, “*Messenger, proclaim everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord.*”¹² According to ‘A’isha (ra), based upon the above revelation, the Prophet said that those who accused him of hiding some revelations were fabricating lies¹³ and slandering Allah.¹⁴ Therefore, in no way can the act of hiding or changing revelations¹⁵ and making any addition to them¹⁶ be assumed for the Prophet.¹⁷ During the Farewell Sermon, his Companions (ra) gave their testimonials that the Prophet (saw) completed his mission, and performed his task as a Messenger in the best possible manner.¹⁸

The Prophet (saw) was commanded to obey the revelation, which was sent to him.¹⁹ It was not his responsibility to convert everyone to Islam, and make them obey Allah (swt). His only duty was to disseminate the message.²⁰ Having this awareness he is reported to have said, “*I am only a Messenger. It is Allah, He who shows the true path,*”²¹ and “*Allah sent me as a Messenger, not as a compeller.*”²² He was neither the people’s guardian nor their representative.²³ Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) devoted himself to guiding

¹¹ Isra’, 17/106; Kahf, 18/27; ‘Ankabut, 29/45.

¹² Ma’idah, 5/67.

¹³ M439, Muslim, Iman, 287.

¹⁴ B4612, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ma’idah) 7.

¹⁵ Yunus, 10/15.

¹⁶ Haqqah, 69/44-47.

¹⁷ ‘Ankabut, 29/48; Qiyamah, 75/16-9.

¹⁸ M2950, Muslim, Hajj, 147.

¹⁹ An’am, 6/50, 106; Yunus, 10/109; A’raf, 7/203.

²⁰ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/20; Ma’idah, 5/92, 99; Nahl, 16/35, 82.

²¹ HM17060 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 100.

²² M3696, Muslim, Talaq, 35; T3318, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 66.

²³ An’am, 6/66, 104-107; Ghashiyah, 88/21-22.



people to the true path so much that Allah (swt) counseled him several times²⁴ by saying, “[Prophet], are you going to worry yourself to death because they will not believe?”²⁵ The genuine reason behind this was the boundless mercy of our Prophet. It was for this reason that he fervently wanted his uncle to embrace Islam²⁶ and was willing to lead the funeral prayer of the leader of the hypocrites.²⁷

The Prophet (saw), besides reciting and explaining the revelation, had also the important responsibility of teaching people wisdom and many other object lessons that they did not know.²⁸ Teaching the Book of Allah was mostly regarding the practice. This is because he was a wise teacher who was equipped with knowledge and wisdom. According to some accounts, he proclaimed that he was sent as a teacher.²⁹

One of the responsibilities of the Prophet (saw) was to explain the revealed verses. Allah Almighty said, “We have sent down the message to you too [Prophet], so that you can explain to people what was sent for them, so that they may reflect.”³⁰ The Prophet (saw) explained the Holy Qur’an to the people through various methods. He sometimes explained the meaning of ambiguous verses, and at other times he explained the general rulings drawn from the verses. For instance, the following Qur’anic verse has a symbolic meaning in relation to fasting: “Eat and drink until

²⁴ ‘Abasa, 80/1-2; Kahf, 18/6; Fatir, 35/8.

²⁵ Shu’ara’, 26/3-4.

²⁶ Qasas, 28/56; Tawbah, 9/113.

²⁷ Tawbah, 9/84.

²⁸ Baqarah, 2/129, 151; Al-i Imran, 3/164; Jum’a, 62/2.

²⁹ M3690, Muslim, Talaq, 29; IM229, Ibn Majah, Sunnah, 17.

³⁰ Nahl, 16/44.



the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black."³¹ The Companion 'Adi b. Hatim (ra) took its meaning literally. He put a black and white thread under his pillow and tried to determine the time for imsāk by looking at them. Because he was not successful in doing that, he consulted the Prophet about it and the Prophet (saw) explained it by saying, "*It is the darkness of the night and the whiteness of the day.*"³²

When the Qur'anic verse, "*It is those who have faith and do not mix their faith with idolatry,*"³³ was revealed, it was very hard for the Companions of Allah's Messenger to understand it. They said, "Which of us has not confused his belief with idolatry?" Allah's Messenger told them, "*This verse does not mean that. Did you not hear Luqman's statement to his son, 'Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed.'*"³⁴ Then he explained that the verse refers to polytheism.³⁵

Still, the Companions (ra) who witnessed the descent of the revelation over the years did not have that much difficulty in understanding most of the meaning of the verses. After all, the Prophet (saw) explained only a small portion of the Holy Qur'an. Over the twenty-three years of revelation, the Holy Qur'an was the most important agenda in their lives, and it was part and parcel of their daily lives. Therefore, its meaning was mostly obvious to the Companions (ra) and some of the sūras that were revealed

³¹ Baqarah, 2/187.

³² B4510, Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Baqarah) 28; M2533, Muslim, Siyam, 33.

³³ An'am, 6/82.

³⁴ Luqman, 31/13.

³⁵ B4776, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Luqman) 1.



were never elucidated upon at all by the Prophet. In other cases only a few verses of some sūras were explained by the Prophet (saw).

The tafsir (explanation) of the Holy Qur'an could be seen in the deeds, moral attitudes, and tacit approvals of the Prophet (saw). In other words, the Prophet preferred to explain the Holy Qur'an not with words but deeds. The Sunnah, which covers all aspects of life from faith to prayer, from education to morality, is indeed a practical explanation of the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, the Prophetic tafsīr is not only to be found in the tafsīr sections of the ḥadīth works, but in the entire Sunnah. In a way, the Holy Qur'an is the representation of the divine will, and the Prophetic Sunnah is the enactment of that representation.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) internalized the divine message in such a way that he spent whole nights praying, sometimes in tears. There were times when he recited the Holy Qur'an while standing until his feet became swollen.³⁶ Each verse that he recited pleased him or made him sad. While he recited the verses related to prayer, he would pray to Allah (swt), and while he recited verses with regard to admonishment he would take refuge with Allah.³⁷ Because he was the last prophet he had grave concerns not only for his ummah, and but also for all humanity. He enjoyed listening to the Holy Qur'an from some of his Companions (ra). While he was listening to them, he contemplated the meaning of the verses, and sometimes he was unable to

³⁶ M7124-M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 79-81; B1130, Bukhari, Tahajjud, 6.

³⁷ M1814, Muslim, Musafirin, 203.



bear the burden of this because of the profound content of the verses. Once, while he was listening to the following Qur'anic verse read by 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), "*What will they do when We bring a witness from each community, with you [Muhammad] as a witness against these people?*"³⁸ the seal of the prophets (saw) spoke with tears running down his cheeks, "*It is enough already.*"³⁹ As a result of intense thinking and genuine concern, the Prophet (saw) admitted that some of the sūras had aged him. When his closest Companion, Abu Bakr (ra) said, "O Messenger of Allah, your hair has turned grey." He replied by saying, "*The Suras of Hud, al-Waqi'ah, al-Mursalat, al-Naba' and al-Takwir have aged me.*"⁴⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was aware that the divine words were the ones that gave life to mankind,⁴¹ and granted them their spirit.⁴² According to 'Umar (ra), the Prophet said referring to the Holy Qur'an, "*Verily, with this book, Allah may elevate some communities and denigrate others.*"⁴³

In disseminating the message of Islam, the Messenger of Allah (saw) adopted the Qur'anic method of teaching through wisdom and beautiful words. Moreover, he used the best possible methods in his struggle against his enemies and interlocutors.⁴⁴ The Holy Qur'an was the foundation of his worldview, and it gave him guidance how to fight

³⁸ Nisa, 4/41.

³⁹ B5050, Bukhari, Fadha'il al-Qur'an, 33; M1867, Muslim, Musafirin, 247.

⁴⁰ T3297, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 56.

⁴¹ Anfal, 8/24.

⁴² Shura, 42/52.

⁴³ M1897, Muslim, Musafirin, 269.

⁴⁴ Nahl, 16/125-7.



the infidels.⁴⁵ After starting to convey the revelations to people in Mecca, it upset the Messenger of Mercy to see in the following years that his people did not heed the divine message. This situation was expressed in the words of revelation as: “*O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur’ān as [a thing] abandoned.*”⁴⁶

The Holy Qur’an was the most important source and support for our Prophet and for those who embraced Islam. The new society of Medina was constructed upon Qur’anic principles, and molded by the Prophetic tradition. The basic education that Muslims received in the Mosque of the Prophet was Qur’anic education. The Messenger of Mercy recited the sūras before, during, and after the prayers several times, so that some of the Companions (ra) might have the opportunity to memorize them. The majority of his Friday sermons were recitations of Qur’anic verses on specific subjects.⁴⁷ As a result, only a small number of the Prophet’s Friday sermons that have been recorded and related to us.

For instance, the daughter of Haritha b. Nu‘man (ra), who was known for the donations of her houses to the Prophet (saw), said, “I memorized Surah al-Qaf by listening to it from the Prophet. He recited it during every Friday Prayer.”⁴⁸ According to Jabir b. Samura (ra), the Prophet (saw) read his sermons while standing, and sat down between the two portions of the sermon. He recited

⁴⁵ Furqan, 25/52.

⁴⁶ Furqan, 25/30.

⁴⁷ D1101, Abu Dawud, Salat, 221, 223.

⁴⁸ M2014, Muslim, Jum’a, 51.



various verses and invoked the name of Allah (swt).⁴⁹ The Messenger of Allah recited the sūras of al-Sajdah and al-Insan during the Friday fajr prayers,⁵⁰ and recited the sūras of al-Jum‘a, and al-Munafiqin, and at other times, al-A‘la and al-Ghashiya.⁵¹ On another occasion, he divided the Surah al-A‘raf into two and recited it during the maghrib prayer.⁵² On another occasion, he recited the Surah al-Qaf, and Ya-Sin during the Fajr prayer.⁵³ The Messenger of Allah (saw) recited the Holy Qur’an in accordance with its spirit, and impressed its listeners. For example, when Jubayr b. Mut‘im came to negotiate about prisoners of war with the Messenger of Allah (saw), he had been leading the maghrib prayer, and reciting the Surah al-Tur. Although he was not a Muslim, Jabir was very impressed and influenced by the Qur’anic recitation of the Prophet so much that he said, “I felt as if my heart was going to burst up.”⁵⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was almost like an embodiment of the Holy Qur’an. He was the living example of the Qur’anic explications. When ‘A’isha (ra), who lived with the Prophet under the same roof, was asked about his morality, she said, “Do you not recite the Holy Qur’an? The character of Messenger of Allah was the Holy Qur’an.”⁵⁵ On another occasion,⁵⁶ ‘A’isha (ra) reminded the Muslims of the Qur’anic verse, “*Truly you have a strong morality,*”⁵⁷

⁴⁹ IM1106, Ibn Majah, Iqama, 85.

⁵⁰ B1068, Bukhari, Sujud al-Qur’an, 2.

⁵¹ N1423, Nasa’i, Jum‘a, 39.

⁵² N992, Nasa’i, Iftitah, 67.

⁵³ HM16510, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 35.

⁵⁴ HM16907, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 85.

⁵⁵ D1342, Abu Dawud, Tatawwu‘, 26.

⁵⁶ IM2333, Ibn Majah, Ahkam, 14; HM25108, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 91.

⁵⁷ Qalam, 68/4.



and read the first nine verses of the Surah al-Mu'minun.⁵⁸

When she was asked how the Prophet spent his nights, she replied with the Surah al-Muzzammil.⁵⁹ All of this referred to the fact the Prophet (saw) was the living Qur'an.

The words of 'A'isha (ra) were sure signs that the words, deeds, and approvals of the Prophet (saw) all stemmed from the Holy Qur'an. Its morality would cover them all. Thus, the Sunnah is the application of the Holy Qur'an in real life, and a perfect demonstration of the life style of Islam.

In short, the Noble Prophet was with the Holy Qur'an day and night in the full sense of the term. When he went to bed, he recited the Surah al-Nas and al-Falaq,⁶⁰ and when he woke up for the midnight prayer, he recited the last ten verses of the Surah Al-i 'Imran.⁶¹ While the Holy Qur'an mirrored the Prophet in every sense, including his feelings, he mirrored the Holy Qur'an in his every word and deed throughout his twenty-three years of prophethood. Therefore, the life shaped by the position of prophethood was a life that was shaped by the Holy Qur'an, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) was truly the living Qur'an.

⁵⁸ NK11350, Nasa'i, Sunan al-Kubra, VI, 412.

⁵⁹ M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

⁶⁰ B6319, Bukhari, Da'awat, 12.

⁶¹ B4572, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-i 'Imran) 20; M1789, Muslim, Musafirin, 182.



THE PERSON WHO MERITS THE MOST RESPECT

Throughout history, the Ka'bah was damaged numerous times for various reasons and continuously repaired by the tribes living in Mecca. During the life of the Prophet, the Ka'bah, which had been repaired the last time by the tribe of Jurhum, was extensively damaged by rain water and floods. At that point the Prophet's tribe of Quraysh decided to restore it. Every tribe of Quraysh collected stones and built the wall of the Ka'bah up to the level where the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) was going to be placed. When it was time to put the Stone in its place a major disagreement arose among the tribes. Nobody wanted to share the honor of placing this sacred stone, which had been set in place by Abraham in order to show the starting point of the circumambulation. This disagreement almost led to a war among the tribes. In fact, the tribe of Banu 'Abd al-Qadir brought a bowl filled with blood and made a



covenant to fight to the death with the tribe of Banu ‘Adi’ by putting their hands into the blood. Afterwards, the tribes of Quraysh waited for four or five days and then gathered in the Masjid al-Haram for consultation, but still could not reach an agreement. Finally, upon the advice of Abu Umayya b. Mughira, the oldest member of the Quraysh, they decided to accept the arbitration of the first person who would enter Masjid al-Haram. The first person who entered from the Banu Shayba gate of Masjid al-Haram was the young Muhammad (saw) whom they used to call “al-āmin” (trustworthy). Therefore, upon seeing him they expressed their pleasure by joyfully exclaiming that “it is the trustworthy man; it is Muhammad.” When they explained to him their disagreement and asked him to be an arbitrator among them, Muhammad (saw) offered them a solution proving how accurate they were in trusting him to be able to make everyone content. He put the Black Stone in the middle of a piece of cloth, and asked a representative of each tribe to hold one of the edges of the cloth and raise it close to its place. Then Muhammad al-Amin picked it up with his noble hands and restored it to its original place.¹ Everybody was pleased with this solution and nobody objected. This was how the Prophet, who was highly respected by the Quraysh, prevented a civil war from breaking out among the Quraysh with his honesty, justice, and noble character.



¹ HS2/18, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 18-19; BS3991, Bayhaqi, Shu‘ab al-iman, III, 436, BS9289, Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, V, 116.



Even though being a member of an honorable tribe helped make a person respectable in the Arabian peninsula at that time, moral qualities, such as being a trustworthy person, caring for kith and kin, generosity, protecting the weak and the orphans, and behaving well with the neighbor, also enabled a person to gain a high status in this community.²

In addition to being a member of the most honorable tribe of his time,³ his superior features and moral qualities made the Prophet (saw) a privileged person of his community. Despite growing up as an orphan, working as a shepherd, and doing a trade to earn his living, Muhammad (saw) reached a privileged and respected place in his community. This cannot be explained simply by his being a member of an honorable tribe. As observed in his arbitration in the incident of the Black Stone, his trustworthiness was one of the major factors that made him gain the respect of his community. In fact, Khadijah (ra), who was engaged in business at the time, preferred him as a business partner because of his trustworthiness. After working with him for a while, she began to admire him because she had the opportunity to observe his moral qualities, which made him gain such a respected place in the community. In a period when moral values had degenerated, Khadijah, who herself was highly moral, appreciated his righteousness and proposed marriage to him.

Khadijah, who married the Prophet (saw) because of his good character, emphasized such values when she had

² HM15585, Ibn Hanbal, III, 425.

³ B3668, Bukhari, Fadhā'il ashāb al-nabī, 5.



to console him when he was disconcerted after receiving the first revelation. She told him that Allah (swt) would not disgrace him because of his upright character and personality, “Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.”⁴

The Prophet (saw), who had been respected so much, faced various objections by his community when he began to convey the commands of Islam. Even though Meccans had no worries about his character and morality because of their trust in him and his respected position among them, Even though they did not reject the superior values of his personality,⁵ they still went on to accuse him of being mad, being a poet, being a magician, and being confused. Whereas when the verse, “Warn your nearest kinsfolk,”⁶ was revealed, Allah’s Messenger went out, ascended the hill of al-Safa, and addressed the people of Quraysh who gathered there, “*What do you say, If I inform you that cavalymen are proceeding up the side of this mountain, would you believe me?*” They replied, “We have never heard you tell a lie.”⁷

Even though they expressed their trust in him, it did not suit their interest to accept the Prophet’s call. In fact, the Holy Qur’an describes their state as follows: “*We know well that what they say grieves you [Prophet]. It is not you they disbelieve: the evildoers reject Allah’s revelation.*”⁸

⁴ B3 Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

⁵ B7, Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

⁶ Shu’ara’, 26/214.

⁷ B4971, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Lahab) 1.

⁸ An’am, 6/33.



When they realized that they needed to undermine the Prophet's respected position among the people in order to neutralize his message, they tried to develop some new arguments, such as *"The disbelievers think it strange that a prophet of their own people has come to warn them: they say, 'He is just a lying sorcerer. How can he claim that all the gods are but one Allah? What an astonishing thing [to claim]!' Their leaders depart, saying, 'Walk away! Stay faithful to your gods! That is what you must do. We did not hear any such claim in the last religion: it is all an invention. Was the message sent only to him out of all of us?' Rather, they are in doubt about My message. Rather, they have not yet tasted My punishment."*⁹

It was reported that the Roman Emperor Heraclius invited Abu Sufyan and his friends, who had come to Damascus for trade, to his palace in order to get information about the person who had declared his prophecy. The following acknowledgement by Abu Sufyan, who had not become a Muslim at that time, about the Prophet clearly shows how the polytheists were not able to deny the respectability of Allah's Messenger: "By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labeling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet. When Heraclius asked me about the Prophet, 'Does he break his promises?' I replied, 'No. We have a truce with him but we do not know what he will do in it.'" It is remarkable that Abu Sufyan continued his statement by saying, "I could not find an opportunity to say anything against him except that."¹⁰

⁹ Sad, 38/4-8.

¹⁰ B7, Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1; M4607, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 74.



The truce that Abu Sufyan mentioned was the Treaty of Hudaibiyya. One of the articles of this Treaty was about returning to the polytheists those people who would convert to Islam, leave the polytheists, and join the Muslim side. The Treaty had been drafted but was not yet completed and signed. Just then, Abu Jandal (ra), who had been chained and tortured after embracing Islam, was able to run away and take refuge among the Muslims. Abu Jandal was the son of Suhayl b. ‘Amir, the person who conducted the Treaty negotiations with the Muslims on behalf of the polytheists. Suhayl asked the Prophet to return his son to him in accordance with the conditions of the Treaty. Even though the agreement had not been signed, Allah’s Messenger did not break his promise and returned Abu Jandal to the polytheists.¹¹ This incident also proves the falsity of Abu Sufyan’s above-mentioned claim that the Prophet’s attitude toward the truce was not clear.

The Prophet (saw)’s respected and honorable position in his society was the same among not only the polytheists but also among the Jews and the Christians. ‘Abd Allah b. Salam, a Jewish scholar who came to visit the Prophet when he came to Medina, said after gazing upon the face of the Messenger of Allah (saw), “I knew that this face was not the face of a liar.”¹² This wise man who could read the Prophet’s respectability from his face embraced Islam soon after this incident. Likewise, the Jews appeal to the Prophet

¹¹ B2731 Bukhari, Shurut, 15; B2700 Bukhari, Sulh, 7.

¹² T2485, Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 42; DM1494, Darimi, Salat, 156.



as an arbitrator in their own disagreements is also worth mentioning to demonstrate their trust in him.¹³

Revelations sent to the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasize his distinguished status in the presence of Allah (swt). After receiving the prophethood his honorable position in society was strengthened by these verses This Qur'anic emphasis further elevated the Prophet's position among the Muslims. The warning to the believers not to push themselves forward in the presence of Allah's Messenger,¹⁴ the command not to raise their voices in his presence,¹⁵ the statement that he was not just any one of them but was Allah's Messenger and the seal of the prophets,¹⁶ the command to obey him along with obedience to Allah,¹⁷ the statement that following him will be a reason to gain Allah's love,¹⁸ the command to let him decide between them in all matters of dispute and find no resistance in their souls to his decisions, accepting them totally,¹⁹ and the establishment of a link between loving the Prophet more than everything and the faith²⁰ strengthened his respectability and honor among his addressees. In this way, Allah Almighty placed the distinguished position of His Messenger in His presence within the hearts of the believers.

This honorable status given to the Prophet (saw) by Islam shaped the Companions' relationship with him. The

¹³ B6819, Bukhari, Hudud, 24; M4437, Muslim, Hudud, 26.

¹⁴ Hujurat, 49/1.

¹⁵ Hujurat, 49/2.

¹⁶ Ahzab, 33/40.

¹⁷ Nur, 24/52, 54.

¹⁸ Al-i 'Imran, 3/31.

¹⁹ Nisa, 4/65.

²⁰ B15, Bukhari, Iman, 8; M169, Muslim, Iman, 70.



statement, “May my mother and father be sacrificed for you,” was used by the Companions (ra) in their talks with the Prophet (saw) as an expression of their adherence to him, while the statement, “Allah and His Messenger knows better,” was an expression of their respect and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. In this context, the Companions (ra), who believed and obeyed the divine commands and prohibitions conveyed by the Prophet (saw), not only avoided disrespect toward him but also tried to prevent the rude behaviors of others, such as that of some bedouins.²¹ This was because they were clearly aware of the following Qur’anic warning in regard to offending Allah and His Messenger: “*Those who insult Allah and His Messenger will be rejected by Allah in this world and the next—He has prepared a humiliating torment for them.*”²²

The following observation of ‘Urwa b. Mas‘ud, a prominent member of Quraysh, which he made to the people of Quraysh when he returned from the talks for the Hudaibiyya Treaty was a clear expression of the respectability of the Prophet in the presence of his addressees, “O people! By Allah, I have been to the kings and to Caesar, Khosrau and Negus, yet I have never seen any of them respected by his courtiers as much as Muhammad is respected by his Companions.”²³ Still, Allah’s Messenger never made his respectable and honorable position a means of pride and arrogance. On the contrary, he specifically warned believers about avoiding

²¹ M2451, Muslim, Zakat, 143, B3344, Bukhari, Anbiya, 6.

²² Ahzab, 33/57.

²³ B2731 Bukhari, Shurut, 15.



the behaviors and extreme expressions of veneration which might lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.²⁴

The Companions' respect and love for the Prophet were strengthened by the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the prophetic teaching advising Muslims to send blessings upon him. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "*Allah and His angels bless the Prophet –so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.*"²⁵ Allah's Messenger advised believers to send blessings upon him with the following statements: "*The person closest to me on the Day of Judgement is the one who sent the most blessings upon me*"²⁶ and "... *But invoke blessings on me, for your blessings reach me wherever you may be.*"²⁷ Thus, sending blessings upon the Prophet (saw) is not simply a remembrance or invocation to Allah for the Prophet. It is a means of remembering him, his teachings, and his Sunnah. Believers who send praises and blessings upon the Prophet (saw) should not confine themselves to remembering him but should shape their lives in accordance with his teachings and try to become an umma worthy of him. In this context, sending blessings upon the Prophet and remembering him by following the believing generations after the age of the Companions (ra) is very important in order to ensure the continuance of his spiritual respectability, his authority, and the strong connection to him by his followers.

²⁴ D2042, Abu Dawud, Manasik, 96, 97; B3445, Bukhari, Anbiya, 48; D5230, Abu Dawud, Adab, 151,152; HM22554, Ibn Hanbal, V, 255.

²⁵ Ahzab, 33/56.

²⁶ T484 Tirmidhi, Witr, 21.

²⁷ D2042, Abu Dawud, Manasik, 96, 97.



Allah Almighty has given His final Messenger a distinguished and honorable status among His prophets. He took a pledge from the prophets to believe in His final Messenger whom He would send after the Scripture and wisdom that He gave them, and this final Messenger would confirm them.²⁸ As for believers, they have been commanded to believe in all the prophets of their Lord without making any distinction among any of them.²⁹ This is why all the prophets are respectable in the eyes of Muslims. Muslims believe in all the prophets and are careful not to show the slightest disrespect to them just as they believe in their Prophet and show him respect.

²⁸ Al-i 'Imran, 3/81.

²⁹ Baqarah, 2/136, 285.



PREEMINENCE OF THE LAST PROPHET

One day when the Prophet (saw) was sitting with his Companions (ra) in Medina, a Jew came and complained to him, “O Father of Qasim! One of your friends slapped me in the face.” This man was the Jewish scholar Finhas who had said, “So Allah is poor, while we are rich,” and by doing so had incurred the anger of Abu Bakr for mocking the verse that spoke of the believers doing a good trade by giving their money as a loan to Allah,¹ in other words, spent their wealth for the sake of Allah (swt).² This man had previously made another complaint about Abu Bakr (ra) to the Prophet (saw).³

Fihnās’ complaint was again about Abu Bakr. After his complaint, Allah’s Messenger called Abu Bakr and asked him, “*Did you hit this Jew?*” Abu Bakr (ra) confessed that he had hit him.

¹ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/181.

² Baqarah, 2/245.

³ TT7/442, Tabari, Jami‘ al-bayan, VII, 442.



According to the reports of Abu Hurayra (ra) and Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ra), a man from the Ansar had heard a Jew taking an oath by saying, "By Him Who made Moses superior to the worlds...," when he received an offer that he did not like for his merchandise that he was trying to sell. Then the man started to argue with the Jew saying, "O vile man! Did Allah make Moses superior even to the Muhammad?" and he said to the Jew, "By Him Who made Muhammad superior to the worlds..."⁴ The man of Ansar then lifted his hand and slapped the face of Finhas. Since non-Muslims were under the protection of Muslims, according to the agreement between Muslims and the Jews, Finhas took his case with the Companion to the Prophet (saw). After listening to both sides, Allah's Messenger made the following warnings: "*Do not make any distinction among the prophets of Allah*"⁵ and "*Do not give me superiority over Moses.*"⁶ It was obvious that he did not want his followers to put the prophets in any hierarchical scheme.



All the prophets chosen by Allah (swt) were equal in respect to creed and the universal essence of the divine message they brought. Even though Allah Almighty bestowed on some of his prophets more blessings than others in respect of knowledge, and spiritual and material levels, there was no difference between them in regard to being prophets of Allah. A believer who listens to the

⁴ M6153, Muslim, Fadha'il, 160; M6151, Muslim, Fadha'il, 159; B2412, Bukhari, Khusumat, 1.

⁵ M6151, Muslim, Fadha'il, 159.

⁶ B2411, Bukhari, Khusumat, 1.



Holy Qur'an believes that all the prophets were chosen by Allah (swt) and makes no distinction between them. Allah Almighty explained what was appropriate for a believer to believe concerning this issue by stating in the Holy Qur'an, *"They all believe in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers,"*⁷ *"those who believe in the revelation sent down to you [Muhammad], and in what was sent before you,"*⁸ and *"We make no distinction between any of His Messengers."*⁹ By saying, *"None of you should say that I am better than Yunus (i.e. Jonah),"*¹⁰ Allah's Messenger wanted his followers not to perceive the prophets as competitors. He used the above example because it is remarkable to think that Allah's Messenger did not regard himself superior to the Prophet Jonah, who had been swallowed by a whale because of his impatience and about whom Allah Almighty said, *"Do not be like the man in the whale."*¹¹

On the other hand, Allah Almighty gave some of His Messengers only the mission of calling people to His religion, while He sent to others Scrolls, Scriptures and law. Some of the prophets like Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, and Muhammad (saw) were given the title of "ulul al-'azm (messengers of firm resolve)"¹² for their greatness and their tenacity in preaching Allah's message. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an that Allah (swt) spoke to some prophets like Musa,¹³ raised others in rank, gave Jesus clear signs

⁷ Baqarah, 2/285.

⁸ Baqarah, 2/4.

⁹ Baqarah, 2/136, 285.

¹⁰ B3412, Bukhari, Anbiya', 35.

¹¹ Qalam, 68/49.

¹² Ahqaf, 46/35.

¹³ Qasas, 28/30.



and strengthened him with Ruh al-Quds (the Holy Spirit), and equipped some others by various abilities.¹⁴ Likewise, when Allah the Almighty says, “*Your Lord knows best about everyone in the heavens and the earth. We gave some prophets more than others: We gave David a book [of Psalms],*”¹⁵ He is reminding believers that He elevated David who was earning his livelihood by working as an ironsmith¹⁶ to a high position by giving him sovereignty and wisdom.¹⁷

In the Surah al-Baqarah where the monotheistic struggles of the prophets like Abraham, Jesus, and Moses are reported, Allah Almighty praises the Prophet by saying, “*These are the revelations of Allah which We recite to you [Muhammad] with the truth, and you truly are one of the messengers.*”¹⁸ Moreover, according to the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty took a pledge from all the prophets, and therefore from those who followed those prophets, that they must believe and support the messenger who comes confirming the revelation they were given.¹⁹

The prophets who were equal in respect to the essence of the divine call that they brought had certain characteristics in matters related to the world and the Hereafter. In this context, it is true that the Prophet (saw) had certain features and privileges distinguishing him from the other prophets. Those privileges will naturally be valid for his ummah as well.²⁰ For example according to a tradition

¹⁴ Baqarah, 2/253.

¹⁵ Isra, 17/55.

¹⁶ Anbiya, 21/80.

¹⁷ Baqara, 2/251.

¹⁸ Baqarah, 2/252.

¹⁹ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/81.

²⁰ T1553 Tirmidhi, Siyar, 5.



transmitted by Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“I have been given five things which were not given to anyone of the prophets before me. These are: Allah made me victorious by awe (by Him frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month’s journey. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing with which to perform tayammum. Therefore, my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due. The booty has been made ḥalāl (lawful) for me (and was not made so for anyone else). Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation exclusively but I have been sent to all of mankind. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection.)”*²¹

In another tradition, Allah’s Messenger (saw) added to the above mentioned features, *“...I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning (jawāmi‘ al-kalim) ...and the line of prophets is closed with me.”*²²

As understood from the narration above, Allah’s Messenger was supported by Allah (swt) with the ability to imbue awe to the hearts of the enemy as in the Battle of the Khandaq.²³ While believers in other divine religions were allowed to worship in their special places, Allah Almighty permitted the believers in the Prophet, as a favor, to worship at any clean place and to perform the tayammun (dry wudu’) by using clean earth when needed. Allah Almighty, who knew the believers’ weaknesses and needs,²⁴ made booty legal for them.²⁵

²¹ B438, Bukhari, Salat, 56; M1163, Muslim, Masajid, 3.

²² M1167, Muslim, Masajid, 5.

²³ Ahzab, 33/26.

²⁴ B3124, Bukhari, Fardh al-khumus, 8.

²⁵ Anfal, 8/69.



Some scholars interpreted the feature of being jawāmi‘ al-kalim, which was given to the Prophet and was manifest in the Holy Qur’an and the ḥadīths, as expressing comprehensive meanings with concise and literary speeches.

The power of intercession stated in the narration is not only given to the Prophet Muhammad but also to other prophets, to those who had taken from the Most Merciful a covenant,²⁶ those who testify to the truth,²⁷ and those whom Allah has permitted, (i.e.) to whom He wills and approves.²⁸ But the Messenger of Allah (saw) will be the first intercessor, the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah),²⁹ and the one with the greatest number of believers compared to other prophets.³⁰ This honorable position bestowed upon our Prophet is “maqam mahmud” (the praised status).³¹ This is the rank where the Prophet (saw) will intercede for his ummah.³²

The Prophet (saw), who was the Messenger of Allah sent as a mercy to all people,³³ and to bring good news and warning to all people³⁴ and jinns,³⁵ was the last ring in the chain of prophets.³⁶ By saying, “*The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their*

²⁶ Maryam, 19/87.

²⁷ Zukhruf, 43/86.

²⁸ Najm, 53/26.

²⁹ M5940 Muslim, Fadha’il, 3.

³⁰ M485 Muslim, Iman, 332.

³¹ Isra, 17/79.

³² HM9682 Ibn Hanbal, II, 441.

³³ Anbiya’, 21/107.

³⁴ Saba’, 34/28.

³⁵ DM47, Darimi, Muqaddima, 8.

³⁶ Ahzab, 33/40.



*religion is one,*³⁷ Allah's Messenger expressed his position among other prophets. His statement about the institution of prophethood that had continued throughout human history and the explanation of how he was linked to this chain gives us an important and archetypal worldview.

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) was distinguished from earlier prophets by the miraculous Qur'an which was given to him. In fact, every prophet was given unique miracles in accordance with the level of development of his time and region and, of course, those miracles naturally ended with the end of their lives. However, the miracle of the Holy Qur'an did not end with the death of the the Prophet. On the contrary, it will continue to exist as his miracle until the Last Day. This is why Allah's Messenger said, *"Every Prophet was given miracles whereby people believed, but what I have been given is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other prophets on the Day of Resurrection."*³⁸

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an is proof that the sources of the Prophet's knowledge were not limited to the human intellect and the five senses, and that divine revelation was among his sources. The fact that the Prophet (saw) was the recipient of divine revelation is the most important factor that distinguishes him from other people.

Revelation sometimes manifested itself as divine help when he was distressed. Allah Almighty helped him during his emigration to Medina with invisible forces,³⁹ during

³⁷ B3443, Bukhari, *Anbiya'*, 48.

³⁸ B4981, Bukhari, *Fadha'il al-Qur'an*, 1.

³⁹ *Tawbah*, 9/40.



the Battle of the Khandaq by sending a violent wind and invisible forces⁴⁰ and by putting panic into the hearts of the non-believers.⁴¹ It is stated in the Holy Qur'an that Allah supported the believers with five thousand angels in the Battle of Badr.⁴² Likewise, the Prophet was informed through divine revelation that the Byzantines, who had been defeated by the Persians, would soon be victorious against the Persians⁴³ and that Mecca would be conquered.⁴⁴ He was shown the greatest signs of his Lord during his night journey (Isra') and ascension to the heavens (Mi'raj).⁴⁵

The distinguishing features of Allah's Messenger were not, of course, limited to miraculous matters. One of his most distinguishing features was his humble and simple life. When Allah, the Almighty gave His Messenger the right to choose between the bounty of this world and the favors in His presence, the Prophet (saw) chose the one with his Lord.⁴⁶ In fact, his preference to become a servant prophet instead of a king prophet was a reflection of this choice.⁴⁷ All these features and superior characteristics of Allah's Messenger have received great attention within his ummah and a rich and valuable literature recounting his distinguishing features and characteristics known as "khasa'is al-nabi" (the distinguishing features of the Prophet) and "dala'il al-nubuwwa" (the proofs of the prophethood) has appeared. Still, perhaps it would be

⁴⁰ Ahzab, 33/9.

⁴¹ Ahzab, 33/26.

⁴² Al-i 'Imran, 3/13, 123-127.

⁴³ Rum, 30/1-4.

⁴⁴ Fath, 48/27.

⁴⁵ Isra', 17/1; Najm, 53/18.

⁴⁶ M6170, Muslim, Fadha'il al-sahaba, 2.

⁴⁷ MK10686, Tabarani, Mu'jam al-kabir, X, 288.



more apt to look for the greatness and preeminence of the Prophet (saw) in his ability to purify all the moral and spiritual illnesses of pre-Islamic society and his ability to uplift such a society, which had gone far astray, to the highest morals and values. Thus, perhaps the Prophet's greatest miracle was that even though extraordinary miracles had been given to previous prophets to help them deliver the divine message to the people of their time, his success was the construction of an exemplary society in the short time of twenty-three years by using not extraordinary miracles but just human conditions.

When introducing His Messenger, Allah Almighty emphasized in the Holy Qur'an that he truly had "a strong character."⁴⁸ One of the most important features that the Prophet, who has been sent to all humanity, had was his strong character. We can briefly mention some of his distinguishing characteristics through the words of his Companions (ra) who knew him the best:

He was the one who was the farthest from the sins of the people.⁴⁹

There was no one who was more compassionate to his family than he was.⁵⁰

He was the best and most benevolent of people.⁵¹

None was more apt to seek council of his Companions (ra) than the Messenger of Allah (saw).⁵²

⁴⁸ Qalam, 68/4.

⁴⁹ M6045, Muslim, Fadha'il, 77.

⁵⁰ M6026, Muslim, Fadha'il, 63.

⁵¹ M2481, Muslim, Zakat, 167.

⁵² T1714, Tirmidhi, Jihad, 35.



Throughout his life, he never treated his wives or his servants in a way that would hurt them.⁵³

In short, *“Allah’s Messenger had the best character among all of the people.”*⁵⁴

⁵³ M6050 Muslim, Fadha’il, 79.

⁵⁴ T2015, Tirmidhi, Birr, 69; M6015, Muslim, Fadha’il, 54.



“CALL ME THE SERVANT AND MESSENGER OF ALLAH”

The Prophet (saw), who had left Medina for the conquest of Mecca, was approaching Mecca supported by allied tribes with a magnificent army of ten thousand men. When the news of the Muslim army arrived in Mecca, some prominent members of Mecca, such as Abu Sufyan, Hakim b. Hizam, and Budayl b. Warqa' set out toward the route of the Muslim army in order to investigate the Muslim campsite for further information. When the army arrived at the valley called Marr al-Zahran, Allah's Messenger commanded his soldiers to set up as many separate campfires as possible in order to cause fear among the Meccans. Indeed, Abu Sufyan and his companions began to panic when they saw the campfires and were also soon recognized by Muslim scouts. When they were caught and brought to the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abu Sufyan embraced the religion of Islam. When the Prophet (saw) proceeded



toward Mecca, he commanded his uncle ‘Abbas to place himself and Abu Sufyan at the entrance of the passage where all the soldiers would pass in order for Abu Sufyan to be able to see the magnificence of the Muslim forces and be predisposed to them. First, the military units of allied Arab tribes of the Muslim army began to pass before him. After that, the military units of the Ansar, and then the military units of the Muhajirun,¹ among them the Prophet (saw) in his armor, appeared.²

In the presence of such a magnificent army, Abu Sufyan asked in surprise, “O ‘Abbas! Who are these?” ‘Abbas replied, “They are Allah’s Messenger and his Companions (ra) formed from the first Muhajirun and Ansar.” Abu Sufyan, who witnessed the obedience and loyalty of the Companions (ra) to the Prophet and the discipline of his army, expressed his astonishment to ‘Abbas by saying, “By Allah! The sultanate of the son of your brother has grown so much.” ‘Abbas said in response, “No! By Allah! This is not a sultanate but prophethood.”³



*T*hese blessings regarded by Abu Sufyan as a “sultanate” were defined by the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas as “prophethood” because what they saw that day could be attained neither by individual efforts nor by a sultanate. He was a prophet and was given the mission of prophethood. He had fulfilled all the requirements of the

¹ MS36889, Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Maghazi, 34.

² B4280 Bukhari, Maghazi, 49; WM2/814, Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 814.

³ MS36889, Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Maghazi, 34.



mission given to him and thus the Exalted Will that gave him this mission provided him with all sorts of assistance and consequently such a situation emerged. While because of his prophethood, he had been forced out of the city where he was born and grew up, he was able to acquire, for the same reason, tremendous strength in a very short time and thus he gained many loyal adherents and returned to Mecca to conquer it.

Muhammad (saw), who was given the mission of prophethood, which is a blessing given only to the chosen servants of Allah (swt)⁴ and not to those who crave it, was sent to the worlds as a mercy.⁵ The first manifestation of this mercy was clearly seen in the believing community he founded. In fact, Allah’s Messenger, who had transformed his Companions (ra) by saving them from the darkness of the age of Ignorance and making them into a virtuous society, was coming back to Mecca. The polytheists observing this scene of the Muslim armed forces were astounded by it. The magnificent transformation expressed by Abu Sufyan was not because of the sultanate of a leader who gathered many loyal adherents behind him, but rather it was the manifestation of the great successes achieved because of the Prophet’s characteristics of being an eminent human and a leader with the endorsement of prophethood.

In contrast to the polytheists’ inconceivable perceptions of prophethood, it is true that while the Holy Qur’an declares that Muhammad (saw) was a “rasūl/nabī (messenger/prophet),” it also reminds us right after this statement that

⁴ Shura’, 42/13.

⁵ Anbiya, 21/107; Nahl, 16/64.



he was a mortal human being.⁶ He was neither an angel nor a poet nor a bewitched man as the Meccan polytheists had labeled him.⁷ According to the famous expression of the Holy Qur'an, he was a basharan rasūlan (a human being, a messenger).⁸ This was stated by the Prophet (saw) himself on various occasions. In fact, whenever he said, "*I am certainly a prophet of Allah,*" he would immediately add, "*I am the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib.*" He emphasized the fact that he was both a prophet and a mortal human being by saying, "*Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only a servant. So, call me the servant of Allah and His Messenger.*"⁹ Likewise, when he said, "*I am a human being, so when I command you about a thing pertaining to religion, do accept it, and when I command you about a thing out of my personal opinion, then keep in mind that I am a human being,*"¹⁰ he highlighted the obligation to obey him in matters only related to religion.

Even though he was a human being, he also was a prophet receiving revelations from his Lord. Receiving revelation was the most important characteristic that distinguished him from other people. The Qur'anic verse, "*Say, 'I am only a human being, like you, to whom it has been revealed that your Allah is One. ...,'*"¹¹ clearly presents this fact. He was the final prophet that Allah selected from among His servants.¹² The Prophet (saw) himself humbly expressed the fact that

⁶ Al-i 'Imran, 3/14; Isra', 17/90-95; Ahzab, 33/40.

⁷ Isra', 17/47, 95; Anbiya, 21/5; Tur, 52/29-30; M140 Muslim, Iman, 46.

⁸ Isra', 17/93.

⁹ B3445, Bukhari, Anbiya, 48; HM391, Ibn Hanbal, I, 56.

¹⁰ M6127, Muslim, Fadha'il, 140.

¹¹ Kahf, 18/110.

¹² Ahzab, 33/40; D4252, Abu Dawud, Malahim, 1.



he was the seal of the prophets with the following words, *“My similarity in comparison with the other prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say, ‘Would it be that this brick be put in its place!’”* Allah’s Messenger then continued to say, *“So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets.”*¹³

The Prophet (saw) began carrying out his mission of prophethood after receiving a momentous message from his Lord¹⁴ at the age of forty. Still, his prophetic mission was not limited to the community to whom he was initially sent. Allah Almighty sent him to bring good news and warning to all people.¹⁵ This is the reason why a unique Book, the Holy Qur’an that will stay valid until the Last Day, was revealed to him. Allah’s Messenger pointed toward this aspect of his prophethood by saying *“Every Prophet was given miracles through which people believed, but what I have been given, is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other prophets on the Day of Resurrection.”*¹⁶ The miracle of the Holy Qur’an is unlike the earlier prophets’ miracles which addressed merely their individual society. The Holy Qur’an is a miracle not only because of its wording but also because of its meaning. Even in a society that was famous for its talent and skills in poetry and other literature, people were unable to produce something similar to it in both its

¹³ B3535, Bukhari, Manaqib, 18; M5963, Muslim, Fadha’il, 23.

¹⁴ Muzzammil, 73/5.

¹⁵ Saba’, 34/28.

¹⁶ B4981, Bukhari, Fadha’il al-Qur’an, 1; M385, Muslim, Iman, 239.



wording and its meaning.¹⁷ It has become a miracle that will continue until the Day of Judgement. By its meaning it has been and will be a means for people to purify themselves from both material and spiritual impurities and has been and will be the means to achieve happiness in both this world and the Hereafter.

Allah Almighty who did not leave His Messenger alone in his mission of prophethood said, “*We have sent down the Holy Qur’an Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it.*”¹⁸ and thus gave His Messenger the glad tidings that He Himself will protect the Holy Qur’an. In fact, the protection and supervision of Allah Almighty was always with the Prophet while he carried out his mission. This was why it was not possible for him to hide something from the revelation or to make an error while delivering or explaining the divine message. Moreover, his personality would never have allowed him to do such things. Even before his prophethood, he was known by his good character, trustworthiness, bravery, and for always telling the truth,¹⁹ which was why he was called “al-amīn” (trustworthy) by the members of his community.²⁰ It is inconceivable to believe that the Messenger of Allah (saw) would have added or omitted something while delivering the divine message especially when it is taken into account that he was known by all of his community as a person to whom it was impossible to attribute a lie even before his prophetic mission.²¹

¹⁷ Yunus, 10/37-38.

¹⁸ Hijr, 15/9.

¹⁹ M508, Muslim, Iman, 355; B4953, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Alaq) 1.

²⁰ ST43, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 146.

²¹ B4553, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-i ‘Imran) 4.



The verses, *“If [the Prophet] had attributed some fabrication to Us, We would certainly have seized his right hand and cut off his lifeblood, and none of you could have defended him,”*²² show how careful Allah’s Messenger was in conveying the divine message to the people. In fact, he would not speak from his own desire. Everything he said was nothing less than a revelation that was sent to him.²³

Some Companions (ra) warned ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr who used to write everything that he heard from the Messenger of Allah (saw) in order to memorize it by saying, “Do you write everything that you hear from him while the Messenger of Allah (saw) is a human being: he speaks in anger and pleasure?” However, when ‘Abd Allah (ra) mentioned these warnings to the Messenger of Allah (saw), he signaled with his finger to his mouth and said, *“Write, by Him in Whose hand my soul lies, only right comes out from it.”*²⁴

It is impossible to consider the notion that Allah’s Messenger would hide or omit the revelation he received from his Lord. Indeed, Allah Almighty clearly stated in the Holy Qur’an, *“Messenger, proclaim everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord—if you do not, then you will not have communicated His message...”*²⁵ In like manner, ‘A’isha (ra) said, “He who presumes that the Messenger of Allah (saw) concealed anything from the Book of Allah fabricates the greatest lie against Allah.”²⁶

²² Haqqah, 69/44-47.

²³ Najm, 53/3, 4.

²⁴ D3646, Abu Dawud, ‘Ilm, 3.

²⁵ Ma’idah, 5/67.

²⁶ M439, Muslim, Iman, 287; B7531, Bukhari, Tawhid, 46.



Allah Almighty protected His Messenger not just in conveying the messages of Islam but also in his fight with the polytheists. In the face of the polytheists' denial of the Prophet and their treacherous fight against him, Allah Almighty reminded him of the fact that he was always under his Lord's watch and said, *"Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: you are under Our watchful eye..."*²⁷ *"... Allah will protect you from people..."*²⁸ and *"[O My Messenger] If it were not for the grace of Allah and His mercy to you [Prophet], a party of them would have tried to lead you astray; they only lead themselves astray, and cannot harm you in any way..."*²⁹ In this way, Allah strengthened his spirit and resistance against hardships, and encouraged him to carry out his mission with all his strength.

Allah's Messenger who carried out his mission under His Lord's watch and protection experienced divine support on many occasions throughout his prophetic mission. This assistance sometimes came in the form of invisible armies in his battles with the polytheists, such as at Badr,³⁰ Uhud,³¹ the Khandaq, Hunayn,³² and elsewhere³³ sometimes in the form of a strong wind,³⁴ and sometimes in the form of creating panic in the hearts of the enemy.³⁵ Sometimes Allah Almighty showed the enemy to the believers as few,

²⁷ Tur, 52/48.

²⁸ Ma'idah, 5/67.

²⁹ Nisa, 4/113.

³⁰ Al-i 'Imran, 3/123.

³¹ B4054, Bukhari, Maghazi, 18.

³² Tawbah, 9/25.

³³ Tawbah, 9/26.

³⁴ Ahzab, 33/9.

³⁵ Ahzab, 33/26; M1163, Muslim, Masjid, 3.



thus encouraging them,³⁶ and sometimes protected His Messenger by putting two visible guardians wearing white clothes on his right and left sides.³⁷ However, such divine assistance never led the Prophet (saw) to negligence. On the contrary, he always took the necessary precautions³⁸ and applied his own battle strategy. Allah’s Messenger, who would put his trust in Allah (swt) after taking all necessary precautions, would have no pessimism or fear in his heart toward the enemy because he knew that his Lord was always with him.³⁹

The Prophet (saw), who fulfilled his mission in the best way under divine protection, was also protected against sin.⁴⁰ Because of his position in society, it was not possible for him to be in inappropriate places or commit prohibited actions. On the other hand, the Prophet’s slight mistakes called dhalla (slip, error) were immediately corrected by Allah. For instance, once Allah’s Messenger received a warning after not paying attention to the blind Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum (ra) because he was trying to invite prominent members of the Quraysh to Islam.⁴¹ In like manner, he got a divine warning when he decided to release the war captives from the Battle of Badr after consulting with his Companions (ra).⁴² This situation showed that even the slightest mistakes of the Prophet regarding his duty of prophethood were corrected by Allah.

³⁶ Anfal, 8/44.

³⁷ M6005, Muslim, Fadha’il, 47.

³⁸ B2947, Bukhari, Jihad, 103; B3051, Bukhari, Jihad, 173.

³⁹ Anfal, 8/19; Tawbah, 9/40.

⁴⁰ B4837, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Fath) 2; M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 81.

⁴¹ ‘Abasa, 80/1-11; TT24/217, Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, XXIV, 217.

⁴² Anfal, 8/67; M4588, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 58.



Throughout his prophethood, Allah's Messenger became an example to his Companions (ra) by practicing Islam in his life down to the slightest details. In fact, Allah Almighty said, "*The Messenger of Allah is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Him often.*"⁴³ This is because throughout his mission, the Prophet (saw) first applied the divine commands to himself and avoided the prohibitions. In this way, by his exemplary life he became the greatest proof of the divine revelation, because the Divine Will introduced the Prophet as a witness (an example) to Muslims and the Muslims as an example to other people.⁴⁴

Throughout his prophethood, Allah's Messenger always struggled to convey the divine message to people by his actions and behavior. In fact, in the first revelations that he received he was commanded to warn his close relatives.⁴⁵ Allah's Messenger, who received the divine command as "*Warn your nearest kinsfolk,*"⁴⁶ went out and climbed the hill of al-Safa. He then addressed the Meccans with the following words: "*What do you say? If I inform you that cavalymen are proceeding up the side of this mountain (to attack you), will you believe me?*" They said, "We have never heard you tell a lie." Then he said, "*I am a plain warner to you of a coming severe punishment.*"⁴⁷

The Prophet (saw) explained this matter to his Companions (ra) by means of the following representation:

⁴³ Ahzab, 33/21.

⁴⁴ Hajj, 22/78.

⁴⁵ Muddaththir, 74/1-2.

⁴⁶ Shu'ara', 26/214.

⁴⁷ B4971, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Lahab) 1; M508, Muslim, Iman, 355.



“My example and the example of what I have been sent with is that of a man who came to some people and said, ‘O people! I have seen the enemy’s army with my own eyes, and I am the plain warner; so protect yourselves!’ Then a group of his people obeyed him and fled at night proceeding stealthily until they were safe, while another group of them disbelieved him and stayed at their places until morning when the army came upon them, and killed and ruined them completely. So this is the example of that person who obeys me and follows what I have brought (the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah), and the example of the one who disobeys me and disbelieves the truth that I have brought.”⁴⁸

In this illustration, Allah’s Messenger compared those who believe in him with those who do not obey him as being those who are destroyed by the enemy. Those who do not obey him in fact will reach happiness neither in this world nor in the Hereafter. This is because obedience to Allah’s Messenger means obedience to Allah Himself.⁴⁹ Allah’s Messenger pointed out this fact to his Companions (ra) by giving them the glad tidings that those from his community who obey him will enter Paradise⁵⁰ and he said, *“Whosoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whosoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah.”*⁵¹ By saying *“By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who amongst the community of Jews or Christians hears about me, but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief),*

⁴⁸ B7283, Bukhari, I’tisam, 2; M5954, Muslim, Fadha’il, 16.

⁴⁹ Nisa, 4/80; Anfal, 8/20.

⁵⁰ B7280, Bukhari, I’tisam, 2.

⁵¹ M4749, Muslim, Imara, 33; B7137, Bukhari, Ahkam, 1.



he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire”,⁵² he informed about the situation of those who did not obey him.⁵³

In the Holy Qur’an the Lord Almighty regards obedience to the Prophet as obedience to Him and states that it was not the Prophet’s task to watch over them and force Islam on those who do not obey by stating, “Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. If some pay no heed, We have not sent you to be their keeper.”⁵⁴ Another verse informs us that the Prophet (saw) will not be responsible for the inhabitants of Hell⁵⁵ because Allah’s Messenger’s responsibility was to only deliver the divine revelation.⁵⁶ Guiding people to the straight path depends only on the Divine Will⁵⁷ and Allah informed His Messenger that He does not guide disbelievers, those who do evil, and obstinate sinners.⁵⁸

Our beloved Prophet (saw) was not sent as a guardian over people who did not obey, but he was sent as a “warner” for those who were insistent on disbelief, and a “bearer of good tidings” for those who believe.⁵⁹ With the Qur’anic verse, “Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning, as one who calls people to Allah by His leave, as a light-giving lamp,”⁶⁰ the Lord Almighty explained the Prophet’s mission in the most comprehensive way; he is exemplary, a bearer of good news, a warner, a caller, an enlightened and enlightening prophet...

⁵² M386 Muslim, Iman, 240.

⁵³ B7280 Bukhari, I’tisam, 2.

⁵⁴ Nisa, 4/80; Anfal, 8/20.

⁵⁵ Baqarah, 2/119.

⁵⁶ Al-i ‘Imrân, 3/20; M3696 Muslim, Talaq, 35.

⁵⁷ Qasas, 28/56.

⁵⁸ Baqara, 2/258, 264; Tawbah, 9/24.

⁵⁹ Baqarah, 2/119; Saba’, 34/28; Maryam, 19/97.

⁶⁰ Ahzab, 33/45, 46.



The Messenger of Allah (saw), who represented Islam in the best way, on the one hand courteously called the polytheists to Islam in accordance with the command, “[Prophet], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Argue with them in the most courteous way...”⁶¹ and, on the other hand, conveyed the divine messages he received to believers. Allah’s Messenger not only conveyed the verses of the Holy Qur’an to his Companions (ra), but also explained those verses in a manner that they could understand. The Lord Almighty spoke about this task of the Prophet (saw) in the following verse: “We sent them with clear signs and scriptures. We have sent down the message to you too [Prophet], so that you can explain to people what was sent for them, so that they may reflect.”⁶²

In one of his sayings, the Prophet (saw) compared the guidance that Allah (swt) sent to people through him with the fall of plentiful rain, “The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed

⁶¹ Nahl, 16/125.

⁶² Nahl, 16/44.



through me (the prophets and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)"⁶³ The Prophet (saw) not only explained the verses of the Holy Qur'an but also played an active role in legislation by establishing rulings in matters that were not found in the Holy Qur'an. In fact, this aspect of the Prophet is depicted in the Holy Qur'an as follows: "Who follow the Messenger—the unlettered prophet they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel—who commands them to do right and forbids them to do wrong, who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful..."⁶⁴

On the one hand, the Prophet (saw) established new rulings for new matters, and, on the other hand, he judged between the believers. Obedience to his verdicts was obligatory for the believers, "By your Lord, they will not be true believers until they let you decide between them in all matters of dispute, and find no resistance in their souls to your decisions, accepting them totally."⁶⁵ Likewise, the Qur'anic verse, "When Allah and His Messenger have decided on a matter that concerns them, it is not fitting for any believing man or woman to claim freedom of choice in that matter: whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger is far astray,"⁶⁶ expresses Allah's Messenger's prophetic effect on believers.

The Prophet (saw), who lived a modest life and did not follow a life of a sultan and ostentation, even after the foundation of the Muslim state, asked his Lord to be a

⁶³ B79, Bukhari, 'Ilm 20; M5953, Muslim, Fadha'il, 15.

⁶⁴ A'raf, 7/157.

⁶⁵ Nisa, 4/65.

⁶⁶ Ahzab, 33/36.



servant-prophet rather than a king-prophet.⁶⁷ This was because he considered not the mortal favors of this world but Allah’s Mercy and the bounties in His presence to be superior to everything.⁶⁸ He preferred to be a servant-prophet because he wanted to be away from the luxurious and ostentatious lifestyle of being a king. It did not mean to isolate himself from leadership completely. As a matter of fact, he spent his life in Medina as a leader and commander besides being a prophet, yet he never desired a luxurious and ostentatious life like other kings.⁶⁹ Our Prophet (saw) exhibited the best example for Muslims for this aspect of his life, and left his marks on history with unique examples of high morals.

By delivering the message of Islam in his twenty-three-year long life of prophetic mission, Allah’s Messenger (saw) erased the traces of the age of the Jahiliyya and cleansed society of all material and spiritual impurities, and thus created the ideal community by means of social change.⁷⁰ Some scholars accounted for the creation of such society in the following words: “If Allah’s Messenger did not have any miracles other than his Companions they would still be enough to prove his prophethood.”⁷¹ The fact that he had the power to influence his Companions (ra) so much that he could take them out of the swamp of ignorance, and turn them into an exemplary community⁷² was clearly because of his station of prophethood which was granted to him by Allah (swt).

⁶⁷ MK10686, Tabarani, Mu’jam al-kabir, X, 288.

⁶⁸ M6170, Muslim, Fadhā’il al-sahaba, 2.

⁶⁹ B886 Bukhari, Jum’a, 7; M5403 Muslim, Libas, 6-7.

⁷⁰ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/110.

⁷¹ FH4/305, al-Qarafi, Furuq, IV, 305.

⁷² Baqarah, 2/143.

محمد



“I AM A HUMAN BEING LIKE YOU”

The Companions (ra) felt a boundless sadness and were greatly grieved when the Prophet (saw) passed away. Moreover, the insolent behavior of the hypocrites enraged ‘Umar (ra). With the confusion of the Prophet’s untimely death, he stood up in a corner of the Prophet’s Mosque and said, “By Allah! The Messenger of Allah has not died and he will not die until the hands and feet of most of the hypocrites are cut off (from hypocrisy).”¹ These and similar words were nothing but the reflections of the state of shock caused by the Prophet’s unexpected death.

Meanwhile, Abu Bakr (ra) who had received the sad news went to the mosque from his house in the district of Sunh. He uncovered the face of Allah’s Messenger and kissed him between his eyes. In order to calm the surprised Companions (ra), especially ‘Umar, Abu Bakr

¹ IM1627 Ibn Majah, Jana’iz, 65.



(ra) said, “Let my mother and father be sacrificed for you, (O Allah’s Messenger), you are good in life and in death. By Allah in Whose Hands is my life, Allah will never make you taste death twice.” Then he left the room and said, “O oath-taker (who takes an oath that Allah’s Messenger did not die)! Calm down.” When Abu Bakr spoke, ‘Umar (ra) sat down.²

Then Abu Bakr (ra) ascended the pulpit and said after praising Allah, “Whoever used to worship Allah, Allah is alive and will never die. Whoever used to worship Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. Allah Almighty addressed His Messenger saying, “You [*Prophet*] will certainly die, and so will they,”³ and, “Muhammad is only a messenger before whom many messengers have been and gone. If he died or was killed, would you revert to your old ways? If anyone did so, he would not harm Allah in the least. Allah will reward the grateful.”⁴



After these words of Abu Bakr (ra), people started to cry.⁵ The Companions (ra) were in such a state of confusion that it was as if they had not heard this verse before and not learned its meaning until Abu Bakr recited it. Everybody started to recite this verse. ‘Umar (ra) who had such difficulty in accepting the Prophet’s death until then faced the reality. His legs could not support him and

² B3667, Bukhari, Fadhā'il ashāb al-nabī, 5; IM1627, Ibn Majāh, Jana'iz, 65.

³ Zumar, 39/30.

⁴ Al-i 'Imran, 3/144.

⁵ B3668 Bukhari, Fadhā'il ashāb al-nabī, 5.



he fell down at the very moment of hearing Abu Bakr (ra) reciting this verse.⁶

This incident, the greatest pain that the Companions (ra) faced, reminded them of the known reality of life. Allah’s Messenger was a human being as well. He received revelation, but in the end he was also a human being.⁷ Like every mortal being born to this world, he also had to pass on. The only eternal being is Allah and His religion is Islam. This is what Abu Bakr (ra) reminded people of when he recited the above verse. Because of their emotional state, it was as if the Companions (ra) were hearing this verse for the first time in their lives. There were among them those who knew the time of the Prophet’s birth,⁸ and those who were his childhood friends. The Prophet (saw) had spent his life with them⁹ and he had left them when the time destined for him by Allah (swt) had arrived.

The life and death of Allah’s Messenger was in fact a refutation of polytheist thinking that a messenger of Allah could not be like an ordinary person. Allah Almighty had commanded His Messenger to respond by saying, *“Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal, a messenger?”* to those who said, *“We will not believe for you [Muhammad] until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us; or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them; or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen; or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face; or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the*

⁶ B4454 Bukhari, Maghazi, 84.

⁷ Kahf, 18/110.

⁸ T3619 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 2.

⁹ Yunus, 10/16.



sky—even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you send a real book down for us to read.”¹⁰ When the Prophet (saw) felt distressed because the polytheists told him, “Why is no treasure sent down to him? Why has no angel come with him?” and was thinking about keeping some parts of what was revealed to him from the people, he was reminded that his role was only to be a warner.¹¹ The pre-Islamic society that remembered the earlier prophets only by their miracles tended to deny this Prophet, who was from among them, lived like them and had human needs like them. They argued, “What sort of messenger is this? He eats food and walks about in the marketplaces! Why has no angel been sent down to help him with his warnings?”¹² In the Holy Qur’an this wrong perception of the Prophet was corrected by the following statement, “No messenger have We sent before you [Muhammad] who did not eat food and walk about in the marketplace...”¹³ and it was pointed out that the desired path of Allah was the conveyance of divine warnings through a human being.

The unbelievers who thought that a prophet had to be “a being beyond humans” or “an angel” reacted to the prophethood of Allah’s Messenger by saying, “Has Allah sent this man as a messenger?” and based their reason for denial on the fact that he was a human being.¹⁴ Verses in the Holy Qur’an rejected such notions and emphasized the fact that Allah’s Messenger was just “a human being.”

¹⁰ Isra, 17/90-93.

¹¹ Hud, 11/12.

¹² Furqan, 25/7.

¹³ Furqan, 25/20.

¹⁴ Isra, 17/94.



Thus, what was repudiated by the Holy Qur'an was the people's expectation of an extraordinary or even a heavenly messenger. As a response to them, Allah Almighty said, "Say, *'If there were angels walking about on earth, feeling at home, We would have sent them an angel from Heaven as a messenger.'*"¹⁵

Allah's Messenger (saw), who wanted to wipe away the pre-Islamic perception of what it entailed to be a prophet, confirmed the correct notion of prophethood by acting very cautiously in this matter as related in the following tradition. According to Anas b. Malik (ra), one day a man came and complimented the Prophet saying, "O Muhammad! O our Prophet! O the son of our Master! O the best of us! O the son of the best of us!" Then Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*O people! You should fear Allah and do not let Satan get you carried away. I am Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, the servant of Allah and His Messenger. By Allah, I do not like for you to raise me above my station to which Allah appointed me.*"¹⁶ Allah's Messenger also drew attention to the source of this wrong perception in another saying, "*Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only a servant. So, call me the servant of Allah and His Messenger.*"¹⁷

At every opportunity, Allah's Messenger pointed out the supreme importance of his characteristic of being a servant of Allah (swt). One day when a man whom he taught how to say the proclamation of faith said, "I bear

¹⁵ Isra, 17/95.

¹⁶ HM12579 Ibn Hanbal, III, 154.

¹⁷ B3445, Bukhari, Anbiya', 48.



witness that Muhammad is the Messenger and servant of Allah,” the Prophet (saw) immediately interjected, “*I have been a servant of Allah before I became His Messenger,*” and corrected his statement to “*Muhammad is the servant and Messenger of Allah.*”¹⁸ Thus, by drawing attention to being a servant of Allah, the Prophet refuted those who exalted him too much, while his emphasis on his prophethood was a response to those who beat, tortured, oppressed, and tried to kill and draw him out of his city. Moreover, his warnings to the girls playing the tambourine and singing at the marriage feast of Rubayy bint Mu‘awwiz (ra), a young female Companion who had accompanied a military expedition with Allah’s Messenger in order to serve water to the soldiers and help transport the wounded and martyred,¹⁹ was also based on such a concern. It had been reported that the girls were singing about the good characteristics of their father who had been martyred in the Battle of Badr. Just then, one of them wanted to praise the Prophet (saw) by saying, “There is a Prophet among us who knows what will happen tomorrow.” The Prophet (saw) said to her, “*Do not say this, but go on saying what you have said before*”²⁰ and then added, “*Only Allah knows what will happen tomorrow.*”²¹

All these warnings and reminders were delivered in order to prevent the promotion of a wrong perception of the station of prophethood. It seems that the notion that the Prophet should be a being who was beyond human

¹⁸ MA3076, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, II, 205.

¹⁹ HI7/641, Ibn Hajar, ‘Isaba, VII, 641.

²⁰ B4001 Bukhari, Maghazi, 12.

²¹ IM1897 Ibn Majah, Nikah, 21.



manifested itself because of peoples’ perception of earlier prophets. The first meeting of the Companion, whose name has been recorded in the sources in various forms, like Rifa’a b. Yathribi or Yathribi b. ‘Awf (ra),²² and who was known by the patronymic name Abu Rimtha, with the Prophet clearly shows how much influence this established perception had by this time. Abu Rimtha reported, “Together with my father, we came to the Prophet (saw). When we saw him, my father asked me, ‘Do you know who this man is?’ I said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘He is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (saw).’ I was surprised by these words because I used to imagine the messenger of Allah as a being that did not resemble any human being. Whereas his hair was long and dyed with henna and he was wearing two green robes.”²³

Contrary to young Abu Rimtha’s assumption, Allah’s Messenger did not have an appearance different from that of other people. He was the best exemplar for those who were around him and all his actions and behaviors were pure and graceful. However, he never regarded himself as being distinct from his Companions (ra) and he never acted superior to them. Even though he was the Messenger of Allah (saw) and leader of his community, he did not maintain a distance between him and other people and he never looked down upon them. It was reported that one day a man came to speak with him but the man began to tremble with awe. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Do not*

²² HI2/495, Ibn Hajar, ‘Isaba, II, 495.

²³ HM7116 Ibn Hanbal, II, 228.



be afraid. I am not a king; I am just a man whose mother ate dried meat."²⁴

Neither his dress nor his actions were different from those of others. He liked to attend ceremonies, marriages, and feasts. He would sit down when eating and say, *"I sit like a servant sits and eat like a servant of Allah eats."*²⁵

When he was with his friends, he did not attract attention by his appearance and actions, and was completely like them. For instance, when Dimam b. Tha'labah, who was described by the Prophet as an "understanding man" and by 'Umar as "the best and most concise of men with regard to speech," came to Medina, he was not able to discern who among the men sitting together in the mosque was the Prophet and had to ask, "Who among you is Muhammad?"²⁶ A similar incident took place during the emigration before the above-mentioned incident. On a Monday during the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, when Allah's Messenger and his friends arrived at the place called Quba' after the tiring journey of emigration, they were ardently welcomed by the Medinan believers. At that moment Abu Bakr (ra) stood up, receiving the people, while Allah's Messenger sat down and rested under a palm-tree. Some of the Ansar who came had not seen Allah's Messenger before, so they began to greet Abu Bakr (thinking that he was the messenger of Allah), but when sunlight fell on Allah's Messenger, Abu Bakr (ra) went and shaded him with his clothes, only then

²⁴ IM3312, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 30.

²⁵ MA19543, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, X, 415.

²⁶ B63 Bukhari, 'Ilm, 6.



did the people understand that the man sitting there was Allah's Messenger (saw).²⁷

According to 'A'isha's description, Allah's Messenger used to do whatever an ordinary head of a family would do in his home.²⁸ He was a person like everybody else. He would clean his clothes, milk his sheep, and do his own daily works himself.²⁹ It was possible to see him playfully joking with children,³⁰ taking out his grandchildren for a walk,³¹ conversing with the youth, trading in the market, or digging a trench for a battle. When it was asked of Jabir b. Samura (ra), who moved to Kufa later in his life and passed away during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan,³² whether he had sat in the company of the Messenger of Allah (saw), he said, "Yes, very often. The Prophet (saw) used to sit at the place where he observed the morning or fajr prayer until the sun rose or when it had risen; he would stand, and his Companions would talk about matters (pertaining to the days) of ignorance, and they would laugh (about these matters) while the Prophet (saw) would only smile."³³ To a similar question, Zayd b. Thabit (ra) replied, "When we spoke about this world, he would speak about it as well and when we spoke about food, he would also speak about it."³⁴

Allah's Messenger (saw) continued his life among the people as one of them. Like everybody else, he would

²⁷ B3906 Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 45.

²⁸ EM540, Bukhari, *Adab al-mufrad*, 190.

²⁹ HM26724 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 256.

³⁰ B6354 Bukhari, *Da'awat*, 31.

³¹ MS32185, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, *Fadha'il*, 23.

³² TK4/439, al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, IV, 439.

³³ M1525 Muslim, *Masajid*, 286.

³⁴ MK4882, Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-kabir*, V, 140.



become sad,³⁵ happy,³⁶ or angry.³⁷ He, too, had tasks that he performed in his everyday life. He had friends. He had wives, children, and grandchildren. There were times when he had arguments with his wives,³⁸ and at other times he shared peaceful and happy moments with them...³⁹ Because he had human needs, he experienced problems in life which every human being could experience. Once he overslept because of he was tired from a journey and could not wake up for the fajr prayer, but he made up it after the sun rose.⁴⁰ Once he got confused about how many rak'as of prayer he had performed, and when the Companions (ra) asked whether there was a change in the rak'as of prayer, he said, "*Verily I am a human being like you. I remember as you remember and I forget just as you forget.*" He then performed two prostrations as compensation for his forgetfulness.⁴¹ On another occasion of ritual prayer he had begun reciting the Sūrah al-Mu'minun and just as he was going to recite the verse mentioning Moses and Aaron,⁴² he started to cough. When he realized that he was not going to be able to continue the recitation, he went down to ruku.⁴³ Even though he was the Messenger of Allah (saw), he always wished to be a grateful servant of Allah (swt). His feet became swollen and chapped because

³⁵ M6025 Muslim, Fadha'il, 62.

³⁶ B3556 Bukhari, Manaqib, 23.

³⁷ D4659 Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 10.

³⁸ B2468 Bukhari, Mazalim, 25.

³⁹ D2578, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 61.

⁴⁰ B344, Bukhari, Tayammum, 6; M1560, Muslim, Masajid, 309.

⁴¹ M1284 Muslim, Masajid, 93.

⁴² Mu'minun, 23/45.

⁴³ HM15468, Ibn Hanbal, III, 411.



of his nightlong prayers.⁴⁴ Moreover, even though all his past and future mistakes were forgiven by Allah, he said, *"There is (at times) some sort of shade upon my heart, and because of that I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day."*⁴⁵

He faced problems of daily life just like everybody else. For example, on his way back from Khaybar, he had his wife Safiyya (ra) sit behind him on his mount. After they had covered a portion of the journey, suddenly the foot of the camel slipped and both the Prophet and his wife Safiyya fell down.⁴⁶ On another occasion, Allah's Messenger (saw) fell from his horse and hurt his right side and, because of his injuries, he was forced to perform his prayers while sitting.⁴⁷ Like other people, he fell ill and was in need of treatment. It is known that at one time he had a bad headache and was cupped.⁴⁸ In another incident which 'A'isha (ra) related, when the Prophet (saw) was ill they forced him to drink medicine by pouring it into his mouth even though he had told them specifically not to force him to drink medicine in such a way. They seemed to have thought that he did not want medicine out of the usual aversion a patient has for medicines. Thus, they continued to give him the medicine. However, when he improved and felt better, he in a way took his revenge by asking everyone there to drink from that same medicine.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 81.

⁴⁵ M6858 Muslim, Dhikr, 41.

⁴⁶ B6185, Bukhari, Adab, 104; B5968, Bukhari, Libas, 102.

⁴⁷ M921 Muslim, Salat, 77.

⁴⁸ B5700 Bukhari, Tibb, 15.

⁴⁹ B6886, Bukhari, Diyat, 14.



The Prophet (saw)'s knowledge and experiences related to worldly affairs were not much different from that of the community in which he lived. When he emigrated from Mecca, where trade not agriculture was the common source of income, to the fertile lands of Medina, he saw people engaged in agricultural activities. Medina was a city covered with dategroves. Those gardens were important sources of income for the people of Medina. People used to graft their trees to get better fruit. When the Prophet (saw) saw them, he asked, "What are you doing?" They said they were grafting and it was a practice that they had been doing since early times. Thereupon Allah's Messenger said, "Maybe it would be better if you do not do this." The people were informed about it and they abandoned this practice. They made a mention of it to the Prophet (saw), whereupon he said, "I am a human being, so when I command you about a thing pertaining to religion, accept it, and when I command you about a thing out of my personal opinion, keep in mind that I am a human being."⁵⁰

'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra) used to write down everything he heard from the Prophet in order to memorize it. Some Companions (ra) warned him by saying, "You write everything that you hear from the Prophet while the Messenger of Allah (saw) is a human being and he speaks in anger and pleasure." When 'Abd Allah mentioned their warning to the Messenger of Allah (saw), he signaled with his finger to his mouth and said, "Write, by Him in Whose hand my soul lies, only right comes out from it."⁵¹ This

⁵⁰ M6127, Muslim, Fadha'il, 140.

⁵¹ D3646 Abu Dawud, 'Ilm, 3.



statement meant that his human side never impaired his station of prophethood. Allah's Messenger said, *"If I abused any person of my people, or cursed him in my anger, I am one of the children of Adam. I become angry as they become angry. He (Allah) has sent me as a mercy for all worlds,"* and then prayed to Allah saying, *"(O Allah!) Make them (abuse or curse) blessing for them on the Day of Judgement!"*⁵² He stated that he might issue a verdict in cases among people based on the evidence presented to him as follows: *"I am only a human being, and you people (opponents) come to me with your cases; and it may be that one of you can present his case eloquently in a more convincing way than the other, and I give my verdict according to what I hear. So if ever I judge (by error) and give the right of a brother to his other (brother) then he (the latter) should not take it, for I am giving him only a piece of Fire."*⁵³ With these words, the Prophet warned those who had the ability to give convincing speeches and usurp the defendant's rights to not use this ability in court. Furthermore, he emphasized that he was acting based only on what he saw and heard. Moreover, he pointed out how much he would like to see the establishment of absolute justice, but confessed how uneasy he was about succeeding in this matter as a human being. For example, he used to divide his time equally among his wives and then prayed to Allah (swt) saying, *"O Allah, this is my division concerning what I control, so do not blame me concerning what You control and I do not."*⁵⁴

⁵² D4659 Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 10.

⁵³ B7169, Bukhari, Ahkam, 20; D3583, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

⁵⁴ D2134, Abu Dawud, Nikah, 37-38; N3395, Nasa'i, Ishrat al-Nisa', 2.



Normal human needs also applied to the Prophet (saw). However, he restricted and controlled these needs with the consciousness of the Hereafter. ‘Umar (ra) who became emotional and cried when he saw the marks of a straw mat imprinted on the Prophet’s side said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Caesar and Khosrau are leading the life (i.e., luxurious life) while you, though you are Allah’s Messenger, are living in poverty.” The Prophet (saw) then replied. “*Won’t you be satisfied to hear that they enjoy this world and we the Hereafter?*”⁵⁵ By refusing all the wealth and rank offered by the polytheists to make him give up his claims in the early days of his mission, the Prophet already proved that he was not in pursuit of worldly desires.⁵⁶ He compared himself in this world to a traveler temporarily resting under a tree.⁵⁷

His close and distant friends, especially his relatives, maintained the usual human relations with him. Those who travelled with him,⁵⁸ those who made business in his name,⁵⁹ and his wives who placed their head on the same pillow with him knew that they lived with a person like them. Just as there were those who enjoyed fun times with him,⁶⁰ there were those who played games like archery with him.⁶¹ There were people who made Allah’s Messenger angry or hurt him, however, all those people always kept in their minds that he was a prophet selected from among them and that he was receiving revelations from Allah (swt).

⁵⁵ B4913, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Tahrim) 2; HM12444, Ibn Hanbal, III, 140.

⁵⁶ HS2/101, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 101; BN3/56 Ibn Kathir, Bidaya, III, 56.

⁵⁷ T2377, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 44; IM4109, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 3.

⁵⁸ B344 Bukhari, Tayammum, 6.

⁵⁹ B3642, Bukhari, Manaqib, 28; D3384, Abu Dawud, Buyu’, 27.

⁶⁰ D5001 Abu Dawud, Adab, 84.

⁶¹ B2899 Bukhari, Jihad, 78.



When Qubath b. Ashyam, who had fought on the side of the polytheists, converted to Islam, participated in some battles with Allah's Messenger, and settled in Damascus after the Battle of Yarmuk,⁶² said that he and the Prophet were born in the Year of the Elephant, people asked him "Are you greater (in age) or is the Messenger of Allah?" He said, "The Messenger of Allah is greater than me, but I have an earlier birthday."⁶³ This response was an honorable manifestation of such a consciousness.

When his wives insistently asked for worldly apparel and adornment from him and hurt his feelings, they were treating him like an ordinary human being. On the other hand, they also received warnings that making the Prophet (saw) angry would attract Allah's wrath. During the days when he was offended by the actions of his wives and went to live in a separate place, 'Umar told his daughter Hafsa (ra), "She who makes Allah's Messenger angry is a ruined losing person! Which one of you can be certain that Allah will not get angry because of the anger of Allah's Messenger and ruin you? Do not ask Allah's Messenger for too many things, and don't report upon him in any case, and don't desert him."⁶⁴

It was almost impossible to distinguish the Prophet's human side from his station of prophethood. For instance, he would speak nothing but the truth even if he was angry.⁶⁵ When he sneezed like an ordinary person, he would inform

⁶² HI5/408, Ibn Hajar, 'Isaba, V, 408.

⁶³ T3619, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 2.

⁶⁴ B2468, Bukhari, Mazalim, 25.

⁶⁵ D3646, Abu Dawud, 'Ilm, 3.



the people about the manners of sneezing;⁶⁶ when he ate something, he would explain the manners of eating;⁶⁷ or when he overslept and missed a prayer, he would teach how to make up that prayer.⁶⁸ This was the very wisdom behind the fact that he was chosen from among the people. Otherwise, how could a prophet who did not eat, drink, or sleep be an example for people who have all these features? Most importantly, who could explain death and the notion of life after death better than a mortal prophet?

Allah (swt) did not send an angel or a being that was not human as a messenger, but rather chose a human being who lived a life like everybody else. Just as earlier prophets, Muhammad (saw), the last Messenger of Allah, was chosen from among the community in which he lived because the religion he brought carried messages, both individual and social, in all areas of life and he delivered those messages to people by both explaining and practicing them. In this respect, only a prophet who spoke the same language, shared the same life, and had the same spiritual and physical needs could be an example for the people. All sectors of society are able to find an aspect of the Prophet to take as an example.⁶⁹ At home, he was the head of a family, a husband, or a father. In society, he was a friend or a neighbor. In the market, he was a customer. In the street, he was one of the public. He was the head of the state and the commander of the army. He also was a prophet and the best exemplar to people in all his actions. He was neither merely a human

⁶⁶ B6224, Bukhari, Adab, 126; HM9660, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

⁶⁷ D3773, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 17; IM3275, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 12.

⁶⁸ B344 Bukhari, Tayammum, 6.

⁶⁹ Ahzab, 33/21.



being nor merely the Messenger of Allah (saw). As stated in the Holy Qur'an, he was "*a human prophet*." Thus, it has always been evident and clear for Muslims, based upon the abovementioned divine wisdom, the reason the Messenger of Allah (saw) was selected from among human beings.

Those who could not comprehend the "human prophet" thought he was a superhuman.

He (saw) was not a superhuman, but a superior human being!

محمد



THE SOURCE OF RULING

One day Allah's Messenger (saw) was startled by a voice coming from the sky. He had the same fear he had had when he received the first revelation in the cave of Hira. Then he looked up he saw Jibril whom he had seen in the cave of Hira. Jibril was so magnificent that he filled all the space between the sky and the earth as he had done the first time that the Prophet had received revelation. The Prophet (saw) felt afraid of him, returned home, and said to his wife, "Wrap me (in blankets)." His Lord had given him a new mission¹ and then He revealed to his Messenger the following Qur'anic verses: "*You, wrapped in your cloak, arise and give warning! Proclaim the greatness of your Lord; cleanse yourself; keep away from all filth.*"²

This second revelation which command "Read" gave the Prophet the good news of a new life. He was no longer a man who purified his

¹ B4, Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

² Muddaththir, 74/1-5.



heart by contemplating alone in a cave,³ but rather became a caller who invited all of humanity to contemplation and purification and established moral principles related to both social and individual life.⁴ After these events, he was not the only person whose life was changed. All humanity was about to go through radical changes because the morally and legally shattered lives of humanity needed a leader and a ruler who could rebuild the ruined order on a just foundation. Allah (swt) chose Muhammad (saw) for this task. He authorized His Messenger with the necessary powers. He commanded obedience to His Messenger,⁵ and even identified obedience to His Messenger as obedience to Himself (swt).⁶ This was because the Prophet (saw) did not speak from his own desire, and what he said was nothing less than a revelation that was sent to him.⁷ Allah (swt) said, *“Whatever gains Allah has turned over to His Messenger from the inhabitants of the villages belong to Allah, the Messenger, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, the traveler in need—this is so that they do not just circulate among those of you who are rich—so accept whatever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from whatever he forbids you. Be mindful of Allah: Allah is severe in punishment.”*⁸ In this way, the Prophet (saw) began to establish not only moral and religious rulings but also principles in areas related to people’s rights, administration, and business.⁹

³ B3, Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

⁴ Baqarah, 2/151.

⁵ Ma’idah, 5/92.

⁶ Nisa, 4/80.

⁷ Najm, 53/2-4.

⁸ Hashr, 59/7.

⁹ Shura, 42/15.



When the Prophet (saw) was chosen from among his community and attained the honor of being the Messenger of Allah (saw), he was well familiar with the order in which power had been turned into oppression. First, he addressed the false perception about beliefs in Allah and the Hereafter. The efforts of the Prophet were focused mostly on the principles of faith during the Meccan period. At first, Allah's Messenger carried out such activities secretly. Therefore, those who believed in him tried to perform their acts of worship secretly in accordance with his teachings.¹⁰ When the Qur'anic verse prescribing the ritual prayer for believers was revealed,¹¹ in which Allah (swt) said, "[Prophet], *remember your Lord inwardly, in all humility and awe, without raising your voice, in the mornings and in the evenings—do not be one of the heedless,*"¹² it was of course the Prophet (saw) who taught them how to perform the prayer.¹³ In this way, since the earliest days of Islam, he carried out his mission to explain the verses of the Holy Qur'an by personally practicing them.

During the Meccan period, the Prophet (saw) recited the verses dealing with the unity of Allah to believers who were under pressure and persecuted by the polytheists. He explained those verses in accordance with the level of understanding of his audience. In order to do this, he sometimes recited the verses as they were, and sometimes

¹⁰ HS2/98, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 98.

¹¹ IF2/53, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, II, 53.

¹² A'raf, 7/205.

¹³ B6008 Bukhari, Adab, 27.



explained them by using his own phrases and expressions. His priority in that period was to call people to submit themselves to the tawhid.

After emigrating to Medina, in addition to his responsibility to establish the principles of faith in the hearts of people, Allah's Messenger devoted time to transforming Medina into a land of peace and brotherhood based on law and morality where justice and rights were manifested in unity. He did not confine himself to reciting to people the revelation he received from Allah (swt), but he explained it to them by using both his words and deeds because this was a mission given to him by Allah.¹⁴ The ritual prayer which was prescribed five times a day during the Mi'raj¹⁵ was taught by him to the Companions both with their times and the way to perform them.¹⁶ He was the one who prohibited believers from performing ritual prayer during sun rise and sun set.¹⁷ In addition, he was the one who showed them how to perform the command of almsgiving, and described what could be used for this purpose and the amount.¹⁸ He also described how to perform the Hajj.¹⁹

When Allah's Messenger delivered the divine commands in the form of general principles, he also explained the verses related to establishing the family, divorce, sharing goods and property, lawful and prohibited foods, trade, and many other issues. For example, it is understood from

¹⁴ Nahl, 16/44.

¹⁵ M411 Muslim, Iman, 259.

¹⁶ B631 Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

¹⁷ N565 Nasa'i, Mawaqit, 33; HM22000 Ibn Hanbal, V, 191.

¹⁸ M2263 Muslim, Zakat, 1; N2475 Nasa'i, Zakat, 18.

¹⁹ M3137 Muslim, Hajj, 310.



the verse *“Allah has allowed trade and forbidden usury”*²⁰ that all sorts of trade were permitted, but Allah’s Messenger prohibited for example trading in pigs and wine²¹ and limited the absolute permission of trade.

In addition to the mission and authority to explain the commands and prohibitions found in the Holy Qur’an, he was also given the authority to establish rulings in matters not found in the Holy Qur’an.²² For example, once when he was delivering a sermon, Allah’s Messenger said, *“O people, Allah has made the Hajj obligatory for you; so perform the Hajj.”* Thereupon a man asked, *“O Messenger of Allah, (is it to be performed) every year?”* The Prophet (saw) kept quiet, and the man repeated his words thrice, whereupon Allah’s Messenger said, *“If I were to say ‘Yes,’ it would become obligatory (for you to perform it every year) and you would not be able to do it.”* Then he said, *“Leave me with what I have left to you, for those who were before you were destroyed because of excessive questioning, and their opposition to their apostles. So when I command you to do anything, do it as much as is in your power and when I forbid you to do anything, then abandon it.”*²³

His prohibitions were binding just like those of the Holy Qur’an. For example, he prohibited consumption of donkey meat, which was not mentioned in the list of prohibited food.²⁴ The Companions (ra), who obeyed this prohibitions at the moment of their legislation, turned

²⁰ Baqarah, 2/275.

²¹ M4048 Muslim, Musaqat, 71.

²² A’raf, 7/157.

²³ M3257 Muslim, Hajj, 412.

²⁴ B5528 Bukhari, Sayd, 28.



the pots in which they were cooking donkey meat upside down and threw it away.²⁵

The Prophet (saw), who also used his personal experiences and independent reasoning to issue rulings in matters about which there was no revelation, said to two men who took their case to him, *“I decide between you on the basis of my opinion in cases about which no revelation has been sent down to me.”*²⁶ Of course, the personal views of Allah’s Messenger were not the same as those of an ordinary person in regards to their correctness. One day when ‘Umar (ra) addressed the people, he pointed out this matter as follows: *“O people, the opinion from the Messenger of Allah (saw) was correct, because Allah showed (i.e., inspired) him; but from us it is sheer conjecture and artifice.”*²⁷ The Prophet (saw) was under the observance and control of Allah (swt) at all times. The issues to which ‘Umar drew attention within the context of the Prophet’s infallibility were related to his prophetic mission. In fact, he was corrected by divine revelation whenever he made an error in a decision related to religion.²⁸ Therefore, his explanations are not directly accepted as revelation, but accepted as revelation as they would certainly be corrected if wrong.

The legislative status of Allah’s Messenger in matters related to daily life started with his prophethood and continued until the end of his life. In the Meccan period, he tried to establish communication with foreigners and explain to them the straight path. In a Hajj season, he had

²⁵ B2991 Bukhari, Jihad, 130.

²⁶ D3585 Abu Dawud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

²⁷ D3586, Abu Dawud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

²⁸ ‘Abasa, 80/1-10; Tawbah, 9/43; Tahrim, 66/1; Anfal, 8/67-68.



the opportunity to get in touch with people coming from Medina. At a place called 'Aqaba Allah's Messenger met with six of them who responded to his call positively. On that historic day, the Prophet (saw) heard from them the following words:

“(O Prophet!) We left our people and came here. There is no similarity of the hostility and evil between us and the tribe of Aws in any other tribe. Perhaps Allah Almighty will end the hostility between these two tribes by means of you. Let us go and convey your call to them. Let us invite them to this religion we have embraced.”²⁹

The word of those six people from the Ansar in fact declared the addition of a political dimension to the legislative position (in all aspects of human life) of Allah's Messenger. In the following season of Hajj, a group of twelve people from the Ansar, two of whom were from the tribe of Aws and ten of whom were from the tribe of Khazraj, took an oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (saw). In that meeting, the Prophet (saw) appointed a leader to each of the twelve allied tribes in Medina. In this way, he began to follow and manage the developments in Medina while he was still in Mecca before his emigration to Medina. It was not a coincidence that there were forty people in the congregation for Friday prayer³⁰ led by Mus'ab (ra), who the Prophet (saw) sent to the Muslim Medinans as an instructor and that there were twelve people led by As'ad b. Zurara (ra), who was in 'Aqaba.³¹

²⁹ HS2/276, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 276-277.

³⁰ ST3/602, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, III, 602.

³¹ D1069, Abu Dawud, Salat, 209, 210; IM1082, Ibn Majah, Iqama, 78; BS5703, Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, III, 259.



Friday prayer became a distinct feature of the Prophet's religious and socio-political community and the presence of Muslims in Medina.

When it was time for him to emigrate to Medina, Allah's Messenger led the first Friday prayer in the Valley of Ranuna between Quba' and Medina.³² This was also a declaration given in the name of social unity. The first thing he did when he arrived in Medina was to prepare a document which brought all beliefs together and was in a way the first written constitution of the City State of Medina. A common agreement document which included non-Muslim groups, most of whom were Jews, was the basic manifestation of the foundation of the Medinan City State. Thus, as the head of the state, Allah's Messenger (saw) put an end to arbitrary practices of the tribes and individuals while protecting their rights and linked the government to a common agreement document.

The authority of the Prophet (saw) was established as an article of the constitution and was accepted by non-Muslims.³³ In this way, the Prophet (saw) assured the rights of all individuals and groups, no matter what their religious affiliations, tribes, and gender. His judicial power emerged in Medina was based on the fact that he was a political leader in charge of carrying out legal sanctions. The necessary ground for the task of regulating the legal relations was formed in Medina. Therefore, worldly sanction mechanisms that would also be valid for people

³² MK5414, Tabarani, Mu'jam al-kabir, VI, 30; HS3/22, Ibn Hisham, Sira, III, 22-25.

³³ BN3/275, Ibn Kathir, Bidaya, III, 275.



from other beliefs were needed to be carried out beyond a sanction system based on the awareness of afterlife.

As the head of the state, Allah's Messenger heard cases of not only the Muslims but also the non-Muslims. However, he issued his verdicts among the Jews³⁴ and Christians³⁵ according to their own books. In disputes among the Muslims, the Holy Qur'an was his fundamental basis, which was an order to him from Allah (swt).³⁶ In fact, once when two people came to him for his Judgement in a case, they asked him to resolve it according to the rules of the Book of Allah. After listening to their case, Allah's Messenger said, "*By Him Who has my life in His hands, I will judge between you according to Allah's Book (Laws).*"³⁷

The Prophet (saw) was the highest authority in the Medinan City State who was approved by the people of Medina. However, this task was also given to him by Allah (swt) in the following verse: "*We have sent down the Scripture to you [Prophet] with the truth so that you can judge between people in accordance with what Allah has shown you...*"³⁸ According to the Holy Qur'an, not being pleased with his judgement was a sign of hypocrisy.³⁹ A man from the Ansar disputed with Zubayr of Mecca in the presence of Allah's Messenger in regard to the watering places of Harra from which they watered date-palms. The man from the Ansar said, "Let the water flow," but Zubayr (ra) refused to do so and the dispute was brought to Allah's Messenger. After

³⁴ M4437, Muslim, Hudud, 26; DM2351, Darimi, Hudud, 15.

³⁵ Ma'idah, 5/47.

³⁶ Nisa, 4/105.

³⁷ B7260, Bukhari, Akhbar al-ahad, 1; B7278, Bukhari, I'tisam, 2.

³⁸ Nisa, 4/105.

³⁹ Nisa, 4/61.



he heard the case, he said to Zubayr, “*O Zubayr, water your date-palms, then let the water flow to your neighbor.*” The man from the Ansar was enraged and said, “O Allah’s Messenger, (you have given this decision) for he is the son of your aunt.” The face of Allah’s Messenger underwent a change, and then he said, “*O Zubayr, water your date-palms, then hold it until it rises up to the walls.*” Zubayr said that the following verse was revealed upon this incident: “*By your Lord, they will not be true believers until they let you decide between them in all matters of dispute, and find no resistance in their souls to your decisions, accepting them totally.*”⁴⁰

Another example of the Judgements that Allah’s Messenger gave in disputes among people was when the following incident happened to Bara’ b. ‘Azib (ra). Once Bara’s camel passed over the fences around his neighbor’s garden and destroyed his neighbor’s crops. When the Prophet (saw) heard what had happened, he held the owner of the camel responsible for watching his camel at night, and the owner of the garden responsible for watching the crops in the morning.⁴¹

When issuing a Judgement Allah’s Messenger (saw) completely depended upon concrete evidence. By saying, “*If the people were given according to their claims, they would claim the lives of persons and their properties, but the oath must be taken by the defendant,*”⁴² he attracted attention to the importance of basing Judgements on concrete evidence. In

⁴⁰ Nisa, 4/65; M6112 Muslim, Fadha’il, 129.

⁴¹ MA18438, ‘Abd al-Razzak, Musannaf, X, 82; DK3269, Daraqutni, Sunan, III, 153.

⁴² M4470, Muslim, Aqdiyya, 1.



cases he heard in his court, he required concrete proof,⁴³ a witness⁴⁴ or taking an oath.⁴⁵ In addition, he reminded believers of the dimension of accountability in the afterlife and ensured the establishment of justice. For example, he stated that if anyone made an untruthful accusation against a Muslim, he would suffer Allah's wrath until he retracted his case.⁴⁶ On another occasion, he made the following warning: *"I am only a human being, and you people have disputes. It may be that someone among you can present his case in a more eloquent and convincing manner than the other, and I give my Judgement in his favor according to what I hear. Beware! If ever I give (by error) somebody something of his brother's right then he should not take it as I have only, given him a piece of Fire."*⁴⁷

Reminding them of the Hereafter in legal cases was a method unique to the Prophet (saw) because he was also a Messenger of Allah. By using this method, he achieved very concrete solutions. For instance, when two men came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) in a dispute over their inheritance but had no evidence to support their claims, they heard such words from the Prophet and each decided to withdraw from the case in favor of the other.⁴⁸

For example, Rabi'a b. 'Ibdan and Imru' al-Qays b. 'Abis al-Kindi (ra) from the region of Hadramawt⁴⁹ came to the Messenger of Allah (saw). Rabi'a b. 'Ibdan said, "O

⁴³ M359 Muslim, Iman, 224.

⁴⁴ D3621, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 25.

⁴⁵ B2515 Buhâri, Rehn fi'l-hazar, 6.

⁴⁶ D3597, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 14; HM5385, Ibn Hanbal, II, 71.

⁴⁷ B6967, Bukhari, Hiyal, 10.

⁴⁸ D3584, Abu Dawud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

⁴⁹ M359, Muslim, Iman, 224.



Messenger of Allah, this (man) took away from me forcibly the land which belongs to my father.” Then Ibn ‘Abis al-Kindi said, “It is my land. It is in my possession, and I cultivate it. He has no right to it.” The Prophet (saw) then said to Rabi‘a b. ‘Ibdan, “*Do you have any proof?*” He said, “No.” The Prophet (saw) then said, “*(There is nothing to do but) for you but to ask for his oath.*” He said, “O Messenger of Allah, he is liar, he does not care for what he is taking the oath. He does not refrain himself from anything.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*You will have nothing from him except that.*” He went to take an oath for him. When he turned his back, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*If he takes an oath on the property to take it away by unfair means, he will meet Allah while He is unmindful of him.*”⁵⁰ Thereupon, Ibn ‘Abis al-Kindi said, “The land is his.”⁵¹

The issues about which Allah’s Messenger issued his verdict and applied the necessary sanctions were not only limited to cases between two parties. He also acted as a judge in cases related to public rights and to acts committed that were prohibited by religion.⁵²

Allah’s Messenger (saw) acted like an ordinary judge during the hearing of cases and always observed the principle of justice when issuing his Judgement. His verdict would never be changed according to the parties of the cases. As in all of his actions, he would never show favoritism in matters directly related to the rights of individuals or the public. Once a woman from a respected

⁵⁰ D3245 Abu Dawud, Nudhur, 1.

⁵¹ D3244 Abu Dawud, Nudhur, 1.

⁵² M4440, Muslim, Hudud, 28; M4410, Muslim, Hudud, 8; B6777, Bukhari, Hudud, 4; Nur, 24/4; Ma’idah, 5/33-34.



tribe committed theft. The tribe members wanted to send an intermediary fearing that if that woman was punished, the tribe's dignity would also be damaged. They thought Usama b. Zayd was a good candidate, also loved by the Prophet. He agreed to do it upon insistence of the tribe members, and conveyed their request to the Messenger of Allah (saw). Upon hearing the request, the Prophet said: *"O people, those who have gone before you were destroyed, because if any one of high rank committed theft amongst them, they spared him; and if anyone of low rank committed theft, they inflicted the prescribed punishment upon him. By Allah, if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would have her hand cut off."*⁵³

Still it is also noteworthy that Allah's Messenger (saw) did not consider every dispute worthy to be taken to a trial,⁵⁴ and he did not support the notion of taking to the court issues that could be solved between the parties of the dispute. He wished for people to peacefully solve their own problems among themselves. Because according to him, when a dispute was taken to the court, it would no longer be a case only between them but rather turn into a public matter. When a case would be taken to the court, Allah's Messenger, whose actions were exemplary for believers, would be forced to do whatever was necessary. For example, a man had stolen Safwan b. 'Umayya's (ra) shirt. Thus, he brought the man before the Prophet, who ordered that his hand be cut off after establishing his crime. When Safwan heard this, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have decided to withdraw my case." The Prophet (saw) said, "O Abu Wahb! Why didn't you do that before you brought him

⁵³ M4410 Muslim, Hudud, 8.

⁵⁴ N4776, Nasa'i, Qasama, 20-21.



to me?" and the Messenger of Allah (saw) had the man's punishment carried out.⁵⁵

This incident also shows that the issues related to justice began to become institutionalized. The resolution of cases were no longer matters between individuals, and the institutions of justice began to develop. When the borders of the state expanded after a certain period, Allah's Messenger appointed judges to ensure that the execution of judicial matters would take place properly. When the parties to a case were not happy with the decision of a judge, they were allowed to take it to the Prophet himself. In other words, the Prophet (saw) assumed the task of the court of appeals in contemporary context.⁵⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) was in charge of *tashrīʿ* (legislative), political and legal affairs. The *tashrīʿ* (i.e. establish rules on religion) was an authority and duty he assumed after being a prophet. Indeed, the political and judicial affairs were also part of this authority of his. In this regard, his decisions were, and will continue to be, binding on Muslims. However, it is important in terms of practice to know by which title of his he took the decisions. The rulings in terms of which there is no worldly punishment but only a return in the afterlife are binding for every Muslim individual whether male or female. Although the same applies to his political and legal rulings as well, people with political or judicial authority will be the implementers of this kind of decisions. The decisions and rulings he put in these fields should be followed not only in terms of the way they are practiced but also for the principles observed through them.

⁵⁵ N4883, Nasa'i, Qat' al-sarik, 4; HM15379, Ibn Hanbal, III, 401.

⁵⁶ BS16863, Bayhaqi, Sunan al-kubra, VIII,175.



THE SENSITIVE AND TENDER PROPHET

The Noble Messenger bade farewell his sons by Khadijah, al-Qasim and ‘Abd Allah (ra), to the eternal world while they were still babies in Mecca. After they died, he had a son by Maria (ra).¹ When he received the good news, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*This evening a son was born to me. I have named him after my forefather Ibrahim (Abraham).*”² He wanted him to grow up, thrive, and continue his lineage. In order for baby Ibrahim to be breastfed, he was given to the wet nurse Umm Sayf, the wife of a blacksmith named Bara’ b. Aws (ra), who lived in a quarter outside Medina. From time to time Allah’s Messenger (saw) would visit his only son. He loved him and would kiss and nuzzle him.³

¹ TB2/214 Tabari, Ta’rikh, II, 214.

² M6025 Muslim, Fadha’il, 62.

³ ST1/136, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 13; B1303, Bukhari, Jana’iz, 43; M6026, Muslim, Fadha’il, 63.



In order to ensure that they would be well fed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) set aside for Maria and Ibrahim milkers from a herd of camels and sheep. Ibrahim was nourished and his skin filled out and whitened and he began to resemble his father.⁴ Not more than 17 or 18 months had passed when, although he was quite adorable, he suddenly became ill. Learning of his illness, the Messenger of Mercy went to visit his beloved baby with his friend ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra). Ibrahim’s illness intensified and he began to fail. The eyes of our Prophet, who was very compassionate and affectionate toward children, began to swell with tears.⁵ His Companions (ra) who saw him in this state expressed their surprise, saying, “Are you crying, O Messenger of Allah! The Muslims who see you cry will also cry.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “*The eyes weep and the heart is saddened, but we can only say what pleases our Lord...*”⁶ When Ibrahim’s soul had been surrendered, he said, “*To be brief, if there had been no route to follow and if he had not then joined those who preceded him, we would have thought differently. O Ibrahim! We truly grieve for you.*”⁷

Later the Prophet of Mercy said to his friends, “*Do not wrap him in his shroud until I look at him (for the last time)!*” When the time came to wash and wrap him in his shroud, our Prophet bent over him and wept.⁸



⁴ ST1/137, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 137.

⁵ B1303, Bukhari, *Jana’iz*, 43.

⁶ M6025, Muslim, *Fadha’il*, 62.

⁷ MA6672, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, III, 552; M6026, Muslim, *Fadha’il*, 63.

⁸ IM1475, Ibn Majah, *Jana’iz*, 13.



The Companions (ra) thought that the Prophetic prohibition of mourning and lamenting the dead by screaming and wailing, rending garments, and beating the breast included weeping. They thought that a prophet who was always patient in the face of human calamities and who recommended consenting to divine will would have to be patient and not weep even at the death of his own son. But in this instance, our Prophet, being above all a human being, exhibited sadness with the compassion of a father at the loss of his baby son and, at the same time as a Messenger, served as an example to his community on how to behave at the loss of a relative. He showed what the extent of grieving and weeping should be.

Yes, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was weeping. This was because he was human and had feelings. He was a father and compassionate. He had a heart and it was aflame. He had eyes and they reacted to what he saw. His tears flowed. He was the Prophet, the Messenger of Mercy, and he was merciful.

In a similar scene, the Prophet of Mercy wept once more at the death of his grandchild Umayma, the daughter of his daughter Zaynab (ra).⁹ Our Prophet wept with the boundless compassion of a grandfather at the death of his grandchild. Saying, *“Allah is the One who takes and who gives. Everything has an allotted time,”* he consoled Zaynab, in particular, and those around her. He also said, *“This is a mercy which Allah has placed in the hearts of whomever he*

⁹ HM22122 Ibn Hanbal, V, 204.



wished among His servants. Allah is merciful to his servants who are merciful.”¹⁰

The Messenger of Mercy, who was a sensitive man, wept not only for his own son and his grandchild but also for many of his Companions (ra). For example, when he kissed the lifeless body of ‘Uthman b. Maz’un (ra), who was very pious and loyal, tears soaked his cheeks.¹¹ According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, when Sa’d b. ‘Ubada (ra) became sick, the Prophet (saw) and some of his friends went to visit him. When they approached Sa’d, his whole family gathered around him. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked, “*Has Sa’d died?*” they answered, “No. O Messenger of Allah! He has not died.” Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) was overcome and wept. When they saw that he was weeping, they wept as well.¹²

Behind the weeping, which was a reflection of the feelings of the Messenger of Mercy, sometimes lay sadness, sometimes compassion, sometimes longing, and sometimes anxiety and fear that he felt for his community. According to his friend ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), at the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw) there was an eclipse of the sun. The Prophet (saw) stood up to do the ritual prayer. Those who were with him did the same. In each prayer cycle he stood, bowed, prostrated himself, and sat up longer than in the previous one. While prostrating himself in the second cycle he took a deep breath and wept. Then he said, “*My Lord! You promised me this would not happen while*

¹⁰ B5655, Bukhari, Marda, 9; M2135, Muslim, Jana’iz, 11.

¹¹ D3163, Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 35-36; T989, Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 14.

¹² B1304, Bukhari, Jana’iz, 44; M2137, Muslim, Jana’iz, 12.



I was among them. You promised me this would not happen while hoping for forgiveness from You.” When the prayer was finished, he raised his head and the sun was revealed. After the prayer, he got up and addressed the congregation. He praised and glorified Allah and then he said, *“The sun and moon are two of the signs of Allah (symbolizing his existence and unity). If you see an eclipse of the sun or moon, remember Allah and rush (to pray). I swear by Allah who holds my soul in His hand that Paradise has been placed so close to me that I could almost pick its fruit. And Hell has been placed so close to me that I sought refuge in Allah fearing that it had completely enveloped you.”*¹³

He was both a father and, at the same time, Allah’s Messenger. Therefore, because the day of the death of his baby son Ibrahim coincided with the eclipse of the sun, there were those who wanted to make a connection between these two events. As a result, he felt he had to make the following address: *“The eclipse of the moon or sun is not caused by the life or death of any person.”*¹⁴

As an ordinary man, the Prophet (saw), like other men, was sometimes seen to be overcome with excitement and at other times to be anxious. According to Asma’ the daughter of Abu Bakr (ra), one day when there was an eclipse of the sun, the Prophet became so perturbed he hastily put on a woman’s robe. When those around him realized what had happened, they produced his own clothing for him.¹⁵

¹³ N1483, Nasa’i, Kusuf, 14; D1194, Abu Dawud, Istisqa’, 9.

¹⁴ B1043, Bukhari, Kusuf, 1; M2102, Muslim, Kusuf, 10.

¹⁵ M2108, Muslim, Kusuf, 16.



If the weather became cloudy and the wind increased, Allah's Messenger (saw) would become worried and this could be seen on his face. Once 'A'isha (ra) said, "O Messenger of Allah! When people see clouds, they hope for rain and are happy. But when you see this, I read displeasure in your face." Thereupon he said, "O 'A'isha (ra)! *Who can assure me that there is not calamity in it? For, a people (the people of 'Ad) were destroyed by wind. They (in fact) saw the calamity coming but (out of hope) said, 'These are clouds that will bring us rain.'*"¹⁶

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the most wonderful, generous, and brave man. One night the people of Medina were awakened by a loud noise and everyone was very frightened. Some of the people who had gone in the direction from which the sound had come saw that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was on his way back as he had gone out toward the sound before them. He had mounted the horse of Abu Talha, which had no saddle, and a sword hung from his neck, and he said, "*Don't be frightened! Don't be frightened!*"¹⁷

Furthermore, as an ordinary man, the Prophet was sometimes worried and fearful and was protected by his Companions (ra).¹⁸ For example, one night when he came to Medina he couldn't sleep and said, "*I wish a good man from among the Companions (ra) would protect me tonight!*" A little later Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (ra) appeared and watched

¹⁶ M2086, Muslim, Istisqa', 16.

¹⁷ M6006, Muslim, Fadha'il, 48.

¹⁸ HM19847, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 405.



over him sword in hand and thus the Prophet was able to sleep.¹⁹

According to the Companion Hind b. Abi Hala (ra), who knew the characteristics of Allah's Messenger very well and reported his habits, he was not a man of comfort and pleasure. Instead he was always heartsick and pensive. He had a taciturn nature. He did not speak of trivial matters.²⁰ Hind described our Prophet not as one addicted to pleasure or who was impassive but, to the contrary, as one who had a rich sense of the world and thus was usually deep in thought.

He never withdrew into his own quarters or pavilion. He sensed deep in his heart the distress of those who were suffering. He encouraged them to be patient and to resist the suffering. He and his Companions (ra) were subjected to all kinds of persecution during the first years of his message in Mecca where torment, suffering, and torture were common. He and his Companions (ra) faced the blockade, which lasted two or three years, together. They experienced hunger, fear, the Hijrah, and finally war together. They dug the ditch (for the Battle of the Khandaq) together. The Messenger of Mercy, who was a sensitive person, was concerned about the weak, destitute, disabled, male and female slaves, in short, all of his Companions (ra). In this respect Allah on High said, "*A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses*

¹⁹ B2885, Bukhari, Jihad, 70; M6230, M6231, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 39-40.

²⁰ TS226 Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 97.



*him: he is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy toward the believers.*²¹

One of the most prominent features of Allah's Messenger (saw) was that he was the Prophet of Mercy. Allah on High sent him as a mercy to the worlds.²² In fact when he wanted to curse the polytheists, he said, "*I was not sent as a reciter of curses. I was sent as a mercy.*"²³

In addition, with respect to the feelings of Allah's Messenger, he was also extremely shy. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) described this feature of him, saying, "the Prophet (saw) was shyer than a virgin in her private room. If he saw something that he abhorred, we could see it in his face."²⁴

When faced with certain situations, the Prophet (saw) used to become angry, lose his temper, or become demoralized. The Companions (ra) could usually tell that he was fuming by looking at his face.²⁵ Indeed the Messenger of Allah (saw) himself said that he was an ordinary person and could become angry like anyone. Furthermore, he prayed to his Lord that, if he ever abused a believer in anger, by either word or deed, as recompense the believer would come close to Allah on the Day of Judgement and the Prophet's action would be a means of purification and mercy.²⁶ But the kind of behavior that he mentioned occurred rarely and under exceptional circumstances. For, as the Holy Qur'an states, "*Out of mercy from Allah, you*

²¹ Tawbah, 9/128.

²² Anbiya, 21/107.

²³ M6613, Muslim, Birr, 87.

²⁴ B6102, Bukhari, Adab, 72; IM4180, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 17.

²⁵ B6336, Bukhari, Da'awat, 19.

²⁶ M6616, M6619, Muslim, Birr, 89, 90; B6361, Bukhari, Da'awat, 34.



[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.”²⁷

The Prophet (saw) used to be patient in the face of injustices directed against him. However, when it came to the rights of Allah and His servants, he behaved more sensitively and was even able to endure the injustices for the sake of protecting these rights. Once, while leading the ritual prayer, Mu‘adh b. Jabal (ra) read the sūra of al-Baqara and took too long with the prayer. As a result, the congregation departed and he was left alone performing the prayer. Later he complained of this to the Prophet (saw). Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) sharply rebuked him, saying, “*Mu‘adh! You are trying the patience of people.*”²⁸

But we should remind ourselves here of the fact that even when the Noble Messenger was angry it was a certain kind of anger. Ka‘b b. Malik (ra), who was one of three people who remained behind at the Battle of Tabuk, went to the Prophet after he had returned from the battle. He went to explain why he had not participated in the battle and to greet him. Ka‘b described this moment, which was the first time he had met the Prophet (saw) after the battle as follows: “The Messenger of Allah smiled at me in an angry way and said, ‘*Come!*’”²⁹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was not vindictive even toward his fiercest enemies. Whether in Mecca or Medina,

²⁷ Al-i ‘Imrân, 3/159.

²⁸ M1041 Muslim, Salat, 179.

²⁹ M7016, Muslim, Tawbah, 53; N732, Nasa‘i, Masajid, 38.



he did not want to exterminate his adversaries but to guide them. On the day of the conquest of Mecca, it never occurred to him to take revenge on the Meccans and he let them go free.³⁰ According to 'A'isha (ra), "Allah's Messenger never took revenge for himself. Only when Allah's proscriptions were violated would he take revenge for Allah."³¹

Another instance which shows that Allah's Messenger (saw) was a sensitive person concerned his relationship with and his love for his wives.

He maintained his love for his first wife Khadijah even after her death and throughout his life remembered her with goodness. This was so much so that 'A'isha (ra), his youngest wife, could not help but feel jealous of Khadijah many years later.³²

In the incident in which his beloved wife 'A'isha (ra) was slandered, the Prophet (saw), as a normal human being, was also affected by the rumors that circulated about. He investigated the circumstances surrounding the event and as a spouse passed some difficult and anxious days. However, he was able to learn from the verses³³ that were revealed to him that 'A'isha (ra) was not involved in the ugly crime that she was alleged to have committed.³⁴

The Prophet (saw), who was offended because his wives insisted that he provide them with various worldly goods, withdrew to an arbor and lived apart from them for twenty-nine days. Upon the revelation of verses which

³⁰ BS18785, Bahyaqi, Sunan al-kubra, IX, 195.

³¹ B3560, Bukhari, Manaqib, 23; M6045, Muslim, Fadha'il, 77.

³² B3821, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20; M6282, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 78.

³³ Nur, 24/11-21.

³⁴ B4141, Bukhari, Maghazi, 35; MA9748, 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, V, 410.



required his wives to choose between the benefits of this world and Allah's pleasure and the hereafter,³⁵ he explained to the women their error. Contrite, they chose Allah (swt) and his Messenger.³⁶

Like other people, the Prophet (saw) also rejoiced and was happy about various things. Ka'b b. Malik (ra) said, "When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was happy, his face shined as if it were a crescent moon. We could tell he was happy from his face."³⁷ The Messenger of Allah, who sometimes in his relations with people could not avoid being humorous, made excellent and clever jokes; but while doing so he was careful not to depart from the truth.³⁸ He did not mix jokes with untruths.³⁹ He often indulged in word play and while some people could not understand the humor of this, which resulted from metaphorical and allegorical expressions,⁴⁰ some of the Companions (ra), who knew this habit of the Prophet very well, made similar jokes in response.⁴¹ However, those who did not know this characteristic of the Prophet (saw) were surprised when they saw him make jokes and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Are you (really) joking with us?" And he would answer, saying, "*But I am only saying the truth.*"⁴²

According to Jabir b. Samura (ra), who described the discussions, conversations, and close relations between

³⁵ Ahzab, 33/28-34.

³⁶ B4785, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ahzab) 4; B4786 Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ahzab) 5; ST8/182, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, VIII, 182-187.

³⁷ B3556, Bukhari, Manaqib, 22.

³⁸ T1992, Tirmidhi, Birr, 57.

³⁹ HM8462, Ibn Hanbal, II, 341.

⁴⁰ D4998, Abu Dawud, Adab, 84; TS241, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 105.

⁴¹ IM3443, Ibn Majah, Tibb, 3.

⁴² T1990, Tirmidhi, Birr, 57 HM8462, Ibn Hanbal, II, 341.



the Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra), after the Messenger of Allah (saw) completed the fajr prayer, he remained in the place where he had prayed until sunrise. He only left after the sun had risen. In the meantime the Companions (ra) used to speak with him. In the mosque they would recite poetry, recall what they had done in the Jahiliyya period, and smile and laugh.⁴³

Yes, Allah's Messenger would laugh but he did not laugh heartily. His face would express laughter, but it would always be in the form of a smile. Indeed, some of the Companions (ra) described the moments when the Noble Messenger smiled broadly on various occasions, saying, "He smiled to the extent that this molars could be seen."⁴⁴ 'A'isha (ra), who knew our Prophet best, described the way he laughed as follows: "I never saw the Messenger of Allah laugh so hard that one could see his uvula. He would only smile."⁴⁵

These characterizations, which have been passed down from the Prophet (saw), clearly show that Allah's Messenger, who was an ordinary man, had feelings and behaved like other people and exhibited various emotional reactions depending on the circumstances. It was important for the Messenger of Allah (saw) to serve as an example to Muslims in situations in which he was anxious or fearful or in which he had fallen into difficulty and the like. The Prophet of Mercy did not hide from those around him his sincere feelings, which he expressed in a very natural

⁴³ M1525, Muslim, Masjid, 286; ST2/372, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, II, 372.

⁴⁴ M461, M462, Muslim, Iman, 308, 309.

⁴⁵ B4828, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ahqaf) 2; M2086, Muslim, Istisqa', 16.



manner when faced with the events that he experienced as a man, husband, leader, and finally as a prophet. To the contrary, he was an example to Muslims in possessing a healthy sense of the world and in having control over his feelings. On such occasions, he served as a guide to believers on how to express positive and negative feelings.

As is clear from the examples which have been given, our beloved Prophet did not suppress his feelings. He did not refrain from reflecting his feelings outwardly or from even acting on them in an appropriate manner or from sharing them with those around him. In Turkish culture there are widespread sayings, such as, in particular, “Men don’t cry,” which usually force people to suppress their natural feelings. Over time, suppressed feelings can lead to a number of problems which can appear unexpectedly or which can cause various forms of mental illness. Whereas our Prophet, who understood these matters, advised Muslims not to suppress their feelings but to bring them under control, not to over react emotionally but to exhibit emotions moderately. As in every matter, the Prophet of Mercy was an example and guide to believers with regard to expressing feelings and emotions.

محمد



“SHOULD I NOT BE A GRATEFUL SERVANT OF ALLAH?”

When he was young, the nephew of the Messenger of Allah (saw), ‘Abd Allah b. al-‘Abbas (ra), tried to spend time with him in order to learn all about the Prophet and how he behaved and worshipped. Because Maymuna (ra), one of the Prophet’s wives, was his aunt, he sometimes used to spend the night at their home. When he was ten years old, he said to himself, “I’m going to pay close attention to how the Messenger of Allah prays during the night.” Later he described what he saw as follows: “The Messenger of Allah spoke for a while with his family and then went to sleep. In the middle of the night, or slightly later, he woke up.¹ He rubbed the sleep from his face and then recited the last ten verses of the sūra of Al ‘Imran. Afterwards he took a small water skin hanging from the wall and did the wudu’. Then he stood up to perform the ritual prayer. I got up and did

¹ B7452, Bukhari, Tawhid, 27.



the same as he had done, and stood to his left. He put his hand on my head and held me by the ear and twisted it and dragged me to his right.” As little ‘Abd Allah (ra) explained, that night our Prophet did two rak‘as six times and finally one rak‘a for a total of 13. Then he stretched out on the place where he had prayed and rested for a while. When he heard the muazzin’s call to prayer, he quickly did two more rak‘as and then went out to lead the fajr prayer.²



The first guide from whom we learned how to worship was the Noble Messenger. It is desirable for every believer to perform the ritual prayer the way he did,³ to fast the way he did,⁴ to perform the Hajj the way he did,⁵ to recite the Holy Qur’an the way he did,⁶ in short, to worship the way he did. The Companions (ra), who like ‘Abd Allah b. al-‘Abbas, felt the same desire at the time of the Prophet, were eager to watch the Noble Messenger while he worshipped or to ask him about his life of worship. This was because the community of a prophet who said, “*Pray as you have seen me praying,*”⁷ and “*Learn the requirements of the Hajj (by watching me),*”⁸ could not remain indifferent to his life of worship.

The young Companion Zayd b. Khalid (ra) was also curious about how our Prophet performed the ‘isha’

² B4570, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-i ‘Imran) 18; M1791, Muslim, Musafirin, 184.

³ TS281 Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 123.

⁴ TS300 Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 133.

⁵ M2950 Muslim, Hajj, 147.

⁶ HM26983, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 286.

⁷ B631 Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

⁸ M3137 Muslim, Hajj, 310.



prayer. He found his opportunity to satisfy his curiosity on a journey. From the skirt of the tent of Allah’s Messenger, he watched him in performing the prayer.⁹ As a recent convert, Wabisa b. Ma’bad was also curious about how the Prophet (saw) prayed. Wabisa was a member of a delegation of ten men selected from the tribe of the Banu Asad, who had become Muslims in the ninth year of the Hijrah, to go to Medina to learn about Islam.¹⁰ He once watched the Messenger of Allah (saw) praying and said, “When he bowed he made his back so straight that if water were poured on it, he would not have shed it.”¹¹ Thus he passed on some information about how he prayed.

The young Companion, Ibn ‘Umar (ra), who transformed his way of life by personally imitating the Prophet’s actions and transmitting them, carefully reflected our Prophet’s behavior in his life. For this reason the descriptions in many ḥadīths which take the form “Ibn ‘Umar did as follows, worshipped as follows”¹² in fact indirectly describe how the Prophet (saw) worshipped.

Allah’s Messenger himself explained to the people his life of worship and taught it to them. According to the testimony of Sahl b. Sa’d (ra), the Noble Messenger ordered a woman among the Ansar to have her slave, who was a carpenter, make a pulpit from a tamarisk tree. After it was completed, the Prophet (saw) did two rak‘as of the ritual prayer at it and then said to the people around him,

⁹ MU266, Muwatta’, Salat al-layl, 2; D1366, Abu Dawud, Tatawwu’, 26.

¹⁰ DI62/340, Ibn ‘Asakir, Ta’rikh Dimashq, LXII, 340; ZE4/323, Dhahabi, Ta’rikh al-Islam, IV, 323.

¹¹ IM872, Ibn Majah, Iqama, 16.

¹² HM4452, Ibn Hanbal, II, 3; HM4460, Ibn Hanbal, II, 3.



*“O people! I have done this so that you may follow me and learn the way I pray.”*¹³

A group of six people from the Banu Layth,¹⁴ all of them young¹⁵ went to the Prophet to learn the rules of Islam. They spent about 20 nights with him. During this time, Allah’s Messenger coached them, saying, *“You see how I perform the ritual prayer. You do the same. When it is time for prayer, one of you should pronounce the adhan and the oldest of you should lead the prayer.”*¹⁶ As the time passed, Allah’s Messenger saw that the youths were concerned about their families and so he sent them back with the advice, *“Return (to your country), stay with them, and teach your families (what you have learned here)...”*¹⁷ Malik b. al-Huwayrith (ra), who took this advice, performed the ritual prayer in the mosque in order to show and teach the people (in Basra where he led the prayer) how our Prophet performed the ritual prayer.¹⁸

In the life of worship of the Noble Messenger, prayer, which he called *“the light of my eyes,”*¹⁹ had a special place. After he had been given the mission of teaching people the divine truths, he was commanded, exactly like the other prophets,²⁰ to perform the ritual prayer. According to Zayd b. Harith (ra), our Prophet’s freed slave whom he treated like his own son, the second time Jibril came to him with revelation he taught him how to perform the wudu’ and

¹³ B917, Bukhari, Juma’, 26.

¹⁴ AU5/16, Ibn al-Athir, Usd al-ghaba, V, 16.

¹⁵ B685 Bukhari, Adhan, 49.

¹⁶ B631, Bukhari, Adhan, 18; B7246, Bukhari, Akhbar al-ahad, 1.

¹⁷ B628, Bukhari, Adhan, 17.

¹⁸ B824, Bukhari, Adhan, 143.

¹⁹ N3391, Nasa’i, Ishrat al-Nisa’, 1.

²⁰ Anbiya, 21/73.



ritual prayer.²¹ When the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims first performed the ritual prayers, they did two rak‘as each time.²² When they were being oppressed by the polytheists in Mecca,²³ they would silently recite, when possible, the Holy Qur’an during ritual prayer.²⁴ They would usually perform the prayer in the home of al-Arqam b. Abi’l-Arqam (ra), who was one of the first Muslims, and was called Dar al-Arqam (the Abode of al-Arqam).²⁵ As the polytheists continued their pressure, they saw that our Prophet was praying near the Ka’bah and could not refrain from interfering in the prayer in a deplorable fashion.²⁶ Indeed, the polytheist ‘Uqba b. Abi Mu‘ayt once attacked the Noble Messenger and tried to choke him, but he was saved through the action of Abu Bakr (ra).²⁷

It was during this time when the Muslims were experiencing difficulties that the night prayer (tahajjud) was made obligatory via the first verses of the Surah al-Muzzammil.²⁸ Thereupon, our Prophet and his Companions (ra) awoke for the tahajjud prayer for a year. After twelve months, the difficulty of performing the tahajjud prayer was mitigated by a verse that was revealed at the end of this surah.²⁹ Henceforth the tahajjud prayer was voluntary rather than obligatory. Allah Almighty made the tahajjud

²¹ HM17619 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

²² B3935, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 48.

²³ ‘Alaq, 96/9-10.

²⁴ M1001 Muslim, Salat, 145.

²⁵ BH1/457, Halabi, al-Sira al-halabiyya, 1/457.

²⁶ B240, Bukhari, Wudu’, 69.

²⁷ B3856, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 29.

²⁸ Muzzammil, 73/1-4.

²⁹ Muzzammil, 73/20; M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.



prayer obligatory only for the Noble Messenger, that is, it was specific to him.³⁰

As for performing the ritual prayer five times a day, it became a religious obligation on the night of the Mi'raj, which occurred about a year and a half before the Hijrah.³¹ The way of performing these prayers was also taught to our Prophet by Jibril.³² Thus, whereas previously each prayer was done with two rak'as, henceforth four were required.³³ As for the prayers according to the Sunnah and voluntary prayers, which were in addition to the obligatory ritual prayers, our mother 'A'isha (ra) said the following when she was asked about this: *"The Messenger of Allah did four (voluntary) rak'as in my house before dhuhr. Then he went to the mosque and led the congregation in dhuhr ritual prayer. Then he returned (to her house) and did two (voluntary) rak'as. Then he led the congregation in the maghrib ritual prayer. Then he returned (to her house) and did two (voluntary) rak'as. Then he led the congregation in the 'isha' ritual prayer. Then he returned (to her home) and did two (voluntary) rak'as ... Later at fajr he did two (voluntary) rak'as again."*³⁴

Allah's Messenger considered the night prayers to be extremely important. 'A'isha (ra) described them saying, "Do not even ask how beautiful he would perform the ritual prayers and their length."³⁵ He used to do the witr prayer (a special prayer done between the evening and fajr prayer) after the 'isha' prayer. He used to awaken at a certain time

³⁰ Isra, 17/79.

³¹ M431 Muslim, Iman, 279.

³² B3221, Bukhari, Bad' al-khalq, 6.

³³ B3935, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 48.

³⁴ M1699 Muslim, Musafirin, 105.

³⁵ B3569 Bukhari, Manaqib, 24.



of night, clean his teeth, do the wudu', and then pray doing 13, 11,³⁶ or five rak'as³⁷ including the witr. If he could not pray at night because of sleep or bodily pain, he would compensate for this by doing 12 rak'as during the day.³⁸ 'A'isha (ra) said of our Prophet's worship at night, "I do not know that the Messenger of Allah ever recited the whole Qur'an in one night, or ever performed the ritual prayer for an entire night, or ever fasted an entire month, except for Ramadan."³⁹

During the tahajjud prayer, the Prophet would stand until his feet would swell⁴⁰ and he would recite the Holy Qur'an at length, verse by verse.⁴¹ Sometimes he would pray throughout the night by reciting the same verse repeatedly.⁴² The Noble Messenger used to prostrate himself long enough for someone to recite 50 verses.⁴³ Some nights he would pray while standing for a long time and sometime he would prefer to sit. If he recited the Holy Qur'an while standing, being in a standing position he would do the rak'as and prostrations. If he were sitting, he would do the rak'as and prostrations at the place where he was sitting.⁴⁴ However, as he approached the end of his life, he began to do the nafl (supererogatory) prayers while sitting.⁴⁵ Indeed, at the place where he would pray in the

³⁶ B4570, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-i 'Imran) 18; M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

³⁷ D1357, Abu Dawud, Tatawwu', 26.

³⁸ N1790, Nasa'i, Qiyam al-layl, 64.

³⁹ N2350, Nasa'i, Siyam, 70; M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

⁴⁰ B6471 Bukhari, Riqaq, 20.

⁴¹ M1712, Muslim, Musafirin, 118; T373, Tirmidhi, Salat, 158.

⁴² T448, Tirmidhi, Salat, 212; TS277, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 122.

⁴³ B994 Bukhari, Witr, 1.

⁴⁴ M1699, Muslim, Musafirin, 105.

⁴⁵ M1712, Muslim, Musafirin, 118; T373, Tirmidhi, Salat 158.



mosque he would rest against a column, using it like a cane to support himself.⁴⁶ Once he fell from a horse and injured his right side. Because of this he had to pray for some time while sitting.⁴⁷

When Allah's Messenger was in Mecca, before the time when the fast was not yet a religious obligation, he used to hold the fast of 'Ashura' on the tenth day of the month of Muharram. During the period of the Jahiliyya, the Quraysh tribe also used to hold this fast. After the Messenger of Allah (saw) emigrated to Medina, he continued the fast of 'Ashura'.⁴⁸ When he learned that the Jews in Medina held this fast in obedience to Moses, he said, "*We have a greater right to Moses (with respect to obeying him) and we are closer to him,*" and ordered the Muslims to fast on the day of 'Ashura'.⁴⁹ However, in the second year of the Hijrah, after the fast of Ramadan became a religious obligation, observing the fast of 'Ashura' was left to the desire of the people.⁵⁰

During his lifetime, the Prophet (saw) did the fast of Ramadan nine times. Every night of Ramadan, Jibril came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and our Prophet used to recite the Holy Qur'an, that is, those verses which had been revealed so far, to Jibril.⁵¹ Our tradition of reading the Holy Qur'an during Ramadan is based on this event. Subsequently, Allah's Messenger enlivened the nights of

⁴⁶ D948 Abu Dawud, Salat, 172-173.

⁴⁷ M921 Muslim, Salat, 77.

⁴⁸ B3831, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 26.

⁴⁹ B2004 Bukhari, Sawm, 69.

⁵⁰ M2641 Muslim, Siyam, 116.

⁵¹ B1902 Bukhari Sawm, 7.



Ramadan with the voluntary prayers called tarāwīḥ.⁵² He was especially preoccupied with worship on the nights which likely included the Laylat al-Qadr and encouraged his family to do the same.⁵³

Once, near the end of Ramadan, he added two extra days of fasting without breaking the fast, that is, the fast of the wiṣāl (continuation). When he saw some of his Companions (ra) doing what he had done, he declared that this was a practice unique to himself.⁵⁴ During the last ten days of Ramadan, our Prophet would go into retreat in the mosque (‘itikaf) and preoccupy himself with worship. He did this every Ramadan with one exception.⁵⁵ Every year his retreat lasted ten days, but the year he died it lasted twenty days. During Ramadan of that year he recited the Noble Qur’an to Jibril twice.⁵⁶

The Noble Messenger said that the ṣadaqa given in Ramadan was better than that given at other times,⁵⁷ and that he would be at the peak of generosity during this month.⁵⁸

In addition to the fast of Ramadan, which was obligatory, Allah’s Messenger was careful to fast, voluntarily, in the months of Muharram (‘Ashura’),⁵⁹ Sha‘ban,⁶⁰ and Rajab.⁶¹ However, except for Ramadan, he did not fast for an entire

⁵² D1371, Abu Dawud, Shahr Ramadan, 1; B1129, Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5.

⁵³ M2787, Muslim, ‘itikaf, 7; D1376, Abu Dawud, Shahr Ramadan, 1.

⁵⁴ B7241, Bukhari, Tamanni, 9; M2570 Muslim, Siyam, 59.

⁵⁵ M2781, Muslim, ‘itikaf, 2; B2041, Bukhari, ‘itikaf, 14.

⁵⁶ IM1769 Ibn Majah, Siyam, 58.

⁵⁷ T663 Tirmidhi, Zakat, 28.

⁵⁸ B1902 Bukhari, Sawm, 7.

⁵⁹ T754, Tirmidhi, Sawm, 50; D2429, Abu Dawud, Siyam, 55.

⁶⁰ T736, Tirmidhi, Sawm, 37; N2354, Nasa’i, Siyam, 70.

⁶¹ M2726 Muslim, Siyam, 179.



month.⁶² The traditions which state that Allah's Messenger (saw) fasted for a "complete" month⁶³ should be more accurately understood to mean "most of" a month.⁶⁴

In addition, our Prophet fasted for six days of the month of Shawwal,⁶⁵ for the 13th, 14th, and 15th days, called the *ayyām al-bīd*, of the lunar months,⁶⁶ and nine days of the month of Dhu 'l-Hijja.⁶⁷ However, it is probable that he did not fast at 'Arafat on the ninth of Dhu 'l-Hijjah if he could have been in difficulty or infirm.⁶⁸ When the Noble Messenger fasted he usually gave priority to Mondays and Thursdays.⁶⁹ Sometimes he would fast on the Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays of a month and on the Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays of another month.⁷⁰ He declared the reason he fasted on Mondays, saying, "*I was born on a Monday and the first revelation came to be on a Monday.*"⁷¹

Another form of worship which became obligatory after the emigration to Medina was the *zakāt*. Allah Almighty had also commanded many previous prophets to institute the *zakāt*.⁷² Although our Lord (swt) Himself had put in place the basic rules concerning the *zakāt*,⁷³ Allah's Messenger (saw) arranged the payment of the *zakāt* by taking into

⁶² M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

⁶³ IM1649 Ibn Majah, Siyam, 4.

⁶⁴ T737 Tirmidhi, Sawm, 37.

⁶⁵ M2758 Muslim, Siyam, 204.

⁶⁶ N2347, Nasa'i, Siyam, 70.

⁶⁷ D2437 Abu Dawud, Siyam, 61.

⁶⁸ M2632 Muslim, Siyam, 110.

⁶⁹ D2451 Abu Dawud, Siyam, 69.

⁷⁰ T746 Tirmidhi, Sawm, 44.

⁷¹ M2750 Muslim, Siyam, 198.

⁷² Anbiya, 21/72-73.

⁷³ D1630 Abu Dawud, Zakat, 24.



consideration both the revelation that he had received and the social and economic conditions of the society in which he lived. Our beloved Prophet taught the believers to whom they should give zakāt,⁷⁴ the property subject to zakāt,⁷⁵ the stipulations concerning zakāt,⁷⁶ the amount⁷⁷ and the etiquette of giving zakāt.⁷⁸ He encouraged believers to pay zakāt⁷⁹ and at various opportunities he warned those who did not pay it.⁸⁰ Now, one-fifth of war booty was set aside by Allah Almighty for His Messenger and relatives.⁸¹ Consequently, for moral, social, and religious reasons, neither the Noble Messenger nor his family ever took zakāt or ṣadaqa or consumed it.⁸²

In the ninth year after the emigration to Medina, Allah the Exalted made the Hajj to Mecca a religious obligation in the verse, “*The Hajj to the House is a duty owed to Allah by people who are able to undertake it.*”⁸³ Because relations between the Muslims and polytheists were not good that year, Allah’s Messenger (saw) did not make the Hajj with his Companions (ra) until the following year. This Hajj turned out to be both his first and last,⁸⁴ for three months after this Farewell Pilgrimage he joined his Lord, whom he called “*My most sublime Friend.*”⁸⁵

⁷⁴ Tawbah, 9/60; D1630 Abu Dawud, Zakat, 24.

⁷⁵ M2263, Muslim, Zakat, 1; N2475, Nasa’i, Zakat, 18.

⁷⁶ T631 Tirmidhi Zakat, 10.

⁷⁷ T620, Tirmidhi, Zakat, 3; DM1662, Darimi, Zakat, 7.

⁷⁸ B1426 Bukhari, Zakat, 18.

⁷⁹ B1429, Bukhari, Zakat, 18; IM1842, Ibn Majah, Zakat, 28.

⁸⁰ M2300, Muslim, Zakat, 30; T3012, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 3.

⁸¹ Anfal, 8/41.

⁸² B1491, Bukhari, Zakat, 60; M2476, Muslim, Zakat, 162.

⁸³ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/97.

⁸⁴ T815 Tirmidhi, Hajj, 6.

⁸⁵ B6348, Bukhari, Da’awat, 29.



Allah's Messenger (saw) did the minor pilgrimage (ʿUmra) four times. Apart from the minor pilgrimages that he had made together with the Hajj, he did all the others during the month of Dhu 'l-Qa'da. These minor pilgrimages were the ones he did after returning from al-Hudaybiyya, the one he did the following year, the one he did from al-Ji'rana, which was the place where he distributed the booty of the Battle of Hunayn, and the one he did with the Farewell Pilgrimage.⁸⁶

The sacrifice of an animal, which was a form of worship and which was a tradition surviving from the time of Abraham,⁸⁷ had a special importance for Allah's Messenger (saw). When he wanted to sacrifice an animal, he would take two tawny, plump, double-horned rams. One he sacrificed on behalf of his community, which testified to the tawhid and to his prophethood, and the other he sacrificed on behalf of himself and his family.⁸⁸ He warned people that the slaughter of the animal must be properly done so that it did not suffer.⁸⁹ He himself even sharpened the knife so the animal would be killed properly.⁹⁰

Our Prophet used to perform the eid prayers in a vast open area called the muṣallā. He would first do the eid prayer,⁹¹ and then do the eid sermon.⁹²

In the life of worship of Allah's Messenger (saw), reciting the Holy Qur'an had great importance both as an

⁸⁶ B1780, Bukhari, 'Umra, 3.

⁸⁷ IM3127, Ibn Majah, Adahi, 3; HM19498, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 368.

⁸⁸ IM3122 Ibn Majah, Adahi, 1.

⁸⁹ M5055 Muslim, Sayd, 57.

⁹⁰ M5091 Muslim, Adahi, 19.

⁹¹ M2045 Muslim, 'Eidayn, 2.

⁹² M2052 Muslim, 'Eidayn, 8.



indispensable part of various acts of worship and as an act of worship in itself. This blessed book was revealed to him and he recited it all his life and considered it critical to leading a proper life. The Holy Qur’an was the greatest miracle of Allah’s Messenger.⁹³ Every day Allah’s Messenger would regularly recite a section of the Holy Qur’an; and if possible he would not stop until he finished.⁹⁴ There was no set time or specific place for reciting the Holy Qur’an, he would recite it at any opportunity. As for reciting the Holy Qur’an, nothing was an obstacle to it except the state of janabah (ritual uncleanness).⁹⁵ While reciting it, he would extend the recitation by beautifully lengthening the sound of the letters.⁹⁶ He would pause at the end of every verse,⁹⁷ and he would recite them clearly one by one.⁹⁸ Those who heard him recite the Holy Qur’an, admired his voice and the way he recited.⁹⁹ Allah’s Messenger (saw) also liked very much to listen to others recite it. Sometimes he was so affected by the verses that he heard that he could not help but weep.¹⁰⁰

Allah’s Messenger (saw), who was a man at the highest level of awareness of servanthood, had all the human features. He could forget, make mistakes, and not be able to do certain things. After returning from a battle, he was so tired that he fell asleep with his Companions (ra)

⁹³ B7274, Bukhari, I’tisam, 1.

⁹⁴ IM1345, Ibn Majah, Iqamat al-salawat, 178; HM16266, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 9.

⁹⁵ D229, Abu Dawud, Taharah, 90; N266, Nasa’i, Taharah, 171.

⁹⁶ D1465, Abu Dawud, Witr, 20; B5045, Bukhari, Fadha’il al-Qur’an, 29.

⁹⁷ D4001, Abu Dawud, Huruf wa ‘l-qira’at, 1.

⁹⁸ N1023, Nasa’i, Iftitah, 83; D1466, Abu Dawud, Witr, 20.

⁹⁹ B7546 Bukhari, Tawhid, 52.

¹⁰⁰ B5050, Bukhari, Fadha’il al-Qur’an, 33.



and could not get up for the fajr prayer.¹⁰¹ And once he confused the verses that he was reciting during prayer.¹⁰² Another time he made a mistake in the number of rak'as during prayer.¹⁰³ Once during prayer he began to cough and could not stand, so he had to cut his recitation in half and stop the rak'as.¹⁰⁴ His life of worship was replete with such human frailties yet it was practicable and could serve as an example. Therefore, by explaining the logic of worship to those who despaired—observing his capacity as a prophet and saying “Who is he? Who are we?”—he said that it was sufficient for them to take him as an example.¹⁰⁵

During all acts of worship, there were fundamental principles to which the Prophet (saw) adhered. Above all were sincerity and candor. Accordingly, acts of worship were only done for Allah Almighty.¹⁰⁶ And one expected something in return. The good news of our Prophet for those who performed their acts of worship and were sincere in doing so “as if they saw Allah,”¹⁰⁷ was great. He said, “*Whoever departs this world with sincerity toward Allah, worshipping Him alone with no partner, establishing regular prayer and paying zakāt, he dies while Allah is pleased with him.*”¹⁰⁸

At the same time, sincerity leads to a deep sense of awe and humility in the one who has it. ‘Abd Allah b. Shihhir (ra), who saw the Prophet while he was praying, described

¹⁰¹ B344 Bukhari, Tayammum, 6.

¹⁰² HM15967, Ibn Hanbal, III, 471.

¹⁰³ B714 Bukhari, Adhan, 69.

¹⁰⁴ HM15468, Ibn Hanbal, III, 411.

¹⁰⁵ B5063 Bukhari, Nikah, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Fatiha, 1/5.

¹⁰⁷ B50 Bukhari, Iman, 37.

¹⁰⁸ IM70 Ibn Majah, Sunnah, 9.



his sense of awe as follows: “I saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) while he was performing the ritual prayer. He was crying so hard that a sound like the rattling of a mill rose from his breast.”¹⁰⁹ This state of affairs was described in another ḥadīth as follows: “While performing the ritual prayer, the sound of a cry like a bubbling pot rose from his breast.”¹¹⁰ By means of prayer, Allah’s Messenger (saw) entered the presence of his Lord and this made him forget all his grief. Perhaps because of this, he would pray when he found himself in difficulties.¹¹¹ When he was in distress, he would ask for Allah’s forgiveness one hundred times in a day.¹¹²

Our Prophet would pray at every opportunity. He encouraged his Companions (ra) to pray, telling them, “*Let one of you ask his Lord for his every need, even ask Him for the strap of his sandal when it breaks.*”¹¹³ When he prayed, he would begin with himself.¹¹⁴ However, the scope of his prayer was wide.¹¹⁵ He would usually pray, saying, “*Our Lord! Give us goodness in this world and in the next and protect us from the torment of Hell.*”¹¹⁶ He would also pray after doing the ritual prayer. After the salam, he would usually ask Allah’s pardon three times, and then recite the prayer, “*O Allah! You are the source of peace (or the One free from all*

¹⁰⁹ D904, Abu Dawud, Salat, 156, 157; N1215, Nasa’i, Sahw, 18.

¹¹⁰ TS323 Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 144.

¹¹¹ D1319, Abu Dawud, Tatawwu’, 22.

¹¹² M6858, Muslim, Dhikr, 41.

¹¹³ T3604-8, Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 132.

¹¹⁴ T3385, Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 10.

¹¹⁵ D1482 Abu Dawud, Witr, 23.

¹¹⁶ M6840 Muslim, Dhikr, 26.



*faults) and from You comes peace. Blessed are You, O Possessor of Majesty and Honor.*¹¹⁷

Allah's Messenger (saw) recommended that people not go to extremes in acts of worship and that they worship continually and in moderation. This is what he, himself, did.¹¹⁸ In addition, when he was going to choose between two things, he would chose the easier, unless it were sinful.¹¹⁹ Just as he taught people the great importance of their acts of worship, he also granted them certain concessions. He himself took advantage of these concessions to lighten the obligatory acts of worship in case of necessity, such as when travelling or when ill.¹²⁰

At the basis of the Prophet's voluntary acts of worship, such as the tahajjud in particular, was the concept and effort of "being able to be a grateful servant." The fact that he performed so many acts of worship was not because he had to or to ask for forgiveness for his sins, but to be able to thank his Lord. It is very interesting that some of those who learned the life of worship of Allah's Messenger, who vowed, "*to be a thankful servant*,"¹²¹ exaggerated his acts of worship and then thought that they had to give themselves up entirely to acts of worship. As for the Noble Messenger, he warned them that, although he was a prophet, he worshipped without breaking from the needs and realities of daily life and that this was the path that he followed.¹²²

¹¹⁷ M1334, Muslim, Masajid, 135; N1338, Nasa'i, Sahw, 81.

¹¹⁸ B1970 Bukhari, Sawm, 52.

¹¹⁹ B3560 Bukhari, Manaqib, 23.

¹²⁰ M2610, Muslim, Siyam, 90; N2262, Nasa'i, Siyam, 48.

¹²¹ B1130 Bukhari, Tahajjud, 6

¹²² B5063 Bukhari, Nikah, 1.



Throughout his life, every significant word and deed of the Prophet was done with the awareness of ‘ubūdiyya, that is servanthood. Thus, he considered all behavior which was an act of charity (ṣadaqa) for Allah, people, and society, and not just certain acts like ritual prayer, fasting, the Hajj, and zakāt, to be within the concept of worship. In the words of Allah’s Messenger (saw), to remove a stone which was an obstacle in the road, to help someone on his riding mount, taking a step on the way to ritual prayer, and speaking well were all forms of charity.¹²³ Having a smiling face, commanding one to do good and avoid evil, showing the way to someone who was lost, and giving directions to a stranger were all acts of charity.¹²⁴ In short, all good and proper behavior which was done with an awareness of worship and to please Allah (swt) was charity.¹²⁵

In order to praise Allah Almighty while busy with the endless issues of daily life, those who do not wish to be distracted “*by commerce or profit from remembering Allah, keeping up the prayer, and paying the prescribed alms (zakāt)*”¹²⁶ should not neglect to make the following prayer which our Prophet recommended be recited at the end of every ritual prayer: “*O Allah! Help me to remember You, to give thanks to You, and to worship You well.*”¹²⁷

¹²³ M2335, Muslim, Zakat, 56.

¹²⁴ T1956, Tirmidhi, Birr, 36.

¹²⁵ M2328, Muslim, Zakat, 52.

¹²⁶ Nur, 24/37.

¹²⁷ D1522, Abu Dawud, Witr, 26; N1304, Nasa’i, Sahw, 60.

محمد



CLEAN, SIMPLE AND GRACEFUL

*A*llah's Messenger (saw) was uncomfortable in the presence of untidiness and disorder and liked to see orderly and neat appearances. There were many examples showing his meticulousness in this matter. Once he saw a disheveled man whose hair was disorderly and said, "*Could this man not find something to make his hair lie down?*" When he saw another man wearing dirty clothes he reacted to it by asking rhetorically, "*Could this man not find something to wash his garments with?*"¹

One day the Messenger of Allah (saw) was in the mosque when a man came in with disheveled hair and beard. The Messenger of Allah motioned with his hand that he should be sent out to groom his hair and beard. The man did so and then returned. The Messenger of

¹ D4062 Abu Dawud, Libas, 14.



Allah said, *“Isn’t this much better than that one of you should come with his head disheveled as if he was a satan?”*²



No matter what his circumstances, a Muslim is bound to appear as elegant and agreeable as possible by properly benefiting from his means. Of course, although appearing agreeable and elegant is only one of the duties of a believer, it is a very important one. Allah’s Messenger (saw) used to tell believers to be clean and to pay attention to their apparel. In fact, once when he and his Companions (ra) went on a military expedition against the Banu Ammar tribe, they saw a shepherd wearing two threadbare cloaks. The Messenger of Allah looked at him and asked whether that man had any other clothes. When the Prophet (saw) was told that the man had some extra clothes in his bag, he said, *“Let him go and put them on.”* When the Companion who worked as a shepherd wore the clothes, Allah’s Messenger said, *“May Allah strike his neck. Isn’t that better for him?”* The shepherd asked, *“O Messenger of Allah! (Should I wear such clothes when I go to fight) in the way of Allah.”* The Messenger of Allah said, *“Yes, (even when you go to fight) in the way of Allah.”*³

Allah’s Messenger (saw), who advised wearing nice clothes even when going to a battle, obviously wanted his followers to be well-groomed, clean, nice, elegant, and well-liked people. For instance, it is well known that the Companion who asked Allah’s Messenger, whose aim was

² MU1739, Muwatta’, Sha’r, 2.

³ MU1654, Muwatta’, Libas, 1.



to achieve certain benefits and goals undisclosed to us, “O Messenger of Allah! (Should I wear such clothes when I go to fight) in the way of Allah” participated in the following battle and was martyred.⁴ It seems that the Beloved Prophet wanted him to appear before Allah in beautiful clothes.

In like manner, when the Companion Malik b. Nadla (ra) came to the presence of the Prophet (saw) wearing a lowly garment, he faced a similar counsel. The Prophet (saw) asked him, “*Have you got any property?*” Malik replied, “Yes.” The Prophet (saw) asked, “*What kind (of property) is it?*” He said, “Allah has given me camels, sheep, horses, and slaves.” Allah’s Messenger then said, “*When Allah gives you property, let the mark of Allah’s favor and honor upon you be seen.*”⁵

Throughout his life, Allah’s Messenger (saw) wore clothes in various colors such as white,⁶ black,⁷ green,⁸ red,⁹ and yellow.¹⁰ However, he avoided bright colors.¹¹ Allah’s Messenger preferred and advised people to wear white among all other colors. Once, he said, “*Wear your white garments, for they are among your best garments, and shroud your dead in them.*”¹²

Allah’s Messenger (saw) wore natural, clean, and simple clothes suitable to the climatic conditions of his region and he advised his Companions (ra) to do the same. According

⁴ MU1654, Muwatta’, Libas, 1.

⁵ D4063, Abu Dawud, Libas, 14; T2006, Tirmidhi, Birr, 62.

⁶ M273, Muslim, Iman, 154.

⁷ M5445, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-zina, 36; T2813, Tirmidhi, Adab, 49.

⁸ D4065, Abu Dawud, Libas, 16; T2812, Tirmidhi, Adab, 48.

⁹ B5848, Bukhari, Libas, 35; T1724, Tirmidhi, Libas, 4.

¹⁰ D4064 Abu Dawud, Libas, 15.

¹¹ T2807 Tirmidhi, Adab, 45.

¹² D4061, Abu Dawud, Libas, 13; T994, Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 18.



to the information provided by the ḥadīth sources, he wore a “cap” and wrapped a turban on it.¹³ The clothes he wore usually had two pieces, an upper garment called “ridā”¹⁴ and a piece worn below his waist called “izār.”¹⁵ The clothing, which the Messenger of Allah (saw) liked best, was the (long Arab) shirt or thobe.¹⁶ The shirts worn by the Prophet (saw) were different from the ones that we wear today. They were white, collarless, cotton made, long down to the knees and sometimes even longer. Some of these shirts had long sleeves coming down to the wrists¹⁷ and some were shirts that had shorter sleeves.¹⁸ Prophet’s preference for this type of clothing was probably because it was neater as well as more suitable to local health and climatic conditions compared to the other traditional clothes.

In addition to the thobe, Allah’s Messenger (saw) sometimes wore other clothes like the mantle,¹⁹ “qaba”,²⁰ and shirt.²¹ Among the clothes he liked, was “hibra, a type of shirt made in Yemen.²² This shirt, which was very suitable to warm climates, usually had stripes and was made from cotton.²³ Moreover, he wore a cloak²⁴ and a multi-colored outer garment woven from black goat hair.²⁵ This

¹³ D4078, Abu Dawud, Libas, 21; T1784, Tirmidhi, Libas, 42.

¹⁴ M2429, Muslim, Zakat, 128.

¹⁵ D4036, Abu Dawud, Libas, 5; T1733, Tirmidhi, Libas, 10.

¹⁶ T1762, Tirmidhi, Libas, 28; D4025, Abu Dawud, Libas, 3.

¹⁷ D4027, Abu Dawud, Libas, 3.

¹⁸ IM3577, Ibn Majah, Libas, 10.

¹⁹ B2918 Bukhari, Jihad, 90

²⁰ M5612, Muslim, Adab, 22.

²¹ B5809 Bukhari, Libas, 18.

²² B5813, Bukhari, Libas, 18; M5441, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-zina, 33.

²³ IF10/277, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, X, 277.

²⁴ B5800, Bukhari, Libas, 12.

²⁵ D4032, Abu Dawud, Libas, 5; M5445, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-zina, 36.



demonstrates that Islam never adopted a single clothing style, but different styles of clothes shaped by climate, traditions, and customs. Islam as a religion accepted all types of clothes as long as they were comfortable, loose-fitting, neat, descent, and worn without an inclination toward any pride and extravagance.

‘A’isha (ra), the beloved wife of the Prophet, relates that he used to perform prayers wearing a black and embroidered garment. However, when the embroidery of the garment distracted him, he said, “*Take this garment of mine to Abu Jahm and get me his inbijāniyya (a woolen garment without marks) as it has diverted my attention from the prayer.*”²⁶ Furthermore, there are reports stating that the Messenger of Allah (saw) bought some trousers after he had bargained for them.²⁷ However, it is not known whether he bought it for himself or for someone else since trousers are not common in the region.

The Prophet (saw) wore sandals called “nalin” suitable to climatic conditions.²⁸ His sandals were made from tanned leather.²⁹ The sandals of the Prophet had two straps.³⁰ Those straps were tied to the bottom of the sandal from the front and to the collar of the sandal at the top. In addition to sandals, the Prophet also wore a type of shoe called “khuff” in Arabic. It is important to note that the khuff is mistakenly understood in Turkish culture as a sort of sock called “mest,” although they were not a type of

²⁶ B373, Bukhari, Salat, 14; M1238, Muslim, Masajid, 61.

²⁷ D3336, Abu Dawud, Buyu’, 7; IM3579, Ibn Majah, Libas, 12; NS9670, Nasa’i, Sunan al-kubra, V, 482.

²⁸ B5851, Bukhari, Libas, 37; M2818, Muslim, Hajj, 25.

²⁹ D4210, Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 19; N5246, Nasa’i, Zina, 66.

³⁰ B5857, Bukhari, Libas, 41; D4134, Abu Dawud, Libas, 41.



leather sock worn inside the shoes but were worn as shoes by themselves. A pair of khuff that the Prophet wore were given to him as a gift by the Negus.³¹

As in all other aspects of life, the main principle that shaped the Prophet's attitude toward clothing was to avoid any pride and extravagance. In order to express this point, he said, *"Eat, give charity and clothe yourselves without being extravagant, and without showing off."*³² What he meant by showing off with clothes was to ignore the moral principles established by Islam and to belittle people by wearing pompous apparel. In fact, one day Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise."* A person (among his hearers) said, *"Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine."* The Prophet (saw) remarked, *"Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is to disdain the truth (out of self-conceit) and have contempt for the people."*³³

In addition, once pointing out that robes were used to boast and express wealth among Arabs, the Prophet (saw) said, *"Allah will not look on the Day of Resurrection at the person who drags his garment (behind him) out of conceit."* Thereupon Abu Bakr said, *"O Allah's Messenger! One side of my garment hangs low if I do not pay attention to it."* The Prophet (saw) said, *"You are not one of those who do that out of conceit."*³⁴

³¹ D155, Abu Dawud, Taharah, 59; T2820, Tirmidhi, Adab, 55.

³² N2560, Nasa'i, Zakat, 66; B5783, Bukhari, Libas, 1.

³³ M265, Muslim, Iman, 147.

³⁴ B5784 Bukhari, Libas, 2.



Moreover, Allah's Messenger (saw) was against the styles of clothing which could be called prideful or vain at that time. This means that clothes that which were worn to stand out as being different from others in order to attract attention³⁵ could be described as "garments of pride and vanity." Thus, wearing patched clothes to look pious, Allah fearing, and pretending not to give importance to this world could also be considered within the meaning of the above phrase.³⁶ In this context, Allah's Messenger said, *"Whoever wears a garment of pride and vanity, Allah will clothe him on the Day of Resurrection in a garment of humiliation."*³⁷

Allah's Messenger (saw) also paid attention to clothes which were suitable for the honor and dignity of the believer just as much as he cared for their cleanliness. In this respect, he had great influence on the people around him. The Companion Bara' b. 'Azib (ra) expressed his feelings about the Prophet's clothing style as follows: "I have not seen anyone with hair past his shoulders in a red garment more handsome than the Messenger of Allah (saw),"³⁸ and Jabir b. Samura (ra) said, "I saw the Prophet on a clear night, so I looked at the Messenger of Allah (saw) and at the moon, and he was wearing a red garment, and he looked better than the moon to me."³⁹ When Ibn 'Abbas (ra) was sent to a rebellious community as an envoy, he went there by wearing his nicest clothes. When the members of the community implied that his clothes

³⁵ AV11/50, 'Azimabadi, 'Awn al-ma'būd, XI, 50.

³⁶ MT8/221, 'Ali al-Qari, Mirqāt al-mafātih, VIII, 221.

³⁷ IM3606, Ibn Majah, Libas, 24; HM5664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 92.

³⁸ T1724, Tirmidhi, Libas, 4; M6065, Muslim, Fadha'il, 92.

³⁹ T2811, Tirmidhi, Adab, 47.



did not fit Islamic principles, Ibn ‘Abbas told them, “Why are you objecting? I saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) wear the best ensemble of clothes.”⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Prophet (saw) paid special attention to his clothing as a statesman. It was narrated by Anas b. Malik that Dhu Yazan, the Himyarite king, presented to the Messenger of Allah (saw) a suit of clothes he had purchased for thirty three camels. Our Prophet accepted this present,⁴¹ and in return, he purchased a suit of clothes for twenty she-camels and some more and presented it to Dhu Yazan.⁴² The Prophet (saw) once put on the garment sent by Sa’d b. Mu’adh and delivered a khutbah. After the speech, people gathered around him, touched and admired it. Upon seeing that, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Do you wonder at this? The handkerchiefs of Sa’d b. Mu’adh in Paradise are better than this.*”⁴³ Other than some Companions (ra) who were inclined to imitate the Prophet (saw) in every aspect of daily life including eating, drinking, and clothing as a manifestation of their love for him and hope to be blessed by means of him, most of the Companions (ra) acted freely in accordance with their tastes and preferences. This shows that they considered the habits of Allah’s Messenger related to clothing as part of his human side rather than his prophetic side.

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) put on a new garment, he would mention it by name, and then pray saying, “*O Allah, praise be to You! You have given me this garb*

⁴⁰ D4037, Abu Dawud, Libas, 5.

⁴¹ D4034 Abu Dawud, Libas, 5; DM2522 Darimi, Siyar, 53.

⁴² D4035 Abu Dawud, Libas, 5.

⁴³ B5836 Bukhari, Libas, 26.



to wear; I ask You for its goodness and the goodness for which it was made, and I seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil for which it was made.” and when any of the Companions put on a new garment, he (saw) would say “*May you wear it out and may Allah give you another in its place.*”⁴⁴ Moreover, the Prophet gave the good news that whosoever buys a new garment, and then takes the old garment and gives it in charity will be under Allah’s protection in both this world and the Hereafter.⁴⁵

When a man asked ‘Umar’s son ‘Abd Allah (ra), “What kind of garment should I wear?” he replied, “Wear a garment by which the fools will not humiliate you and the wise will not deplore you.”⁴⁶ This is because clothing plays an important role both to show the person’s respect to himself and to determine his place among other people. This is the reason, as related by his grandson Hasan, that Allah’s Messenger (saw) commanded believers “*to put on the nicest clothes and to wear the nicest fragrance that they have*”⁴⁷ and he himself applied this principle throughout his life and became an example for them.

⁴⁴ D4020, Abu Dawud, Libas, 1.

⁴⁵ T3560, Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 107; IM3557, Ibn Majah, Libas, 2.

⁴⁶ MZ8604, Haythami, Majma’ al-zawā’id, V, 135.

⁴⁷ BT1222, Bukhari, Ta’rikh al-kabir, I, 382.

محمد



THE PROPHET'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

*I*t was the ninth year after Hijrah. Allah's Messenger (saw) returned from the Battle of Tabuk and went to his home next to his mosque in Medina. When he entered the room, he saw a cupboard covered by a curtain with living creature pictures on it. As soon as he saw it, the color of his face changed and he tore it down. He then said to 'A'isha (ra), "*The people who will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be those who try to make the like of Allah's creations.*" Upon the warning of Allah's Messenger, 'A'isha (ra) turned the curtain into one or two cushions.¹ Later, Allah's Messenger used to sit on those cushions.² Islam is based on the belief in the principle of tawḥīd, i.e., the Oneness and Unity of Allah. Allah's Messenger (saw) wanted to erase the traces of

¹ M5528, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 92; B5954, Bukhari, Libas, 91; IF10/387, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, X, 387.

² B2479, Bukhari, Mazalim, 32; M5534, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 96.



polytheism from the minds of believers who had just been saved from it. Because of his meticulousness in this matter, Allah's Messenger prohibited hanging curtains, covers, wall carpets, or similar objects with pictures over cupboards, walls, or ceilings. It seems he did this because he did not want believers to attach importance and show respect to anything that might lead them back to their old beliefs.



Allah's Messenger would be disturbed by these objects at home and would often ask for them to be thrown away. According to 'A'isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) never left anything in his house that carried images or crosses; he would always obliterate it.³

These narrations show us that the Prophet (saw) tried to protect the principle of tawhid; that he strongly opposed attributing superiority or special meanings to objects; and that he accepted the supremacy of tawhid as the determining factor in his relations with objects.

The Prophet (saw) did not deem it appropriate to have objects at home in a place and position that might distract a person from his spiritual feelings and remind him continuously of this world. 'A'isha (ra) related that they used to have a curtain on which there were images of birds. Since they hung it toward the direction of the qibla, everybody who entered the house saw it. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "O 'A'isha, remove it, for every time I come in and see it, I remember this world."⁴

³ B5952, Bukhari, Libas, 90; D4151, Abu Dawud, Libas, 44.

⁴ N5355, Nasa'i, Zina, 111; M5521, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 88.



The Prophet (saw), who said that this world was a temporary place from which to obtain benefits,⁵ did not want to attach value to any item or object more than necessary. He (saw) avoided all kinds of luxury, extravagance, and extremism and became an exemplar for Muslims through his behavior. In the Prophet's worldview, things were not something that hearts should be drawn toward and through which values could be gained, but rather they were objects to be used whenever needed. Allah's Messenger would find adequate means through the goods that he used to satisfy a need. He did not want a luxurious life, but rather he preferred a modest life like that of Muslims with little means. When he passed away, he did not have any property, even the things that he had when he was born. This is because he had given any money and property, which was more than he required, away as charity in the way of Allah (swt). According to a report reported by 'Amr b. al-Harith, the brother of the believers' mother Juwayriyya bint al-Harith (ra), the Prophet (saw) did not leave anything (after his death) except his arms, a white mule, and a (piece of) land which he had given as charity.⁶ He left neither dinar or dirham, nor a slave or a concubine, or any other wealth behind.⁷ The objects that Allah's Messenger (saw) left behind as inheritance were only the minimum things that were necessary for the maintenance of life.

⁵ M3649, Muslim, Rada', 64.

⁶ B3098, Bukhari, Fardh al-khumus, 3; B2912, Bukhari, Jihad, 86.

⁷ B2739, Bukhari, Wasaya, 1.



Even though he had the power to acquire all kinds of material wealth, he was never interested in accumulating worldly possessions. One day ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud, one of the jurist Companions (ra), entered the Prophet’s room, which he compared to a dove nest because of its small size. The Prophet (saw) was sleeping on a straw mat. Because of the hardness of the mat, it left marks on the side of the Prophet (saw). Ibn Mas‘ud (ra) could not help himself and began to cry. Allah’s Messenger who was surprised by his crying asked him, “*Why are you crying?*” Ibn Mas‘ud began to explain what made him cry by saying, “O Messenger of Allah! Khosrau and Cesar walk on silk and satin fabrics, whereas you sleep on a reed mat, which left marks on your body.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (saw) said the following to comfort Ibn Mas‘ud: “*Do not weep, O ‘Abd Allah! The world is theirs and the Hereafter is ours. What interest should I have in this world? Because I am like a traveler who rests under the shade of a tree and then stands up and continues his journey.*”⁸

Neither the traveler nor the shade is permanent in this world. However, resting under the shade of a tree in the hot weather of the desert would help one to regain strength in order to reach his destination. This worldly life is finite and the things in it are temporary. However, it is necessary not to ignore the things in this world as an investment for the afterlife. Allah’s Messenger (saw) beautifully explained this fact with the above-mentioned comparison.

It is related that a woman from the Ansar visited ‘A’isha (ra) in her home. At that time she saw the Prophet’s reed

⁸ MK10327, Tabarani, Mu‘jam al-kabir, X, 162; IM4109, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 3.



mat. Probably because she did not deem it proper for the Prophet (saw), she prepared a wool mattress as soon as she returned home and sent it to him. When Allah's Messenger came home and saw the mattress, he asked, "What is this?" 'A'isha (ra) said, "So and so lady from the Ansar came, saw your mat, and sent this mattress after she went home." Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "Send it back."

'A'isha (ra) reported the rest of the incident as follows: "I did not send the mattress back. (Honestly) I liked to have such a mattress in my home." So Allah's Messenger repeated his warning thrice and then said, "By Allah! O 'A'isha! If I had wanted, Allah would have given me gold and silver mountains."⁹

Allah's Messenger (saw) would not use objects that could lead him to slackness and keep him away from worship. When Hafsa (ra) was asked, "How was the bed of Allah's Messenger in your house?" she replied, "It was a canvas folded into two, which was spread for Allah's Messenger to sleep on. On one night I thought if I folded it into four and spread it, it would become softer. I folded it and spread it that way. In the morning, Allah's Messenger asked, 'What did you spread for me last night?'" I replied, "It was the same bed, I only folded it into four so that it might become softer." Allah's Messenger said, "Leave it in its original form. Its softness deprived me of my prayers (tahajjud) at night."¹⁰ However, even though Allah's Messenger did not want a comfortable bed for himself, he did not make such a requirement for his Companions (ra).

⁹ ST1/465, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 465; BS1468, Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, II, 173.

¹⁰ TS330 Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 148.



Having the items that they need is the most natural right of people. Thus, having a house in which to live, garments which to cover their body and protect it from cold and hot weather, and food with which to maintain life are natural rights.¹¹ However, Allah's Messenger (saw) also took the conditions of his time into consideration and asked people not to exaggerate and waste when using such items.¹²

Allah's Messenger (saw) avoided extremes throughout his life and was an example to his Companions (ra) by living a modest life. He used many items that were in demand in the daily life of his society without turning them into "a show of wealth." In fact, when he went to a place as a guest, he sometimes sat on a cover spread for him,¹³ and sometimes on the ground instead of the cushion offered to him.¹⁴

Even though he had the means for a more luxurious life, he preferred a modest and simple life just like ordinary poor people. This was why all the items found in his home were extremely plain and simple. He had a couple of leather cushions filled with palm fibers, two mattresses filled with straw, a couple of pelts hung on his wall, and a couple of curtains.¹⁵ An oil lamp used for the illumination of his house,¹⁶ a knife,¹⁷ a large plate to eat food¹⁸ two cups

¹¹ T2341, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 30.

¹²M5452, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 41.

¹³ AM1177, Bukhari, Adab al-mufrad, 402.

¹⁴ B6277, Bukhari, Isti'dhān, 38; M2741, Muslim, Siyam, 191.

¹⁵ B5843, Bukhari, Libas, 31; M5528, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 92; HM25113, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 91.

¹⁶ IM3089, Ibn Majah, Manasik, 91; EM1223, Bukhari, Adab al-mufrad, 420.

¹⁷ M5091, Muslim, Adahi, 19.

¹⁸ B5225, Bukhari, Nikah, 108.



one of which was glass¹⁹ and one of which was from wood²⁰ were among the items he used. He also had a vessel in his home in which he heated water in the bathroom and made dough.²¹ Moreover, he had a couple of water containers used for both the wudu' and drinking water.²² Even though people in Muslim society used sieves in those days, the Messenger of Mercy neither had a sieve to sift flour nor did he eat bread made from whole-wheat flour until the end of his life.²³

As a human being, Allah's Messenger (saw) paid attention to his personal grooming and care. He used some objects to keep himself clean and handsome and he carried them with him when he set out on a journey. He had two combs that he used even when he woke up in the middle of the night.²⁴ One of them was made from iron²⁵ and the other was made from ivory.²⁶ He had a mirror and whenever he looked at it, he would pray to Allah (swt) saying, "*All praise be to Allah! O Allah! Make my character beautiful just like You have made me beautiful.*"²⁷ He had a black kohl called ismid which he applied to his eyes thrice before going to bed.²⁸ He advised his Companions (ra) to use ismid for it strengthened eyesight and fed the eyelashes.²⁹ The shine of the oil that the Prophet (saw) applied to his beard and

¹⁹ IM3435, Ibn Majah, Ashribah, 27.

²⁰ TSH19, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 84.

²¹ N241, Nasa'i, Taharah, 149; IM378, Ibn Majah, Taharah, 35.

²² IM3412, Ibn Majah, Ashribah, 16.

²³ B5413, B5415, Bukhari, At'imah, 23.

²⁴ BS96, Bayhaqi, Sunan al-kubra, I, 54.

²⁵ B6241, Bukhari, Isti'dhan, 11; M5638, Muslim, Adab, 40.

²⁶ BS96, Bayhaqi, Sunan al-kubra, I, 54; ST1/484, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 484.

²⁷ NZ913, Nawawi, Adhkar, p. 304; HM3823, Ibn Hanbal, I, 403.

²⁸ T2048, Tirmidhi, Tibb, 9; IM3499, Ibn Majah, Tibb, 26.

²⁹ D3878, Abu Dawud, Tibb, 14; T1757, Tirmidhi, Libas, 23.



hair when he was about enter ihram could easily be seen.³⁰ His toothbrush (miswāk) made from the arak tree was among the items that he used first when he came home,³¹ and kept by him when he woke up at night,³² and he used it frequently.³³

Allah's Messenger (saw) participated in many wars in order to protect Islam and the Muslims and he used the fighting tools of his time such as the sword, armor, and helmet. He had nine swords, most of which were booty of war. He gave beautiful names to his war armory. His famous sword gained in the Battle of Badr called "Dhu 'l-fikar".³⁴ The top of the handle of this sword was made from silver and had silver rings over its sheath.³⁵ The sword he carried on the day of the conquest when entering Mecca had silver and gold handiwork.³⁶ He also had other swords: one called Ma'sur that he inherited from his father,³⁷ another one called 'Adb given to him as a gift by Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) and he used it in the Battle of Badr,³⁸ others were called Ka'l, Battar, and Hatf which he received as war booty from the Banu Qaynuqa, and Rasub and Mihzam taken from the tribe of Tay.³⁹

Allah's Messenger (saw) used to wear armor in the battles in order to protect himself from the arrows and

³⁰ M2838, Muslim, Hajj, 44.

³¹ M590, Muslim, Taharah, 43; D51, Abu Dawud, Taharah, 27.

³² B245, Bukhari, Wudu', 73; M595, Muslim, Taharah, 47.

³³ ST1/484, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 484.

³⁴ T1561, Tirmidhi, Siyar, 12; IM2808, Ibn Majah, Jihad, 18.

³⁵ D2583, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 64; N5376, Nasa'i, Zina, 120.

³⁶ T1690, Tirmidhi, Jihad, 16.

³⁷ ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 485.

³⁸ VM1/103, al-Waqidi, Maghazi, I, 103.

³⁹ ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 486.



sword blows of his enemies. He had seven coats of chain mail. The most famous one of them was Dhat al-Fudul.⁴⁰ The two named Fidda and Sa'diya were among the booty gained from the campaign against the the Banu Qaynuqa. Allah's Messenger wore Dhat al-Fudul and Fidda in the Battle of Uhud and Dhat al-Fudul and Sa'diya in the Battle of Khaybar, one on top of the other.⁴¹ He also had a helmet that he wore on the conquest of Mecca.⁴² Allah's Messenger had three spears that he acquired from the Banu Qaynuqa. He had a total of six bows called Rawha, Bayda, Safra,⁴³ Zawra, Saddad, and Katum, which was broken in the Battle of Uhud.⁴⁴ Allah's Messenger (saw) gained almost all of these instruments of war either as booty or as a gifts.

Allah's Messenger (saw), who asked his Companions (ra) to wear their best clothes and fragrances, said, "*Allah will not look at the person who drags his garment (behind him) out of conceit,*" and thus established the chief standard in this matter.⁴⁵

In respect to usage of household items, the attitude of Allah's Messenger (saw), who was the best exemplar in the organization of his house and for the use of the objects found in his home, as he was in all aspects of life, can be summarized as simplicity, taking care of obligations, maintaining order, and keeping everything clean. As a head of the state, a victorious commander, and especially as the Prophet of the final divine religion, Allah's Messenger (saw)

⁴⁰ MA9662, 'Abd al-razzaq, Musannaf, V, 295.

⁴¹ ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 487.

⁴² B4286, Bukhari, Maghazi, 49; N2870, Nasa'i, Manasik al-haji, 107.

⁴³ ST1/489, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 489.

⁴⁴ ZD1/130, Ibn Qayyim, Za'd al-ma'ad, I, 131.

⁴⁵ BT1222, Bukhari, Ta'rikh al-kabir, I, 382.



was not a poor person, but he preferred to live a humble life. Even though he lived just like his poor Companions (ra), he did not prohibit the use of nice and quality items as long as this did not lead to extremes. Almost all of the quality items he personally used were gained from battles as booty or given to him as gifts. Throughout his life, he neither opposed the acquisition of wealth, nor did he crave wealth, and he did not become a person who made wealth the goal of his life.



THE PROPHET'S MANNERS OF EATING

ʿUmar b. Abi Salama (ra), who was born in the second year after the emigration, was a very fortunate child because even before he reached the age of puberty his mother Umm Salama (ra) married the Prophet (saw) and he was able to become a member of the Prophet's family. He was raised under the discipline and care of the Messenger of Mercy.¹ One day Allah's Messenger saw little ʿUmar's (ra) hand go around the dish while he was eating. So Allah's Messenger said to him, "*O boy! Mention the Name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat what is nearer to you of the dish.*" Allah's Messenger's cautionary counsel with three simple sentences taught little ʿUmar and shaped his eating manners throughout his life.² In fact, by these instructions, Allah's Messenger taught believers the three most important traditions related to eating.

¹ AU4/169, Ibn al-Athir, 'Usd al-ghaba, IV, 169-170.

² B5376, Bukhari, At'imah, 2; M5269, Muslim, Ashribah, 108.



Eating and drinking are necessary for every living being, including the humans, to survive. Allah's Messenger (saw), who regarded all of life as worship in a general sense, turned eating and drinking into a more meaningful concept through his manners and traditions.

In Islam, which accepts all kinds of material and spiritual purity as part of faith,³ the attention paid by the Prophet (saw) to washing one's hands before eating and washing one's hands and mouth after eating are remarkable in respect to hygiene. It is even more notable if one considers that the Prophet (saw) taught these practices in a society that did not have knives, spoons, and forks and in which people ate with their hands. He called the washing of hands before and after eating as "*the blessing of food*."⁴ In order to help Muslims adopt this mannerism, which is very important for cleanliness and health, Allah's Messenger commanded them to perform the wudu' even after having any kind of (greasy) food grilled by fire.⁵ However, after the habit of cleanliness was established in Muslim society, it is reported that he abolished the practice of performing the wudu' after having food grilled by fire.⁶

In such a society, it was not unexpected that Allah's Messenger ate his food by hand and licked his fingers after eating in order to clean them.⁷ However, the essential point

³ T3519, Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 86; HM23461, Ibn Hanbal, V, 363.

⁴ D3761, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 11; T1846, Tirmidhi, At'imah, 39.

⁵ M788 Muslim, Haidh, 90.

⁶ B207, Bukhari, Wudu', 50; T80, Tirmidhi, Taharah, 59.

⁷ M5297, Muslim, Ashribah, 131.



that should not be missed here is that Allah's Messenger washed his hands before eating and also washed his hands and mouth after eating. The Prophet (saw) even warned those who went to bed without cleaning their hands and mouth and having the residue and smell of food on their hands and mouth. He drew attention to possible spiritual and material problems that such an action might cause.⁸ All these demonstrate that one should wash one's hands before and after eating food even when they seem to be clean.

The Prophet (saw) would sit and eat his food on a table on the floor after mentioning the name of Allah (swt). Allah's Messenger was always in the state of thankfulness to Allah by being aware of the fact that everything that he ate was a blessing and favor of Allah. This is why he began eating by mentioning Allah's name, just as he did at the beginning of every deed, and said, *"When a person enters his house and mentions the name of Allah at the time of entering it and while eating the food, Satan says (addressing himself): You have no place to spend the night and no evening meal; but when the person enters without mentioning the name of Allah, Satan says: You have found a place to spend the night, and when he does not mention the name of Allah while eating food, he (Satan) says: You have found a place to spend the night and to have the evening meal."*⁹

Allah's Messenger (saw) also advised those around him to mention the name of Allah at such times. Thinking that mentioning the name of Allah (swt) was an advance expression of thankfulness to the Almighty Creator for

⁸ T1859, Tirmidhi, At'imah, 48; D3852, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 53.

⁹ M5262, Muslim, Ashribah, 103.



His blessings, Allah's Messenger stated that there would be no blessing in food eaten without mentioning the name of Allah. For those who forgot to mention His name at the beginning, the Prophet said to mention it as soon as they remembered it, *"When one of you eats food, then let him say, 'Bismillāh (In the name of Allah).' If he forgets it in the beginning, then let him say, 'Bismillāh fī awwalīhi wa akhirihi (In the Name of Allah in its beginning and its end.)'"*¹⁰ Just as with eating, the Prophet (saw) also advised his Companions (ra) to say Allah's name before drinking. He said, *"Let none of you drink all at once like the camel. But drink two or three times, mentioning Allah's Name when you drink, and praising Him when you (finish)"*¹¹ and he also prohibited breathing into the drinking utensil.¹²

Allah's Messenger (saw) would eat and drink using his right hand and say, *"When any one of you intends to eat (a meal), he should eat with his right hand and when he (intends) to drink he should drink with his right hand, for Satan eats with his left hand and drinks with his left hand."*¹³ What is understood from the above tradition is that the preference to eat and drink with the right hand is a Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Using the right hand was even recommended as a distinguishing feature of Muslims; and using the left hand to eat because it was some kind of aspiration to be like non-Muslims or to boast and show off was regarded as a reproachable act. However, it is obvious that those who

¹⁰ T1858, Tirmidhi, At'imah, 47; D3767, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 15.

¹¹ T1885, Tirmidhi, Ashribah, 13.

¹² B154, Bukhari, Wudu', 19.

¹³ M5265, Muslim, Ashribah, 105; D3776, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 19.



use their left hand because for a valid reason are exceptions to this prohibition.

The table on which the Prophet (saw) ate his food was made from leather dining sheets.¹⁴ Just like his dining sheets, his way of sitting on the floor for eating was also humble. He would not sit and take his meals while leaning against something like fine diners.¹⁵ In fact, when a bedouin saw the Prophet eating on his knees, he was surprised and said, "What kind of a way of sitting is this?" The Messenger of Allah said, "*Allah has made me a respectable servant, and He did not make me an obstinate tyrant.*"¹⁶ By doing this, he preferred to act differently from the ostentatious sitting styles of the kings and tribal leaders of his time. According to this, the essence of his eating manners was not based on disagreeable attitudes such as pride, extravagance, and pretentiousness. On the contrary, values such as modesty, satisfaction, simplicity, cleanliness, and lawfulness were emphasized.

Allah's Messenger (saw) advised Muslims not to stand up from the table but to wait for others to finish their meals by saying, "*When a meal is served, a man should not stand up until it is removed, and he should not take his hand away, even if he is full, until the people have finished. And let him continue eating. For a man may make his companion shy, causing him to withhold his hand, and perhaps he has a need for the food.*"¹⁷ The Prophet (saw)'s advice was a precaution to make sure people who were not yet full could continue

¹⁴ B5415, Bukhari, At'imah, 23; T1788, Tirmidhi, At'imah, 1.

¹⁵ B5398, Bukhari, At'imah, 13.

¹⁶ D3773, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 17; IM3263, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 6.

¹⁷ IM3295, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 21.



their meal and to prevent them from leaving the table early because of feeling uncomfortable.

Allah's Messenger (saw) did not deem eating and drinking while standing appropriate.¹⁸ However, he sometimes needed to eat while walking, and drink while standing up during the rush of the day.¹⁹ Therefore, this means that even though the general principles of eating manners have been established in Islam, it is possible for a believer to overstep those principles under certain conditions provided that he does not contradict the spirit of Islam. Based on this point, one should not forget that the most important points emphasized by the Prophet (saw) were not the means but the aims. It can be said that the lawfulness and cleanliness of the food and drink, paying utmost attention to people's health, avoiding extravagance, and thanking Allah (swt) were the major aims.

ʿUmar, one of the closest Companions of the Prophet, witnessed the moments when Allah's Messenger could find not even a single date to eat after suffering hunger for an entire day.²⁰ The Prophet (saw) and his family who mostly ate barley bread²¹ used to spend many nights in a row hungry.²² The number of the days that the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) spent hungry was not few.²³ Sometimes, they were forced to tie stones on their bellies to ease the pain of their hunger.²⁴ ʿA'isha (ra) reported

¹⁸ M5275, Muslim, Ashribah, 113; T1879, Tirmidhi, Ashribah, 11.

¹⁹ T1880, Tirmidhi, Ashribah, 11; IM3301, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 25.

²⁰ M7461, Muslim, Zuhd, 36; IM4146, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 10.

²¹ T2357, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 38; HM2303, Ibn Hanbal, I; 256.

²² T2360, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 38; IM3347, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 49.

²³ B5432, Bukhari, At'imah, 32.

²⁴ T2371, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 39.



that no fire for cooking used to be made in the house of Allah's Messenger for long periods of time; they had only dates and water for a while; and their neighbors from the Ansar used to present Allah's Messenger with some of their milk and his family used to drink it.²⁵ Once when Allah's Messenger was offered only bread for dinner, he asked his family for a condiment. They said, "We have nothing but vinegar." He asked for it and began to eat it, and then said, "*Vinegar is a good condiment, vinegar is a good condiment.*"²⁶

As understood from the above reports, the Prophet (saw)'s practice of such a life style was not because of his preference for the ascetic philosophy of life called "one morsel, one shirt," but rather because of both the hardships in finding food under the circumstances of the time and his benevolence and distribution of whatever he had to his poor Companions. Allah's Messenger (saw), who adopted modesty as a motto of life, never criticized any food, but he used to eat it if he liked it, and leave it if he disliked it.²⁷ He did not like wasting food. He used to command his Companions (ra) to finish all the food on their plate and personally was careful to not leave even a single morsel on his plate.²⁸

There were certain foods that the Prophet (saw) did not eat because he did not like them. They usually were foods from foreign lands and thus he was not familiar with them. Even though his dislike of certain foods was primarily

²⁵ M7452, Muslim, Zuhd, 28; B2567, Bukhari, Hiba, 1.

²⁶ M5353, M5352, Muslim, Ashribah, 167, 166.

²⁷ B5409, Bukhari, At'imah, 21; B3563, Bukhari, Manaqib, 23; M5383, Muslim, Ashribah, 188.

²⁸ M5306, Muslim, Ashribah, 136.



because of his personal choices, it was also closely related to the cuisine culture of his society. In fact, the incident related below, which took place in his wife Maymuna's house, clearly shows his attitude toward food that was foreign to his culture.

One day Allah's Messenger, Khalid b. al-Walid, known by the nickname "Allah's sword," and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas went to the house of Maymuna (ra).²⁹ Maymuna, who also was Khalid b. al-Walid's and Ibn 'Abbas' aunt, prepared something for them to eat.³⁰ Just when the Prophet (saw) extended his hand to eat the food, a woman who was present told him what the food contained. In fact, whenever something was offered to him, he was given information about that food.

The dish offered to the Prophet (saw) by Maymuna was a roasted mastigure (lizard) which her sister Hufayda bint al-Harith (ra) had brought from Najd.³¹ When Allah's Messenger learned that it was roasted mastigure, he withdrew his hand from it. Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) said, "O Allah's Messenger! Is this unlawful to eat?" He replied, "*No, but it is not found in the land of my people, so I do not like it. You are free to eat it.*"³²

Upon these words of the Prophet (saw), Khalid (ra) took the mastigure meat and ate it while Allah's Messenger observed him.³³ Other people who were present also ate

²⁹ B5391, Bukhari, At'imah, 10; M5034, Muslim, Sayd, 43.

³⁰ B5391, Bukhari, At'imah, 10; M5040, Muslim, Sayd, 47.

³¹ B5391, Bukhari, At'imah, 10.

³² M5034, Muslim, Sayd, 43; M5040, Muslim, Sayd, 47.

³³ B5391, Bukhari, At'imah, 10; B5537, Bukhari, Sayd, 33.



from the meat, but Maymuna (ra) did not by saying, “I do not eat anything but that which Allah’s Messenger eats.”³⁴

The Prophet (saw)’s refusal to eat the lizard meat was a matter related to his unfamiliarity with that kind of food, his taste, and preferences. Despite his refusal, his permission for others to eat it clearly proves that it was something lawful to eat and the choice to eat it was completely left to people’s tastes. On the other hand, Maymuna’s attitude toward the food was because of her desire to act like the Prophet rather than whether she liked it or not.

Even though the principles related to the permissibility or prohibition of foods were determined by religion, the preference among the types of food was completely a matter of culture and personal choices. It was reported that the Prophet (saw) liked the foreleg of a lamb³⁵ and gourd³⁶ but did not like eating locusts.³⁷ In this context, the preference of some Companions (ra) to eat the types of food that the Prophet (saw) liked and avoid others that he did not was because of their love and loyalty to him, rather than because of an obligation. The fact that Anas (ra) liked eating gourd just because the Prophet (saw) liked it,³⁸ and that Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (ra) did not eat food with garlic just because the Prophet (saw) did not³⁹ can be given as examples of this.

One day, a vegetable plate including onion and garlic was brought to the Prophet (saw). When he smelled something

³⁴ M5040, Muslim, Sayd, 47.

³⁵ M481, Muslim, Iman, 328.

³⁶ IM3302, Ibn Majah, At‘imah, 26.

³⁷ D3813, Abu Dawud, At‘imah, 34.

³⁸ B2092, Bukhari, Buyu’, 30; M5326, Muslim, Ashribah, 145.

³⁹ M5356, Muslim, Ashribah, 170.



that he did not like, he asked what it was. He was told what kind of vegetables there were on the plate, and he told his Companions (ra), *“Take these vegetables to the man sitting over there.”* However, the Companion in question did not want to eat the vegetables that the Prophet did not want. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger told him, *“Eat. (I do not eat it) for I converse with those whom you do not converse with.”*⁴⁰ In this way, he explained that the reason for refusing the dish was based upon not wanting to disturb his audience because of bad odor, yet he also wanted to show that things that he did not eat or like could be still be eaten by others.

One of the remarkable points in the attitude of Allah’s Messenger (saw) in respect to foods was that nobody has the authority to make a lawful food unlawful to himself no matter what his motives. In fact, the verse, *“You who believe, do not forbid the good things Allah has made lawful to you—do not exceed the limits: Allah does not love those who exceed the limits,”*⁴¹ was revealed about a Companion who prohibited for himself meat in order to prevent his sexual desire and to perform more acts of worship.⁴² In other words, even for performing more acts of worship, it was not acceptable to establish limits on the blessings of Allah (swt); the only exception was when certain foods constituted a health risk.

Once, Allah’s Messenger (saw) himself was warned by divine revelation regarding a similar issue. One day, the Prophet (saw) stayed a little longer in the house of his wife Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra) because he had drunk at her house

⁴⁰ B855, Bukhari, Adhan, 160; D3822, Abu Dawud, At’imah, 40.

⁴¹ Ma’idah, 5/87.

⁴² T3054, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5.



a beverage made from honey and the roots of a tree called maghafir. Hafsa and 'A'isha (ra) who felt envious about this agreed to say, "I detect the smell of maghafir in you," to Allah's Messenger when they saw him. Upon hearing this, Allah's Messenger said that he would never drink this beverage anymore. Thereupon, Allah (swt) warned His Messenger with the following verse: "*O Prophet, why do you prohibit what Allah has made lawful to you in your desire to please your wives? Yet Allah is forgiving and merciful.*"⁴³

There were some foods that Allah's Messenger (saw) liked very much and praised. He would do that because even though all the blessings given by Allah (swt) were worthy of being praised and thanked for. Still, he especially praised certain foods like tharid,⁴⁴ meat,⁴⁵ dates,⁴⁶ and vinegar.⁴⁷ One could say the same thing was true about thousands of different foods which were not mentioned by the Prophet (saw) and were not known in the land where he lived; because there is no doubt that every fruit and vegetable created by Allah (swt) has its own unique beauties.

Allah's Messenger, who began his meals by mentioning the name of Allah, would say the following to thank Allah (swt): "*Praise be to Allah Who has given us food and drink and made us Muslims.*"⁴⁸

Sometimes he also expressed his thankfulness with the following invocation: "*Praise be to Allah abundantly and*

⁴³ B5267, Bukhari, Talaq, 8; N3450, Nasa'i, Talaq, 17; Tahrim, 66/1.

⁴⁴ D3783, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 22.

⁴⁵ IM3305, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 27.

⁴⁶ B5769, Bukhari, Tibb, 52.

⁴⁷ M5353, Muslim, Ashribah, 167.

⁴⁸ D3850, Abu Dawud, At'imah, 52; T3457, Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 55.



*sincerely, of such a nature as is productive of blessing, is not insufficient, abandoned, or ignored, O our lord.*⁴⁹

Sometimes he said the following prayer: *“May the fasting (men) break their fast with you, and the pious eat your food, and the angels pray for blessings to be upon you.”*⁵⁰

In addition, Allah’s Messenger (saw) stated that the sins of believer who said the following prayer would be forgiven: *“Praise be to Allah Who has fed me with this food and provided me with it through no might and power on my part.”*⁵¹

As seen above, the invocations consist of praises and expressions of gratitude to Allah (swt). This is why even when one does not say long prayers, one should at least say, “Alḥamdulillāh (Praise be to Allah),” and thus express gratitude for the blessings given by Allah. Allah’s Messenger emphasized this as follows: *“Allah is pleased with His servant who praises Him after taking a morsel of food or drinking a beverage.”*⁵²

⁴⁹ B5458, Bukhari, At’imah, 54; D3849, Abu Dawud, At’imah, 52.

⁵⁰ D3854, Abu Dawud, At’imah, 54; IM1747, Ibn hMaja, Siyam, 45.

⁵¹ D4023 Abu Dawud, Libas, 1

⁵²M6932, Muslim, Dhikr, 89; T1816, Tirmidhi, At’imah, 18.



THE PROPHET'S CONCISE SPEAKING

The Prophet (saw)'s stepson Hind (ra) was famous for his deep knowledge about the Prophet's physical appearance, character, and skill to present eloquent speeches.¹ One day Hasan asked Hind (ra) to relate to him something about his grandfather the Messenger of Allah (saw). Hind b. Abi Hala started to say that the Prophet's face looked like the full moon, and spoke about his beard, and blessed physique. After Hasan carefully listened to what Hind related, he said to him, "Tell me about his way of speaking."²

Thereupon, Hind b. Abi Hala who was the son of the Prophet's first wife Khadijah (ra) from her first marriage continued by saying, "Allah's Messenger was continually full of concern. He was constantly deep in thought. He had no rest and would not speak without a reason. He would be silent for long periods of time. He would

¹ HI6/557, Ibn Hajar, 'Isaba, VI, 557.

² MK18934, Tabarani, Mu'jam al-kabir, XXII, 155.



begin conversations and end them clearly and distinctly by mentioning the name of Allah (swt) and would speak in a way that combined many meanings in a few words (jawami al-kalim). He spoke with excellence, and there was no excess in it or unnatural brevity. He was gentle by nature and not coarse, and he was not contemptuous of anyone. He would extol the favors he received even when they were few and small. He never found fault with them. He never criticized the food or drink that was prepared for him, nor did he overly praise it. No one would stand against his anger when matters of the Lord's truth were opposed until he had triumphed, but he would never get angry for his own sake, nor would he ever seek to win such an argument. He would gesture with his whole palm to point (not by just one finger). When astonished, he would turn the face of his palm upwards. He used his hands frequently as he spoke and would strike his left palm with his right thumb. When he would get angry, he would turn away and avert his gaze, and when he was full of joy, he would lower his eyes. Most of his laughing was as smiling; when he did laugh, it was not loud, and he would show his teeth a bit like they were hailstones."³



Allah's Messenger, who said, "*...I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning...*"⁴ knew and spoke Arabic proficiently. In pre-Islamic Arab society, one of the two tribes which was proud of speaking Arabic in

³ TS226, Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 97.

⁴ M1167, Muslim, Masajid, 5; B2977, Bukhari, Jihad, 122.



the most fluent and eloquent manner was the Quraysh, the tribe to which the Prophet belonged, and the other tribe was the Khawazin with whom he grew up.⁵ Pointing out the Prophet's extremely effective speech style, 'A'isha (ra) said, "the Prophet (saw) used to talk so clearly that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so."⁶ She also stated that Allah's Messenger never talked quickly and vaguely,⁷ never beat around the bush. On the contrary he spoke in such a distinct manner that anyone who listened to him could understand it.⁸ When 'A'isha (ra) listened to Abu Hurayra (ra), who related the ḥadīths successively, she reacted to him saying, "Allah's Messenger never talked so quickly and vaguely as you do."⁹ The young Companion Jabir b. 'Abd Allah said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke in a distinct and leisurely manner.¹⁰

Allah's Messenger would not speak unnecessarily and said, "*Indeed the most beloved among you to me, and the nearest to sit with me on the Day of Judgement is the best of you in character. And indeed, the most disliked among you to me, and the one sitting furthest from me on the Day of Judgement are the Pretentious, one who exaggerated during conversation, and the arrogant.*"¹¹

Allah's Messenger used to repeat three times the words and phrases that he deemed important in order for his sayings to be understood well.¹² One day after he said to his

⁵ ST1/113, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 113.

⁶ B3567, Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 23: M7509 Muslim, *Zuhd*, 71.

⁷ B3568, Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 23.

⁸ D4839, Abu Dawud, *Adab*, 18.

⁹ B3568, Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 23; M6399, Muslim, *Fadhā'il al-sahaba*, 160.

¹⁰ D4838 Abu Dawud, *Adab*, 18.

¹¹ T2018 Tirmidhi, *Birr*, 71.

¹² B95, Bukhari, *Ilm* 30; T3640, Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 9.



Companions (ra), “*O servants of Allah! Be as fellow-brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him,*” he pointed toward his chest thrice and said, “*The piety is here.*”¹³ In like manner, when he was talking about major sins, he warned them concerning the sin of giving false statements and false witness and kept on repeating that warning until the Companions (ra) thought that he would not stop.¹⁴ After giving his historical speech on the Farewell Pilgrimage, Allah’s Messenger asked those who were present, “*Have I conveyed Allah’s Message to you?*” They replied, “*Yes,*” the Prophet (saw) said, “*O Allah! Be witness for it,*” and repeated this statement thrice.¹⁵

Sometimes the Prophet (saw) would use a different method to draw the attention of his audience in order to help them understand his statements. It was ten years after the emigration during the month of Dhu al-Hijja. After counseling the crowd that gathered there to listen carefully to him and to memorize his words in the speech known as the “Farewell Sermon,” he said to them, “*I do not know, perhaps I will not be with you after this year.*” It was clear that Allah’s Messenger was conveying the message that his time of leaving this world was approaching. After this introduction, he continued his words as follows:

“*O People! Which month is this?*” Everybody kept quiet, thinking that he might give it a name. Then he said, “*It is the forbidden (sacred) month.*” He continued asking

¹³ M6541, Muslim, Birr, 32.

¹⁴ B5976, Bukhari, Adab, 6; M259, Muslim, Iman, 143.

¹⁵ B4402, B4403, Bukhari, Maghazi, 78.



questions like the following: “*What town is this?*” “*Which day is this?*” Upon the silence of the crowd, he answered his own questions by saying that it was the sacred town, and it was a sacred day. His aim was evidently to warn them by primarily reminding them of matters that were commonly accepted by everybody. After obtaining the attention of his audience, he came to the point he wanted to emphasize, “*No doubt! Your blood, your properties, and your honor are sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this (sacred) town (Mecca) of yours, in this month of yours.*”¹⁶

Allah’s Messenger (saw) paid a lot of attention in ensuring that his statements were intelligible and in making them memorable to the minds of his audience by using comparisons and similies. For example, he explained the difference between a believer and disbeliever by means of the following comparison, “*The example of a believer is that of a fresh green plant whose leaves move in whatever direction the wind forces them to move and when the wind becomes still, it stands straight. Such is the similitude of the believer: He is disturbed by calamities (but like the fresh plant he regains his normal state quickly). And the example of a disbeliever is that of a pine tree (which remains) hard and straight until Allah cuts it down when He will.*”¹⁷ The Messenger of Mercy explained the relationship among the believers with the following comparison: “*You see the believers being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves, and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the*

¹⁶ B67, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 9; WM3/1111, Waqidi, Maghazi, III, 1111; B1739, Bukhari, Hajj, 132.

¹⁷ B7466, Bukhari, Tawhid, 31.



body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”¹⁸

Based on the fact that body language can sometimes be more effective than words, Allah’s Messenger used to employ gestures or mimicry as an auxiliary element in his speeches. He used body language, especially his hands,¹⁹ his fingers, and his staff to point out things.²⁰ One day he was talking about Hell. He began his speech by taking refuge with Allah from it, and turned his face to the other side.²¹ It was as if he was shown the terrifying scenes of Hell and he did not want to look at that scene and turned his face away from it. By doing this, Allah’s Messenger (saw) was describing the terrifying fearfulness of Hell and telling his Companions (ra) to avoid Hell by using his body language. Once the Prophet was talking about major sins. He sat up when he mentioned giving a false statement and a false witness. This was bodily emphasis because of his strong feeling on that subject.²²

Allah’s Messenger was always polite in his conversations. He would never use words and expressions that could hurt the feelings of his interlocutors.²³ In fact, Anas b. Malik (ra) stated that the Prophet (saw) was not a person who would abuse (others), say obscene words, or curse others.²⁴ He would carefully select his words. He had a male slave named Anjasha, who led the camels that carried

¹⁸ M6586, Muslim, Birr, 66; B6011, Bukhari, Adab, 27.

¹⁹ B3302, Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 15.

²⁰ ST1/377, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 377; B5304, Bukhari, Talaq, 25.

²¹ B6023, Bukhari, Adab, 34; M2350, Muslim, Zakat, 68.

²² B5976, Bukhari, Adab, 6; M529, Muslim, Iman, 376.

²³ TS226, Tirmidhi, Shama’il, 97.

²⁴ B6031, Bukhari, Adab, 38.



the Prophet's wives during the journey of the Farewell Pilgrimage. At that time Anjasha (ra), while en route, recited poems in order to speed up the camels. Under the influence of Anjasha's beautiful voice, the camels began to walk faster and the mothers of the believers began to feel uncomfortable. The Prophet (saw) politely cautioned him regarding his wives discomfort by saying, "*O Anjasha, steer them slowly (the camels). Be careful with the vessels carrying crystals!*"²⁵

Allah's Messenger would take his interlocutor's level of understanding into consideration and would choose his words accordingly. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (ra) indicated this by saying, "I am commanded to speak in accordance with the levels of people"²⁶ and the Companion Abu Tufayl (ra) expressed the same principle applied by the Prophet by saying, "Every level has its own unique way of speaking."²⁷ The Messenger of Mercy would speak with his Companions (ra) as a teacher, a friend, and as an astute commander leading his army, with his wives as an understanding husband, and with his children as a compassionate father.

When he was asked a question, the Prophet (saw) would pay attention to the conditions of his questioner and answer in accordance with his/her needs and deficiencies. For example, when he was asked, "Which deed is the best?" by various people at various times and places, he gave varying

²⁵ M6039, Muslim, Fadha'il, 72; B6210, Bukhari, Adab, 116; AU22/289, al-'Ayni, Umdat al-Qari, XXII, 289.

²⁶ DF1611, Daylami, Firdaws, I, 398.

²⁷ BS5020, Bayhaqi, Shu'ab al-iman, IV, 263.



answers, such as “Believing in Allah and His Messenger,”²⁸ “Performing ritual prayer in its prescribed time,”²⁹ “Raising the voice while chanting talbiya (during Hajj), shedding the sacrificial animals blood,”³⁰ and “To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know.”³¹

One day a man went to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, teach me some words which I can live by. Do not make them too plentiful for me, lest I forget.”³² The Messenger of Allah said, “Do not be angry.” The man continued to ask for advice, but Allah’s Messenger gave him the same brief answer.³³ Even though much advice could have been given to the man, the wisdom behind the Prophet’s insistence on the advice of “not to be angry” was hidden within the temper of the questioner’s character. Perhaps calmness was the most important and most essential issue for that person and therefore Allah’s Messenger advised him not to get angry.³⁴

Allah’s Messenger (saw) who said that avoiding useless talk was part of the goodness of a person’s Islam³⁵ warned his community by saying, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak only what is good or keep quiet...”³⁶ He strictly prohibited speech that would prepare the ground for backbiting, lying, and speaking behind others’ backs.³⁷

²⁸ B26 Bukhari, Iman, 18.

²⁹ B527, Bukhari, Mawaqit al-salat, 5.

³⁰ IM2924, Ibn Majah, Manasik, 16.

³¹ B28, Bukhari, Iman, 20.

³² MU1646, Muwatta’, Husn al-khulq, 3.

³³ B6116, Bukhari, Adab, 76.

³⁴ IF10/520, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, X, 520.

³⁵ T2317, Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 11.

³⁶ B6475, Bukhari, Riqaq, 23; M173, Muslim, Iman, 74.

³⁷ B5975, Bukhari Adab, 6; IM349, Ibn Majah, Taharah, 26.



He pointed toward this fact by describing a Muslim as, *“The one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands.”*³⁸

According to a report by Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (ra), who hosted the Prophet (saw) in his home in Medina, a man came to the Prophet and said, “O Messenger of Allah, teach me but make it concise.” The Prophet (saw) said, *“When you stand to pray, pray like a man bidding farewell. Do not say anything for which you will have to apologize. And give up hope for what other people have.”*³⁹

The Messenger of Mercy would begin and end his speeches with the name of Allah. When he was talking about something that he was planning to do in the future, he would say, “Inshā’ Allāh.” In this way, he drew attention to the fact that there was a Divine Will dominating all wills including his will even if he was a prophet. In fact, his Lord advised him and all believers through him with the following words: *“Do not say of anything, ‘I will do that tomorrow,’ without adding, ‘Inshā’ Allāh,’ and, whenever you forget, remember your Lord and say, ‘May my Lord guide me closer to what is right.’”*⁴⁰

Sometimes, Allah’s Messenger (saw) would begin his speeches with an oath. This was done in order to affirm what he was going to say and to attract the attention of the audience to the significance of the issue at hand. His oaths usually were in the form of *“By the One Who holds my life in*

³⁸ M162, Muslim, Iman, 65; B10, Bukhari, Iman, 4.

³⁹ IM4171, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15.

⁴⁰ Kahf, 18/23-24



his hands.”⁴¹ He sometimes would take an oath saying, “By the One Who turns the hearts.”⁴²

Trustworthiness was his most distinct feature. The last messenger of Allah had been known in his tribe by this characteristic even before his prophethood. He had been known as “al-āmīn” (the trustworthy)⁴³ and he was never heard telling lies.⁴⁴ In fact, his wife Khadijah (ra) calmed Allah’s Messenger down when he felt afraid and worried when he received the first revelation by saying, “...By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you as you keep good relations with your kith and kin, speak the truth, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guest generously and assist the deserving, calamity-afflicted ones.”⁴⁵

Allah’s Messenger (saw) would never tell a lie, not even when he made jokes. In other words, no matter how his mood was, happy or angry, only the truth would come out of his mouth.⁴⁶ He would make the finest, the politest, and the most pleasant jokes. Once a man came to him and asked a mount from him. The Prophet (saw) said, “We shall give you a she-camel’s child to ride on.” He said, “What shall I do with a she-camel’s child?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “Do any others than she-camels give birth to camels?”⁴⁷ The Companions (ra) who knew that the Prophet liked jokes would respond to his jokes in the same way. One day, Suhayb al-Rumi (ra), who had a witty and humorous

⁴¹ HM6510, Ibn Hanbal, II, 162; T2170, Tirmidhi, Fitān, 9.

⁴² B7391, Bukhari, Tawhīd, 11.

⁴³ HS2/20, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 20.

⁴⁴ M508, Muslim, Iman, 355; B4971, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Lahab) 1.

⁴⁵ M403, Muslim, Iman, 252; B6982, Bukhari, Ta’bir, 1.

⁴⁶ D3646, Abu Dawud, ‘Ilm, 3; HM6510, Ibn Hanbal, II, 162.

⁴⁷ D4998, Abu Dawud, Adab 84; T1991, Tirmidhi, Birr, 57.



character, went to the Prophet. In front of the Prophet there were some bread and dates. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Come and eat.*” So Suhayb started to eat some of the dates. Then the Prophet said, “*Are you eating dates when you have an inflammation in your eye?*” Suhayb said, “I am chewing from the other side” and the Messenger of Allah (saw) smiled.⁴⁸

Allah’s Messenger would deliver sermons on Fridays and festival days to educate his Companions (ra).⁴⁹ In addition to those days, he would talk to them whenever he deemed it necessary in order to give them advice, to inform them, to encourage them, or to caution them. Whenever the Messenger of Mercy addressed a gathering, he would ascend to a high place in order to let everybody see him and hear his words. In the earliest days, he used to stand on a date-palm log when delivering his sermons in the mosque. Later he began to deliver his speeches on a pulpit based upon advice offered by one of his Companions.⁵⁰ Whenever he delivered a speech outside the mosque, he would mount a camel,⁵¹ or ascend to a high place.⁵²

Allah’s Messenger (saw), who began his sermons by praising Allah (swt),⁵³ would neither prolong his speech nor keep it so short that it could not be understood.⁵⁴ That is because his chief purpose was not to prolong a speech, but to express several issues with the least number of

⁴⁸ IM3443, Ibn Majah, Tibb, 3.

⁴⁹ B1015, Bukhari, Istisqa’, 8; M2047, Muslim, ‘Eidayn, 3.

⁵⁰ B3584, Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; HM5886, Ibn Hanbal, II, 110.

⁵¹ T2121, Tirmidhi, Wasaya, 5.

⁵² M508, Muslim, Iman, 355.

⁵³ B927, Bukhari, Jum’a, 29; T1163, Tirmidhi, Rada’, 11.

⁵⁴ N1419, Nasa’i, Jum’a, 35; IM1106, Ibn Majah, Iqama, 85.



words. Moreover, the Prophet (saw) tried not to address his Companions (ra) repeatedly in order to not wear them out. He would watch for the most apt time and place for his address in order to keep up their interest and enthusiasm.⁵⁵ Thus, extending the edification over a certain time was essential for the continuance of their interest and enthusiasm. In short, the Prophet (saw), who is the leader and guide of Muslims in all aspects of life, is the best exemplar for all the believers.

⁵⁵ B68, Bukhari, 'Ilm, 11; M7127, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 82.



“I WAS SENT AS A TEACHER”

One day the Prophet (saw) left home and went to the mosque where he spoke to people, meeting two groups there. One group was reciting the Holy Qur’an and praying to Allah (swt). The other group was studying and teaching. The Noble Messenger showed great interest in them and looked upon them full of love and compassion, and said, *“Both groups are good. This group is reciting the Holy Qur’an and praying to Allah. If Allah wishes, he will either give them (what they want) or not. As for the others, they are learning and teaching. I was also sent as a teacher.”* Then he joined them.¹ According to another ḥadīth, the Prophet (saw) said to ‘A’isha (ra), *“Allah did not send me to distress you and make things difficult for you. He only sent me as a teacher to make things easy for you.”*² Thus he described himself as an educator and tutor.

¹ IM229, Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 17; DM357, Darimi, Muqaddima, 32.

² M3690, Muslim, Talaq, 29.



Yes, our beloved Prophet (saw) was a teacher equipped with revelation and adorned with knowledge. As Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said, he taught the keys and consequences of everything good.³ While teaching his Companions (ra) many things which were useful to man in every field of life, he said, *"I am teaching you like a father teaches his children."*⁴

The Prophet (saw), who said, *"It is incumbent upon every Muslim to seek knowledge,"*⁵ was inclined, in an important sense, to the aspect of training and teaching which was transformative, changed and developed people and prepared them for the future and thus encouraged all Muslims, men and women, to seek knowledge. Thus, he said, *"Whoever takes a path to gain knowledge, Allah makes a path to Paradise easy for him. And tranquility descends upon any group in one of Allah's houses who recite Allah's book, study it among themselves, and learn it; and they are enveloped in mercy. Angels surround them and Allah mentions to them those who are in his presence. And whoever is slow in his deeds, his lineage will not advance him."*⁶

The Prophet (saw), who understood very well the importance of instruction and teaching, applied various means to carry out these tasks. Above all he took into consideration the status of everyone who sought his advice, their level of understanding, their spiritual condition and

³ N1164, Nasa'i, Tatbiq, 100; HM4160, Ibn Hanbal, I, 438.

⁴ IM313, Ibn Majah, Taharah, 16; N40, Nasa'i, Taharah, 36.

⁵ IM224, Ibn Majah, Sunnah, 17.

⁶ M6853, Muslim, Dhikr, 38; T2945, Tirmidhi, Qira'a, 10.



need and then gave them advice and dealt with them accordingly. He recommended that, in human relations and in activity related to instruction and teaching, the status of the audience always be taken into consideration. Allah's Messenger (saw) also drew these principles that he followed to the attention of his Companions (ra). In fact, 'Ali warned, "Relate things to people that they can understand. Do you want Allah and his Messenger to be denied?"⁷ Saying, "If you relate to a group something that their minds cannot comprehend, this only becomes a fitnah for some of them,"⁸ 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) indicated that a given knowledge transmitted to a given group could cause mental confusion.

Allah's Messenger (saw) wanted there to be close relations with people who pursued knowledge and wanted to learn, and he wanted them to be well received and to be informed about subjects for which there was a need. As he said, "*Men will come to you from the direction of the east to learn. So when they come to you then exhort them to good.*"⁹

The Prophet (saw) would not embarrass one whom he was addressing or leave him in a difficult situation. The young Companion from Medina Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam (ra), when he did not yet know the etiquette for ritual prayer once said, "yarhamuka 'llah" (may Allah have mercy on you) to one who sneezed during its performance. Whereupon, the congregation stared at him disapprovingly. He then said, "Woe be upon me! Why are you staring at

⁷ Bukhari, 'Ilm, 49 —at the chapter heading—.

⁸ M1, Muslim, Muqaddima, 5.

⁹ T2651, Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 4; IM249, Ibn Majah, Sunnah, 22.



me?” He understood that they wanted him to remain silent. After the prayer, he explained how the Prophet (saw) had behaved toward him, “I never saw a teacher before or after him who was better than he was. By Allah! The Messenger of Allah did not scold me, strike me, or abuse me. He only said, *‘In this prayer human speech is not spoken. The prayer is only the tasbīh, takbīr, and reciting the Holy Qur’an.’*”¹⁰

The Prophet (saw) would not point out the faults of people to their faces. When he encountered behavior that did not please him, he would say things like, “*What is happening to these people?*” or “*Some of you are doing such and such.*” In this way he would warn people without mentioning any names and take an indirect approach. His audience took the necessary lessons without any social embarrassment. The Noble Messenger, tasked Ibn al-Lutbiyya from the tribe of al-Azd with collecting the zakāt. When he returned with what he had collected, he said to the Prophet, “This (portion) is for you and this was given to me as a gift.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) ascended the pulpit and said, “*I sent an official to carry out a task for me and what happens? He says, ‘This (portion) is for you and this was given to me as a gift. Would that this person had stayed in the house of his mother or father and had seen if he would be given gifts or not?’*” Thus the Prophet (saw) saw the taking of a gift by the zakāt collector as a bribe or abuse and by announcing it from the pulpit got everyone to avoid doing this.¹¹

¹⁰ M1199 Muslim, Masajid, 33.

¹¹ M4738, Muslim, Imara, 26; B2597, Bukhari, Hiba, 17.



Sometimes while instructing people, the blessed Prophet (saw) would encourage them by complimenting them. One day he asked Ubayy b. Ka'b, who was a ḥāfiẓ (one who had memorized the Qur'an by heart) among the Companions (ra),¹² "O Abu 'l-Mundhir! Which is the greatest verse that you have memorized?" When he answered, "Allah and his Messenger know best," the Messenger of Allah (saw) repeated his question. Ubayy then said, "Allahu la ilaha illa huwal Hayyul Qayyum (there is no god but Allah, the Living and the Eternal)." Thereupon the blessed Prophet tapped him lightly on the chest and said, "Abu 'l-Mundhir, may knowledge be blessed for you."¹³ Abu Hurayra (ra) asked Allah's Messenger, "Who will be the luckiest person to gain your intercession on Resurrection Day?" He replied, "O Abu Hurayra (ra)! I thought that no one would ask me about this ḥadīth before you, as I know your longing for the (learning of) ḥadīths. The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Resurrection Day will be the one who said, 'There is no god but Allah,' sincerely from the bottom of his heart."¹⁴ The Prophet (saw) was thus pleased with his question, praised him, and encouraged him to act this way.

While instructing people and teaching them things, the primary training method that the Prophet (saw) used was to make it easy. His statement, "Make things easy for people (concerning religious matters), and do not make it hard for them,"¹⁵ reveals his approach in instruction. 'A'isha (ra) said, "Whenever the Messenger of Allah was given his choice

¹² B4999, Bukhari, Fadhā'il al-Qur'an, 8; M6334, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-Sahaba, 116.

¹³ D1460, Abu Dawud, Witir, 17.

¹⁴ B6570, Bukhari, Rīqaq, 51.

¹⁵ B69, Bukhari, 'Ilm, 11; M4525, Muslim, Jihad, 6.



between two things, he would take the easier (or lesser) of them provided it involved no sin, for if it did, no one kept farther away from it than him. And the Messenger of Allah never took revenge on his own behalf for anything unless something Allah had forbidden had been transgressed, in which event he took inflict punishment.”¹⁶

The Noble Messenger also recommended this principle to his Companions (ra). One day a man who had recently become a Muslim, but who did not yet know the ethics and etiquette of the faith, urinated in a mosque, the ground floor of which was composed of sand and earth. The people who were there rushed toward him, but the Messenger of Allah (saw) intervened and said, “*You were sent only to make things easy, not to make them difficult. Pour a bucket of water on the place where he urinated.*”¹⁷ Afterwards he summoned this man and gave him advice about certain things that should not be done in a mosque.¹⁸

The Messenger of Allah’s method of educating people was to act gently toward them. He always had a positive influence with his smiling face, pleasant language, and excellent manner. In fact, Allah (swt) had described this to him, “*Out 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 ...*”¹⁹ In addition, he learned from another verse that even arrogant rulers like

¹⁶ M6045, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 77; D4785, Abu Dawud, Adab, 4.

¹⁷ D380, Abu Dawud, Taharah, 136; T147, Tirmidhi, Taharah, 112.

¹⁸ M661, Muslim, Taharah, 100; HM13015, Ibn Hanbal, III, 191.

¹⁹ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/159.



Pharaoh could be influenced by kind words and gentle actions and he applied this to his own behavior.²⁰

After the Noble Messenger had distributed the booty from the Battle of Hunayn, a man said that the distribution had been unjust and that it did not comply with Allah's command. When his words reached the Prophet, he was satisfied with saying, *"If Allah and His Messenger did not act justly, who else would act justly. May Allah be merciful to Moses, for he was vexed by more than this, yet he remained patient."*²¹ This response, which showed that the man lacked manners and gratitude, occurred after the Prophet of Mercy gave a bit more booty to al-mu'allafa qulūbuhum (those whose hearts are desired to be won over), that is, certain people whom he had hoped to win over to Islam. Now, the Noble Messenger had the right and authority to expend one-fifth of the Treasury as he wished, so there was no question of injustice as was believed.

Despite everything, the Messenger of Mercy tried to win people over to Islam by educating them. He always acted kindly toward them and was a pioneer in such behavior. Of course, some people can be wrong and make mistakes. Because of their mistakes, he could have excluded them, offended them, or harmed rather than helped them. In this respect, Allah's Messenger (saw) approached people with understanding and educated them in excellent fashion.

It appears that the Messenger of Mercy behaved kindly and gently with animals as well as people. One day 'A'isha (ra) was riding an ill-tempered camel. In order to calm

²⁰ Ta-Ha, 20/43-44.

²¹ B3150, Bukhari, Fardh al-Khums, 19.



it, she began to pull back hard on its halter. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A’isha, be gentle! For gentleness beautifies something wherever it is, and when it is removed from somewhere it makes it ugly.*”²² He thus advised her to behave kindly to her mount.

Sometimes, in order to warn the person to whom he was speaking or to increase his interest or curiosity, the Prophet (saw) would draw attention to a subject by asking questions in various ways. One day while travelling with Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked him, “*O Mu’adh! Do you know the right that Allah has over his servants?*” Mu’adh answered, “Allah and his Messenger know best.” Then the Prophet said, “*The right that Allah has over his servants is that they should associate no one with Him and worship Him (alone).*” After travelling for a while, Mu’adh heard his blessed voice once again, “*Very well, O Mu’adh! Do you know what right the servants have over Allah if they do this?*” Again he said, “Allah and his Messenger know best.” Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*That Allah would not punish them (if they do this)*²³ *and not place them in Hell.*”²⁴

After the Sūrah al-Kawthar was revealed to our Prophet, he began to recite it saying, “*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim (In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful),*” and completed the sūrah. Afterwards, he asked, “*Do you know what al-Kawthar is?*” The Companions (ra) replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Thereupon, he said, “*It is*

²² D2478, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 1; M6603, Muslim, Birr, 79.

²³ B6500, Bukhari, Riqaq, 37.

²⁴ HM22423, Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.



a river in Paradise that my Lord promised to me.”²⁵ In like manner, the Prophet (saw) attracted the attention of his Companions (ra) by asking such questions as “Do you know who is a bankrupt person?”²⁶ “Do you know that your Lord has said?”²⁷ However, concerned that irrelevant questions could lead to the creation of new rules and increased responsibilities, asking irrelevant questions was forbidden by revelation, and Allah’s Messenger was not pleased when asked such needless questions.²⁸

Finding a solution to a problem by showing different approaches was a procedure that the Prophet (saw) followed. The method of instruction that Rafi‘ b. ‘Amr al-Ghifari (ra) described is rather noteworthy in this respect: “When I was a boy, I used to throw stones at the palm trees of the Ansar. So I was brought to the Prophet who said, ‘My son, why do you throw stones at the palm trees?’ I said, ‘To eat (the dates).’ He said, ‘Do not throw stones at the palm trees, but eat what falls beneath them.’ He then wiped my head and prayed, ‘O Allah! Fill his belly.’”²⁹ It appears therefore that the child was taken by the arm in fear and frustration to the Prophet (saw) and was expected to be punished. However, in light of the way that the Messenger of Allah (saw) addressed him so compassionately by saying, “My son,” the child sincerely admitted why he had thrown stones, “To eat.” Undoubtedly, the Divine support had a great impact in the success of this wise method. The child

²⁵ D784, Abu Dawud, Salat, 121-122; M894, Muslim, Salat, 53.

²⁶ M6579, Muslim, Birr, 59; T2418, Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 2.

²⁷ B846, Bukhari, Adhan, 156.

²⁸ T814, Tirmidhi, Hajj, 5; N2620, Nasa‘i, Manasik al-Hajj, 1.

²⁹ D2622, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 85; HM20609, Ibn Hanbal, V, 31.



whose head was carressed and received the prayer and good wishes of the Prophet was going to feel the spiritual pleasure of this memory for the rest of his life.

Sometimes the Prophet (saw) explained a subject by using an example that everyone could understand. Analogies helped one to comprehend issues more easily by linking what was abstract to what was concrete. For instance, the Noble Messenger compared those who accepted his mission to those who did not in the following manner: *“The guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me are like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed the water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the water and Allah benefited the people with it and they used it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (and, as a result, that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and benefits (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns it and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not accept Allah’s guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land).”*³⁰ In another hadith, the Noble Messenger said, *“Scholars on earth are like stars in the sky,”*³¹ comparing the way they used knowledge to illuminate everything around them with stars.

³⁰ B79, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 20; M5953, Muslim, Fadha’il, 15.

³¹ HM12627, Ibn Hanbal, III, 156.



The stories told by Muhammad (saw) concerning belief, actions, and ethics, had an extremely important influence on the training and education of Muslims. This was because, story-telling was a method of instruction which caught the attention of the listener, made him listen, and encouraged and even fascinated him. The religious and ethical messages in the stories describing the good and evil behavior of the past generations who were frequently mentioned in the Holy Qur'an were placed in perfect harmony and encouraged people to do good and deterred them from doing evil. The good and evil experiences of these early peoples were described with literary skill and imagery. The goal was to emphasize to his audience that if they behaved as these other peoples had done they would have the same fate, and they should take a lesson from their behavior. The verse, "*Tell them the story so that they may reflect,*"³² points out the beneficial effect of stories as a method of instruction.

Stories which stimulate the senses and excitement, and cause people to think and take lessons from the past, are an effective means of explaining sublime values and difficult and complex issues. This is because explaining a subject by giving concrete examples and using such literary arts as imagery, similes, and analogies has educational value for the listener and provides him with moral support. In addition, stories increase the ability to resist disasters and difficulties. They encourage people who experience similar problems to pray, cheer up, have patience, and trust in Allah (swt). For this reason, the Companions (ra), above

³² A'raf, 7/176.



all the children and youth, listened with great attention, enthusiasm, and excitement to the stories that the Prophet (saw) told. Among the stories that he told was one about a woman who went to Hell and was punished there because she had confined a cat which died for lack of food or water³³ and another about a man who pleased Allah (swt) and had his sins forgiven because he took water from a well and gave it to a dog which had been licking moist soil because of a lack of water.³⁴

When engaged in instruction, training, and teaching in the time of the Prophet (saw), the principle of selecting a productive and suitable time frame was also taken into consideration. A man came to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) and said, “I wish you could speak (preach) to us every day.” He replied, “The only thing which prevents me from doing so is that I would hate to bore you. I will adopt for you (a day for) preaching by selecting a suitable time just as the Prophet used to do in order not to make us weary.”³⁵ This was because, from the perspective of arousing interest and enthusiasm on the part of the listeners, this approach was quite practical.

As a requirement of his method of instruction and education, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave individual attention to each person with whom he spoke. Each Companion with whom he spoke thought he had been given special attention. He gave a special place to the children and youth in his presence. Among the first things

³³ M5852, Muslim, Salam, 151; N1483, Nasa‘i, Kusuf, 14.

³⁴ M5859, Muslim, Salam, 153; EM378, Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 137.

³⁵ B70, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 12; T2855, Tirmidhi, Adab, 72.



that he did were to give practical advice for a meaningful life during the years of childhood and youth and to teach the principles of religious thought and belief. Indeed, one day while ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (saw) on the same mount, the Prophet stated the following to him: *“Young man! I will teach you something. Be mindful of Allah and He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allah and He will always be with you. If you want something, ask Allah. If you need help, ask Allah for help. Know that if all people were to gather together to do something to benefit you, you would never get any benefit except what Allah had decreed for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except by what Allah had decreed for you. The pens are lifted and the pages are dried.”*³⁶

Sometimes the Messenger of Allah (saw) would use the expression “O my son!” when addressing the emotional world of children. In this way he would get their attention and be sure that they had a good understanding of what he said. In fact, Anas b. Malik (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) said to him, *“O my son! If you are capable of waking up in the morning and going to bed in the evening with no perfidy in your heart, then do so.”* Then he went on to say, *“O my son! That is from my Sunnah. Whoever follows my Sunnah has loved me. And whoever loves me will be with me in Paradise.”*³⁷

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw that ‘Umar b. Abi Salama (ra), who was raised in his care, used his hand to roam about in the dish, he said, *“My son! Mention the*

³⁶ HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293; T2516, Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 59.

³⁷ T2678, Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 16.



*name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near to you.*³⁸ In this way, he warned him about table manners.

It appears that, when giving a speech or in conversation, the Noble Messenger used body language in excellent fashion. When teaching, he would activate the spiritual world and physical being of the person to whom he was speaking by speaking softly, sincerely, and with a moving tone of voice or loudly, depending on the status of his interlocutor, and also use jesting and mimicry. Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), described how the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave a sermon as follows: “When the Prophet gave a sermon, he eyes would turn red, his voice would rise, and it was as if he were in a towering rage and warning an army... Once he put his index finger and middle finger together and said, *‘I have been sent with (the closeness of) the Last Hour like this.*”³⁹

It was said that the Prophet (saw) also used his hands as follows: “...Whenever he indicated (a thing or a place), he use his whole hand. Whenever he became surprised (about an issue), he would turn his hand over. While speaking he would put his hands together and strike the inside of his right hand with his left thumb...”⁴⁰ While saying, “*The believer is like a building for another believer, they support each other,*” he clasped his hands by interlacing his fingers.⁴¹ While mentioning that all Muslims were brothers and the rights and privileges they had over each other, Allah’s Messenger

³⁸ M5269, Muslim, Ashribah, 108.

³⁹ M2005, Muslim, Jum‘a, 43.

⁴⁰ TS226, Tirmidhi, Shama‘il, 97.

⁴¹ B481 Bukhari, Salat, 88.



(saw) brought up the subject of piety. He declared that it was a heartfelt attitude and said three times, "*Piety is here, piety is here, piety is here,*" and while doing so pointed with his hand to his breast.⁴² Again putting together his index finger and middle finger he indicated how close those who raise orphans would be to Paradise.⁴³ After saying, "*There is no doubt that Allah does not look at your bodies and faces but at your hearts,*" he pointed to his breast with his fingers in the same way.⁴⁴ When the Prophet's face became red, it was clear that he was angry.⁴⁵ When he was happy, the joy could be read in his face.⁴⁶

Sometimes in order for the subjects that he was explaining to be better understood and learned, the Prophet (saw) would draw shapes and make comparisons. According to a ḥadīth reported by 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), one day the Messenger of Allah (saw) drew a straight line and said, "*This is the path of Allah.*" Then he drew some lines to the left and right of it. Then he said, "*These are other paths. At the beginning of each is a satan who summons one to it.*" Then he recited the following verse: "*Surely this is my straight path. Therefore, follow it. Do not depend on the other paths. They will divert you from Allah's path.*"⁴⁷

Under some circumstances, in order for what he explained to be better understood and comprehended, he would demonstrate it with personal behavior. One day a bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked

⁴² M6541, Muslim, Birr, 32.

⁴³ M7469, Muslim, Zuhd, 42; IM3680, Ibn Majah, Adab, 6.

⁴⁴ M6542, Muslim, Birr, 33.

⁴⁵ B91, Bukhari, 'Ilm, 28.

⁴⁶ HM18525 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 265.

⁴⁷ DM208, Darimi, Muqaddima, 23; HM4142, Ibn Hanbal, I, 435.



him how to perform the wudu'. The Prophet (saw) showed him how to do so by washing his limbs three times. Then he said, *"This is the wudu'. Whoever does more has acted badly, has gone to excess, or has done wrong."*⁴⁸

Sometimes Allah's Messenger (ra) warned those who did not follow his advice. One day a Companion said, "O Messenger of Allah! I will no longer attend the prayer because the one who is leading it is taking too long." 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), who reported this ḥadīth, stated that he had never seen the Prophet (saw) more furious and addressed the people saying, *"O people! Some of you are driving people away (from good deeds). So whoever leads the people in prayer should shorten it, because among them are the sick, the weak, and those who need (to return to their work)."*⁴⁹ Allah's Messenger had wanted the Muslims to properly prepare for the Tabuk Campaign, which proved to be difficult. However, three Companions (ra) were not able to participate for one reason or another. The Prophet (saw) was very upset that these Companions (ra), who did not lack for belief and worship, did not participate in the campaign. After he returned, he did not want anyone to speak to them until Allah gave His permission. However, because they realized their mistake and regretted it, fifty days later Allah's Messenger began to speak to them.⁵⁰

The method of speech that our Prophet used while instructing and training people is also very worthy of note. 'A'isha (ra) described it as follows: "The Messenger

⁴⁸ IM422, Ibn Majah, Taharah, 48; N140, Nasa'i, Taharah, 105.

⁴⁹ B90, Bukhari, 'Im, 28.

⁵⁰ M7016, Muslim, Tawbah, 53.



of Allah did not speak quickly as you do now, rather he would speak so clearly that those who sat next to him could memorize what he said.”⁵¹ Indeed, he used to speak so clearly that one could count his words.⁵² He used to repeat points which he considered to be important.⁵³ Sometimes, in order to get people’s attention, he would repeat only certain introductory phrases. One day he began to talk by saying, *“His nose should rub the ground! His nose should rub the ground! His nose should rub the ground!”* The Companions (ra) were immediately curious and could not help but ask, *“Whose nose, O Messenger of Allah?”* Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“The one who lives long enough to see his parents in old age, one or both of them, and does not enter Paradise.”*⁵⁴

Sometimes he would call to his Companions (ra) by name, and he would receive the response, *“At your service, O Messenger of Allah!”* He would call them this way repeatedly and each time receive the same answer. Then, after getting the attention of his interlocutor, he would explain what he was going to say.⁵⁵ When describing important matters, he would address groups as a whole or mention people one by one individually.⁵⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) devoted a special time to women as part of his instruction. In fact, al-Bukhari gives the following ḥadīth under the heading *“Was a special day set aside for the education of women?”* One day a

⁵¹ T3639, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 9.

⁵² B3567, Bukhari, Manaqib, 23.

⁵³ M2008, Muslim, Jum’a, 46; D4608, Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 5.

⁵⁴ M6510, Muslim, Birr, 9.

⁵⁵ B128, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 49.

⁵⁶ M504, Muslim, Iman, 351; B2753, Bukhari, Wasaya, 11.



woman came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Men can easily hear your words. Set aside a day for us and on that day let us come to you so that you may teach us what Allah has taught you.” The Messenger of Allah responded, “*Gather on such and such day.*” They did so and he went to them and taught them what Allah (swt) had taught him.⁵⁷ This means that the women at the time of the Prophet (saw) wanted a separate day in which special attention was paid to their education because, although the doors of the mosque were always open to them, they were not satisfied with preaching, sermons, and discussions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) which were addressed to the general public. In this program of instruction which was devoted to women all questions were directed straight to the Noble Messenger and his answers were received directly from him. Sometimes the women acquired their knowledge through ‘A’isha (ra). Indeed, ‘A’isha explained this situation as follows: “How fine are the Ansar women! Their shyness does not prevent them from asking about their religion and from having a deep understanding of it.”⁵⁸

After the emigration to Medina, a plain shaded place called the Suffa (covered portico), which was build adjacent to the Mosque of the Prophet, constituted the seed, in a sense, of future organized institutions of learning. The Companions (ra) who dedicated themselves to this nursery of knowledge and wisdom and who were called the Companions of the Suffa (Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa) were the

⁵⁷ M6699, Muslim, Birr, 152; B101, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 35; HM7351, Ibn Hanbal, II, 247.

⁵⁸ Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 50 —at the section heading—; M750, Muslim, Haidh, 61.



object of the Prophet's special interest. He personally met the expenses for their food and lodging.⁵⁹ The Companions who reported the most ḥadīths, Abu Hurayra (ra),⁶⁰ 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar,⁶¹ and 'Uqba b. 'Amir (ra),⁶² were all graduates of this school. Public officials, such as governors, commanders, judges, and teachers, were usually chosen from among them.

Furthermore, some Companions (ra) who resided far away used to stay as guests at the Suffa when they visited the Messenger of Allah (saw). In their programs of short-term training, which today we would call courses or seminars, they learned the fundamentals of the religion; and when they returned to their homes they taught what they had learned to their family members and relatives. In fact, Malik b. al-Huwayrith (ra) passed on the following memoir about staying in the Suffa: "We came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and we were young men of about the same age. We stayed with him for twenty days. The Messenger of Allah was merciful and compassionate, and he realized that we were missing our families, so he asked us about those whom we had left behind. We told him, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *'Go back to your families, stay with them, and teach them (what you have learned here). Tell them to pray when the time for prayer comes; let one of you make the call to prayer (adhan) and let the oldest of you lead the prayer.'*"⁶³

⁵⁹ B6452, Bukhari, Rīqaq, 17.

⁶⁰ T3837, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 46.

⁶¹ M6370, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-Sahāba, 140.

⁶² M1873, Muslim, Musafirīn, 251.

⁶³ N636, Nasa'i, Adhan, 8; B628, Bukhari, Adhan, 17.



In principle, the Noble Messenger avoided useless knowledge and wanted useful knowledge. One prayer that he frequently repeated and wanted to be remembered went, “O Allah! I ask You for beneficial knowledge, good sustenance, and acceptable deeds.”⁶⁴ Saying, “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from a soul that is not satisfied, a heart that is not humble, knowledge that is of no benefit, and prayers that are not answered,”⁶⁵ he stressed the need to avoid useless knowledge. This was because useful knowledge, which contributed to the material and spiritual world of man and bore actual value, was a source of compassion and blessing for everything in existence, living and non-living, while useless knowledge was not only a burden on the one who learned it but also led to forgetting useful knowledge.

The Prophet (saw), who knew the value of knowledge and (religious) scholars, stated that if there were no people who were occupied with knowledge and who taught it then people would be led astray and the truth would be forgotten: “Allah does not take away knowledge by taking it from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it by the death of the (religious) scholars until not one of them remains. Then people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their opinion (on religious/legal matters) without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”⁶⁶

In summary, the Prophet’s sense of morality, with respect to his method of instruction, training, and teaching, and his

⁶⁴ IM925, Ibn Majah, Iqama, 32; HM27056, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 294.

⁶⁵ N5540, Nasa’i, Isti’adha, 65; D1548, Abu Dawud, Witr, 32.

⁶⁶ B100, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 34; M6796, Muslim, ‘Ilm, 13.



physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional world, are our most valuable examples for raising a strong, healthy, and well-balanced generation and for preparing for the future. For, a sacred duty like the education of people, requires seriousness, honor, and dignity as much as gentility and modesty. Depending on the environment and conditions, there was simplicity, practicality, and harmonious and coherent variation in the guidance of the Prophet (saw) and in his ḥadīths and Sunnah. To be sure, whatever his nature and manner of upbringing, whoever imitated the blessed Prophet, who was the rich and vivid exemplar of the Holy Qur’an and who was sent to fulfill moral virtues, would definitely exhibit exemplary behavior.

محمد



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF THE PROPHET

One day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was spending time with his Companions (ra). A young man came to him, and said, “O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to commit adultery.” People turned to rebuke him, saying, “Be Quiet! Be Quiet!” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Come here.*” The young man came close to him and the Prophet told him to sit down. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Would you like that for your mother?*” The man said, “No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their mothers.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Would you like that for your daughter?*” The young man said, “No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their daughters.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Would you like that for your sister?*” The man said, “No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their sisters.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Would you like that for your aunts?*” The man



said, “No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their aunts.” The Prophet (saw) placed his hand on him and he said, “*O Allah, forgive his sins, purify his heart, and guard his chastity.*” After that, the young man never again turned to anything sinful.¹



He was a young man and a very straightforward person. He did not hesitate to go to the Prophet (saw) and ask permission about this issue because the Prophet was so open to dialogue that everyone could come and talk to him about any issue. On that day, the Prophet (saw) not only stopped the Companions (ra) who were getting ready to assault the young man, but also called him over to sit with him. The Messenger of Allah kept the young man close to him, and used his body language to be more effective in his conversation with him. The Noble Messenger, being an ideal teacher, convinced the young man with his body language and with his right questions. The result was a successful example of effective communication.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was a human being. His relations with the Companions (ra) were natural, casual, and frank. Honesty and integrity were parts of his relationships that always took place within the boundaries of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. When Jabir b. Samura (ra) was asked whether the Prophet (saw) interacted with other people like a regular human being, he responded, “Yes, very

¹ HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.



often. He used to sit at the place where he observed the morning or fajr prayer until the sun rose or when it had risen; he would stand, and they (his Companions) would talk about matters (pertaining to the days) of ignorance, and they would laugh (about these matters) while (the Noble Prophet) only smiled.”²

The Companions (ra) paid their utmost attention to the words, deeds, and commands of the Prophet (saw), who was a teacher, trainer, guide, leader, and messenger. Thus, they tried to hear what he said not only during his sermons and in his preaching, but also all of his discourses wherever they were delivered. The Companions (ra), who were ready to sacrifice their lives and property for the sake of His message, listened to him with sobriety, seriousness, and pleasure as if “they had a bird sitting on their heads.”³

Considering that the most ideal communication takes place when the speaker and the listener have common ideals or thoughts, it could easily be said that the most ideal conditions of communication were realized between the Prophet and his Companions.

The following account is a good indication of the forthright relationship between the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra). This is the story of Salama (or Sulayman) b. Sahr (ra).⁴ This man took an oath (zihār) not to approach his wife during the month of Ramadan. However, he could not help himself and had sexual intercourse with her. According to some accounts he broke

² M1525, Muslim, Masajid, 286.

³ D3855, Abu Dawud, Tibb, 1.

⁴ EÜ2/525, Ibn al-Athir, Usd al-Ghaba, II, 525.



his fasting,⁵ and according to other accounts his oath.⁶ He regretted what he had done, and began to think as to how to compensate for his mistake. He asked help from his tribe, but to no avail. Therefore, he decided to take the issue to the Prophet (saw). He reported to the Prophet what had happened. He was very regretful for his error, but also certain that the generous Prophet was going to offer him a solution.

After listening to him, the Prophet (saw) suggested that he pay a fine to expiate his sin. However, Salama (ra) did not have the means to do this, or to free a slave, fast for sixty days, or feed sixty people.⁷ Thus, the Prophet gave him a basket of date-fruit, and asked him to distribute the fruit to the needy. When Umm Salama reminded the Prophet that his family was the poorest in his neighborhood, the Prophet (saw) laughed, and said to take the fruit to his family and eat it.⁸ When Salama returned to his neighborhood, he said to his neighbor, “I returned to my people and said, ‘I found dejection and bad ideas with you, and I found liberalness and blessing with the Messenger of Allah (saw).’”⁹

As confirmed by a new Muslim at that time, ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), “The Messenger of Allah turned his attention to even the most dejected in the society, and tried to win their hearts.”¹⁰ In order to invite them to Islam, he made generous offers to them. One of the newest Muslims at that time, Safwan b. ‘Umayya (ra), made the following

⁵ B1935, B1937, Bukhari, Sawm, 29-31; M2595-M2603, Muslim, Siyam 81-87.

⁶ T1199, Tirmidhi, Talaq, 19; D2213, Abu Dawud, Talaq, 16, 17.

⁷ HM16535, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 37.

⁸ M2595, Muslim, Siyam, 81.

⁹ T3299, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 58.

¹⁰ TS345, Tirmidhi, Shama’il, p. 156.



admission, “The Messenger of Allah gave me something (from the spoils) on the day of (the Battle of) Hunayn, and he was the most hated creature to me. But he did not stop giving to me until he was the most beloved creature to me.”¹¹

The Prophet (saw) preferred to live a simple and modest life both before and after his prophethood. Both in Mecca where he spent distressful years, and in Medina where he had a relatively easy and affluent life, he maintained moderation in his eating, dressing, and life style. His modesty could be observed in his attitude toward people from all walks of life. For example, a slave girl came and held onto his hand one day and took him to a place she wanted to go. Until she got to where they were going, the Prophet (saw) did not take his hands away from her hands.¹²

Sometimes, those who came to see him were anxious about being in his presence. For instance, once the Prophet (saw) told a person who was anxious in his presence, “*Take it easy. I am not a king; I am just a man whose mother ate dried meat.*”¹³ On another occasion, he said to a woman from the Tamim tribe who got nervous in his presence, “*O woman! Calm down!*” and made her feel comfortable.¹⁴

According to various accounts, the Prophet (saw) did not have a visible sign on his body or on his face that would have proved that he was a prophet. Therefore, those who

¹¹ M6022, Muslim, Fadhā'il, 59; T666, Tirmidhi, Zakat, 30.

¹² IM4177, Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 16.

¹³ IM3312, Ibn Majah, At'imah, 30; NM3733, Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 1400 (2/466).

¹⁴ MK21679, Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, XXV, 7-11.



had not seen him before could easily confuse him with his Companions (ra).¹⁵ Still, those who had a deep knowledge of human personality were able to discern the differences from his facial expressions and his words. For example, after meeting him in Medina, a Jewish sage, ‘Abd Allah b. Salam said, “When I saw the face of the Messenger of Allah (saw), I immediately understood that his face was not the face of a liar.” Shortly afterwards he embraced Islam.¹⁶

Qur’anic and Prophetic measures determined the Prophet’s relationship with his Companions (ra). Balance and moderation were always the main principles in their relationship. The Companions (ra), who knew the Prophet’s love and mercy for them, never failed to show respect to him. They also felt very comfortable next to him. As reported by ‘A’isha (ra), two slave girls played daff (tambourine) in his room on a day of ‘Īd al-Aḏḥā. The Messenger of Allah was dressed up for the occasion of ‘Īd al-Aḏḥā and he reclined in the room, but did not stop them for continuing. When Abu Bakr (ra) entered the room he began to scold the slave-girls for playing such music in front of the Messenger of Allah, but the Prophet (saw) said, “*Leave them Abu Bakr, for every nation has an ‘īd (i.e., festival) and this day is our ‘īd.*”¹⁷ Likewise, he took ‘A’isha (ra) with him to the mosque in order to watch the games performed by the Abyssinians. When ‘Umar (ra) scolded them and wanted to throw them out of the mosque, the

¹⁵ B3906, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45.

¹⁶ ST1/235, Ibn Sa’d, Tabāqat, I, 235; T2485, Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 42.

¹⁷ B3931, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 46



Prophet (saw) intervened and said, “*Let them perform their show!*”¹⁸

Because of his tolerance, modesty, patience, and calmness, the Companions (ra) felt quite comfortable when they were with him. As reported by Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (ra), According to Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, women Companions could speak out their ideas in the presence of the Prophet (saw), and negotiate with him.¹⁹

Although the Prophet (saw) was polite and sincere to his Companions (ra), once in a while he could become angry. The Companions (ra) witnessed some of these occasions and related the reasons behind his anger. Because of their proximity to him the Companions (ra) were able to understand his state of mind by looking at his words,²⁰ or his body language. Moreover, they knew that he was angry at them for their own benefit.²¹ In describing his state of being, the Companions (ra) said, “He laughed with the laugh of an angry man.”²² Or they said, “He looked with the look of an angry man.”²³ It is obvious that the Companions (ra) could understand the anger of the Prophet by his facial expressions. As with other people, anger and rage could be seen on the face of the Prophet (saw). Sometimes, his forehead would be covered with sweat when he was angry.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) sent an expedition against the enemy one day. A Companion killed a man despite the fact that he

¹⁸ B988 Bukhari, ‘Eidayn, 25.

¹⁹ B6085, Bukhari, Adab, 68; M6202, Muslim, Fadhā’il al-Sahaba, 22.

²⁰ D4659, Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 10.

²¹ HM6702, Ibn Hanbal, II, 182.

²² N732, Nasa’i, Masajid, 38.

²³ HM2127, Ibn Hanbal, I, 238.

²⁴ HM17657, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 166; B91 Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 28.



had said he was a Muslim. Upon hearing this, the Prophet (saw) delivered a sermon. A witness to that moment, 'Uqba b. Malik (ra) said, "It was obvious to see in his face that the Prophet was in a rage." The Messenger of Allah scolded the man in an unprecedented way. When the man defended himself by saying, "O Messenger of Allah, that man said, 'I am a Muslim' only in order to save his life," the Prophet (saw) still did not accept his justification.²⁵

A woman from the tribe of the Banu Makhzumiyya committed theft. In order to lighten her punishment, the relatives of the woman sent Usama to the Prophet (saw). Usama (ra) asked the Prophet to lift the punishment for her. Upon hearing this, the face of the Prophet changed and he severely scolded Usama. Then he delivered a sermon in which he said that the previous nations were destroyed because of the fact that they did not punish the privileged ones and punished only poor and weak ones because of their crimes.²⁶

With regard to his emotions it is known that that the Messenger of Allah (saw) prayed, "*O Allah, Muhammad is a human being. I lose my temper just as human beings lose temper, and I have held a covenant with You which You will not break: For a believer whom I give any trouble or invoke curse or beat, make that an expiation (of his sins and a source of) his nearness to You on the Day of Resurrection.*"²⁷

With the mercy of Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw) was always polite, gentle, and chivalrous. As a prophet, he was

²⁵ HM22857, Ibn Hanbal, V, 289.

²⁶ M4411, Muslim, Hudud, 9.

²⁷ M6627, Muslim, Birr, 95.



always forgiving. As the divine warning stated,²⁸ other types of behavior would have frightened away the new believers. He was not an uncivilized, rude, or cruel person.²⁹ Anas b. Malik (ra) said, "I served the Prophet 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 did you not do so?'"³⁰ As Anas (ra) testified, "the Prophet (saw) never invoked a curse nor did he use bad words in his communications with others."³¹ A young new Muslim, Jarir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) said, "The Messenger of Allah never avoided me after I embraced Islam, nor did he look at me without beaming with laughter."³²

'Urwa b. Mas'ud, who observed the loyalty of the Companions to the Prophet (saw), related to the Quraysh the following: "O people! By Allah, I have been to the kings and to Caesar, Khosrau and the Najash (Negus), yet I have never seen any of them respected by his courtiers as much as Muhammad is respected by his Companions (ra)."³³ Likewise, Abu Sufyan who went to Medina to renew the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, but was not accepted by the Prophet (saw) or the Companions (ra), returned to Mecca and said, "I am coming from a tribe whose hearts are loyal to one heart."³⁴

The Companions (ra) knew that the Prophet (saw) made some decisions based on his own opinions and because of

²⁸ Al-i 'Imran, 3/159.

²⁹ An'am, 6/35; Ghashiyah, 88/22; Qaf, 50/45.

³⁰ B6038, Bukhari, Adab, 39; B2768, Bukhari, Wasaya, 25.

³¹ HM12299, Ibn Hanbal, III, 127.

³² T3820, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 41.

³³ B2731, Bukhari, Shurut, 15; MA9720, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 330.

³⁴ MA9739, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 374.



that they did not hesitate to offer him some alternative suggestions and solutions. They knew that he was open to all kinds of ideas and suggestions as long as they improved the conditions of the Muslims. For example, during the Battle of Badr the Prophet (saw) decided to base the army camp in a place which was not strategically a good place. It was far away from the water wells. Knowing this, Habib b. Mundhir (ra) said to him, “O Messenger of Allah! This camp site is not appropriate neither for advancement nor withdrawal of our army. Was this suggested by Allah, or was it your opinion as a tactic?” When he understood that it was the Prophet’s personal opinion, he suggested another place for encampment and the Prophet (saw) accepted his suggestion.³⁵

During a heated time in battle, the Prophet (saw) suggested giving one third of the Medina date-fruit harvest to the Tribe of Ghatafan on condition that they would withdraw. He sought council with the Companions (ra) on the issue. Some of the prominent Companions, such as ‘Usayd b. Khudayr, Sa’d b. Mu’adh and Sa’d b. ‘Ubadah (ra) said, “If this is a decision sent from above, then go ahead and implement it! If this is your own verdict and command, still go ahead and implement it. We will obey your decision! If it is your personal decision, then we do not have anything but our sword to give to them.”³⁶ Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Had I been commanded to do anything, I would not seek your council. I just wanted to*

³⁵ VM1/52, Waqidi, Maghazi, I, 53; HS3/167, Ibn Hisham, Sira, III, 167-168.

³⁶ VM2/476, Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 478.



share my personal opinion with you.” Then he accepted their idea and gave up on his own decision.³⁷

The Prophet (saw) took the needs and suggestions of his Companions (ra) into consideration at all time, and consulted with them on many different issues. On issues about which he did not have a revelation, he did not hesitate to consult with the Companions (ra). This was also this command of Allah, “*Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah.*”³⁸ As Abu Hurayra (ra) informs us, “None was more apt to seek the council of his Companions (ra) than the Messenger of Allah (saw).”³⁹ Therefore, some of the Prophet’s practices resulted from consultation with his Companions (ra).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) sought the council of his Companions (ra) and accepted their ideas, needs, and suggestions. For example, during the Battle of Badr, he accepted the idea of Sa’d b. Mu’adh who suggested building an arbor to protect the Prophet.⁴⁰ Before the Battle of the Khandaq he adopted the idea of Salman who suggested digging ditches around the city.⁴¹ He accepted the idea of Tamim al-Dari (ra) who suggested building a pulpit to address the increasing number of the Muslim congregation.⁴² And when he wanted to send letters of invitation to the neighboring king, he made a stamp for

³⁷ VM2/478, Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 478; MA9737, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 367.

³⁸ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/159.

³⁹ T1714, Tirmidhi, Jihad, 35; HM19136, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 329.

⁴⁰ HS3/168, Ibn Hisham, Sira, III, 168.

⁴¹ VM2/444, Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 445.

⁴² D1081, Abu Dawud, Salat, 214, 215; B3584, Bukhari, Manaqib, 25.



himself, because the Companions (ra) told him that the Persian would not accept the letters without a valid official stamp.⁴³

A Companion was free to ask the Prophet whether it was a divine order when he commanded him to do something. As related by Ibn ‘Abbas, after the slave Barira was manumitted by ‘A’isha (ra), she wanted to divorce her husband. Barira’s husband was a slave called Mughith, who loved his wife dearly. He did not want to divorce her. He strolled through the streets of Medina, weeping with his tears flowing down his beard. He finally went to the Prophet (saw) and asked him to intercede for him. Thereupon the Prophet said to Barira (ra), *“Be afraid of Allah! Why don’t you return to him? He is your husband and the father of your child.”* She said, *“O Allah’s Messenger! Do you order me to do so?”* He said, *“No, I only intercede for him.”* She said, *“I am not in need of him.”* When the Prophet (saw) saw her determination, he said to his Uncle ‘Abbas, *“O ‘Abbas! Are you not astonished at the love of Mughith for Barira and the hatred of Barira for Mughith?”*⁴⁴

Despite the fact that the Companions (ra) were loyal to the Prophet, they did question some of his decisions. As reported by Anas b. Malik (ra), when the Messenger of Allah (saw) had given one hundred camels each to certain people from the Quraysh from the great amount of booty taken from the tribes of the Khawazin, some people of the Ansar who participated in the jihad said, *“May Allah forgive*

⁴³ B65, Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 7; T2718, Tirmidhi, Isti’dhan, 25; M5480, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 56.

⁴⁴ B5283, Bukhari, Talaq, 16; D2231 Abu Dawud, Talaq, 18, 19.



the Messenger of Allah (saw)! While our swords are still dribbling with the blood of the Quraysh, he gives to them and ignores us.” When this news reached the Prophet (saw) he gathered the Ansar and said, *“I have given these (booties) to those people who had not yet been completely saved from the phase of unbelief in order to shed (the) light (of Islam on) their hearts. Does it not please you that the people take the booty to their homes and you take Allah’s Messenger to your homes? I swear by Allah that what you return with (the Prophet) is much better than what they return with.”* Thereupon, the Ansar replied, *“Yes, O Messenger of Allah! We are satisfied.”*⁴⁵

Furthermore, after the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet did not take revenge on the Quraysh, but instead pardoned them. He declared that those who took refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan, or locked themselves in their own houses, would be safe. Seeing this, the Ansar suspected that the Prophet (saw) was going to resettle in his hometown, Mecca. Some of them even said, *“What is happening to this man! He developed a new interest in his hometown, and became merciful toward his own tribe.”* Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“O people of the Ansar! I am a servant and messenger of Allah! I took refuge in Allah with you. My life as well as my death will be destined with you.”* By saying this he removed their reservations and anxieties.⁴⁶

Sometimes, the Companions (ra) rejected the decisions of the Prophet. On the sixth year of the Hijrah, the Prophet and his Companion were going to visit the Ka’bah for the

⁴⁵ B3778, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 1; M2436, Muslim, Zakat, 132-134.

⁴⁶ M4622, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ’l-Siyar, 84; HM10961, Ibn Hanbal, II, 538; BS18782, Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, IX, 193.



first time. On the way, they were stopped by the polytheists in the Hudaibiyya region, and forced to sign a peace treaty. On face value, the conditions of the treaty weighed heavily on the Muslims. Thus, ‘Umar went to the Prophet (saw) and contested this treaty by saying, “Are you not truly the Messenger of Allah (saw)?” Is not our cause just and the cause of the enemy unjust? Why do we give concessions to the infidels?” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Yes, I am the Messenger of Allah (saw), and I am not in a position to rebel against Him. He is the one who is going to help me.*” Thus, ‘Umar (ra) was consoled only by hearing the Prophet recite the Srah al-Fath heralding the conquest (of Mecca).⁴⁷

One day, the Prophet (saw) said to Abu Hurayra (ra), “*Go, and give the glad tidings of the Paradise to those who genuinely believe in the tawhid!*” On the way, he met ‘Umar incidentally, and related to him what the Prophet had said. ‘Umar told him not to say that, but when he learned that it was the statement of the Prophet he went to him. ‘Umar said, “Do not say that again! I fear that people would stop practicing the commandments of Islam after relying on this statement.” Then the Prophet said, “*Let them (practice the commandments of Islam!)*”⁴⁸ Likewise, ‘Umar (ra) passionately differed with the notion that the Prophet (saw) performed the funeral prayer for the leader of the hypocrites, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy b. Salul.⁴⁹

As understood from the examples above, when the Companions (ra) did not know or were unable to

⁴⁷ B2731, Bukhari, Shurut, 15; MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 330.

⁴⁸ M147 Muslim, Iman, 52.

⁴⁹ B1366, Bukhari, Jana‘iz, 84; B4671, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Tawba) 12.



understand the rationale behind the decisions of the Prophet, they respectfully disagreed with him. Because they knew him very well, they did not hesitate to question some of his decisions, and ask him questions without reservation. In return, the Messenger of Allah (saw) took their sincerity, faithfulness, intentions, characters, and concerns into consideration, accepted some of their suggestions, and rejected others.

In the communications between them there existed no distance between the Prophet (saw) and his Companions. The Companions (ra), who loved him more than their own souls, had deep trust, respect, and loyalty to him. Their love and respect were mutual. This solid and sound relationship formed the first Muslim society in the “Asr al-Sa’adah.” The genuine bond between the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) set the tone for the personal relationship among all Muslims. Today, more than ever, there is a need to have such a relationship among Muslims.

محمد



FRIEND OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*A*qra^ʿ b. Habis was a chief of the Banu Tamim tribes and had an important position among the Arabs. He was an arbitrator in disputes that occurred during the pre-Islamic Age of Jahiliyya and he tried to rule with justice to the best of his abilities. Prior to the conquest of Mecca, al-Aqra^ʿ became a Muslim and was trying to learn as much about Islam as he could. A comment made by the Prophet (saw) made him realize that he had a lack of affection for children and compassion for minors. One day al-Aqra^ʿ saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) kissing his grandson Hasan. He said, “I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them.” Whereupon the Compassionate Prophet cast a look at him and said, “*Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.*”² With this statement the Prophet (saw) suggested to him that he correct this aspect of

¹ HI1/101, Ibn Hajar, ʿIsaba, I, 101-102.

² M6028, Muslim, Fadhaʿil, 65; B5997, Bukhari, Adab, 18.



his personality. Consequently, one of the most important principles adopted by the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the ability to display love and compassion for young ones.³



It is well known that the Prophet loved children very much, for he was sent as a mercy for humankind,⁴ and it is evident that love of children is a sign of the feeling of compassion that Allah (swt) has bestowed on human beings. It was reported that once a bedouin came to the Prophet and said, “Do you kiss your children?” The Prophet (saw) replied in the affirmative. Then the bedouin said, “We do not (ever) kiss our children.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) gave him this meaningful answer, “*What can I do if Allah has deprived you of mercy?*”⁵

Our Prophet showed his love for children at times by praying for them,⁶ at times by embracing and kissing them,⁷ and sometimes by letting the children sit on his lap.⁸ As a matter of fact, Usama b. Zayd (saw) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to put him on (one of) his thighs and put al-Hasan b. `Ali on his other thigh, and then embrace them and say, “*O Allah! Please be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them.*”⁹ Sometimes he would show his care for children by sitting them on his mount,¹⁰ carrying

³ D4943, Abu Dawud, Adab, 58.

⁴ Anbiya, 21/107.

⁵ B5998, Bukhari, Adab, 18; 5 M6027, Muslim, Fadha'il, 64.

⁶ B5884, Bukhari, Libas, 60; M6256, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 56.

⁷ B2122, Bukhari, Buyu', 49.

⁸ B223, Bukhari, Wudu', 59; 8 M5616, Muslim, Adab, 25.

⁹ B6003, Bukhari, Adab, 22.

¹⁰ B5965, Bukhari, Libas, 99.



them on his shoulders,¹¹ caressing their cheeks,¹² and even joking with them.¹³

Umm Sulaym (ra), a female Companion from Medina, well known for her piety, intelligence and courage, returned to Medina after the Battle of Hunayn, and gave birth to a boy in Medina.¹⁴ She gave the baby to her other son Anas and sent them to the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah asked a date to be brought and softened it in his mouth. When the date had become palatable, he put it in the baby's mouth. When the baby got the taste of the date, he moved his lips with joy, and the Prophet (saw) said, "*Look what love the Ansar has for dates!*" then wiped the infant's face and named him 'Abd Allah.¹⁵ When Mecca was conquered by the Muslims, the people of Mecca began to bring their children to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He would invoke blessings on them and caress their heads,¹⁶ showing his love for all of the children.

The Prophet of Compassion pleased children by letting them ride on saddled mounts. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far,¹⁷ Usama b. Zayd¹⁸ and Fadl b. 'Abbas,¹⁹ (ra) were among the children and youngsters whom he had traveled with and ridden on saddled mounts. This practice of the Messenger of Allah (saw) made the children so happy that they looked forward to his return from a journey and competed in

¹¹ M6259, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-Sahāba, 59; B5996, Bukhari, Adab, 18.

¹² M6052, Muslim, Fadhā'il, 80.

¹³ T1992, Tirmidhi, Birr, 57; 13 D5002, Abu Dawud, Adab, 84.

¹⁴ "Abd Allah b. Abu Talha," DĪA, I, 97; ST8/425, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat; VIII, 425.

¹⁵ M6322, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-Sahāba, 107; B5470, Bukhari, 'Aqīqa, 1.

¹⁶ D4181, Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 8.

¹⁷ M6268, Muslim, Fadhā'il al-Sahāba, 66.

¹⁸ B5964, Bukhari, Libas, 98; M2950, Muslim, Hajj, 147.

¹⁹ M3088, Muslim, Hajj, 267; B1685, Bukhari, Hajj, 101.



greeting him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) also placed one child in front of his saddle and one behind and this way he was able to make more of them happy.²⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) sometimes showed love for children by caressing their cheeks. His touch made them proud, and would be remembered fondly. Even in later years, they would share such memories with others. ‘Abd Allah b. Tha‘laba²¹ and Jabir b. Samura (ra) were among these lucky children. Jabir described his happy memory as follows: “I prayed along with Allah’s Messenger my first ritual prayer. He then went to his family and I went along with him when he met some children (on the way). He began to pat the cheeks of each one of them. He also patted my cheek and I experienced coolness or a fragrance of his hand as if it had been brought out from the scent bag of a perfumer.”²²

Our Prophet sometimes spent so much time²³ with children that he would joke and play games with them. For example, Mahmud b. al-Rabi‘, a child of a family belonging to the Banu al-Khazraj tribe of Medina, reported, “When I was a boy of five, I remember, the Prophet took water from a bucket (used for getting water out of a well) with his mouth and sprayed it on my face.”²⁴

Nothing could prevent the Prophet’s love for children and showing his love. Even in ritual prayer, which is one of the most important forms of worship in Islam, he always

²⁰ D2566, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 54; B5965, Bukhari, Libas, 99.

²¹ B4300, Bukhari, Maghazi, 54.

²² M6052, Muslim, Fadhail, 80; SN15/85, Nawawi, Sharh al-Sahih al-Muslim, XV, 85.

²³ B6129, Bukhari, Adab, 81.

²⁴ B77, Bukhari, Ilm, 18; M876, Muslim, Salat, 36.



showed his love and attention to children. It was reported that sometimes his granddaughter Umama²⁵ from his daughter Zaynab and Abu al-‘As, and sometimes Hasan or Husayn,²⁶ the children of his other daughter Fatima and ‘Ali (ra), climbed on his shoulders, on his back, or sat on his lap during ritual prayer. When he prostrated, he would put them down, and when he stood up, he would take them back.

When the Noble Prophet was praying, sometimes children passed in front of him, sometimes they held his knees, but he completed his ritual prayer without disrupting them.²⁷ When he heard a child crying during a prayer, he would shorten it.²⁸ When people brought the first fruit of the season, he would make a prayer of blessing, then call the youngest child, and give them the first fruit.²⁹

Undoubtedly, the Prophet of Mercy’s relationship with children was based on love, compassion, and kindness. He pointed out, “*He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, respect our elders, and command good and forbid evil.*”³⁰ The Prophet (saw) did not allow children to be hurt under any circumstances. As a matter of fact, Umm al-Fadl (ra), the wife of his uncle and wet-nurse of his grandson Hasan, brought Hasan to the Prophet (saw) one day and put him on the Prophet’s lap. However, Hasan wet his grandfather’s lap. Thereupon, the wet nurse said, “What have you done?” and struck the shoulder of the baby. The

²⁵ M1212, Muslim, Masajid, 41; B516, Bukhari, Salat, 106.

²⁶ N1142, Nasa’i, Tatbiq, 82; HM28199, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 466.

²⁷ N755, Nasa’i, Qiblah, 7; HM3167, Ibn Hanbal, I, 341.

²⁸ B709, Bukhari, Adhan, 65; M1055, Muslim, Salat, 191.

²⁹ M3335, Muslim, Hajj, 474.

³⁰ T1921, Tirmidhi, Birr, 15; D4943, Abu Dawud, Adab, 58.



Prophet of Mercy could not abide by this and said, “*You hurt my son! May Allah have mercy on you.*”³¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) would not rebuke, condemn, or beat children when they misbehaved or made mistakes; instead, he would give them advice and guide them to righteous behavior. One day Rafi' b. 'Amr³² (ra) was caught throwing stones at date-palm trees of the Ansar. He was brought to the Prophet who said, “*O my son, why are you throwing stones at the date-palm trees?*” He replied, “*So I can eat.*” The Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Do not throw stones at the date-palm trees. Eat from what falls to the ground from them.*” Then he patted him on the head and said, “*O Allah, give him enough to eat.*”³³

The following statement of Anas (ra), who had been in the service of the Prophet from a young age, summarized the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s relationship with children very well. He said, “I served the Messenger of Allah (saw) for ten years, and, by Allah, he never said to me any harsh word, and he never said to me about a thing as to why I had done this and as to why I had not done that.”³⁴

The Prophet (saw) respected children’s individual personalities and paid them compliments. To this end, sometimes he would greet children who were playing games,³⁵ sometimes he praised their clothes,³⁶ and sometimes he visited them when they were ill.³⁷

³¹ IM3923, Ibn Majah, Ta'bir al-Ru'ya, 10; HM27416, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 340.

³² IM2299, Ibn Majah, Tijara, 67.

³³ D2622, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 85.

³⁴ M6011, Muslim, Fadha'il, 51; D4773, Abu Dawud, Adab, 1.

³⁵ M6378, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 145; D5202, D5203, Abu Dawud, Adab, 135, 136.

³⁶ B3071, Bukhari, Jihad, 188.

³⁷ B5657, Bukhari, Marda, 11.



The death of children would sadden the Messenger of Allah (saw) a great deal. When his daughter Zaynab's little son was placed in his arms when he was about to die, the Prophet of Compassion started shedding tears. When Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) saw this he said, "O Allah's Messenger! What is this?" Our Prophet said, "*It is the mercy which Allah lodged in the hearts of his servants. And Allah is merciful only to those of His servants who are merciful to others.*"³⁸ In like manner, the Prophet (saw) was immensely sad for his son Ibrahim who died at a young age. When Ibrahim was taking his last breath, the Messenger of Allah (saw) embraced him and started to shed tears silently and said, "*Our eyes shed tears and our hearts are filled with grief.*"³⁹

The relationships that the Prophet (saw) established with children were full of love, compassion, and compliments. While he always showed respect to adults, his communications with the youth was much deeper and more impressive. Although, young people, who are in their own state of mind, live and experience such feelings as desire, excitement, pride and violence intensely, they are also inexperienced. Knowing this, the Prophet of Compassion adopted an honorable, reassuring, encouraging, rational, and moderate style toward the youth.

When the Prophet (saw) gave a task to young adults, he gave them confidence and encouraged them to come out of the timidity of inexperience. When 'Ali (saw) was assigned to Yemen as a qāḍī (judge) at a young age, he was shy at

³⁸ B1284, Bukhari, Jana'iz, 32; M2135, Muslim, Jana'iz, 11; AU8/105, al-'Ayni, Umdat al-Qari, VIII, 105.

³⁹ M6025, Muslim, Fadha'il, 62; B1303, Bukhari, Jana'iz, 43.



first, citing the fact that he was young and inexperienced. At that point the Messenger of Allah (saw) softly struck him on the chest with his hand and encouraged him with the following prayer: “O Allah, guide his heart and make his tongue steadfast.” Furthermore, he informed him how he should judge a case. Subsequently ‘Ali said, “After that, I never hesitated in passing judgement between two people.”⁴⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) not only strengthened the confidence of young adults, but also tried to make his community feel secure about them. At one time, he appointed his manumitted slave, Zayd b. Haritha (ra), despite his young age, as a commander of the armed force among whom there were some elderly Companions (ra). Evidently, some of the Companions had reservations about his command. Later, the Prophet, (saw) appointed Usama, Umm Ayman and Zayd’s son, as commanders of the troops to be sent against the Byzantines and against some opposition prevailed. The Messenger of Allah said, “I have been informed that you spoke about Usama. If you (people) are criticizing his (Usama’s) leadership, you used to criticize the leadership of his father before. By Allah, he (Zayd) deserved the leadership indeed, and he used to be one of the most beloved persons to me, and now this (his son, Usama) is one of the most beloved persons to me after him.”⁴¹ This statement both silenced the objections and encouraged young Usama.

Knowing very well that young people experience intense emotions at their age, the Messenger of Allah (saw) considered this when he dealt with them. He was extremely

⁴⁰ IM2310, Ibn Majah, Ahkam, 1; D3582, Abu Dawud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 6.

⁴¹ B4469, Bukhari, Maghazi, 88; M6254, Muslim, Fadhail al-Sahaba, 55.



reasonable and moderate toward them. The young people who saw how tactful and understanding he was of them, felt a stronger affection to him. Malik b. Huwayrith (ra) reported that he and a group of young men, after accepting Islam, went to Medina to visit the Prophet (saw). They stayed with him for about twenty days and started to feeling homesick. The Messenger of Allah (saw) grasped their situation, accepted it naturally, and without they need to say anything, he rather took the initiative by saying, “(It would be better) if you could return to your hometowns and teach them (what you have learned).” After this conversation he allowed them to return to their families.⁴²

Our Prophet, who knew that one of the hardest aspects of being young was the desire for and interest in the opposite sex, advised young people to behave and be patient. ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) reported, “We were with the Prophet while we were young and had no wealth whatever. So, Allah’s Messenger said, ‘O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty (i.e., his private parts from committing illegal sexual intercourse etc.), and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his desire.’”⁴³

When the noble Prophet’s uncle’s son Fadl b. ‘Abbas came of age to marry, the Messenger of Allah (saw) mediated between Fadl and the Companion Mahmiya (ra) by saying, “Marry your daughter to this young man.”⁴⁴ Fadl was the person who was seated behind the Prophet on the

⁴² B685, Bukhari, Adhan, 49; M1535, Muslim, Masajid, 292.

⁴³ B5066, Bukhari, Nikah, 3; T1081, Tirmidhi, Nikah, 1.

⁴⁴ M2481, Muslim, Zakat, 167.



camel during the Farewell Sermon. It was reported that the Messenger of Allah turned Fadl's face to the other side when he looked at women moving along side by side with them.⁴⁵

The Prophet (saw) helped them to overcome excesses which were genuine to youths because of their youthful enthusiasm. He was easy on them, without hurting and humiliating them, or displaying their wrongs in public. At one time, a young man who could not control himself, came to our Prophet and sought permission to commit adultery, which Islam forbade. The Companions (ra) immediately tried to silence him. However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not allow them and made this young man sit at his side and asked whether he would be willing to allow another man to commit adultery with his mother, his daughter, his sister, or his maternal and paternal aunts. Every time the young man gave the answer in the negative and every time the Messenger of Allah (saw) told him calmly that other people would not accept that either. Then he prayed, "O Allah! *Forgive the sins of this young man, purify his heart and protect his chastity!*" Thus, the young man gave up his intention.⁴⁶

The energy, excitement, and strength of youth are at their zenith and inexperience can place young people in hazardous situations. The Messenger of Allah (saw) considered the young person, who, with a strong will to endure this storm, did not fall into what was harām (forbidden by religion) to be one of the seven people who

⁴⁵ M2950, Muslim, Hajj, 147; D1905, Abu Dawud, Manasik, 56.

⁴⁶ HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.



will be shaded on the Day of Resurrection, when there will be no shade but Allah's.⁴⁷

The Prophet (saw) pointed out that young people who were aware of their responsibility toward Allah (swt) were a saving grace against divine punishment for all of society. He said, *"If there were no young people who were in awe (engaging in prayer), no elderly who bowed (ruku'), no nursing babies and no grazing animals, the penalty would have necessarily rained down or you would have been tormented."*⁴⁸

The Prophet (saw), who was especially interested in the education of the youth, taught young, such as Abu Hurayra (ra), their religion in the Suffa, which was an arcade next to the Mosque of the Prophet. Notable Companions, such as 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, Mu'adh b. Jabal and Anas b. Malik (ra), who spend their youth with the Prophet, were important figures in the building of Islamic culture and civilization. At every opportunity these youth found the Messenger of Allah (saw) to have special recommendations for them. He gave the following advice to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas: *"O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]: Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah [alone]. And know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you*

⁴⁷ B660, Bukhari, Adhan, 36; M2380, Muslim, Zakat, 91.

⁴⁸ YM6402, Abu Ya'la, al-Musnad, XI, 287.



*except with what Allah had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.*⁴⁹

In conclusion, we can say that the Messenger of Allah (saw), as part of the mission of prophethood, developed a sincere relationship with every member of society without the distinction of gender and age. In this context he developed love for children and a sincere relationship with the youth. Considering that if a child is actually an adult of the future and a young person is the next recipient of the revelation, is it then not clear how precious they are for the future of society? The Prophet (saw) was sensitive to children and to youth so that they would be able to bear the responsibility for the future; a child gratified with mercy and compassion, and a youth who was conscious of being the successors on the earth. In brief, the Prophet (saw) tried to educate a person to be the best of creatures.

⁴⁹ T2516, Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 59; HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293.



WOMEN'S HONOR AND RIGHTS ASSURED BY THE PROPHET

*I*n the streets of Medina a poor middle-aged woman wearing a dress that she had borrowed from her neighbor was in a rush to get to the Prophet's house. She was feeling wretched and did not know what to do. She could not hold back her tears. If she did not have this one hope of finding refuge, she would not even have taken one more step. She came to the Prophet (saw) in a flurry. Khawla bint Malik b. Sa'laba (ra) could barely speak, as if there were something stuck in her throat.¹ She sat across from the Prophet (saw) and started to speak with the following words: "O Messenger of Allah! My husband turned his back on me."

"Turning one's back" or "zihār" was a widespread custom of the age of the Jahiliyya and it meant divorcing one's wife. The man used to liken his wife to his mother through certain speech and in doing so he would make his wife unlawful to him

¹ HI7/618, Ibn Hajar, Isaba, VII, 618-620.



and thus a divorce would take place immediately.² Khawla was actually trying to save her home, which she had built for years with a lot of work, and that was where she had raised her children, however, according to the custom there was no way to escape from zihār. Thus, trusting in the mercy and compassion of Allah’s Messenger and hoping that he could find a solution for her, Khawla came to him. She went on to say, “O Messenger of Allah! I gave the years of my youth to him. I gave birth to his children and when I got old and could not bear any children, he turned his back to me and likened me to his mother.”

Khawla’s circumstances deeply affected the Prophet (saw). However, there had been no divine ruling revealed to him by Allah (swt) regarding this crying old woman’s situation. He had to issue his verdict in accordance with the established custom, which meant the old woman would stay divorced. Khawla could not accept this and believed that Allah would not leave her in this situation. She had spent almost all her life with her husband. What could she do alone by herself from that time onwards? There had to be a solution to her problem and she quietly prayed, “O Allah! I present my complaint to you.”

Allah Almighty responded to this woman, who was struggling and striving to eliminate an injustice and save her home, by revealing the Surah of the Holy Qur’an called al-Mujadilah, meaning “the disputing woman.”³ The surah begins with the following verses: “Allah has heard the words of the woman who disputed with you [Prophet] about her husband and complained to

² BS15653, Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 608.

³ D2214, Abu Dawud, Talaq, 16-17; N3490, Nasa’i, Talaq, 33; IM2063, Ibn Majah, Talaq, 25.



Allah: Allah has heard what you both had to say. He is all hearing, all seeing.”⁴ The divine mercy was rejecting an immoral custom which humiliated and violated the rights of women, “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.”⁵



*K*hawla’s struggle was effective in the abolition of this Jahiliyya custom. What was more important concerning this incident, however, was that Khawla was well aware of the value given to women by Islam and that gave her the strength to fight against injustice. Many of the immoral perceptions and traditions that remained from the age of the Jahiliyya were changed little by little during the emergence of Islam. Because of this, Khawla trusted in Allah (swt) and thus became the reason for the abolition of a practice oppressing women.

The value given to women in pre-Islamic Meccan society in which the Prophet (saw) was raised can be understood from the feelings experienced when a girl was born, “*When one of them is given news of the birth of a baby girl, his face darkens and he is filled with gloom. In his shame he hides himself away from his people because of the bad news he has been given. Should he keep her and suffer contempt or bury her in the dust?*”⁶ Allah Almighty identified this practice as “an

⁴ Mujadilah, 58/1.

⁵ Mujadilah, 58/2.

⁶ Nahl, 16/58-59.



*evil decision,*⁷ and pointed out how He raised a baby girl like Maryam as “a precious flower.”⁸ Allah’s Messenger (saw) said in a ḥadīth, “Whoever has three daughters, or three sisters, or two daughters, or two sisters and he keeps good company with them and fears Allah regarding them, then Paradise is for him.”⁹ Because of such divine commands, new-born girls could at last be free from being met with shame and anger and instead begin to be welcomed as a means of reaching Paradise.

Protecting the rights of orphan and single girls and ensuring their right to live were issues to which Islam attached the utmost importance. In the pre-Islamic period, girls who were raised under someone’s protection and patronage were forced to marry the person who raised them in return for a very low amount of dowry compared to that paid to other women of that society. The dowry was really supposed to be a monetary payment with the specific objective of ensuring women’s financial security after their marriage. This was the reason that Allah Almighty in the Holy Qur’an commanded men not to take it back from their women in case the marriage ended even if it was “a great amount of gold.”¹⁰ Because of the financial means provided to women by a dowry, Allah Almighty prohibited marrying orphan girls in return for paying them less as a dowry and thus taking advantage of their loneliness. On the other hand, those who assumed the task of raising orphan girls in the age of the Jahiliyya desired the beauty

⁷ Nahl, 16/59.

⁸ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/37.

⁹ T1916, Tirmidhi, Birr, 13; HM11404, Ibn Hanbal, III, 43.

¹⁰ Nisa, 4/20.



of those girls and did not want to forego the property the girls had inherited and therefore would prevent them from marrying other people. This oppression and injustice were rejected by the following verse: *“They ask you [Prophet] for a ruling about women. Say, ‘Allah Himself gives you a ruling about them. You already have what has been recited to you in the Scripture about orphan girls [in your charge] from whom you withhold the prescribed shares [of their inheritance] and whom you wish to marry, and also about helpless children—Allah instructs you to treat orphans fairly: He is well aware of whatever good you do.”*¹¹

With the emergence of Islam, the depraved and unjust treatment, behavior, and oppression inflicted on women from the age of the Jahiliyya were gradually abolished. One day a man in the city of the Prophet (saw) said to his wife with petty vengeance in mind, “By Allah! I will neither divorce you irrevocably, nor remain married to you!” The woman asked incredulously how that could be possible, and the man said, “I will divorce you, and whenever your waiting period is about to end, I will take you back.” In this way, he could divorce the woman maybe one hundred times and take her back within her waiting period and prevent her from marrying another man. So the woman went to ‘A’isha (ra) to inform her about the situation. Because of this arbitrary practice of her husband, she would have the life of a slave by being neither a married woman nor a divorcee. ‘A’isha (ra) could not say anything to the woman until the Prophet (saw) came. When he returned she told him the situation and the Prophet (saw) was silent until

¹¹ Nisa’, 4/127; B5128, Bukhari, Nikah, 37; B5140, Bukhari, Nikah, 44.



the following Qur'anic ruling, which protects the rights and honor of women, was revealed: *“Divorce is two times, after that, retains her on reasonable terms or releases her with kindness.”*¹²

In the pre-Islamic period, widows also experienced serious hardships. The family members and relatives of her dead husband would forcefully take her under their protection. Either they themselves would marry her or give her hand to another man, or they would never allow her to get married. A widow never had a say in her marriage. However, if she returned the dowry paid to her by her husband to the family of her husband, she would be allowed to get married. In a way, widows were treated like the inheritance of their dead husbands. This custom, which did not give women a say even in their own marriage was rejected by the following verse in Surah al-Nisa,¹³ *“You who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will.”*¹⁴ Before the revelation of this verse, widows could even be forced to marry little boys from the family of their dead husband and were forcefully kept in their husband's home. In time those practices reached such an ugly level that when the Medinan poet Abu Qays b. al-Aslat died, his son Qays attempted to marry his stepmother Kabsha bint Ma'n whom he regarded as an inheritance of his father. The helpless woman immediately went to the Prophet (saw) and told him about her situation. Thereupon, the following verse was revealed, *“Do not marry women that*

¹² Baqara, 2/229; T1192, Tirmidhi, Talaq, 16.

¹³ Nisa, 4/19.

¹⁴ B4579, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Nisa') 6; D2089, Abu Dawud, Nikah, 21, 22.



your fathers married—with the exception of what is past—this is indeed a shameful thing to do, loathsome and leading to evil.”¹⁵

Likewise, Allah’s Messenger did not approve of forcing girls who reached the age of marriage to get married, and commanded Muslims to give them a choice in their marriages saying, “A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission.”¹⁶

During the time that Muslim society was being built in Medina in all its aspects, the regulations about women’s rights related to inheritance were raised. After the Battle of Uhud, the wife of the Medinan Companion Sa’d b. Rabi’ (ra), who was martyred in that battle, came with her two daughters to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and explained to him the injustice they faced, “O Messenger of Allah! These two are daughters of Sa’d b. Rabi’, who fought along with you on the day of Uhud and was martyred. Their uncle took their wealth without leaving any wealth for them, and it is impossible for them to be married unless they have wealth.” Clearly, the first women to be subjected to such injustice were not Sa’d’s wife and their two daughters. This custom, which had been practiced for a long time, was applied in order to prevent women and girls from getting a share of inheritance. Sa’d’s wife was sure that Islam would abolish this unjust practice. The Prophet (saw) told her to be patient until Allah (swt) determined a ruling in her matter. Soon after that incident, the verses on inheritance

¹⁵ Nisa’, 4/22, NS11095, Nasa’i, Sunan al-Kubra, VI, 321; BS14236, Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 253; IBS845, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Isti’ab, p. 845.

¹⁶ B5136 Bukhari, Nikah, 42.



were revealed. Allah's Messenger called Sa'd's brother and told him to give the two daughters of Sa'd two thirds, and give their mother one eighth, and keep to himself whatever remained.¹⁷ The great caliph 'Umar (ra) explained the rights that women gained after the emergence of Islam, "By Allah, in the Period of Jahiliyya, we did not pay attention to women until Allah revealed regarding them what He revealed regarding them and assigned for them what He assigned."¹⁸

After the emergence of Islam, women Companions were not only saved from the unjust practices of the age of the Jahiliyya, but also began to play a more active role in social life. The tasks that they assumed in battle were typical manifestations of this fact. A group of women came to the Prophet (saw) before the Battle of Khaybar and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we have come to spin wool, by which we provide aid in the cause of Allah. We have medicine for the wounded, we can collect arrows and hand them to the fighters, and supply them with soup made of wheat or barley." Thereupon, Allah's Messenger said, "*Then, stand up.*" When Allah (swt) bestowed victory on him at Khaybar, he allotted shares to the women from the spoils as well as to the men.¹⁹

Women could easily get a position in many areas of social life during the time of the Prophet (saw). Some women worked in trade,²⁰ some in education,²¹ and others

¹⁷ T2092, Tirmidhi, Fara'id, 3; D2892, Abu Dawud, Fara'id, 4; IM2720, Ibn Majah, Fara'id, 2.

¹⁸ B4913, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Tahrim) 2; M3692, Muslim, Talaq, 31.

¹⁹ D2729, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 141.

²⁰ IM2204, Ibn Majah, Tijara, 29.

²¹ D3887, Abu Dawud, Tibb, 18; HM27635, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 372.



in health services.²² However, perhaps the most important practice, which shows the value and significance of women during the time of the Prophet, was that the Prophet (saw) took the pledge of allegiance from them.²³ Giving a place to the women Companions (ra) in that pledge, which was an agreement of loyalty between the head of the city state and his subjects, shows that they were given an important place in society and the right of political participation.

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) gave women value in family and social life, always protected them, and did not let anybody oppress them or usurp their rights. The Prophet (saw) unconditionally banned violence against women by men who were prone to violence by reminding them that they shared the same bed with their wives.²⁴ 'A'isha (ra) reported that Allah's Messenger never raised a hand to a woman or a servant.²⁵ Treating women with kindness and politeness was one of the Prophet's principles for life. When he advised Muslim men to be kind to women, he likened them to fragile crystal. According to a report from Anas b. Malik, when Allah's Messenger set out for the Farewell Hajj, Anas' mother Umm Sulaym (ra) was with the Prophet's wives. A guide named Anjasha was driving their camels. When Anjasha, a slave with beautiful voice,²⁶ recited poems and caused the camels to speed up, the Prophet (saw) told him, "*O Anjasha, be careful, drive slowly for you are driving the mounts who carry vessels of fragile crystal.*"²⁷

²² B5679 Bukhari, Tibb, 2

²³ Mumtahina, 60/12; B1306, Bukhari, Jana'iz, 45; M4834, Muslim, Imara, 88.

²⁴ B4942, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Shams) 1; M7191, Muslim, Jannah, 49.

²⁵ M6050, Muslim, Fadha'il, 79.

²⁶ EU1/284, Ibn al-Athir, 'Usd al-ghaba, I, 284.

²⁷ M6039, Muslim, Fadha'il, 72; B6149, Bukhari, Adab, 90.



The Messenger of Mercy warned men by drawing their attention to the gentle and fragile character of women's nature and pointed out that ignoring their character and forcing things upon them might lead to breaking them.²⁸ Good Muslims are undoubtedly the ones who take the Prophet (saw) as an example in this matter. As in all aspects of life, Allah's Messenger presented himself as the example in treating women kindly and said, "*The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives.*"²⁹

Thanks to the Prophet's determined attitude about treating women kindly, fighting against oppression and the violence against them, women in Medina achieved comfort and peace in their lives. Indeed, 'Umar (ra) expressed how much women's status in the family had changed after the Hijrah to Medina as follows: "We (the Quraysh) had dominated women but when we came to Medina we found people whom their women dominated. So our women began to learn from their women."³⁰

Women acting more freely every passing day in Medina by freely expressing themselves, seeking their rights, and defending themselves disturbed some Medinan Companions (ra) like 'Umar. In fact, once 'Umar (ra) shouted at his wife saying, "Who are you to give counsel to 'Umar?" and thereupon his wife responded, "Why do you take it ill that I make a counter argument? By Allah, the wives of the Prophet did so, and sometimes they might not even speak

²⁸ B5184, Bukhari, Nikah, 80; M3650, Muslim, Rada', 65.

²⁹ IM1977, Ibn Majah, Nikah, 50; T3895, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63.

³⁰ M3695, Muslim, Talaq, 34.



with him for a whole day until night.” After hearing this, ‘Umar was worried and he wanted to know if this was true. So, he went to his daughter Hafsa, who was a wife of the Prophet (saw). When she replied in the affirmative, ‘Umar said, “You are a ruined and a lost person! How can you be sure that Allah will not be angry with you because you are making Allah’s Messenger angry? Do not ask for too many things from Allah’s Messenger, and do not reply angrily to him with regards to anything, and do not desert him. Demand from me whatever you like, and I will do whatever you wish.”³¹

Even though ‘Umar was worried about the women’s liberty with the Prophet (saw), Allah’s Messenger was always well mannered and tolerant to women in this respect. Once ‘Umar (ra) asked permission to see Allah’s Messenger in whose company were some women of the Quraysh. They were talking to him loudly and asking him some questions. When they heard ‘Umar was asking permission to enter, they hurried to screen themselves. When Allah’s Messenger saw them, he started to smile. ‘Umar asked, “O Allah’s Messenger! May Allah keep you always in happiness.” Allah’s Messenger said, “*I am astonished at these women who were with me. As soon as they heard your voice, they hastened to screen themselves.*” ‘Umar said, “O Messenger of Allah! You have more right to be respected and feared by them.” Then he addressed those women saying, “O enemies of your own souls! Do you fear me and not Allah’s Messenger?” They

³¹ B2468, Bukhari, Mazalim, 25; M3695, Muslim, Talaq, 34.



replied. “Yes, for you are a fearful and fierce man compared with Allah’s Messenger.”³²

At the basis of the ease that women felt in being in the Prophet’s presence, asking him questions, and requesting solutions to their problems was the unimpeachable politeness and tolerance of the Prophet (saw) toward them. In fact, Allah Almighty described his mercy and politeness in the following verse: “*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...*”³³ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said, “*O Allah, I have strictly prohibited trespassing into the rights of the two weak ones: Orphans and women,*”³⁴ and thus showed how much attention he paid to the matter of the rights of orphans and women and that he was uncompromising in this respect. Women who knew this easily and freely brought the problems that they could not solve to the Prophet (saw). Indeed, when Umm Salama complained saying, “Men go to war, women do not. We also get half a share in inheritance,” the following verse was revealed: “*Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you more than others—men have the portion they have earned; and women the portion they have earned—you should rather ask Allah for some of His bounty: He has full knowledge of everything.*”³⁵ In another instance, Umm ‘Umara (ra) said, “I see that Allah in the Holy Qur’an speaks about men in every issue, but He does not mention women in any way,” and the following

³² B3294, Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 11; M6202, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 22.

³³ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/159.

³⁴ IM3678, Ibn Majah, Adab, 6; HM9664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

³⁵ Nisa’, 4/32; T3022, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 4.



divine response was sent: *“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.”*³⁶

Female Companions (ra) asked many questions related to Islamic law, such as how to cleanse themselves after their periods,³⁷ the ruling about lengthening their hair,³⁸ and whether it was permitted to take money secretly from their stingy husbands.³⁹ Allah’s Messenger would help women both in legal matters like these and in problems concerning their private lives. For example, when both Mu’awiya and Abu Jahm proposed to Fatima bint Qays (ra), the Prophet (saw) warned Fatima about the poverty of Mu’awiya and the harsh character of Abu Jahm and advised her to marry Usama b. Zayd (ra).⁴⁰

At the basis of the female Companions’ wish to be close to, and ask questions to, the Prophet (saw) was the desire to learn the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah in the best and most correct way. They did not want to be behind the male Companions (ra) in respect of learning the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah. Asma’ bint Yazid (ra), who was known as “the preacher of the women” because of her fame for her eloquence in speech,⁴¹ went to the Prophet (saw) on behalf

³⁶ Ahzab, 33/35; T3211 Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 33.

³⁷ B314, Bukhari, Haidh, 13; M750, Muslim, Haidh, 61.

³⁸ B5941, Bukhari, Libas, 85.

³⁹ B2211, Bukhari, Buyu’, 95; M4477, Muslim, Aqdiyya, 7.

⁴⁰ M3697, Muslim, Talaq, 36; T1134, Tirmidhi, Nikah, 38.

⁴¹ HI7/498, Ibn Hajar, Isaba, VII, 498.



of some women and said that only men were benefiting from his teachings and demanded from him some time that he could devote only to women. The Prophet (saw) welcomed this request and reserved a special day to teach them the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah.⁴² In addition to this special day, women would come to the Prophet's Mosque to join the congregation in daily prayers, including the ritual fajr prayer,⁴³ and listen to his sermons.⁴⁴ Allah's Messenger, who said, "*Do not stop Allah's female servants from going to His mosques,*"⁴⁵ personally eliminated obstacles between women and mosque.

During the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw), women would come to his mosque or his house for various reasons, such as offering him something or giving him a gift.⁴⁶ For example, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas' aunt Umm Hufayd (ra) gave the Prophet (saw) some food items, such as butter and dried yoghurt, as gifts.⁴⁷ Barira, the servant of 'A'isha (ra), offered the Prophet (saw) a piece of meat, which had been given to her as a gift.⁴⁸

Women did not refrain from coming to the Prophet (saw) with their children either. Umm Qays bint Mihsin (ra), who was one of the first Muslims of Mecca and emigrant ladies,⁴⁹ came to the Prophet (saw) with her infant and

⁴² B7310, Bukhari, Itisam, 9; M6699, Muslim, Birr, 152; AU25/73, al-'Ayni, 'Umdat al-Qari, XXV, 73.

⁴³ B578, Bukhari, Mawaqit al-salat, 27.

⁴⁴ B98, Bukhari, 'Ilm, 32; M2045, Muslim, 'Eidayn, 2.

⁴⁵ B900, Bukhari, Jum'a, 13; M990, Muslim, Salat, 136.

⁴⁶ T2037, Tirmidhi, Tibb, 1.

⁴⁷ B2575, Bukhari, Hiba, 7.

⁴⁸ B2577, Bukhari, Hiba, 7; M2485, Muslim, Zakat, 170.

⁴⁹ HI8/280, Ibn Hajar, Isaba, VIII, 280.



Allah's Messenger had the infant sit on his lap.⁵⁰ Sometimes female Companions (ra), such as Umm Zufar, visited the Prophet (saw) to ask him to pray for them because of their illnesses,⁵¹ while others like Umm Haritha bint Suraqa, mother of a martyr, came to him to ask the state of their children in the Hereafter.⁵² During the illness of the Prophet (saw) from which he died, female Companions (ra) came to his home, whose door was always open to them, to visit him during his illness. They felt very sad and unhappy that he was going to leave them and because of this, they said to him, "O Messenger of Allah! Why don't you pray to Allah to cure your illness?"⁵³ All these are only a few of the examples of how women, during the time of the Prophet (saw), actively participated in daily life.

Thanks to both the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the rules and measures established by Allah's Messenger, women during the 'Asr al-Sa'adah were as if under the protection of revelation. The following confession of 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) clearly described this situation: "During the lifetime of the Prophet (saw), we used to avoid conversing leisurely and acting freely to our wives lest some divine inspiration might be revealed concerning us. However, when the Prophet (saw) had died, we started speaking leisurely and acting freely to them."⁵⁴

Perhaps at no other time in history have women attained such peace and safety that they achieved during the time

⁵⁰ B223, Bukhari, Wudu', 59; MU141, Muwatta', Taharah, 30.

⁵¹ B5652, Bukhari, Marda, 6; M657,1 Muslim, Birr, 54.

⁵² B2809, Bukhari, Jihad, 14.

⁵³ HM27619, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 368.

⁵⁴ B5187, Bukhari, Nikah, 81.



of the Prophet (saw). It has always been very difficult for them to present value of their being the vicegerents of Allah (swt) on earth, their skills, knowledge, and accumulation of their experiences to the benefit of society. While it was being discussed in Europe whether women had souls or not, Jibril, the angel responsible for conveying revelations to the Prophet (saw), was sending greetings to 'Aisha. One day the Messenger of Allah (saw) told her, "O 'A'isha! This is Jibril, he sends his greetings to you."⁵⁵

The Muslim community, with women and men, is aware of how mercifully the divine revelation and the Prophet (saw), who taught this revelation, protected everyone, especially women. The existence of the Prophet (saw) has been a mercy for this community. One incident was reported in which Umm Ayman (ra) was asked why she wept when the Messenger of Allah (saw) died, because being with Allah was better for His Messenger. She said, "I know that being with Allah is better for His Messenger, but I am weeping because the revelation from heaven has ceased."⁵⁶

With the emergence of Islam, women gained many social and financial rights that they had been deprived of during the age of the Jahiliyya. They started to be respected and valued. Especially in Medina, where Muslim society was shaped, the existence of the Prophet (saw) became like social assurance for them. Thus, it was not arbitrarily that they went to the Prophet (saw) every time they faced unjust treatment. The more they described their problems

⁵⁵ B3217 Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 6; M6304 Muslim, Fadh'a'il al-sahaba, 91.

⁵⁶ M6318, Muslim, Fada'il al-sahaba, 103; IM1635, Ibn Majah, Jana'iz, 65.



the more divine revelation was sent. They solved their problems and they would not let themselves be victimized. Thus, women, who had been deprived of many important rights in Arab Jahiliyya society and had been alienated for centuries, gained the esteem that they deserved because of Islam.

محمد



PEACEFUL HOUSE OF THE PROPHET

The Messenger of Allah (saw) had lost his father before he was born and his mother when he was six years old. First his grandfather, and then his uncle took him under his protection, and tried to ensure that he always felt as if he had a family. His uncle and his uncle's wife never separated him from their own children, always approaching him with compassion and kindness. The Prophet (saw) referred his aunt Fatima bint Asad as “my mother after my mother,”¹ showing that his uncle and his aunt were trying to raise him in a genuine family environment. Their wellintentioned approach would be an example for the orphaned Prophet, who grew up deprived of family love, when he started his own family later on.

When he was at the age of twenty-five, Khadijah, a prominent business woman of

¹ MK21457, Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, XXIV, 351.



Mecca working in the caravan trade, admired his morality and integrity and offered to marry him. Muhammad (saw) accepted her offer and had a happy and peaceful marriage for a total of twenty-five years, fifteen years before his prophethood, and ten years after his prophethood.² The Prophet (saw), who had a compassionate home with a virtuous wife and had children with this spouse, had a family environment of which he had been deprived during his own childhood. He was a dear husband for Khadijah and a compassionate father for his children.



Our Prophet, who attained this kind of patronage in his family life, started at this point on a spiritual quest. In the process of this search, he retreated like some Hanifs (in Islamic thought, they were the people who, during the pre-Islamic period, were understood to have rejected idolatry and maintained the pure monotheism of the religion of Abraham) to get away from all the unpleasantness of Mecca, and took refuge in a cave on the mountain of Hira. His loyal and faithful wife did not leave him alone, even though it was a long distance to walk; she took the food she had prepared for her him in this cave. That was not all, in fact she was the first person who comforted her spouse during his experience of the revelation, and she was the first to believe in it. It was reported that it occurred in the month of Ramadan in the year 610. Muhammad (saw) was honored with the title of the “Messenger of

² HS2/5 Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 5.



Allah.” The first revelation came to him in the cave of Hira. Confused and worried by the encounter with the angel Jibril and the revelation, he ran to his wife Khadijah (ra), not understanding what was happening. After saying, “*Oh, what is happening to me Khadijah?*” he told her everything that had happened to him and expressed his worry and anxiety. Khadijah told him firmly, “No, By Allah! Never will Allah ever disgrace you.” And she calmed him down by saying, “...because you keep your kinship tight, tell the truth, help those in need, give them to whatever you have in your hand, welcome the guests, and support those who are in a state of injustice.” The Messenger of Allah (saw), who had so far been in fear and bewilderment, relaxed a bit with these words of his wife who was full of love and understanding.³ In such a worrisome case like this in which the Prophet ran to his wife and shared this with her, and Khadijah’s support and consolation of her husband the nature of the family home established by the Prophet (saw) could be seen. Love, respect, trust and support...These are the most basic elements that keep the family unit alive and make it prosper. All of these elements were very much a part of the marriage between the Messenger of Allah (saw) and Khadijah.

It is evident that the family life of the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was sent as a mercy to the worlds and as the best example for the believers, would be perfect. He described marriage as belonging to best of creation.⁴

³ B3, Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, Iman, 252.

⁴ T3607, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1.



He said, “*Marriage is part of my Sunnah. Whoever does not follow my Sunnah has nothing to do with me. Get married for I will boast of your great numbers before the nations on the Day of Resurrection.*”⁵ The Messenger of Allah (saw) encouraged people to marry and start families, and was an example to believers with regard to family life. He stated that family life was where the physical, mental, and spiritual health of spouses can flourish, and was much like a school for the development of personality, beliefs and values, decency and good habits for children.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was the patriarch of his family and he was sincere and open hearted, treating all family members well by making them feel valued. He was joyful with their joy, and sad with their sadness. He adopted a warm and harmonious style based upon love, respect, and kindness in relations with them. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The best of you is the best to his wives, and I am the best of you to my wives.*”⁶ With this ḥadīth he showed believers the way to find tranquility in family life.

The Prophet (saw), who wanted a family environment where love, respect, kindness, and compassion prevailed, did not neglect to fulfill the reasonable requirements of his wives and children. It made him feel worthy of them. As a matter of fact, it was reported that during a festival day ‘A’isha (ra) wanted to watch the shield and spear game played by the Abyssinians, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) accepted her request. He made her stand behind him

⁵ IM1846, Ibn Majah, Nikah, 1; B5063, Bukhari, Nikah, 1.

⁶ T3895, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63.



and allowed her to watch as much as she wanted.⁷ When he needed to go somewhere, he would seek permission from his wife,⁸ which is striking in terms of demonstrating the value that he gave his wives.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) showed how he valued his wives by asking their opinions in different matters and consulting them about various problems. The Messenger of Allah got over his fear and bewilderment of the first revelation with Khadijah's support. Umm Salama's ideas and advice following the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, helped get rid of his distress. The Hudaibiyya Treaty was signed between the Muslims, who went to Mecca with only the intention of performing the 'umra, and the polytheists, who neither allowed them to perform the 'umra or enter Mecca. The conditions of the Treaty were so harsh that none of the pilgrims heeded the directions of the Prophet (saw), who asked them to make sacrifices and shave after the signing of the Treaty. The Messenger of Allah (saw), feeling extremely distressed, went to his wife Umm Salama and told her what had happened and discussed this situation with her. Umm Salama (ra) showed a way out by saying, "O Messenger of Allah, do you want to do this? If so do not say a word to anyone but sacrifice an animal and call your barber and shave." The Prophet (saw), who went on to follow his wife advice became an example to his Companions, and the Companions (ra) simply did what the Prophet (saw) did.⁹ The tension was over and the

⁷ B950, Bukhari, 'Eidayn, 2.

⁸ M3682, Muslim, Talaq, 23.

⁹ B2731, Bukhari, Shurut, 15.



crisis was overcome. Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) overcame the above-mentioned stressful situation with the support of his wife.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was faithful and loyal to his family. After his first wife Khadijah's death he often remembered her fondly. He did not refrain from showing his loyalty to his deceased wife and so, whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would distribute its meat among the friends whom Khadijah (ra) loved.¹⁰ It was reported that this attitude of the Prophet (saw) from time to time also caused 'A'isha (ra) to envy the late Khadijah. In fact, although 'A'isha (ra) never saw her, she never felt as jealous of any wife of Allah's Messenger as she did of Khadijah, for whom Allah had prepared a pavilion in Paradise.¹¹ On one occasion when the Prophet (saw) had been speaking about her frequently 'A'isha (ra) got so jealous that she said, "What makes you remember an old woman among the old women of the Quraysh, an old woman with a toothless mouth of red gums, who died long ago, and in whose place Allah has given you somebody better than her?"¹² Even though the Prophet (saw) understood her envy of Khadijah, he replied: *"Almighty Allah did not grant me a better wife than Khadijah. She believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me to be truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me; she comforted me when others shunned me; and Allah granted me children by her while depriving me of children by other women."*¹³

¹⁰ B6004 Bukhari, Adab, 23.

¹¹ B5229, Bukhari, Nikah, 109; 11 M6277, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 74.

¹² B3821, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20; M6282, Muslim, Fadha'il al-Sahaba, 78.

¹³ HM25376, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118.



The Messenger of Allah (saw) always showed an understanding outlook when his wives were jealous of each other and would settle discord among them amicably. Once he was in 'A'isha's room and one of his wives sent him a meal. This act made 'A'isha (ra) so jealous that she hit the hand of the servant who had brought the dish, causing the plate to fall and break with food scattering on the ground. The Prophet (saw), as always, soothed the atmosphere with his calm and mature demeanor by collecting the pieces of the plate from the ground and saying, "*Your mother [mother of the believers] got jealous.*"¹⁴ Afterwards, 'A'isha (ra) regretted her actions, and asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) how she could compensate for her conduct. He replied, "*A plate for the plate, and a meal for the meal.*"¹⁵

Obviously similar events also took place among the other wives of the Prophet (saw). He always responded to such behaviors constructively and was not disparaging. For example, the Companions (ra) knew that Allah's Messenger loved 'A'isha (ra) greatly, so if any of them had a gift and wished to give it to Allah's Messenger then he would delay it until the Prophet went to 'A'isha's home and then send it to him while he was at her home. The other wives discussed this matter together and decided that Umm Salama (ra) should request Allah's Messenger to inform the people to send their gifts to him in whatever wife's house he was at that time. She told him of what they had decided but he did not reply. Then they (those

¹⁴ B5225, Bukhari, Nikah, 108.

¹⁵ D3568, Abu Dawud, Buyu' (Ijara), 89.



wives) asked Um Salama about it. She said, “He did not say anything to me.” They asked her to speak to him again. She talked to him again when she met him on her day, but he again gave no reply. When they asked her, she replied that he had given no reply. They said to her, “Talk to him until he gives you a reply.” When it was again her turn to see him she spoke to him again. Finally, he said to her, “*Do not hurt me regarding ‘A’isha, as the divine inspirations do not come to me on any of the beds except that of ‘A’isha.*”¹⁶

During one of the travels for the Hajj the camel of Safiyya bint Huyay (ra), one of the wives of the Prophet (saw), was fatigued, and Zaynab had a surplus camel. The Messenger of Allah said to Zaynab (ra), “*Give her the camel*”. She replied, “Should I give my camel to that Jewess?” Hearing this statement the Messenger of Allah (saw) became very angry and kept away from her during Dhu al-Hijjah, Muharram, and a part of Safar.¹⁷ Likewise, it reached Safiyya bint Huyay that Hafsa bint ‘Umar (ra) had said, “The daughter of a Jew” so she got upset. Upon hearing her complain, the Prophet (saw) consoled her and said, “*And you are like the daughter of a Prophet, and your uncle is a Prophet, and you are married to a Prophet, so what is she boasting to you about?*” Then he said, “*Fear Allah, O Hafsa.*”¹⁸

The peace and well-being of the family is made possible by couples exhibiting understanding, balance, consistency, and moderation toward each other. At every stage of life,

¹⁶ B2581, Bukhari, Hiba, 8.

¹⁷ D4602, Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 3; HM25516, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 132.

¹⁸ T3894, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63; HM12419, Ibn Hanbal, III, 136.



it is an endless source of happiness for spouses to be able to support each other in times of joy and sadness; in good times and in difficult times, as well as set aside time to spend together in conversation. That is the reason why the Prophet (saw) took into consideration the different personalities, sensitivities, morals and characters of his family members and even solved some problems through silence when necessary.

This was because the Messenger of Allah (saw), who knew that his family had certain rights over him, devoted a certain amount of time to them. It is for this reason that he said that people who neglected their family by constantly worshipping had indeed turned away from his Sunnah.¹⁹ The Messenger of Allah would frequently render service to his house and help to his wives.²⁰ ‘A’isha (ra) was once asked, “What did the Messenger of Allah (saw) do in his house?” She replied, “He was a human being like any other; he would clean his garments, milk his sheep and serve himself.”²¹

The Divine Will as presented in the Holy Qur’an depicted the Messenger of Allah (saw) as the best example and guide for the Muslims regarding the best treatment of their wives, “... *And live with them in kindness. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has bestowed on you or (placed much good).*”²² The Prophet (saw), inspired by this verse, spoke wisely to his followers with the following words: “*A believing man should not hate a*

¹⁹ D1369, Abu Dawud, Tataawwu’, 27; DM2200, Darimi, Nikah, 3.

²⁰ B5363, Bukhari, Nafaqat, 8.

²¹ EM541, Bukhari, Adab al-Mufrad, 190.

²² Nisa, 4/19.



*believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.”*²³ At the same time, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked men to tolerate their wives and advised couples about being encouraging and positive.²⁴

The Messenger of Allah (saw) would always pay attention to the notion of justice in relation to his wives. Whenever he wanted to go on a journey, he would draw lots as to which of his wives would accompany him.²⁵ At other times, he used to fix for each of them a day and a night. ‘A’isha (ra) described this sensitivity and his thoughtful behavior as follows: “The Messenger of Allah did not favor one of us over the other in terms of how much time he spent with us.”²⁶ The distinguished wives of the Prophet, who were aware of his grace, did compete to please him. As a matter of fact, Sawda (ra), whose age was advancing,²⁷ knew of the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s love for ‘A’isha (ra), so she gave up her own turn for her in order to seek the pleasure of Allah’s Messenger by that action.²⁸ Concerning the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s relations with his wives, a ḥadīth which was reported from ‘A’isha (ra) is very telling. She said, “the Prophet kissed one of his wives and went out to pray. He did not perform the wudu.”²⁹ This tradition has normally been transmitted in relation to the legality of wudu’ in the ḥadīth books, but it is also very important in

²³ M3645, Muslim, Rada’, 61.

²⁴ B5186, Bukhari, Nikah, 81.

²⁵ B2593, Bukhari, Hiba, 15.

²⁶ D2135, Abu Dawud, Nikah, 37-38.

²⁷ M3629, Muslim, Rada’, 47.

²⁸ B2593, Bukhari, Hiba, 15.

²⁹ D179, Abu Dawud, Taharah, 68.



demonstrating the Messenger of Allah's heartfelt interest and love for his wives at his home.

The Prophet (saw) was a very nourishing and protecting person with regard to his wives and always tried to keep evil away from himself and his wives. One night when he was in *ī'tikāf* (retreat during Ramadan) Safiyya (ra) came to see him. When she returned, the Messenger of Allah (saw) got to his feet to escort her to her room. When they approached the gates of the Mosque, two people from the Ansar passed by, greeted them, and quickly walked ahead. The Prophet (saw) told them to slow down and gave them an explanation in case there may have been any misunderstanding. He said, *"Do not hurry! This is my wife Safiyya bint Huyayy."* They replied, "Glory be to Allah! O Allah's Messenger (saw) (how dare we suspect you)." That was a truly grave thing for both of them. The Prophet (saw) went on to tell them, *"Satan runs in the body of Adam's son as his blood circulates in it, and I was afraid that he (Satan) might insert an evil thought in your hearts."*³⁰ This is a good example of the sensitivity of the Messenger of Allah (saw) with regard to family honor.

The Prophet (saw) never pressured his family members and he would not use force against them. He would never resort to degrading or hurtful words, scolding, and beatings. 'A'isha (ra) reported, "Allah's Messenger never beat anyone with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, but only when he had been fighting in the cause of Allah..."³¹ On the contrary, he would honor them on different

³⁰ B6219, Bukhari, Adab, 121.

³¹ M6050, Muslim, Fadhā'il, 79.



occasions. It was one of his thoughtful behaviors that when a neighbor invited him to eat he accepted the invitation only if he called his wife.³² The Prophet (saw) demanded from his Companions (ra) that they also show the same sensitivity to their family. As a matter of fact, according to Sa'īd b. Hakam, Mu'awiya al-Qushayri (saw) went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked him, "What do you say (command) about our wives?" He replied, "*Give them food what you have for yourself, and clothe them by which you clothe yourself, and do not beat them, and do not revile them.*"³³

In the family life of the Prophet (saw), livelihood and expenses were modest. He preferred to share whatever he had with everyone, and told the Companions (ra) and his family about the temporary status of this world and the eternity of the afterlife. He stated that Muslims should live a simple life and with regard to the livelihood of his family and should not boast. He was known to supplicate as follows: "*O Allah! Give enough food for the family of Muhammad to go on.*"³⁴ 'A'isha (ra) reported the following statements: "The family of Muhammad had not eaten their fill of wheat bread for three successive days from the time they had emigrated to Medina until the death of the Prophet;"³⁵ "A complete month would pass during which we would not make a fire (for cooking), and our food used to be only dates and water unless we were given a present of some meat;"³⁶ and "When the Prophet died,

³² M5312, Muslim, Ashribah, 139.

³³ D2144, Abu Dawud, Nikah, 40-41.

³⁴ M7440, Muslim, Zuhd, 18; 34 B6460, Bukhari, Riqaq, 17.

³⁵ B6454, Bukhari, Riqaq, 17; M7443, Muslim, Zuhd, 20.

³⁶ M7449, Muslim, Zuhd, 26.



nothing which can be eaten by a living creature was left on my shelf except some barley grain. I ate of it for a period and when I measured it, it was finished.”³⁷

As we have already mentioned, as in every family, occasionally the quarrels or some negative behavior of a spouse occurred in the house of the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah always acted with patience and deliberateness. First of all, if there was a problem or tension in this happy household, he always resolved it by talking it out. Sometimes the direct intervention of the divine revelation led to the issue not being a problem any longer. For example, some of the Messengers of Allah’s wives experienced some distress because of his preference for modest living and they presented their desire to live in better conditions. Their behavior so distressed the Messenger of Allah (saw) that he went away from his wives for a month. Soon this problem was resolved with a Qur’anic verse which asked the Prophet (saw) to release his wives for preferring this world for the afterlife. In the Holy Qur’an it is stated, “*O Prophet! Say to your wives, ‘If you desire the life of this world and its finery, then let me compensate you, and release you kindly. But if you desire Allah, His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, then Allah has prepared for the righteous among you a magnificent compensation.’*”³⁸ He first informed ‘A’isha (ra) of this command of Allah and asked each one to choose. Each of the ladies who understood what they had done wrong

³⁷ B6451, Bukhari, Riqaq, 16; 37 M7451, Muslim, Zuhd, 27.

³⁸ Ahzab, 33/28-29.



gave up their wish for worldly goods and said they preferred Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter.³⁹

The Messenger of Allah (saw), a loving husband, was also extremely tenderhearted and compassionate as a father. He loved to make children happy. When Fatima came to visit him, he got up to welcome her, took her by the hand, kissed her and made her sit where he was sitting; and when he went to visit Fatima, she would get up to welcome him, take him by the hand, kiss him, and make him sit where she was sitting.⁴⁰ The Messenger of Allah (saw) loved his children very much, so when he saw that his own son Ibrahim was breathing his last breath he started to shed tears. When a Companion saw this, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, even you are weeping!" and the Prophet (saw) replied, "*This is mercy.*" Then he wept more and said, "*The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O Ibrahim! Indeed, we are grieved by your separation.*"⁴¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw), who paid a lot of attention to the upbringing of children, was very careful not to hurt them. He treated them with compassion, and made warnings toward them very gentle. One day he saw 'Umar, Umm Salama's son from her previous marriage with Abu Salama (ra). His hand was all over the plate while he was eating. So the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him, "*O boy! Mention the name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and*

³⁹ B4786, Bukhari, Tafsir, 39 (Ahzab); M3681, Muslim, Talaq, 22; TT20/251, Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, XX, 251.

⁴⁰ D5217, Abu Dawud, Adab, 143, 144; T3872, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 60.

⁴¹ M6025, Muslim, Fadha'il, 62.



eat of the dish what is nearer you."⁴² The Messenger of Allah often reminded his family members of their responsibility of worship. While doing this, on the one hand, he was serving the divine statement, and, on the other hand, he was ensuring that they would not neglect their worship. In the Holy Qur'an it was first stated, "*And do not extend your glance toward what We have given some classes of them to enjoy—the splendor of the life of this world—that We may test them thereby. Your Lord's provision is better, and more lasting.*"⁴³ Then it was stated, "*And exhort your people to pray, and patiently adhere to it. We ask of you no sustenance, but it is We who sustain you. The good ending is that for righteousness.*"⁴⁴ The Prophet (saw) did not use oppressive and compelling behaviors toward his family members in these matters, but he warned them appropriately. As a matter of fact, Anas b. Malik (ra) explained his invitation to the family members as follows: "For six month, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would pass by the door of Fatima when going to the fajr prayer saying, '*al-Salat, O People of the house!*' and he would recite the verse, '*Allah only desires to remove all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you thoroughly.*'"⁴⁵

The noble Prophet expected his children and his grandsons to be taught with patience and tolerance and he never wanted to rebuke or humiliate them. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who exemplified Muslims and all human beings in every way, demonstrated how people should

⁴² T2698, Tirmidhi, Isti'dhan, 10.

⁴³ Ta-Ha, 20/131

⁴⁴ Ta-Ha, 20/132.

⁴⁵ Ahzab, 33/33; T3206, Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 33; HM14086, Ibn Hanbal, III, 285.



behave in their family life as a husband, a father and a grandfather. He was a living example of his own saying, “*The best of you is the best to his wives, and I am the best of you to my wives.*”⁴⁶ His Companions (ra) who witnessed his family life confirmed this fact. Anas b. Malik (ra) who was in the service of the Prophet (saw) for many years and had the opportunity to witness his life closely said, “I have never seen anyone who was more compassionate toward his family than the Messenger of Allah (saw).”⁴⁷ The Prophet (saw), who defined those who were morally right and who acted gently to their family members as “*the most perfect of believers in faith,*”⁴⁸ wanted to draw attention to the aspect of the issue in terms of faith. wanted to draw attention to the elements of belief. This is because if a believer’s approach to his immediate family is with compassion, kindness, and understanding, and if he observes their rights, then they will be embellished with the beautiful morality that is required by faith. As a result of such behaviour, healthy relationships will develop in the whole of society and generations, who have good moral fiber, will be brought up in peaceful loving Muslim families.

⁴⁶ T3895, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63; IM1977, Ibn Majah, Nikah, 50.

⁴⁷ ST1/136, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 136.

⁴⁸ HM25184 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 100



HIS ONLY CONCERN WAS HIS UMMAH

The Noble Prophet set off from Mecca to Medina. A notable Companion, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (ra) related one of his memories from the journey as follows:

“When we approached to ‘Azwara’, the Noble Prophet dismounted from his ride. After holding his hands in the air and praying to Allah for some time, he prostrated and stayed there a while. Then he rose, held his hands up in the air, and prayed to Allah for some time, and then again he prostrated. Then he said, *“I begged my Lord and made intercession for my people, and He gave me a third of my people, so I prostrated myself in gratitude to my Lord. Then I raised my head and begged my Lord for my people, and He gave me a third of my people, so I prostrated myself in gratitude to my Lord. Then I raised my head and*



begged my Lord for my people and He gave me the remaining third, so I prostrated myself in gratitude to my Lord.”¹

A person who acts like this can only be a Prophet who commits his life to the salvation of his ummah. He could not accept that even one person from his umma might be deprived of this salvation. While he was putting his face on the hot sand, his whole aim was to keep them away from the fire. As a result of his efforts, Almighty Allah will pardon believers who become a part of the ummah of the Noble Prophet, believing in the Oneness of Allah and, though committing some sins, never associate any partner with Allah (swt).²



As a result of his unique love and mercy for his umma, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave counsel to them for their salvation in this life and in the world to come. Sometimes, he got agitated because of the importance of the knowledge that he passed on to them. His voice would rise, his eyes would become misty and he would become expressive as if he was warning an army against an enemy threat.³ Once he depicted the situation of himself and his umma as follows: “My relationship with my umma is that of a person who lit a fire, and insects and moths began to fall into it and even though I am there to hold you back, you plunge into it despite my efforts.”⁴ Almighty Allah described the love of the Messenger of Mercy for

¹ D2775, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 162.

² Nisa, 4/116.

³ M2005, Muslim, Jum’a, 43.

⁴ M5955, Muslim, Fadhā’il, 17.



his ummah as follows: *“A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses him: He is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy toward the believers.”*⁵ Allah (swt), using His own names, called him “ra’ūf” (compassionate) and “rahīm” (merciful) because of his mercy toward his ummah.

Allah (swt) showed His Messenger’s mercy as His own. He added His mercy to the Prophet’s, and mentioned him with His mercy: *“With Allah’s mercy and grace you be soft on them.”*⁶ In fact, the attachment of Allah’s Messenger to his umma was an indispensable qualification of his prophethood. The divine commandment that says, *“... lower your wing tenderly over the believers who follow you,”*⁷ emphasized the importance of including mercy into the task of prophethood as well as the Prophet’s duty of protecting the believers. It is a protective relationship but at the same time it is full of mercy and modesty. No worldly interest and concern could have plagued this relationship. The commandment, *“...Be modest toward believers,”*⁸ is in fact describing the Messenger of Allah’s relationship with his ummah.

The love of the Prophet (saw), who was known as the Generous, for his ummah depended upon their affinity to Allah (swt). This is because his duty as a prophet was a determining factor for this love and shaped his relationship with the people. His personal love and the requirements of prophethood were almost combined. His prophethood was

⁵ Tawbah, 9/128.

⁶ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/159.

⁷ Shu’ara, 26/215.

⁸ Hijr, 15/88.



Allah's benediction to people and it was a measure of his compassion for the people. The Qur'anic verse, "*It is not fitting for the Prophet and the believers to ask forgiveness for the idolaters—even if they are related to them—after having been shown that they are the inhabitants of the Blaze,*"⁹ powerfully demonstrates the relationship between mercy and faith. On the other hand, it was a prophetic necessity to ask for mercy from Allah (swt) for the believers as was mentioned in the following Qur'anic verse: "*There is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your sins and for the sins of believing men and women.*"¹⁰ Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) never separated himself from the believers in asking for mercy. On the Day of Judgement he will plead mercy for his ummah by saying "*O Lord, my ummah! My ummah!*"¹¹

As Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, the holy Prophet visited a graveyard one day. After saluting the dead, he said, "*Peace be upon you. The abode of the believing people and we, if Allah so wills, are about to join you.*" Then he continued to say, "*I would love to see my brothers.*" The Companions (ra) said, "*Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?*" He replied, "*You are my Companions,*" and continued, "*Our brothers are those who have, so far, not come into the world.*" The Companions (ra) said, "*O Messenger of Allah, how would you recognize those persons of your ummah who have not yet been born?*" As an answer, the Prophet said, "*Supposing a man had horses with white blazes on foreheads and legs among horses which were all black, tell me, would he*

⁹ Tawbah, 9/113.

¹⁰ Muhammad, 47/19.

¹¹ B7510, Bukhari, Tawhid, 36; M479 Muslim, Iman, 326.



not recognize his own horses?” The Companions (ra) said, “Certainly, O Messenger of Allah.” He commanded, “They would come with white faces and arms and legs owing to the wudu’, and I would arrive at the cistern before them.”¹²

He was the Prophet of Mercy and he was there not to destroy but to revive. His aim was to fill lives with his revitalizing message. He was close to the souls of the people and people’s souls were close to him. Thus, he was closer to people than they were to themselves. The Qur’anic verse, *“the Prophet is more protective toward the believers than they are themselves, while his wives are their mothers,”*¹³ demonstrate the operating principle of the relationship between the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his umma. According to this principle the Noble Prophet’s love for his umma was neither an abstract emotion nor limited to otherworldly salvation. He supported them both materially and spiritually. He whispered faith into their hearts and their deep-rooted faith turned into a firm castle. The presence of the Noble Prophet was a source of trust in and of itself, and his prayers comforted people concerning the Hereafter. Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur’an, *“...In order to cleanse and purify them [Prophet], accept a gift out of their property [to make amends] and pray for them –your prayer will be a comfort to them. Allah is all hearing, all knowing.”*¹⁴

His prayers were benedictions for believers. He would do all he could in order not to deprive them of his prayers and blessings because, *“It was only as a mercy that we sent*

¹² M584 Muslim, Taharah, 39.

¹³ Ahzab, 33/6.

¹⁴ Tawbah, 9/103.



you [*Prophet*] to all people.”¹⁵ As the Messenger of Mercy, he would not spare any of his prayers as a source for benediction for the people and he would include them in his prayers for this world and for the next world.¹⁶ One day while walking with his Companions (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw a new grave. He asked whom the grave belonged to and they replied, “This is so-and-so, the freed slave woman of so-and-so,” whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) knew. The Companions (ra) said to him, “She died at midday and we did not want to wake you up when you were fasting and taking a nap.” Then he stood (for the funeral prayer) and the people formed rows behind him. After the prayer he said, “*If anyone among you dies while I am still among you, inform me, for my prayer for the dead is a mercy.*”¹⁷ Once Jarir ‘Abd Allah (ra) complained to the Prophet (saw) that he could not sit firmly upon a horse, whereupon Allah’s Messenger softly struck his chest with his hand and supplicated, “*O Allah, make him steadfast and rightly-guided.*”¹⁸

In his relationship with his ummah, social class differences did not matter. To him, there was no difference between a tribal leader and a slave. He never differentiated himself from the believers in such acts as asking for forgiveness. Likewise, he did not forget his ummah while sacrificing an animal. Once, after sacrificing a horned ram, he said,

¹⁵ Anbiya, 21/107.

¹⁶ B1006, Bukhari, Istisqa, 2; M4675, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 129; D2606, Abu Dawud, Jihad, 78.

¹⁷ N2024, Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 94; IM1528, Ibn Majah, Jana’iz, 32

¹⁸ M6366, Muslim, Fadha’il al-Sahaba, 137; B3020, Bukhari, Jihad, 154.



“This is from me and from my ummah for those who could not sacrifice an animal.”¹⁹

While reading the ḥadīth, *“As stated in the Holy Book of Allah, I am the protector of believers before anybody else,”*²⁰ it is possible to grasp how the Prophet was affected by miseries of the people who came from the Mudar tribe during their desperate time. How the color of his face changed when he saw their miserable, hungry, poor, and needy state! Those people came to the Prophet wearing simple clothing and barefoot. He immediately mobilized the Companions (ra) to help them. As donations were collected, as Jarir’s statement describes, his face shined as if it was covered with gold.²¹

The Prophet (saw) established the fact that he was the real protector of the believers with his statement, *“There is no believer but I, of all the people, who is the closest to him both in this world and in the Hereafter. Recite if you wish, ‘the Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves,’ (33/6) so if a believer (dies) leaves some property then his relatives will inherit that property; but if he is in debt or he leaves poor children, let those (creditors and children) come to me (that I may pay the debt and provide for the children), for them (surely) I am their sponsor.”*²² In this way, the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared that he held the believers to be so dear to him that he was not only their Prophet but also their protector. He was such a protector that he undertook certain responsibilities and delegated the rights to their

¹⁹ HM11066, Ibn Hanbal, III, 8

²⁰ M4160, Muslim, Faraid, 16.

²¹ M2351, Muslim, Zakat, 69.

²² B4781, Bukhari, Tafsir, (Ahzab), 1.



owners. Once he witnessed a disagreement between Ka'b b. Malik and 'Abd Allah b. Abi Hadrad (ra) over a payment. He signaled Ka'b b. Malik with his hand, asking him to take only half of his money back, as he felt pity for Ibn Abi Hadrad who had difficulties in paying his debts.²³ This act showed that his love for believers made him take responsibilities for their personal and public problems.

The believers had a Prophet with whom they could share their small or large problems. He took care of everyone regardless of their social status, whether they were slaves, wealthy nobles, or poor. When invited, he always accepted their invitation.²⁴ He valued especially the poor, the orphans, and the unfortunate. Sometimes he put the needs of Islam, poor students, and the people of the Suffa before those of his own children.²⁵ He always inquired about people who did not attend meetings,²⁶ and he tried to solve their problems by listening to them. One day Abu Sufyan's wife complained to the Messenger of Allah (saw) about her husband being stingy and asked whether or not she could spend his money for family members without the consent of her husband. The Noble Prophet told her that she could spend money for family members as was recognized as appropriate by local tradition, and in saying so resolved her predicament.²⁷

The Messenger of Allah (saw) took care of the complaints of the ummah directly. Therefore, the ill shared their troubles

²³ B2706, Bukhari, Sulh, 10; M398, Muslim, Musaqat, 21.

²⁴ M5316, Muslim, Ashribah, 142.

²⁵ HM838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 107.

²⁶ M2215, Muslim, Jana'iz, 71; B458, Bukhari, Salat, 72.

²⁷ M4479, Muslim, Aqdiyya, 8.



with the Prophet (saw) and he offered them both material and spiritual remedies.²⁸ He visited the ill and prayed to Almighty Allah for them to be healed.²⁹ Once, after seeing Sa'd b. 'Ubayd (ra) on his death bed he even began to cry.³⁰ How could the merciful Prophet, who cried for Sa'd bear the martyrdom of those who died at Bi'r Ma'una? People who claimed to be Muslims from other tribes came to the Noble Prophet knowing that their demands would not be rejected and asked for a teacher. The Messenger of Allah (saw) sent seventy of his Ansar back with them. However, on the way, these people betrayed, ambushed, and martyred these Companions (ra).³¹ The Prophet (saw) felt both rage and deep sadness in such a manner that he cursed these people for thirty days.³² The young Companion Anas b. Malik (ra) who served the Messenger of Allah (saw) for ten years said, "I never saw the Messenger of Allah as sad for any military unit as he was sad for the killing of the seventy Companion on the day of Bi'r Ma'una."³³

He was always understanding toward his ummah, he never used an iron hand and he was never rough or coldhearted.³⁴ The memory of Malik b. Huwayris, who was among the visitors coming from villages to Medina to learn the religion, reveals the compassion the Noble Prophet had in his heart. He reported, "We came to the Prophet (saw). We were all young and about the same age. We stayed with

²⁸ B5684, Bukhari, Tibb, 4; T2080, Tirmidhi, Tibb, 29.

²⁹ M5709, Muslim, Salam, 47.

³⁰ B1304, Bukhari, Jana'iz, 44; M2137, Muslim, Jana'iz, 12.

³¹ B3064, Bukhari, Jihad, 184.

³² M1545, Muslim, Masajid, 297; B4095, Bukhari, Maghazi, 29.

³³ M1550, Muslim, Masajid, 302; B6394, Bukhari, Da'awat, 58.

³⁴ Al-i 'Imran, 3/159.



him for twenty days and nights. The Prophet (saw) was very kind and merciful. When he realized our longing for our families, he asked about our homes and the people there and we told him. Then he said to us, *'Go back to your families and stay with them and teach them and make them practice it. When it is the time for the prayer one of you should pronounce the adhān and the oldest of you should lead the prayer.'*³⁵

The Noble Prophet always refrained from acts that would cause his ummah difficulty. He was very sensitive even in religious life not to wear them out and once he pointed this out by saying, *"When I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut it short, as I dislike troubling the child's mother."*³⁶ Although he wanted his ummah to perform the 'isha prayer at a later time, he never commanded it because it would create difficulties for them.³⁷ 'A'isha (ra) reported that he gave up some propitious deeds for fear that people might continuously practice them and they would become obligations for believers.³⁸ This was the reason why he gave up performing the tarāwīḥ payer in the mosque with his Companions (ra).³⁹ In fact this kind of thinking corresponded well to his efforts that aimed to ease the life of believers.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) shared the distress of his umma in all their activities and tried to reduce their burdens. This was a requirement of his prophetic position

³⁵ M1535, Muslim, Masajid, 292; B631, Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

³⁶ B707, Bukhari, Adhan, 65.

³⁷ B7239, Bukhari, Tamanni, 9; M1445, Muslim, Masajid, 219.

³⁸ B1128, Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5; M1662, Muslim, Musafirin, 77.

³⁹ M1783, Muslim, Musafirin, 177; B7290, Bukhari, I'tisam, 3.



and this was what he meant when he said he was sent as a facilitator.⁴⁰ He was not just worried for the Companions (ra) with whom he lived in the same city, but for all future generations of Muslims.⁴¹ His admonitions and counsels were aimed at people beyond a single time and place; they were to guide the present and future members of the ummah. The ḥadīth, *“There is for every prophet a prayer which is granted. I have, however, reserved my prayer for the intercession of my umma on the Day of Resurrection,”*⁴² is a statement about his desire for his ummah’s salvation. This is the prayer for the salvation of his ummah that he saved for the Day of Resurrection, and which will be conducive to Allah’s mercy and forgiveness. When he said every previous prophet was sent to their tribe and nation but he was sent for all humanity, he added the right of intercession⁴³ because he wanted to embrace all humanity with this entitlement. With the glad tiding of the forgiveness of his ummah, the heat of the hot sand that burned his forehead turned to the coolness of the waters of Paradise in his heart.

⁴⁰ M3690, Muslim, Talaq, 29.

⁴¹ B7068, Bukhari, Fitan, 6; B3792, Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 8.

⁴² M494, Muslim, Iman, 341.

⁴³ B438, Bukhari, Salat, 56; M1163, Muslim, Masjid, 3.

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