

ISLAM

THROUGH HADITHS

6



PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS



ISLAM THROUGH HADITHS 6

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE HADITHS THROUGH HADITHS

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SECTION 7

HISTORY and CIVILIZATION -I-





PROPHETS

THE BLESSED GUIDES FOR MANKIND



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَنَا أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ إِخْوَةٌ
لِعَلَّاتٍ، أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ شَتَّى، وَدِينُهُمْ وَاحِدٌ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to
Jesus, the son of Maryam. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are
different, but their religion is one.”

(B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48)



عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُكُمْ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ أَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَجَعَلَ الْجَنَادِبُ وَالْفَرَاشُ يَقَعْنَ فِيهَا وَهُوَ
يَذُبُّهُنَّ عَنْهَا وَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِحُجَزِكُمْ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَفَلْتُونَ مِنْ يَدِي.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَنْ حَدَّثَكَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَتَمَ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْوَحْيِ، فَلَا تُصَدِّقْهُ،
إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ مَثَلِي وَمَثَلَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ قَبْلِي
كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ بَنَى بَيْتًا فَأَحْسَنَهُ وَأَجْمَلَهُ إِلَّا مَوْضِعَ لَبَنَةٍ مِنْ زَاوِيَةٍ فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ
يَطُوفُونَ بِهِ وَيَعْجَبُونَ لَهُ وَيَقُولُونَ هَلَّا وُضِعَتْ هَذِهِ اللَّبَنَةُ؟ قَالَ: فَأَنَا اللَّبَنَةُ وَأَنَا
خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ.“



According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“My example and your example is that of a person who lit the fire and insects
and moths began to fall in it and he would be making efforts to take them out,
and I am trying to hold you back from fire by holding on to your belts, but you
are slipping from my hands trying to fall into fire.”*

(M5958, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 19)



According to 'A'isha (ra),
*“Whoever tells you that the Prophet (saw) concealed something of the Divine
Inspiration, do not believe him, for Allah said, ‘O Messenger Muhammad!
Proclaim (the Message) which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if
you do it not, then you have not conveyed His Message.’” (Al-Ma'ida, 5:67)*

(B7531, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 46)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra),
Allah's Messenger said, *“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 that this brick be put in its place!’ So I am that brick,
and I am the last of the prophets.”*

(B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18)



Allah on High created and placed Adam and his wife in Paradise. He told them to eat freely there but warned them to not go near one tree, or else they would be among the wrongdoers.¹ Allah (swt) also warned them against the deceits of Satan, their enemy.² Satan did not waste time to approach Adam and his wife and employ his tricks in order to lead Adam and his offspring astray. He told them that the tree that was forbidden to them was the tree of immortality³ and that Allah had forbidden it to them to prevent them from becoming angels and staying in Paradise forever.⁴ With these evil words, Satan made them slip and caused them to be removed from Paradise.⁵ Afterwards, Adam and his wife regretted what they had done and asked for Allah's forgiveness saying, *"Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: If you do not forgive us and have mercy, we shall be lost."*⁶ Allah accepted their repentance, ordered them to descend to earth, and said, *"Get out, all of you! But when guidance comes from Me, as it certainly will, there will be no fear for those who follow My guidance nor will they grieve. Those who disbelieve and deny Our messages shall be the inhabitants of the Fire, and there they will remain."*⁷

This event was the beginning of a new life for mankind, which was called "the world of tests." Adam was both the first man and the first Prophet.⁸ The aforesaid verse spoke to all men and women who would be the descendants of Adam and Eve. Those who would follow the guides sent by Allah would be saved, whereas those who denied them would pay a heavy price.

Indeed the Sublime Creator took the offspring from the loins of men in past eternity and told them, making them bear witnesses about themselves, *"Am I not your Lord?"* And they said, *"Yes, we bear witness."* Allah on High had received this promise from all mankind so they could not say on the Day of Resurrection, *"We were not aware of this."*⁹ Allah the Exalted

¹ Al-Baqara, 2:35.

² Ta Ha, 20:117.

³ Ta Ha, 20:120.

⁴ Al-A'raf, 7:20.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:36.

⁶ Al-A'raf, 7:23.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:38-39.

⁸ HM 22644, Ahmad b.

Hanbal, V, 266.

⁹ Al-A'raf, 7:172.

made the seven heavens and earth and Adam, the first man and father of mankind, bear witness when he received this promise.¹⁰ And Allah (swt) sent “prophets and messengers” to mankind to remind them of their promise and obligations and to convey the guidance that He had promised, and He ordered his servants to obey these envoys.

Prophets and messengers are the blessed persons chosen to convey to humanity the divine messages that they have received from Allah (swt). The word *nabī* (prophet) has the meaning of one who brings news¹¹ and *rasūl* (messenger) has the meaning of one who acts as an emissary.¹² Those who are chosen for this special mission act as emissaries to transmit to mankind the injunctions of the Sublime Creator. They must inform mankind of these injunctions and make known and convey the divine revelation. In Turkish, *peygamber*, a word of Persian origin, is usually the word used for those who undertake this difficult task, one which only specially chosen people can shoulder. Like the word *nabī*, *peygamber* means one who brings news.¹³ prophethood, which is gift of guidance from our Lord, it is a favor that cannot be repaid and is of immeasurable value. A messenger was sent to every people¹⁴ and without fail a warner appeared to every nation.¹⁵ The Holy Qur’an has mentioned some of these prophets but not others.¹⁶ The prophets who are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an are few compared to those who are not mentioned. In response to a question from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra), Allah’s envoy told him that Allah had sent three hundred and fifteen messengers (*rasūl*) and one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets (*nabī*).¹⁷ These are the prophets that are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an: Adam, Idris, Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Shu’ayb, Aaron, Moses, David, Solomon, Job, Ezekiel, Jonah, Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Muhammad (saw). Luqman, Ezra, and Dhu ‘l-Qarnayn are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, but it is disputed whether they are prophets.

Allah on High states in the Noble Qur’an that believers make no distinction among the prophets,¹⁸ and indicates that, with respect to the reasons they were sent, their missions, and the divine announcements that they conveyed, all the prophets came to the same point. On the other hand, Allah (swt) explained that he has favored some prophets over others when He decreed, “We favored some of these messengers above others. Allah spoke to some, others He raised in rank.”¹⁹ In addition, in the noble verse, “Be

¹⁰ HM 21552, Ahmad b. Hanbal, V, 135.

¹¹ LA48/4315, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘arab*, XXXIII, 4315.

¹² LA19/1644, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘arab*, XIX, 1644.

¹³ “Peygamber,” *DIA*, XXXIV, 257.

¹⁴ Yunus, 10:47.

¹⁵ Fatir, 35:24.

¹⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:164.

¹⁷ HM22644, Ahmad b. Hanbal, V, 266.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:285.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:253; al-Isra’, 17:55.

steadfast [Muhammad], like those messengers of firm resolve!"²⁰ some messengers are described as *'ulūl al-'azm* in others words, they are characterized as having high resolve and determination. Muslim theologians say that the prophets who are described as *'ulūl al-'azm* in this verse were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (saw).²¹ As evidence of this, they point to verses in which Allah says He took a solemn pledge²² from these prophets and states that the religion which Muhammad (saw) established for his people was the same as that which He had brought to the other prophets.²³ Accordingly, these prophets were described as *'ulūl al-'azm* because they were given a distinct holy law and were given the task of communicating it and did so in a steadfast and resolute manner in the face of adversity, which was much worse than that encountered by the other prophets.²⁴

Prophethood is a very privileged and exalted divine task with respect to ensuring communication between Allah (swt) and mankind. prophethood's importance becomes clear when we consider that the Sublime Creator did not communicate His will directly to humans and chose special envoys from among His servants for this noble task. Because they are the representatives of an ancient tradition which has continued since the beginning of mankind, the prophets, who were sent as bearers of good news and warning,²⁵ have in fact communicated a single, shared religion, which is Islam. Regardless of where and when they were sent, all prophets spread the same message: *"We never sent any messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so serve Me.'"*²⁶ And the prophets expected nothing in return from mankind, except that they follow Allah's revelation.²⁷

Continuity is one of the most distinctive features of prophethood, which is a gift of Allah to His servants. In fact, the Holy Qur'an states, *"And We sent our messengers in succession: whenever a messenger came to a community they invariably called him a liar, so We destroyed them one after the other and made them into cautionary tales."*²⁸ There are also verses in the Holy Qur'an in which Allah's covenant with his prophets on the matter of continuity is emphasized: *"Allah took a pledge from the prophets, saying, 'If, after I have bestowed Scripture and wisdom upon you, a messenger comes confirming what you have been given, you must believe in him and support him. Do you affirm this and accept My pledge as binding on you?' They said, 'We do.'*

²⁰ Al-Ahqaf, 46:35.

²¹ "Peygamber," *DIA*, XXXIV, 259.

²² Al-Ahzab, 33:7.

²³ Al-Shura, 42:13.

²⁴ KC16/220, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, XVI, 220.

²⁵ Al-Nisa', 4:165.

²⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21:25.

²⁷ Al-Shu'ara', 26:109, 127, 164, 180.

²⁸ Al-Mu'minun, 23:44.

*He said, 'Then bear witness and I too will bear witness.'*²⁹ And Allah (swt) wanted the Master of the Worlds, the last link in the chain of succession of prophethood, Muhammad (saw), to follow the way of the other prophets whom He had led on the straight path³⁰ and to convey the same message to the people who denied the Merciful One that many a people had come and gone before them. *"Say, 'He is my Lord: there is no god but Him. I put my trust in Him and to Him is my return.'"*³¹ This continuity can be clearly seen both in the fact that the prophets confirm and affirm one another, and in the fact that the essence of the belief systems they revealed is one and the same. prophets, who are warners to their peoples, called upon them to worship Allah (swt), to refrain from opposing Him, and to obey their message. This task of invitation and propagation, however, is much more arduous than it would appear. Although the prophets were not lacking in those who believed in them, most people refused to accept their invitation. Therefore, the lives of the prophets were spent struggling with the leading figures of their communities. For the most part, those peoples who were invited to Allah's path were deaf to the invitation. Prophet Noah, for example, constantly preached Allah Almighty's invitation to his people night and day, sometimes by way of fiery speeches, both openly and in private. Despite all his efforts, however, his people thrust their fingers in their ears and arrogantly persisted in their rejection.³²

All the prophets had told their communities that they were Muslims, that is, that they had submitted to Allah (swt). Noah had said this,³³ Abraham and Jacob had exclaimed this,³⁴ Joseph had declared this truth,³⁵ and Jesus and his disciples had also expressed this same fact.³⁶ This was confirmed in the *ḥadith* of our Master the Prophet, *"Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the son of Maryam. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one,"*³⁷ and in the verses given above. However, while the bases of the faith that was revealed by the prophets had remained the same, certain gradual changes had occurred in various religious provisions and in matters concerning social life and law in parallel with the needs and advancement of humanity.

In this process the messengers fulfilled two fundamental tasks: to give the good news of eternal Paradise to believers, and to warn those who refused to believe of Divine punishment.³⁸ In fact, Allah's Messenger

²⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:81.

³⁰ Al-An'am, 6:90.

³¹ Al-Ra'd, 13:30.

³² Nuh, 71:2-9.

³³ Yunus, 10:72.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:130-133

³⁵ Yusuf, 12:101

³⁶ Al 'Imran, 3:52-53.

³⁷ B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48

³⁸ Al-An'am, 6:48.

explained his own situation in this respect, in the person of all prophets, using the following striking example: *“My situation is analogous to one who, like me, was given a mission from Allah, and went to a people and said, ‘I have seen an army with my eyes and I am a plain warner (and issue you warning) that you should immediately manage to find an escape.’ A group of people from among them paying heed (to his warning) fled to a place of protection and a group among them denied him and the morning overtook them in their houses and the army attacked them and killed them and they were routed. This is analogous, on the one hand, to the one who obeyed me and heeded the message that I brought, and, on the other, to the one who rebelled against me and denied the truth of the message that I have brought.”*³⁹

All the efforts of the prophets who invited people to the religion of Allah (swt) were directed to protecting them from the fire of Hell. Muhammad (saw) explained this situation by making the following comparison with respect to his own community: *“My example and your example is that of a person who lit the fire and insects and moths began to fall in it and he would be making efforts to take them out, and I am trying to hold you back from fire by holding on to your belts, but you are slipping from my hands trying to fall into fire.”*⁴⁰

Allah on High sent his envoys to invite those nations and communities who had gone astray, for one reason or another, back to Allah’s path. For example, when some pious men of the people of Noah died, the others heeded the evil suggestion of Satan to set up idols, and they gave the names of those who had died to the idols that they set up. These people had not at first worshiped those idols. But when those who had set up the idols died, the following generations began worshipping them.⁴¹ And this was why Noah was sent to invite them back to the unity of Allah and to warn them and save them from the error into which they had fallen before a painful punishment fell upon them.⁴² The people of ‘Ad, who are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an after Noah, fell into the same error and ascribed partners to Allah. And so Hud was sent to them as a prophet.⁴³ As for the people of Thamud, who insisted on following their forefathers and ascribed partners to Allah, Salih was sent to them as a warner.⁴⁴ As for Shu‘ayb, he was sent with the message to the people of Midyan, whose injustice in the use of weights and measures was widespread, calling them to the tawhid and to cease injustice in the use of weights and measures.⁴⁵ Lot was sent to make

³⁹ M5954, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 16.

⁴⁰ M5958 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 19; T2874, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 82.

⁴¹ B4920, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir (Noah), 1.

⁴² Nuh, 71:1-4.

⁴³ Hud, 11: 50-60.

⁴⁴ Hud, 11:61-62.

⁴⁵ Hud, 11:84.

his people give up their perversion of preferring relations with men rather than with women, which no other nation had done before them, and to invite them to the path of Allah.⁴⁶ And yet, these peoples did not heed the call of their prophets and incurred Allah's destruction.

Nevertheless, in their struggle to proclaim their message, all the prophets encountered the same or similar reactions. The people to whom prophets were sent accused them of sorcery or madness,⁴⁷ and mocked them.⁴⁸ They asked the prophets to perform various miracles, but when they did so, they denied them even though they witnessed them with their own eyes.⁴⁹ It is repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an how the Israelites in particular persecuted their prophets and how Moses struggled with them.⁵⁰ But of course, these actions of the deniers did not go unanswered. Many of Allah's messengers were mocked. Allah on High first granted a respite to those deniers and then took them to task and punished them!⁵¹

Prophethood is not something acquired, that is, it is not a position that one can obtain by hard work or a reward for an act that he has done. Rather, it is an honorable mission which Allah (swt) entrusts as a blessing on those whom he chooses from among His servants.⁵² prophethood is the gift of Allah, that is, a mission bestowed by Allah. Because the mission of prophethood is a matter which requires the greatest responsibility on the face of the earth, people especially selected⁵³ by the Sublime Creator have been entrusted with it. It is inconceivable that our Lord, whom one could not think of doing something unwise, would not make the right choice in his selection of prophets. Indeed, according to the Holy Qur'an, "Allah knows best where to place His messages."⁵⁴

In other words, prophets are not ordinary people. They are individuals who have been gifted with supreme qualities, both physically and spiritually.⁵⁵ Their heart and minds, their intuition and nature consistently led the prophets toward better and beautiful paths. For this reason, the prophets were created with pure character, with exceptional skills, and with a mindset that would keep them on the straight path. Prophet Abraham's conversation⁵⁶ with his people in which he made them acknowledge that the idols they used to worship were not divine beings and they could neither benefit nor harm them, and similarly Prophet Solomon's excellent Judgement between the two parties, who were in disagreement over a sheep destroying their crops, are two examples which exhibit the superior

⁴⁶ Al-A'raf, 7:80-82.

⁴⁷ Al-Dhariyat, 51:52.

⁴⁸ Al-Anbiya', 21:41.

⁴⁹ Al-A'raf, 7:132-133; Ta Ha, 20:22-23.

⁵⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 61, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70.

⁵¹ Al-Ra'd, 13:32.

⁵² Al-Baqara, 2:90.

⁵³ Al 'Imran, 3:33.

⁵⁴ Al-An'am, 6:124.

⁵⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:247.

⁵⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21:58-67.

wisdom and intelligence of the prophets.⁵⁷ In addition to these qualities all the prophets share certain common features which the station of prophethood dictates. These can be listed as *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amāna* (trustworthiness), *fatana* (wisdom), *‘isma* (immunity from sin), and *al-tabligh* (propagating/communicating Almighty Allah’s commands to people). Truthfulness and trustworthiness are especially noteworthy among the many traits the Holy Qur’an lists in describing Allah’s messengers. As a matter of fact, the Holy Qur’an mentions that Prophet Isma‘il was a prophet and a messenger who was always true to his promise,⁵⁸ and other prophets such as Noah, Hud, Salih, and Shu‘ayb have all affirmed that they were “truthful and sincere” messengers of Allah Almighty.⁵⁹ Truthfulness is an indispensable component of the prophets’ thoughts, words, and actions. For example, even someone like Abu Jahl, who harbored a deep-seated hatred toward the Messenger of Allah (saw), acknowledged that the Prophet (saw) was a righteous and trustworthy person, all the while rejecting the religion he had conveyed.⁶⁰ Likewise, in a speech to the people of Quraysh, al-Nadr b. al-Harith, who carried the banner of the polytheists in the Battle of Badr⁶¹ and who was known as “one of the demons of al-Quraysh,” because of his deep animosity toward Allah’s Messenger,⁶² argued that slandering the Prophet (saw) for being a poet, an oracle, or an insane person was misplaced and acknowledged that Allah’s Messenger was a truthful person and always observed what others entrusted him with.⁶³

In addition to these traits, because they possessed the trait of wisdom, the prophets exhibited a strong memory, good Judgement and ability to convince others, and a sound comprehension of unfolding events and the ability to influence these events. They had the ability to foresee and quickly recognize facts that ordinary people, even after much effort and time, failed to realize; they could immediately determine and differentiate between what is right and what is wrong, what is valid and what is invalid. Indeed, the Holy Book provides many examples of the powerful feelings, emotions, and intuitiveness of Allah’s messengers, one of which is the story of Prophet Jacob in the *sūra* of Joseph of the Holy Qur’an.⁶⁴

Allah’s messengers were protected from impediments, from falling into error in explaining and communicating Allah’s religion, and from committing grave sins in the process of fulfilling their holy missions to propagate Allah on High’s sacred words. This is why the Holy Qur’an pro-

⁵⁷ Al-Anbiya’, 21:78-79.

⁵⁸ Maryam, 19:54.

⁵⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:62, 67, 68, 79, 93.

⁶⁰ T3064 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 6.

⁶¹ BN 3/374, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 374.

⁶² ZE1/157 al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam*, I, 157.

⁶³ HS2/137 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 137-138; BD2/201; al-Bayhaqi, *Dala’il al-nubuwwa*, II, 201.

⁶⁴ Yusuf, 12: 86, 94, 96.

vides references⁶⁵ to portions of the lives of many prophets, above all that of our Master the Prophet, before they were assigned the holy station of prophethood. This is a sign that the prophets eschewed deeds that were not well-perceived in their societies even before beginning their mission of spreading Allah's law. A contrary scenario whereby someone who was immoral and who had committed sins and crimes was tasked with calling people to the path of good and virtuousness would not have been convincing. The story mentioned in the Holy Qur'an about Moses killing a man, on the other hand, was not a voluntarily committed crime. As the verse about this case states, Moses described his action as the result of "Satan's work" and he was regretful of it and he immediately repented by supplicating, *"Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me,"* after which Allah Almighty forgave him.⁶⁶

At the same time, however, because of their human nature, prophets occasionally undertook some actions which are called "*zelle*" in Turkish or "mistakes," which can be viewed as "stumbling." However, these minor mistakes were amended by Allah, the Most High. For example the Holy Qur'an narrates the case of Prophet Yunus who, upon leaving his people after he had become angry with them, sought repentance from Allah (swt) and was forgiven by Allah, Most High.⁶⁷ Muhammad (saw) was also subject to the Divine Will's intervention and warnings regarding some of his actions or decisions. The examples of these interventions included such cases as when the Prophet (saw), instead of justly executing his war criminals in the Battle of Badr, decided to let them free in return for a ransom;⁶⁸ when he allowed some of the hypocrites to stay back in Medina rather than making them join the Battle of Tabuk as responsible citizens;⁶⁹ his intention to pray over the funeral of the leader of the hypocrites 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy b. Salul;⁷⁰ when he rendered what was lawful for him unlawful in an attempt to please some of his wives after a dispute among them;⁷¹ and the famous case in which he frowned and turned away from 'Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum, the blind Companion, who came to the Prophet (saw) while he was speaking to a notable of the Quraysh.⁷²

Because the prophets were required to convey Allah's message to the people exactly as they receive it, they did not conceal any aspect of their lives. Hence, the following words of 'A'isha (ra) emphasized that Allah's Prophet undertook his mission in line with Allah's orders, "Whoever tells

⁶⁵ Yunus, 10:16; Hud, 11:62

⁶⁶ Al-Qasas, 28:15-16.

⁶⁷ Al-Anbiya', 21:87-88.

⁶⁸ Al-Anfal, 8:67-68.

⁶⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:42-43.

⁷⁰ Al-Munafiqun, 63:6.

⁷¹ Al-Tahrim, 66:1.

⁷² 'Abasa, 80:1-10.

you that the Prophet concealed something of the Divine Inspiration, do not believe him, for Allah said, *“O 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.”*⁷³ No obstacle caused the prophets to give up on their task of conveying Allah’s commands and fulfilling their missions properly. Each and every one of Allah’s messengers properly fulfilled his mission and the responsibilities he was entrusted with; none under any condition betrayed his sacred mission. As a matter of fact, Allah Almighty took a pledge from the prophets to this end: *“We took a solemn pledge from the prophets—from you [Muhammad], from Noah, from Abraham, from Moses, from Jesus, son of Maryam—We took a solemn pledge from all of them.”*⁷⁴

Allah Most High emphasizes specifically in the Holy Book that the prophets were human beings.⁷⁵ Moreover, they were chosen from among ordinary men,⁷⁶ a fact attributable to Divine Wisdom. This was because the people who rejected them tried to legitimize their denial of the prophets by saying that they were mortal human beings and that, if they were truly prophets, Allah would have sent down visible angels in support of them.⁷⁷ The Holy Qur’an responded to this claim in the verse, *“Say, ‘If there were angels walking about on earth, feeling at home, We would have sent them an angel from Heaven as a messenger.’”*⁷⁸ Hence, the prophets were mortal human beings because they were sent as messengers to other human beings; they ate like other human beings, they married and had offspring like other human beings, they went about in the marketplace like other human beings, they fell ill like other human beings and they passed away just like all other human beings. Furthermore, they were just like those for whom they revealed Allah’s commands; were responsible for their actions and were destined to answer to Allah on the Day of Judgement.⁷⁹

Allah Most High sent His messengers to establish ultimate justice on earth and to be excellent and true role models for His servants.⁸⁰ The prophets did not merely communicate Allah’s laws, they, at the same time, implemented Allah’s religion on earth and were responsible for living their own lives according to Allah’s laws. Hence, they become stellar models for others to follow and obey. Otherwise how could human beings follow and obey someone who was not like them? Thus, the fact that the prophets were mortal human beings was another of Allah’s blessings to His servants.⁸¹

⁷³ Al-Ma’ida, 5:57; B7531, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 46.

⁷⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33:7.

⁷⁵ Al-Kahf, 18:110.

⁷⁶ Al-Nahl, 16:43.

⁷⁷ Al-Mu’minun, 23:24; al-An’am, 6:8.

⁷⁸ Al-Isra’, 17:95.

⁷⁹ Al-Furqan, 25:20; al-Ra’d, 13:38; al-Shu’ara’, 26:80; al-Zumar, 39:30; al-Araf, 7:6.

⁸⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:21; al-Mumtahana, 60:4.

⁸¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:164.

As mortal beings the prophets had or contributed to different professions. For example, Prophet Idris was a tailor,⁸² Prophet Noah excelled in carpentry in the course of building the Ark,⁸³ and Prophet David excelled in making coats of chain mail.⁸⁴ Our Prophet was the ultimate paragon of excellent commercial skills.⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, al-Sa'ib b. 'Abd Allah, one of the Prophet (saw)'s trade partners, reported on the day of the conquest of Mecca that his partnership with the Prophet (saw) began before his revelation and that Allah's Messenger was an excellent partner.⁸⁶ In this regard the prophets were essentially not only the founders of a civilization of truth, established on the belief in the unity of Allah and the Hereafter, but they were also the pioneers of material culture and civilization, with profound contributions to the wider human civilization. They were founders of high civilizations through establishing a social order that did not alienate any person and which protected society from dissolution and destruction. In addition, the prophets served as blessed guides by delivering to people the true knowledge concerning the Hereafter and guidance on how to reach the path of salvation.

The Holy Scripture relates the stories and struggles of some of these blessed guides.⁸⁷ The stories of the prophets in the Holy Book are not fables; these stories present prescriptions for the significant problems which humans face and they record deep wisdom for all times. In this regard the stories of Allah's messengers are true representations of life. Consider Adam, who accepted and repented for his mistakes, unlike Satan who insisted that his sin was not a wrongdoing... Consider Noah, who became a role model with regard to steadfastness when he ignored his opponents who mocked and criticized him when he started to build an Ark far from the sea shore... Consider the story of Abraham, "the friend of Allah," when he was thrown into the mountainous burning fire by King Nimrod and Allah made the fire harmless for him... All of these stories inform believers about the difficulties and struggles faced by Allah's messengers during their holy missions and at the same time present their stance as examples to people with regard to persevering in hardship. Prophet Isma'il exemplified the notion that true emancipation was in fully submitting to Allah (swt); Prophet Jacob, who cried for his son even to the point of sacrificing his eyesight, represented the notion that one should never lose hope and despair; and Prophet Joseph exemplified the ideal of how a single man could emancipate and change the

⁸² KC11/117, al-Qurtubi, *al-Tafsir*, XI, 117.

⁸³ Hud, 11:37-38.

⁸⁴ Al-Anbiya', 21:80; Saba', 34:10-11.

⁸⁵ HS2/5 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 5-6; ST1/129 Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat*, I, 129-131.

⁸⁶ HM15585 Ahmad b. Hanbal, III, 425.

⁸⁷ Al-Nisa', 4:164.

fate of a whole nation for the better. In the case of Prophet Moses, the cruel and oppressive tyrant Pharaoh went onto brutally murder all the newborns just because he was afraid Moses might topple his rule. Instead, all he ended up doing, unknowingly, was to lock himself away in his own palace. Is the story of Moses not a striking example with which our Creator informs mankind about His ultimate power? The cases of Prophet David and Prophet Solomon show us that it is possible to have worldly power and at the same time rule with justice without falling captive to the illusion of wealth and power. Whereas the lives of Prophet Zachariah and Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) were examples for humanity concerning the ultimate sacrifice in order to preserve and protect the dignity of faith. The renowned perseverance of Job is world-famous, and, of course, the case of the Prophet's holy mission in which each and every part of his life—in whatever situation of his life, from rich to poor, from orphan to youth and old age, and from administrator to husband—always exhibited a relatable story, which shined bright as the sun and served as a model for his followers own lives.

The chain of prophethood, which started with the first human and first prophet Adam, ended with the prophethood of our Master Muhammad Mustafa (saw), the final prophet. In the following *ḥadīth* the Prophet of both the worlds explained this matter clearly: *“My example in comparison with the other prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for the place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say, ‘How splendid would it be if this brick be put in its place!’”* The Messenger of Allah continued, *“So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets.”*⁸⁸

The world has never seen a chain as consistent and continuous as the chain of sacred revelation; the continuous communication to people by the prophets of Allah throughout history. In the uninterrupted chain of prophets, each confirmed the scriptures revealed to his predecessors and communicated the divine invitation to his people.⁸⁹ No prophet ever falsified any of the messages of his predecessors. Allah's messengers embraced the whole of humanity. They never discriminated among people based on their race, skin color, language, culture or where they lived. For Allah's messengers only one criteria, *taqwā*, or mindfulness of Allah, which is the pinnacle of respect and consciousness of servanthood before our Creator, made any one human superior to another.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18.

⁸⁹ Fatir, 35:31.

⁹⁰ Al-Hujurat, 49:13.



PROPHET ADAM AND PROPHET NOAH THE TWO FOREFATHERS OF MANKIND

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”...فَجَحَدَ آدَمُ فَجَحَدَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ وَنَسِيَ آدَمُ فَنَسِيَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ وَخَطِئَ
آدَمُ فَخَطِئَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ.“

According to al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet (saw) said, “... Adam denied, so his offspring denied, and Adam forgot and his offspring forgot, and Adam sinned, so his offspring sinned.”

(T3076 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 7)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“...وَالنَّاسُ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“...فَكُلُّ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَى صُورَةِ آدَمَ...”



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: أَتَى النَّبِيَّ ﷺ أَغْرَابِيٌّ... رَجَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَجَلَسَ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ نُوحًا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَمَّا حَضَرَتْهُ الْوَفَاةُ دَعَا ابْنَيْهِ فَقَالَ: “إِنِّي قَاصِرٌ عَلَيْكُمَا الْوَصِيَّةَ أَمْرُكُمَا بِاثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَنْهَاكُمَا عَنْ اثْنَتَيْنِ أَنْهَاكُمَا عَنِ الشِّرْكِ وَالْكِبْرِ وَأَمْرُكُمَا بِإِلَهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَإِنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا فِيهِمَا لَوْ وُضِعَتْ فِي كِفَّةِ الْمِيزَانِ وَوُضِعَتْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فِي الْكِفَّةِ الْأُخْرَى كَانَتْ أَرْجَحَ وَلَوْ أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا حَلَقَةً فَوُضِعَتْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا لَقَصَمَتْهَا أَوْ لَقَصَمَتْهَا وَأَمْرُكُمَا بِسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ فَإِنَّهَا صَلَاةٌ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَبِهَا يُرْزَقُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ.”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“All of mankind are the offspring of Adam, and Adam was created from the soil of all the earth.”*

(T3965 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 74)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Any person who will enter Paradise will resemble Adam.”*

(B3326 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 1)



‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) reported,

“A bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (saw). (The bedouin complained that the Companions (ra) were not careful with observing differences in nobility among the people.) In response, the Prophet (saw) scolded the bedouin, and he turned away from him, sat down, and said, ‘When it was time for Noah to meet his Allah at the end of his life, he called upon his two sons and told them, “This is my brief last will to you. There are two things that I order you to follow and two things that I forbid you: I forbid you to take partners with Allah and to boast about things. I order you to say, ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh’—there is no god but Allah. This is because if one were to weigh the skies, the earth and everything in between against Lā ilāha illā Allāh, the latter would outweigh the former. If the skies and the earth were to become one, they would crumble and break under the weight of Lā ilāha illā Allāh. And I order you to recite, ‘subhān Allāh wa bi ḥamdihi.’ Because this is the prayer for everything and Allah almighty grants His provision through this prayer.’”

(HM 7101, Ibn Hanbal, II, 225)



Our Master, the Prophet (saw), conveyed to us a conversation between Adam and Moses in which Moses said, “My lord, show us Adam who caused us and himself to leave Paradise.” So Allah showed him Adam and this is the conversation that ensued between them:

“Are you our father, Adam?”

“Yes.”

“Are you the one into whom Allah breathed of his spirit, taught you all the names, and commanded angels (to prostrate) and they prostrated to you?”

“Yes.”

“Then what moved you to force us and yourself to leave Paradise?”

“And who are you?”

“I am Moses.”

“So are you the Prophet of the Israelites with whom Allah spoke without any intermediates from behind a barrier?”

“Yes.”

“Did you not find out that this encounter was decreed in the book (records) of Allah before I was created?”

“Yes.”

“Then why do you blame me for an event for which the Divine decree had already written before my existence?”¹

Although this conversation’s exact time and details are not known to us, it teaches us that Allah Almighty decreed Adam’s life before he was created. When the Divine decree was manifest, we witness that everything that was recorded as a function of the Divine wisdom was realized in every detail. In a span of exactly six days, the earth, the skies, and everything in between was created.² Then Allah Almighty informed the angels that He intended to send a successor to earth. To this, the angels proclaimed their

¹ D4702, Abu Da’ud, *Sunna*, 16.

² Al-Furqan, 25:59.

surprise: *“How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?”* In response, Allah Most High said, *“I know things you do not,”*³ and implied that there was wisdom behind the creation of human beings.

According to the tradition of our Master, the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) started to create Adam in Paradise on a Friday,⁴ ⁵ Allah created Adam and left him on his own for a certain amount of time. When Satan saw that Adam had a stomach, he recognized the fact that he had desires, and that he was created in a way that he might not overcome the dictates of his inner-self.⁶ This led Iblis (Satan) to say, *“I can defeat him.”*⁷ This is how, sparked by envy and pride, the seeds of rebellion were sown.

At the end of the prescribed time, Allah Almighty said to the angels, *“I will create a mortal out of dried clay, formed from dark mud. When I have fashioned him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him.”*⁸ The angels, in full obedience of their Creator, bowed down before Him.⁹ However, Iblis, who was one of the *jinn*,¹⁰ did not obey this command.¹¹ He was excessively proud and he became one of the rebels.¹² When Allah (swt) said, *“Iblis, what prevents you from bowing down to the man I have made with My own hands? Are you too high and mighty?”* Iblis said, *“I am better than him: You made me from fire, and him from clay.”*¹³ Iblis became one of the rebels when he said, *“I will not bow to a mortal You created from dried clay, formed from dark mud.”*¹⁴ Thus, because of his rebellion caused by arrogance,¹⁵ Iblis was ordered to leave Allah’s divine realm.¹⁶ Iblis did not take it well that he had been ordered to leave Allah’s divine presence because of Adam. So he said to Allah, *“Give me respite until the Day people are raised from the dead.”*¹⁷ When Allah Almighty granted his wish, Iblis said to Allah, *“Oh my Creator! Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth, will lead them to take the evil on earth as good and put them in the wrong, all except Your devoted servants.”*¹⁸ In response, Allah Almighty declare His divine Judgement when He said, *“I will fill Hell with you and all those that follow you.”*¹⁹ The struggle between mankind and Iblis started with the creation of Adam. It is a struggle which culminates in Hell²⁰ for those who follow Iblis and in heaven for those who are afraid of their Creator.²¹

When Allah Most High created Adam, He showed him all of his progeny who would be born on earth throughout the ages. At that point Adam saw a person with an illuminated face among his progeny and asked,

³ Al-Baqara, 2:30.

⁴ M7054, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 27.

⁵ M6649, Muslim, al-Birr, 111.

⁶ M6649, Muslim, al-Birr, 111.

⁷ NM3992, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak IV, 1494, (2/542)

⁸ Al-Hijr, 15:28-29.

⁹ Al-Hijr, 15:30.

¹⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:50.

¹¹ Al-Hijr, 15:31.

¹² Saad, 38:74.

¹³ Saad, 38:75-76.

¹⁴ Al-Hijr, 15:33.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:34.

¹⁶ Al-Hijr, 15:34; al-A'raf, 7:13.

¹⁷ Saad, 38:79.

¹⁸ Al-Hijr, 15: 39-40.

¹⁹ Saad, 38:85.

²⁰ Abraham, 14:22.

²¹ Maryam, 19:63.

“Which one of my sons is this?” Allah Almighty said, *“This is David.”* When Adam asked, “How long will his life be?” he was told, *“Sixty years.”* In response, Adam said, “Oh my Lord! Please increase his life span.” Allah Almighty said, *“That cannot happen, unless you grant him life from your own life span.”* This is how Adam granted forty years to David from a thousand years of life span that he had been granted. Allah Almighty made the angels witness this and had them prepare a contract.²²

Allah on High gave Adam the names of all things. In order to teach the angels the wisdom behind the creation of Adam, Allah Almighty showed these things to the angels and said, *“Tell me the names of these if you truly [think you can].”* They expressed their weakness before Allah and said, *“May You be glorified! We have knowledge only of what You have taught us. You are the All Knowing and All Wise.”* After this when Adam, instructed by Allah, told the angels the names of the things,²³ the deep wisdom behind the creation of Adam, the qualities of his knowledge and the ability that distinguish him from the angels became clear.

Allah Almighty, who created Adam and then created his wife, our mother Eve, from him so that he might find comfort with her,²⁴ said, *“Adam, live with your wife in this garden. Both of you eat freely there as you will, but do not go near this tree, or you will both become wrongdoers”*²⁵ and *“Adam, this is your enemy, yours and your wife’s: Do not let him drive you out of the garden and make you miserable.”*²⁶

Meanwhile, Satan did not lose time in trying to trick Adam and Eve, whispering into their ears that he was only giving them sincere advice:²⁷ *“Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and power that never decays?”*²⁸ and *“Your Lord only forbade you this tree to prevent you becoming angels or immortals.”*²⁹ These were Satan’s baseless claims in order to trick them and he succeeded in making Adam and Eve stumble.³⁰ When they tasted the fruit of the tree, their nakedness became exposed and they rushed to put together leaves from the Garden to cover themselves. Then Allah Most High proclaimed to them: *“Did I not forbid you to approach that tree? Did I not warn you that Satan was your sworn enemy?”*³¹ and *“Go down, some of you enemies of one another. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood for a time.”*³²

This was the sacred command that started the beginning of mankind’s journey on earth, which became an eternal test that would last until the end of time. Furthermore, Adam realized his error and together with

²² HM3519, Ibn Hanbal I, 371.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2:30-33.

²⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:189.

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:35.

²⁶ Ta Ha, 20:117.

²⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:21.

²⁸ Ta Ha, 20:120

²⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:20.

³⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:30.

³¹ Al-A’raf, 7:22.

³² Al-Baqara, 2:36.

his wife began to repent by repeating some of the prayers he had learnt from his creator: *“Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: if You do not forgive us and have mercy, we shall be lost.”*³³ The ever relenting, most merciful Allah Almighty accepted his repentance³⁴ and said, *“Get out, all of you! But when guidance comes from Me, as it certainly will, there will be no fear for those who follow My guidance nor will they grieve. Those who disbelieve and deny Our messages shall be the inhabitants of the Fire, and there they will remain.”*³⁵

According to tradition, during their time on earth Eve gave birth to forty children and from each birth there was a pair of twins, always a boy and a girl.³⁶ Adam married a son from each birth to a girl from another birth and hence mankind started to procreate. Adam was granted a very long life by Allah (swt) and therefore he saw thousands of his offspring grow up during his own life time.³⁷ Adam also witnessed the emergence of certain evils among his offspring. The first of these was the crime of murder,³⁸ which started when Cain killed Abel, a crime for which Cain receives a share of the burden of punishment every time a person is murdered.

At one time Adam, who was residing on earth, was told by Allah Almighty, *“I have a sanctuary. So go and erect a house for me and circumambulate around it as you have seen the angels doing round My Throne, and there I shall accept your prayer and the prayer of your sons who obey me.”*³⁹ When Adam finished building the house of Allah in this sanctuary, an angel came down and led Adam to Mount ‘Arafat and instructed him in all the rituals which people perform even today.⁴⁰ It is reported that Adam performed the Hajj forty times during his long life.⁴¹

When the end of Adam’s life neared and the angel of death approached him, Adam asked, *“Do I not have forty years of my life left?”* The angels responded by reminding him, *“Did you not donate those forty years to your son, David?”*⁴² Adam seems to have forgotten what had taken place during that time so he replied, *“I did not.”* Then Allah Almighty showed him the contract they had and the angels testified to this.⁴³ Still, Allah on High, with His grace, completed Adam’s life to a thousand years and David’s to a hundred years.⁴⁴ Our Master the Prophet (saw), who reported this conversation between Allah and Adam, reminded us that Adam’s mindset continued in his offspring: *“Adam denied, so his offspring denied, and Adam forgot and his offspring forgot, and Adam sinned, so his offspring sinned.”*⁴⁵

³³ Al-A’raf, 7:23.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:37

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:38-39.

³⁶ TBI 89, al-Taberi, *Ta’rikh*, I, 89.

³⁷ STI/38, Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 38.

³⁸ B3335, al-Bukhari, *al-Anbiya’*, I.

³⁹ STI/38, Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 38.

⁴⁰ STI/38, Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 38.

⁴¹ STI/35, Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 35.

⁴² T3076, al-Timidhi, *Tafsir Al-Qur’an*, 7.

⁴³ HM2270, Ibn Hanbal, I, 251.

⁴⁴ HM 2713 Ibn Hanbal, I, 299; STI/29 Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 29.

⁴⁵ T3076, al-Timidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, 7.

It is true that man continues to repeat his father's mistakes and his forgetfulness, but the fact that that man's father Adam was forgiven should never be overlooked. It is hoped that, if man also repeats the repentance of his forefather Adam, he would also be among those who are forgiven. On the other hand, Allah warns man against Satan's tricks when He says, "*Children of Adam, do not let Satan seduce you, as he did your parents, causing them to leave the Garden, stripping them of their garments*⁴⁶ *to expose their nakedness to them: he and his forces can see you from where you cannot see them: We have made evil ones allies to those who do not believe.*"

Adam is the progenitor for all of mankind therefore people carry his qualities. Our Master Muhammad (saw) wanted to teach his Companions (ra) the fact that all people are equal and they should never lose sight of this and should be especially careful to not fall victim to the pre-Islamic Jahiliyya tradition of praising their individual forefathers. He said, "*People are children of Adam and Adam is of the earth*"⁴⁷ to emphasize equality and the importance of humility in his community.

Adam was the first Messenger on earth, the first Prophet with whom Allah Almighty had a conversation...⁴⁸ Unlike other people he did not go through infancy or childhood. He was created in His image⁴⁹ from dust⁵⁰ as an adult. He was very tall, with bushy hair⁵¹ and he was reported to have been very handsome. As a matter of fact, our Master Muhammad (saw) told us that, as a benefit, those admitted to Paradise would have the appearance of Adam: they would be very tall,⁵² devoid of physical defects,⁵³ and would enter it in this form.⁵⁴

Our Prophet (saw) informed us in a report about the Day of Resurrection that Adam will be seen as the first ray of light for the forgiveness of Muslims. According to a prophetic narration, when the people's suffering reaches an unbearable level on that day, they will decide to appeal to Adam to intercede on their behalf. They will approach Adam and remind him of Allah's blessing on him, "*O Adam! You are the father of all mankind, and Allah created you with His Own Hands, and ordered the angels to prostrate for you, and made you live in Paradise,*" and they will ask him to intercede for them with his Lord. In response, Adam will remind them that Allah Almighty is still angry with him for his violation of Allah's orders against approaching the tree. Adam will then signal to them that he is worried about himself by saying, "myself, myself," and will advise them to go and see Noah.⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Al-A'raf, 7:27.

⁴⁷ T3956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 74.

⁴⁸ HM22644, Ibn Hanbal V, 265.

⁴⁹ Al-Bukhari, al-Isti'zan, 1.

⁵⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:59.

⁵¹ NM3998, Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 1496 (2/544).

⁵² B3327, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 1.

⁵³ IF6/367, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, VI, 367.

⁵⁴ B3326, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 1.

⁵⁵ B3326, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 3.

After Adam, individuals such as Seth and Idris inherited the role of prophethood and invited mankind to worship Allah Almighty. However, the first person who was granted the station of Messenger⁵⁶ was someone who was known for his high resolve and determination, someone from among the *'ulūl al-'azm*,⁵⁷ Noah.⁵⁸

When Noah was sent as a Prophet and a Messenger, there was no one among his people who tried to prevent the spread of evil.⁵⁹ Noah called people to Allah's path based on revelation, and told his people who worshipped idols and who ascribed partners to Allah Most High,⁶⁰ to recognize *tawhīd*, the oneness of Allah, "My people, I am here to warn you plainly. Serve Allah, be mindful of Him and obey me. He will forgive you your sins and spare you until your appointed time—when Allah's appointed time arrives it cannot be postponed. If only you understood!"⁶¹ He also said, "Worship no one but Allah. I fear you will have torment on a painful Day"⁶² and "I ask no reward of you, for my only reward is with the Lord of the Worlds."⁶³ In response to this invitation, prominent figures among his people despised Noah and his followers and said, "We can see that you are nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and it is clear to see that only the vilest among us follow you. We cannot see how you are any better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar."⁶⁴ In response, Noah told them, "I will not drive away the faithful: they are sure to meet their Lord,"⁶⁵ "My people, who could help me against Allah if I drove the faithful away?"⁶⁶ and "I am not telling you that I hold Allah's treasures, or have any knowledge of what is hidden, or that I am an angel. Nor do I say that Allah will not grant any good to those who are despised in your eyes: Allah Himself knows best what is in their souls. If I did this I would be one of the wrongdoers."⁶⁷

After being speechless before the statements of Noah, his people began to say arrogantly, "Noah! You have argued with us for too long. Bring down on us the punishment you threaten us with, if you are telling the truth."⁶⁸ Noah never gave up on his dignified stance in response to this attitude from his people. He told them, "It is Allah who will bring it down, if He wishes, and you will not be able to escape. My advice will be no use to you if Allah wishes to leave you to your delusions: He is your Lord and to Him you will be returned."⁶⁹ Amazed at Noah's perseverance his people said, "Noah, if you do not stop this, you will be stoned."⁷⁰ Noah, who had been accused by his people of being a liar and even of being an insane person, called on Allah (swt) with these words, "I am defeated, help me."⁷¹

⁵⁶ M480, Muslim, *al-Iman*, 327.

⁵⁷ Al-Ahqaf, 46:35.

⁵⁸ NM4007, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, IV, 1499 (2/546).

⁵⁹ ST1/40, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 40.

⁶⁰ B4920, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (Noah) 1.

⁶¹ Noah, 71:2-4.

⁶² Hud, 11:26.

⁶³ Al-Shu'ara', 26:109.

⁶⁴ Hud, 11:27.

⁶⁵ Hud, 11:29.

⁶⁶ Hud, 11:30.

⁶⁷ Hud, 11:31.

⁶⁸ Hud, 11:32.

⁶⁹ Hud, 11:33-34.

⁷⁰ Al-Shu'ara', 26:116.

⁷¹ Al-Qamar, 54:9-10.

The Prophet Noah lived among his people for nine hundred and fifty years,⁷² and yet, when he could not succeed in convincing them, he helplessly implored his Creator, *“He said, ‘My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but the more I call them, the further they run away: every time I call them, so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection, and grow more insolent and arrogant. I have tried calling them openly. I have tried preaching to them in public and speaking to them in private. I said, ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving. He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; He will give you wealth and sons; He will provide you with gardens and rivers.’”*⁷³ After describing his preaching in this way, Noah presented the response he received: *“My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin; who have made a grand plan, saying, ‘Do not renounce your gods!..They have led many astray.”*⁷⁴ Thus, Noah supplicated, *“So make a firm Judgement between me and them, and save me and my believing followers,”*⁷⁵ and *“Lord, do not leave any of the disbelievers on the earth—if you leave them they will lead Your servants astray.”*⁷⁶ When Noah, who called his people to Allah’s path at every opportunity, was told that none of his people would come to profess faith and that he should build an Ark,⁷⁷ he started to build the Ark right in front of the eyes of his people. As he built the Ark, the disbelievers would stop by and laugh at him. He told them, *“You may scorn us now, but we will come to scorn you.”*⁷⁸

Eventually the gates of the sky opened with torrential water, and the earth burst with gushing springs,⁷⁹ and eventually water even gushed out of the earth.⁸⁰ Noah, in accordance with Allah’s orders to him, boarded a pair of each species⁸¹ and approximately eighty⁸² of his people who had believed⁸³ into the Ark, telling them, *“Board the Ark. In the name of Allah it shall sail and anchor.”*⁸⁴ When Noah and his Companions (ra) settled on the Ark they started to recite the supplications Allah had taught them: *“Praise be to Allah, who delivered us from the wicked people. My Lord, let me land with Your blessing: it is You who provide the best landings.”*⁸⁵ When Noah cried out to Allah (swt) with these supplications, Allah, the most glorious and the Answerer, accepted his supplication and saved him and his family⁸⁶ from drowning.⁸⁷

As the Ark sailed with Noah and his Companions (ra) on waves like mountains, he called out to his son, who had stayed behind and who did

⁷² Al-‘Ankabut, 29:14.

⁷³ Nuh, 71: 5-12.

⁷⁴ Nuh, 71:21-24.

⁷⁵ Al-Shu‘ara’, 26:118.

⁷⁶ Nuh, 71:26-27.

⁷⁷ Hud, 11:36-37.

⁷⁸ Hud, 11:38.

⁷⁹ Al-Qamar, 54:11-12

⁸⁰ Hud, 11:40.

⁸¹ Hud, 11:40.

⁸² TB1/118, al-Tabari, *Ta’rikh* 1, 118.

⁸³ Hud, 11:40.

⁸⁴ Hud, 11:41.

⁸⁵ Al-Mu‘minun, 23:28-29.

⁸⁶ Al-Anbiya’, 21:76.

⁸⁷ Al-Shu‘ara’, 26: 118-119.

not believe in him: *“Come aboard with us, my son, do not stay with the disbelievers.”* But when his son said, *“I will seek refuge on a mountain to save me from the water,”* Noah responded, *“Today there is no refuge from Allah’s command, except for those on whom He has mercy.”* At that moment the waves cut them off from each other and Noah’s son was among the drowned.⁸⁸ Seeing that his son was doomed to drown, Noah attempted to call out to his Creator, *“My Lord, my son was one of my family,”*⁸⁹ and he asked Allah to save him. In response, Allah Most High, said to Noah, *“Noah, he was not one of your family. What he did was not right. Do not ask Me for things you know nothing about...”*⁹⁰ drawing his attention to the importance of bonds of faith. Noah realized he was at fault, and immediately repented by supplicating, *“My Lord, I take refuge with You from asking for things I know nothing about. If You do not forgive me, and have mercy on me, I shall be one of the losers.”*⁹¹ As a matter of fact, Noah’s son was not the only member of his family who did not believe in his call. Noah’s wife, who did not believe in him, is often cited as a disbeliever just like Lot’s wife. Although she was the wife of a prophet, she betrayed him. In other words, Noah was not able to help his family members against Allah (swt). Hence Allah’s wrath reached both Noah’s wife and son, both of whom insisted on establishing partners with Allah.⁹²

The storm was so strong that no one but those who boarded the Ark stood any chance of survival. Allah’s Messenger Muhammad (saw) informed us about this: *“When the roads started to fill up with water a mother became concerned about her child whom she loved more than her own life. She immediately started to head up toward a mountain along with her child. She was able to reach as high as one-third of the mountain when the incessant flow of waters reached her. There she desperately climbed further and was able to reach the distance of two-thirds of the mountain. However, the waters caught up with her and she began to climb further up to the summit. Finally, when the waters found them at the summit and covered her completely, she lifted her child up over her head with her hands, and kept the child there until the gushing waters carried them both away from the summit.”* After narrating this incident to us, Allah’s Messenger said, *“If Allah Most High were to show mercy to someone from the people of Noah, he would have shown mercy to that mother.”*⁹³

Eventually, when the earth was cleansed of the trouble that contaminated it, the Divine order descended, *“Then it was said, ‘Earth, swallow up your water, and sky, hold back,’ and the water subsided, the command was*

⁸⁸ Hud, 11:42-43.

⁸⁹ Hud, 11:45.

⁹⁰ Hud, 11:46.

⁹¹ Hud, 11:47.

⁹² Al-Tahrim, 66:10.

⁹³ NM4010, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 1500 (2/547).

fulfilled. The Ark settled on Mount Judi...⁹⁴ and Allah said to His Prophet, “Noah, descend in peace from Us, with blessings on you and on some of the communities that will spring from those who are with you...”⁹⁵ Hence, the difficult journey, which started on the tenth night of the month of Rajab, ended exactly six months later, on the tenth night of the month of Muharram—in other words on the day of ‘Ashura. After their deliverance Noah and his people, in order to express their gratefulness to Allah (swt), fasted on that day.⁹⁶ “This is because Noah was one of Allah’s thankful servants.”⁹⁷

Following the flood, Noah and his people resettled on land and built houses and a settlement for themselves.⁹⁸ However, over time only the offspring of Noah, his three sons and his daughters-in-law survived.⁹⁹ Therefore, Noah, on whom Allah Most High sent blessings among all nations,¹⁰⁰ acquired the epithet “the second progenitor of mankind.”

At the end of the prophetic narration concerning the apocalypse that was described above, the Prophet (saw) reported that, following Adam’s advice, the people began to seek Noah. The people spoke to Noah by saying that he was the first Messenger Allah had sent to the inhabitants of the earth. They said to him that Allah had made him a thankful servant and then said, “Will you not intercede with your Allah on behalf of us?” However, remembering how he had prayed against his own people, he was worried about himself on that day, saying only “myself, myself,” so he told them instead to go to Abraham.¹⁰¹

Our Prophet (saw), who was sent to humanity millennia after Noah for their salvation, reminded a person, who came to him complaining arrogantly of his friend’s lack of recognition of nobility among the Arabs, of Noah’s prayer: ‘When it was time for Noah to meet his Allah at the end of his life, he called upon his two sons and told them, “This is my brief last will to you. There are two things that I order you to follow and two things that I forbid you: I forbid you to take partners with Allah and to boast about things. I order you to say, ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh’—there is no god but Allah. This is because if one were to weigh the skies, the earth and everything in between against Lā ilāha illā Allāh, the latter would outweigh the former. If the skies and the earth were to become one, they would crumble and break under the weight of Lā ilāha illā Allāh. And I order you to recite, ‘subhān Allāh wa bi ḥamdihi.’ Because this is the prayer for everything and Allah almighty grants His provision through this prayer.’”¹⁰²

⁹⁴ Hud, 11:44.

⁹⁵ Hud, 11:48.

⁹⁶ MK5538. al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VI, 69.

⁹⁷ Al-Isra’, 17:3.

⁹⁸ ST1/42, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 42.

⁹⁹ Al-Isra’, 17:3; TT17/353, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XVII, 353; al-Saffat, 37/77; TB1/119, al-Tabari, *Ta’rikh*, I, 119.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Saffat, 37:79.

¹⁰¹ B4712, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir* (Bani Israel), 5.

¹⁰² HM7101, Ibn Hanbal, II, 225; EM548, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 192; NM154, Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 70 (1/49).



ABRAHAM and ISMAIL THE TEST OF A FATHER and A SON WITH REGARD TO TAWHĪD

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ اتَّخَذَنِي خَلِيلًا كَمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا فَمَنْزِلِي وَمَنْزِلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَجَاهَيْنِ...”

According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah has taken me as a close friend as He took Abraham as a close friend. So my house and the house of Abraham will be opposite to one another in heaven on the Day of Resurrection...”

(Ibn Majah, al-Sunna, 11)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَا خَيْرَ الْبَرِيَّةِ!
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "ذَاكَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ."



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
"إِنَّ لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ وُلَاةً مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَإِنَّ وَلِيَّ أَبِي وَخَلِيلُ رَبِّي..."



عَنْ جَابِرٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
"عُرِضَ عَلَيَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ... وَرَأَيْتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ [صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ] فَإِذَا أَقْرَبُ مَنْ رَأَيْتُ
بِهِ شَبَهًا صَاحِبُكُمْ يَعْنِي نَفْسَهُ..."



Anas b. Malik (ra) reported, “A man came to the Prophet of Allah (saw) and called to him, ‘O, the best of creation!’ In response, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *‘That is prophet Abraham.’*”

(M6138, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 150)



According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Every Prophet had a close friend among the prophets. My friend is my forefather Abraham, the beloved of my Lord.*”

(T2995, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 3)



According to Jabir (ra), the Prophet (saw) said (on the night of the Mi'raj),
“*I was shown all of Allah's prophets. I saw Abraham among them as well. Among whom I saw the one who has the greatest resemblance to him is your Companion [meaning himself].*”

(M423, Muslim, al-Iman, 271)



Abraham had been questioning the belief system and religious values of his own society for a long time. The people of his society believed in celestial objects¹ and the idols that represented them governed their lives. They also believed that the seasons and night and day were their creation. Hence, they thought that only those idols could affect life. However, Abraham was not satisfied with these idols which his society had accepted as deities. Rationally Abraham had observed each one and questioned whether they could truly be deities. He had observed that a star or the moon that shined through the night would disappear come daytime despite all of its shine the night before. The same applied to the sun which set when it was night time. How could a god rise and set? Who would give order to the universe when it disappeared behind the dark of the night? He came to the realization that Allah was the One who never disappeared. Indeed, the true Allah would have to be exactly like that. Abraham was slowly reaching the truth through observing the universe and making conclusions based on his reason and intellect. He began to say, *"I have turned my face as a true believer toward Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the polytheists."*²

Abraham was constantly contemplating and deliberating; he would think deeply about each aspect of the universe which would, in turn, strengthen his belief in Allah (swt). Once he stood facing the remains of a dead animal. The corpse had been completely destroyed, opened up by wild animals. Abraham thought to himself: *"The Lord of the universe should be so powerful to be able to bring back these remains from the mouths of all these animals and bring this animal back to life."* Nevertheless, thinking and seeing was not one and the same. The sight of things would help give more exact information and would help one to reach conclusions faster. So he uttered what he was thinking,

¹ TT11/480, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XI, 480-481.

² Al-An'am, 6:75-79.

“My Lord, show me how you give life to the dead.” Allah (swt) responded, “Do you not believe, then?” Abraham said, “Yes, I believe. But just to put my heart at rest.” Allah told him, “Take four birds and train them to come back to you. Then place them on separate hilltops, and call them back, and they will come flying to you: know that Allah is all powerful and wise,”³ and “Devote yourself to Me.” Abraham replied, “I devote myself to the Lord of the Universe.”⁴

Abraham was now ready for his mission. Allah Most High revealed scrolls from earlier scriptures to Abraham whose heart and mind were filled with peace.⁵ Allah Almighty tasked Abraham with calling his people to attain guidance; his mission to invite people to Allah (swt) started and he began to share his knowledge and his experiences with his people, and foremost, with his father Azar. However, it was a dangerous path that he had set upon.

During a day of festivities, Abraham took advantage of his people's preoccupation and, knowing that nobody was in the temple that housed the idols, he entered it and destroyed with his axe all the statues of the deities except the one. Abraham left the biggest idol untouched and hung his axe around the neck of the statue. The people were outraged when they learned about this assault against their sacred idols. Who had the courage to do this? But the culprit was as clear as day for them because Abraham had been mocking the idols for some time. He was brought before King Nimrod, the leader of their people, who asked him,

“Was it you, Abraham, who did this to our gods?” Abraham responded, “No, it was done by the biggest of them—this one. Ask it (perhaps it would talk). That is if they can talk.”⁶ King Nimrod said, “You know very well these gods cannot speak.”⁷ Then Abraham said, “How can you worship what can neither benefit nor harm you, instead of Allah? Shame on you and on the things you worship instead of Allah. Have you no sense?”⁸

It was inevitable that King Nimrod would declare the one who said these words a heretic and an antagonist who had to be punished. Nimrod and his men began to debate how to best punish Abraham. Finally they arrived at a decision and proclaimed, *“Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to do the right thing.”⁹*

They immediately put Abraham in a prison. They lit a huge fire. Abraham was to be placed in the fire. But he was calm and dignified... He prayed in complete surrender to his one and only Allah, telling Him that

³ Al-Baqara, 2:260.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:131.

⁵ Al-Najam, 53:36-37; al-'Ala, 87:19.

⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21:58-63; B3358, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 8.

⁷ Al-Anbiya', 21:65.

⁸ Al-Anbiya', 21:66-67.

⁹ Al-Anbiya', 21:68.

He was sufficient for him; He was the best disposer of affairs.¹⁰ These were his final words. He was thrown into the fire. But right at that moment, even before Abraham fell into the fire a sacred voice echoed, *"Fire, be cool and safe for Abraham."*¹¹

Nimrod and his people waited for the fire to calm down; it burned so furiously that they could not approach it. As soon as they were able to see into the fire, they were shocked. There was Abraham, unharmed. Could there be a miracle more superior to this for those who wanted to believe? Clinging to a final string of hope, Abraham told his father about the oneness and uniqueness of Allah.¹² However, his father had no intention to abandon his idols. Furthermore, he now wanted his son to leave and keep out of his way.¹³ Abraham was left with no option but to emigrate because of the persecution of his people. So Abraham, who was even rejected by his father, took with him his wife Sarah and a handful of his followers and left the city Edessa, where he had been born and raised,¹⁴ and went to Damascus which Allah Most High had promised to be the blessed land¹⁵ for all people.¹⁶ Abraham had understood that he could no longer live in Nimrod's lands. Like so many other prophets, he had to emigrate, so he prayed to his Allah: *"I will go to my Lord: He is sure to guide me. Lord, grant me a righteous son."*¹⁷ After a long period of struggle, Abraham got old; he felt lonely and he wanted a son who could end this loneliness.¹⁸ His longing for a son was so strong that one day he made a vow: *"If Allah grants me a son, I will sacrifice him for His sake."*¹⁹

Though, Abraham's wife Sarah was very old. This honorable woman was aware of her husband's desire to have a son. Realizing that she was past the age of bearing a child, she exhibited an act of selflessness. She had her hand-maiden Hagar,²⁰ who helped with the house chores, marry Abraham.²¹ Soon after he was given the good news that he would have a patient, gentle and a prudent son.²² Now, in Abraham's household, all attention was on this little child, Isma'il.

The family was initially happy but at the same time, although Sarah had married Hagar to Abraham, she was taken by jealous feelings at times and finally she came to the conclusion that she did not want to live under the same roof with them. This short-lived happiness would soon transform into a major test. This is because Allah Most High told Abraham to take Hagar and her child to the area where Ka'ba is located and leave them

¹⁰ TT18/464, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, 464-468.

¹¹ Al-Anbiya', 21:69.

¹² Maryam, 19:42.

¹³ Maryam, 19:46.

¹⁴ "Ibrahim," *DIA* .XXI, 269

¹⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21:71; al-'Ankabut, 29:26.

¹⁶ KC11/305, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, XI, 305.

¹⁷ Al-Saffat, 37:99-101.

¹⁸ Al-Saffat, 37: 100.

¹⁹ TT21/73, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XXI, 73-75.

²⁰ B3358, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 8

²¹ "Ibrahim," *DIA*, XXI, 270.

²² Al-Saffat, 37: 101.

there. This grand prophet, without hesitation, started the journey with his wife and his beloved son, who was still breastfeeding. He left his family in the middle of the desert, in a valley which was at the time not frequented by anyone, and which had not a single trace of water or plant life, not even a weed. The mother and infant had with them a little amount of food and just a small water skin full of water. When Abraham set out to walk back toward his home, leaving them behind, Hagar started to run after him:

“O Abraham! Are you going to leave us in this uninhabited land?” When Hagar looked into Abraham’s eyes, she thought she might have an inkling about what was happening so she asked him, “Has your Lord ordered you to do so?” Abraham responded, “Yes, (this is the order of my Lord!)” After hearing his reply she said, “(Don’t be afraid then! He will protect us and) prevent us from any harm.”²³

As Hagar returned to her infant in a dry, uncultivated area, Abraham continued walking homeward. His mind and prayers were on his wife and son so he prayed, “*Our Lord, I have established some of my offspring in an uncultivated valley, close to Your Sacred House, Lord, so that they may keep up the prayer. Make people’s hearts turn to them, and provide them with produce, so that they may be thankful.*”²⁴

Hagar and Isma’il were alone now. In a short time they drank all of their water and desperation set in. Hagar looked at the hill called Safa across from her. “Will I be able to see someone if I go up there?” she thought to herself. She ran fast to the hill, scanning the valley across from her. No, there was no one around. She climbed down the hill and ran toward the end of the hill called Marwa, where she had left her baby. Then she ran back to Safa, and followed that with a run to Marwa again. She repeated this a total of seven times. Therefore, the seven rounds we make between Safa and Marwa during the Hajj, the *sa’y*, represent Hagar’s run between the two hills. As she was about to lose hope, she heard some voices coming from below. She saw an angel a few steps ahead. It was in a deep hole digging the ground with its wings or its heel. Next, she heard the sound of water splashing from the ground. The clear, cool water known as the spring of Zamzam had been found. Hagar ran to the water and made a pool at the head of the water to create a basin. Centuries later, another prophet, a descendant of Isma’il, the master of the realms, Muhammad Mustafa (saw) would interpret that scene: “*If Hagar had not created that basin*

²³ B3364, al-Bukhari, *al-Anbiya’*, 9.

²⁴ Ibrahim, 14:37.

and had left the water running, the Zamzam would have gushed out and become a wide river.”²⁵

Hagar quickly filled her water skin from the basin. She ran to her son and gave water to his dry lips. Then she continuously drank from it until she was able to produce milk again and feed her infant baby. The angel, Allah’s emissary, gave her the blessed news before leaving: “Don’t be afraid of being harmed. And there, that is going to be the House of Allah, which will be built by this boy and his father. Allah (swt) never neglects the people who are beloved to Him.”²⁶

This blessed news signaled to Hagar that Abraham would come back to them, and she started to wait for her husband. In the meantime she was also witnessing how the newfound, life-sprouting water was transforming the valley. This cold, sweet water had attracted more visitors to the valley and a new city was taking shape. There it was; Mecca was slowly born²⁷ awaiting the blessed and last messenger, our Master Muhammad (saw).

Time flew by and Isma’il came of age running around with limitless energy. His father’s visits would make him very happy, but it was during the last visit that he realized his father was very preoccupied. Eventually his father decided to talk to Isma’il and mentioned the vow he had made before he was born: “My son! It has been a while now that I hear a voice in my dreams, saying, ‘fulfill your vow!’”²⁸ Abraham continued to say, “And then I have seen myself sacrificing you. What do you think?” He said, “Father, do as you are commanded and, Allah willing, you will find me steadfast.”²⁹

That was maybe not the answer Abraham had expected, but perhaps the one that he had hoped for from his son. This answer reflected such a deep level of submission and maturity that it could only have been uttered by a prospective messenger. Even though Abraham was a prophet, he was also a father, someone with utmost compassion whose heart was full of love for his son.

The father held his son’s hand and marched toward the location where he would fulfill his mission. Satan was watching this from afar and seized the moment. Could there have been any better opportunity to sway the father, the mother, and the son from fulfilling Allah’s orders? Except that Abraham had realized, through prophetic wisdom, what Satan had planned. He threw seven stones at Satan when he came near. Satan did not

²⁵ B3364, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 9.

²⁶ B3364, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 9.

²⁷ B3364, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 9.

²⁸ TT21/73, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XXI, 73-75

²⁹ Al-Saffat, 37: 102.

give up. He was talking to him, stopping his march in an effort to dissuade him. He faced them a while later once again. But Abraham did not allow him; he threw seven more stones at Satan. Satan did not want to stop so he threw yet another round of seven stones—and when the pilgrims throw stones during their Hajj today, they are reenacting that very scene—but Satan was adamant in his mission. He tried to whisper first to the mother and then to the child. But both of them responded in the same way: “If this is what our Lord willed for us, what could be better than following his will?”³⁰

When they arrived at the designated location, Abraham stopped. The child understood that the time has arrived. He lay without hesitation on the floor, placed his rosy cheeks on the ground. He asked his father to close his eyes and tie up his hands, asked him to remove his clothes and use it to wrap his body.³¹

Abraham prepared his knife. They were both taken by sadness but showed no trace of wavering. Prayers were recited and during this moment while their eyes were shut an emissary of Allah Almighty appeared next to them. Next to Him was a large, nice looking ram. They heard a voice that echoed through the skies: *“Abraham, you have fulfilled the dream. This is how We reward those who do good—it was a test to prove their true characters.”*³²

Abraham, Isma‘il, and Hagar’s test... They passed the test. A ram was a ransom for Isma‘il.³³ Allah Most High had decreed this test in order to completely remove a wrongful practice which had over time become mainstream—that of sacrificing children. Earning the pleasure of Allah was not the only lesson to be drawn from this event. Allah (swt) would point to Abraham as a model for succeeding generations, He would let him be praised with greetings and love, and draw attention to his complete faith.³⁴

Still Abraham stayed humble as ever and continuously recited the prayers: *“Lord, grant that I and my offspring may keep up the prayer”* and *“Our Lord, accept my request. Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day of Reckoning.”*³⁵

Abraham did not have to wait long—except for the repentance he made on behalf of his father—to see that his prayers were accepted. Isma‘il would have the honor of becoming a prophet³⁶ and receiving Allah’s revelation.³⁷ He would be one of those the leaders whom Allah (swt) had given salvation and favored³⁸ over other people.

³⁰ TT21/80, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XXI, 80-81.

³¹ TT21/73, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XXI, 73-75;

TT21/76, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XXI, 76-79.

³² Al-Saffat, 37: 104-106.

³³ Al-Saffat, 37: 107.

³⁴ Al-Saffat, 37: 108-111.

³⁵ Ibrahim, 14: 40-41.

³⁶ Maryam, 19:54.

³⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:136.

³⁸ Al-An’am, 6:86.

But Allah Most High would favor Abraham chiefly with designating him as the leader of those who favored the tawhid.³⁹ Therefore Allah (swt) gave Abraham and Isma'il the task of reconstructing the Ka'ba, the first temple on earth that was dedicated to Allah and represented the belief in One, Unified Allah. The father and son would have the honor of reinstituting this sacred belief that would survive until the day of dignity for all those who were believers and would come there to worship the One Allah.

Thus, Allah showed them the site of the Sacred House, the Ka'ba.⁴⁰ Abraham travelled twice to Mecca to inform Isma'il that their Allah had ordered them to reconstruct a House for Him at this location. Isma'il supported his father; told him to follow Allah's order, and that he would help him in the matter. When Abraham and Isma'il began to see the foundation for the house slowly appear they prayed saying, *"Our Lord, accept [this] from us. You are the All Hearing, the All Knowing,"*⁴¹ and Allah said in the Holy Qur'an, *"The first House [of worship] to be established for people at Mecca, this blessed House of Allah; a source of guidance for all people."*⁴² The father and son completed their mission and prayed for the well-being of faith for succeeding generations.⁴³ The ultimate sign that these prayers were accepted would be Our Master Muhammad Mustafa (saw), descendant of Isma'il.

Once Abraham and Isma'il completed their mission, Allah Most High announced that the Ka'ba, the house constructed by Abraham, would become a refuge and a sanctuary for people.⁴⁴ Finally they were told to begin to proclaim the Hajj to all people.⁴⁵

The Holy Qur'an tells us that Abraham was a leader who was devoutly obedient to Allah and exemplified all good qualities. He was a servant who was always thankful for the blessings of Allah. That is why he was chosen and guided to the straight path. He was granted many blessings and a high station in this world, and he was included among the righteous in the Hereafter.⁴⁶

With his struggle to uphold the Oneness of Allah, Abraham became the leader of those who believe. In the Holy Qur'an the exemplary leadership of Abraham for the struggle to uphold the Oneness of Allah was mentioned in this verse: *"Truly, they [Abraham and his entourage] are a good example for you [believers] to follow, a good example for those who fear Allah and the Last Day."*⁴⁷

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:124.

⁴⁰ Al-Hajj, 22:26.

⁴¹ Al-Baqara, 2:127; B3365, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 9.

⁴² Al-'Imran, 3:96.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2:127-129.

⁴⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:125.

⁴⁵ Al-Hajj, 27-28.

⁴⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 120-122.

⁴⁷ Al-Mumtahana, 60:6.

The religion that Allah revealed to the last prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (saw), was the same creed based on the Oneness of Allah that Abraham propagated among his people.⁴⁸ That is why Allah Most High referred to the example of Abraham while teaching His religion.⁴⁹ Thus, those who accepted Islam were also instructed to follow the religion of Abraham.⁵⁰ According to the Holy Qur'an, only those thoughtless and heedless people who did not know themselves and those who went against the purpose and nature of creation would forsake such a religion.⁵¹

These qualities made Abraham an exemplary individual, one of Allah's servants who is worthy of being followed. As a "human being," he was the father of all those who follow the Abrahamic religions. First and foremost he was tender-hearted,⁵² hospitable,⁵³ and truthful.⁵⁴ Because of these qualities Allah took him as his "friend."⁵⁵ This friendship between Allah and Abraham became a reference for Allah's Messenger who said, "*Allah has taken me as a close friend as He took Abraham as a close friend.*"⁵⁶ That is why the Prophet (saw) reported that his house and the house of Abraham will be opposite to one another in heaven on the Day of Resurrection.⁵⁷ And it is also why, when one of the Companions (ra) came to the Prophet of Allah and called to him, "O, the best of creation!," he said in response, "*That is the Prophet Abraham.*"⁵⁸

Just like his father, Isma'il was true to his promise. He commanded his people to be strict in their worship of Allah (swt). He was beloved to Allah for his efforts in this regard and his Lord was well pleased with him.⁵⁹

The morals of this family of prophets are a source of blessing and benevolence for all families and their wider circles of acquaintances.⁶⁰ That is the reason that when someone is served food, Muslims are known to supplicate by saying, "May this have the blessings of Abraham, the friend of Allah." The original prayer was recited by his descendant, the Prophet (saw), when a Companion brought the first crop of the season to him. He referenced Abraham in his supplication in this way: "*O Allah, bless us in our fruits; and bless us in our city; and bless us in our measures. O Allah, Abraham was your servant, your friend, and your messenger; and I am your servant and your messenger.*"⁶¹

It is exactly because of these characteristics that the Noble Messenger was chosen as a friend Abraham, the friend of Allah, from among all prophets: "*Every prophet had a close friend among the prophets. My friend is my forefather Abraham, the beloved of my Lord.*"⁶²

⁴⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:123; Al 'Imran, 3:95.

⁴⁹ Al-An'am, 6: 161-162.

⁵⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:135.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2:130.

⁵² Al-Tawba, 9:114.

⁵³ Al-Dhariyat, 51:24-26.

⁵⁴ Maryam, 19:41.

⁵⁵ Al-Nisa', 4:125.

⁵⁶ M1188, Muslim, al-Masajid, 23.

⁵⁷ IM141, Ibn Majah, al-Sunna, 11.

⁵⁸ M6138, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 150.

⁵⁹ Maryam, 19:54-55.

⁶⁰ Hud, 11:73.

⁶¹ M3334, Muslim, al-Hajj, 473; al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 53.

⁶² T2995, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 3.

This similarity and closeness in morals and personality was also reflected in the physical appearance of the two prophets. Thus Muhammad, who met all the other prophets on the Night of Ascension, would say that he was most similar in appearance to Abraham.⁶³

Furthermore, Abraham was not indifferent to the community of Muhammad, who was one of his descendants and who shared this much in morals and in appearance with him. On the Night of Ascension, Abraham said this to the blessed community of this final and perfect religion: “O Muhammad, give my greetings to your community tell them that in Paradise they will find good soil and sweet water and that it is a flat treeless plain, and that its seeds are the phrases *“subhān Allāh wa ‘l-ḥamdu li’llāh, wa lā ilāha illā Allāh wa Allāhu akbar”* (Praise and Glory be to Allah. There is no god but Allah. Allah is most Great).⁶⁴

Abraham was the first to represent numerous beautiful features of the *Sunna*; for example he was the first to be circumcised.⁶⁵ In addition, trimming the moustache, clipping the nails, and hosting guests were among the many beautiful actions that he established.⁶⁶ He is also the first one whose hair turned white. Indeed, to have white in your hair is a sign of maturation and wisdom. It is reported that, Abraham asked the following upon seeing the white in his hair:

“O My Lord, what is this?” Allah replied, “*It is maturation Abraham.*” Then Abraham prayed, “My Lord, increase me in maturity.”⁶⁷

⁶³ M423, Muslim, al-Iman, 271.

⁶⁴ T3462, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 58.

⁶⁵ B6298, al-Bukhari, al-Istizān, 51; M6141, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 151.

⁶⁶ M1250, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 428; BS9615, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, VII, 97.

⁶⁷ MU1677, al-Muwatta’, Sifat al-Nabi, 3.



JACOB and JOSEPH

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF STORIES

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“أُعْطِيَ يُوسُفُ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ شَطْرَ الْحُسْنِ.”

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Joseph has been granted half of all the beauty*”

(HM14096, Ibn Hanbal, III, 287)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ؟
قَالَ: ”أَتْقَاهُمْ“ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ: ”فَيُوسُفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فِي قَوْلِهِ لِرَسُولِهِ ﷺ فَاسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالَ
النَّسْوَةِ اللَّاتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ ﷺ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَوْ كُنْتُ أَنَا لَأَسْرَعْتُ الْإِجَابَةَ وَمَا ابْتَغَيْتُ الْعُذْرَ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْكَرِيمُ ابْنُ الْكَرِيمِ ابْنُ الْكَرِيمِ يُوسُفُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.“



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported the following: “Once Allah’s Messenger was asked, ‘Who is the most honorable among the people?’ He said, ‘*The one that avoids sin the most.*’ They said, ‘We do not ask you about this.’ He then said, ‘*Then Joseph, the Prophet of Allah.*’”

(B3490, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 1)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra) when the Prophet (saw) was asked about what Joseph told the King’s messenger, that is, “Go back to your Master and ask him about what happened to those women who cut their hands (Yusuf, 12:50),” he said, “*If I were him, I would have accepted the crime, and would not have sought to redeem myself.*”

(HM8535, Ibn Hanbal, II, 346)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*The honorable, the son of the honorable, the son of the honorable, (was) Joseph, the son of Jacob! The son of Isaac, the son of Abraham.*”

(BB3390, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 19)



“*My father!*” young Joseph said to his father, “*I dreamed of eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them all bow down before me.*”¹ Jacob, whom Allah almighty had blessed with prophethood, became filled with fear when he heard this from his beloved son and cautioned Joseph by saying, “*My son, tell your brothers nothing of this dream, or they may plot to harm you.*”² Jacob went on to inform Joseph about what the blessed news he received in his dream meant by saying, “*This is about how your Lord will choose you, teach you to interpret dreams, and perfect His blessing on you and the House of Jacob, just as He perfected it earlier on your forefathers Abraham and Isaac: your Lord is all knowing and wise.*”³

It is with this dream that the most beautiful of the stories of the Holy Book begins.⁴ It speaks of Jacob’s suffering, his patience and longing along with Joseph’s torment, his beauty, and chastity. Jacob had twelve sons⁵ and among them he especially liked and kept near him Joseph and Benjamin who were born to the same mother.⁶ Joseph’s older brothers did not like that their father was favoring their younger brother Joseph and Benjamin; they thought they were better than Joseph because they were older, stronger, and saw in themselves many good qualities. Blinded by jealousy, they perceived Joseph and Benjamin as too young and without consequence in the life of the family. Their father’s error had to be corrected and the way to achieve this was to remove Joseph. When that would happen, they would have Jacob to themselves and they would become righteous people.⁷ They had initially decided to kill Joseph but then the eldest among them⁸ said, “*Do not kill Joseph, but, if you must, throw him into the hidden depths of a well where some caravan may pick him up.*”⁹ So they gave up on the idea to kill Joseph and went on to follow this plan which was sparked by their jealousy.

“*Why do you not trust us with Joseph? We wish him well. Send him with us tomorrow and he will enjoy himself and play—we will take good care of him.*”¹⁰

¹Yusuf, 12:4.

²Yusuf, 12:5.

³Yusuf, 12:6.

⁴Yusuf, 12:3.

⁵TB1/201, al-Tabari, *Ta’rikh*, I, 201.

⁶IT4/372, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 372.

⁷Yusuf, 12:8-9.

⁸IT4/372, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 372.

⁹Yusuf, 12:10.

¹⁰Yusuf, 12:11-12.

These were the words that began Joseph's brothers' heinous plot. Their father, sensing their evil intention, said the following to somehow signal he did not want them to take Joseph along: "*The thought of you taking him away with you worries me: I am afraid a wolf may eat him when you are not paying attention.*"¹¹ In order to convince Jacob, they replied, "*If a wolf were to eat him when there are so many of us, we would truly be losers!*"¹² Upon hearing this assurance, Jacob reluctantly allowed them to take his beloved son Joseph with them.

Jacob unwittingly supplied his sons with the perfect reason for Joseph's disappearance when he tried to avoid sending Joseph with them. The brothers immediately knew they would blame Joseph's disappearance on a wolf, and this became part of their dastardly plan. Jacob had given his other ten sons the last missing part of their evil plot. This was explained in the following saying of the Messenger of Allah (saw), which was reported by Ibn 'Umar (ra): "*Don't provide excuses to people to lie, otherwise they will lie. Jacob's sons did not know that wolves could eat people. Because he told them 'I am afraid a wolf may eat him,' they went ahead and lied by saying, 'a wolf ate him.'*"¹³

When his brothers first took him away, they appeared to be treating him well. However, once they moved away out of sight, deep into the desert, they revealed their animosity. They started to be violent with him but his eldest brother intervened and proclaimed, "You had promised me that you would not kill him!" Then the other siblings took Joseph's shirt, picked him up, and threw him down into a well.¹⁴

At night, the brothers returned to their father weeping with fake tears and said to him, "*We went off racing one another, leaving Joseph behind with our things, and [we only realized afterwards] a wolf ate him. You will not believe us, though we are telling the truth!*"¹⁵ To provide evidence for their story they had killed a sheep and used its blood¹⁶ to stain Joseph's shirt so they could deceive their father.¹⁷ But noticing that the shirt had not been torn at all, Jacob could not keep silent,¹⁸ and he said, "*Since when has this wolf been so soft? So it ate Joseph but did not touch his shirt?*"¹⁹ and "*No! Your souls have prompted you to do wrong! But it is best to be patient: from Allah alone I seek help to bear what you are saying.*"²⁰ There, next to his sons' dishonest weeping, Jacob sat with tears streaming down his face. Whereas his sons harbored animosity toward Joseph, Jacob was longing for Joseph. Jacob was in incredible pain,

¹¹ Yusuf, 12:13.

¹² Yusuf, 12:14.

¹³ DF7322, al-Daylami, *Firdaws al-Akhbar*, V, 20.

¹⁴ TB1/201, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 201.

¹⁵ Yusuf, 12:16-17.

¹⁶ IT4/375, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 375.

¹⁷ Yusuf, 12:18.

¹⁸ IT4/375, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 375.

¹⁹ FG3/16, al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, III, 16.

²⁰ Yusuf, 12:18.

his longing for Joseph knew no bounds, and yet he chose to show patience. He chose to seek refuge with Allah Almighty.

Meanwhile, Joseph was by himself and helpless in the well. He stayed there for three long days.²¹ His eldest brother felt sorry for him and took him food every day.²² On the third day, a caravan which made a stop there sent a servant to the well to draw water. When the man lowered his bucket into the depths of the well expecting to find cool clear water, he instead found a young boy holding onto the rope. "Good news!" he exclaimed. "Here is a boy!" The caravan viewed Joseph like a piece of merchandise and took him with them. When they arrived in Egypt, they sold him for a low price, for a few pieces of silver.²³ The Egyptian who bought Joseph was a vizier who was responsible for financial matters and the treasury. He said to his wife, "*Look after him well! He may be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.*"²⁴ Thus, Allah Almighty settled young Joseph with an eminent family in Egypt and when he reached maturity Allah gave him knowledge and a deep sense of good Judgement.²⁵

These were not the only benefits Allah granted Joseph. Allah (swt) also gave him unprecedented beauty. Indeed, there was no parallel to Joseph's beauty. Our Prophet said this of Joseph's beauty, "*Joseph was given half of beauty.*"²⁶ In addition to his physical beauty, Joseph had a beautiful character, which made him even more attractive. People who saw Joseph could not help themselves but to admire him and react to his beauty. All who knew him, including the wife of the vizier, Zulaykha, acknowledged Joseph's nobility, beauty, and honesty. This was so powerful that Zulaykha fell in love with Joseph, who grew up in her own household. She watched Joseph grow into a handsome man and became more attracted to him as each day passed. Then, a moment came when love turned to lust; and when her husband was not home she locked the doors and threw herself on Joseph, saying to him, "Come to me."

Shocked beyond belief at this, Joseph said, "*Allah forbid! My master has been good to me; wrongdoers never prosper,*" and he resisted her advances.²⁷ Zulaykha really desired him and if it were not for the image of his father Jacob that Allah (swt) placed before his eyes at that moment,²⁸ Joseph would have succumbed to her.²⁹ However, Joseph's refusal only increased her passion. Zulaykha did not want to let him go and tried to grab his back. Protected from a major sin thanks to Allah's merciful bounty, Joseph tried

²¹ Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 106.

²² BY3/158, al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-tanzil*, III, 158.

²³ Yusuf, 12:19-20.

²⁴ IT4/378, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 378; Yusuf, 12:21.

²⁵ Yusuf, 12:22.

²⁶ HM14096, Ahmad b. Hanbal, III, 287; M411, Muslim, al-Iman, 259.

²⁷ Yusuf, 12:23.

²⁸ IT4/381, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 381.

²⁹ Yusuf, 12:24.

to flee and they raced each other to the door. She reached for Joseph's shirt and tore it from his back and at that moment, the door opened and her husband walked in. Immediately, without even one second's hesitation, Zulaykha attempted to turn the situation around by placing the blame on Joseph. She cried out to her husband, "*What, other than prison or painful punishment, should be the reward of someone who tried to dishonor your wife?*"³⁰ Puzzled and outraged at this lie, Joseph objected and tried to defend himself by saying, "*No, she tried to seduce me.*"³¹ To resolve this dispute, one of Zulaykha's cousins³² offered a solution, "*If his shirt is torn at the front, then it is she who is telling the truth and he who is lying, but if it is torn at the back, then she is lying and he [Joseph] is telling the truth.*"³³

When the vizier saw that the shirt was torn at the back, he said, "*This is another instance of women's treachery: your treachery is truly great.*"³⁴ He then turned to Joseph and said, "*Joseph, overlook this.*"³⁵ By that he meant that Joseph should not mention it to anyone and then he turned to his wife and, to put an end to this dispute, he told her, "*but you [wife], ask forgiveness for your sin—you have done wrong.*"³⁶

This should have been the end to the matter but some women of the city learned about this episode and said, "*The vizier's wife is trying to seduce her slave! Love for him consumes her heart! It is clear to us that she has gone astray.*"³⁷ When Zulaykha heard their talk, she prepared a banquet and invited them, giving each of them a knife.³⁸ She ordered Joseph to enter the room right when the women started to peel their fruit.³⁹ When the women saw him, they were stunned by his beauty, and cut their hands. They exclaimed, "*Great Allah! He cannot be a mortal! He must be a precious angel!*"⁴⁰ At that moment Zulaykha said, "*This is the one you blamed me for. I tried to seduce him and he wanted to remain chaste, but if he does not do what I command now, he will be put in prison and degraded.*"⁴¹

Facing a choice between going to prison or engaging in adultery, Joseph chose the former. He knew that nothing happens without the will of his Lord, so Joseph called on Him, "*My Lord! I would prefer prison to what these women are calling me to do. If You do not protect me from their treachery, I shall yield to them and do wrong.*"⁴² Allah Almighty answered his prayer and protected him from their treachery.⁴³ Joseph's faith was the reason why the Messenger of Allah (saw) pointed toward Joseph when he was asked about who was the best person among mankind. The Prophet (saw) said that

³⁰ Yusuf, 12:25.

³¹ Yusuf, 12:26.

³² TBI/204, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 204-205.

³³ Yusuf, 12: 26-27.

³⁴ Yusuf, 12:28.

³⁵ Yusuf, 12:29.

³⁶ Yusuf, 12:29.

³⁷ Yusuf, 12:30.

³⁸ Yusuf, 12:31.

³⁹ IT4/285, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 285.

⁴⁰ Yusuf, 12:31.

⁴¹ Yusuf, 12:32.

⁴² Yusuf, 12:33.

⁴³ Yusuf, 12:34.

person would be the one who refrained from sin the most, and then said, that is “Joseph, the Prophet of Allah.”⁴⁴

Although all signs pointed toward Joseph’s innocence, in order to end the waves of gossip and to give the impression that Joseph assaulted his master’s wife,⁴⁵ they thought that they should imprison him for a while.⁴⁶ The Vizier could see no other way of safeguarding the reputation of his name and position. While in prison, Joseph earned the hearts of many in the prison with his honesty, generosity, trustworthiness, and with his ability to interpret dreams. There were two young men who were imprisoned with him. One was the king’s baker and the other was his wine master. These men told Joseph their dreams.⁴⁷ Joseph saw an opportunity to fulfill his mission to call people toward Allah’s path before going on to interpret their dreams. He reminded them they should only worship Allah, Most High, and that the other names they were calling on were idols that were themselves fabricated. He told them that authority belonged to Allah and that they should worship Him alone. He then interpreted their dreams. He said that the baker would be executed and the wine master would continue to serve wine. Joseph turned to the wine master whom he predicted would be saved and told him, “*Mention me to your master.*” But the wine master forgot to do this once he went out of the prison. So Joseph remained in prison for a number of years.⁴⁸ Still, these developments were divinely decreed and our Master, the Prophet (saw), said this about the above episode, “*If Joseph had not relied on someone other than his Lord and if he would not have said, ‘Mention me to your master,’ his time in prison would be much shorter.*”⁴⁹

One night the King of Egypt had a dream that deeply affected him. He dreamt “*about seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones; seven green ears of corn and [seven] others withered.*” When he told his counselors and oracles about this dream they said, “These are confusing dreams and we are not skilled at dream-interpretation.” The wine master who had been released after staying in prison with Joseph was there and he finally remembered Joseph. He asked permission to go and ask Joseph about this dream.⁵⁰ After listening to the dream that was relayed to him, Joseph said, “*You will sow for seven consecutive years as usual. Store all that you reap, left in the ear, apart from the little you eat. After that will come seven years of hardship which will consume all but a little of what you stored up for them; after that will come a year when the people will have abundant rain and will press grapes.*”⁵¹

⁴⁴ B3490, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 1.

⁴⁵ IT4/388, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 387.

⁴⁶ Yusuf, 12:35.

⁴⁷ IT4/388, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 387-388.

⁴⁸ Yusuf, 12:36-42.

⁴⁹ MK11640, al-Tabarani, *sl-Mu'jam sl-Kabir*, XI, 199.

⁵⁰ Yusuf, 12: 43-45.

⁵¹ Yusuf, 12:46-49.

Our Prophet (saw) expressed his bafflement and admiration for Joseph's kindness as he did not refuse to interpret the dream when was approached by his former cell mate, who had not fulfilled Joseph's request and forgot to mention him to the King of Egypt, *"I am amazed at my brother Joseph's grace and patience. May Allah forgive him, he interpreted the dream straight away when he was asked about it; I would not have interpreted it until I was sure I would be released. I am again amazed at his patience and grace. When they came to him to release him, he first inquired about the reason. I would have immediately made my way to the door."*⁵²

The King appreciated Joseph's interpretation of his dream and realized the extent of Joseph's knowledge, intelligence, and foresight. So he ordered his men to go and bring Joseph to him.⁵³ When the envoy arrived to release Joseph and take him to the King, Joseph refused to be released until proven innocent and said, *"Go back to your Master and ask him about what happened to those women who cut their hands."*⁵⁴ Our Master, the Prophet (saw), praised Joseph's patience, saying, *"If I were him, I would have immediately accepted my release and would not have sought any acquittal."*⁵⁵

When the King asked the women what really happened, they said, *"Allah forbid! We know nothing bad of him!"* At this point, the vizier's wife admitted to her fault, *"Now the truth is out: it was I who tried to seduce him—he is an honest man."*⁵⁶ Moreover, Joseph made it clear that his goal was not to seek his own acquittal but rather to show that he did not betray his master behind his back.⁵⁷ The King understood Joseph's loyalty and the degree of his knowledge; he told him he would hold him in favor and put him in high position. Joseph said, *"Put me in charge of the nation's storehouses: I shall manage them prudently and carefully."* The King accepted this request. This is how Joseph, whom the Prophet (saw) praised with the following words was granted an important position by Allah Almighty:⁵⁸ *"The honorable, the son of the honorable, the son of the honorable, (was) Joseph, the son of Jacob! The son of Isaac, the son of Abraham."*⁵⁹

It was also reported that it was around the same time that the vizier, Zulaykha's husband, died. The King married Zulaykha to Joseph and when they married, Joseph told Zulaykha that their marriage was better than what she originally had willed; they had two sons from this marriage.⁶⁰ In the meantime, as Joseph had foreseen, they had a period of abundance in crops for seven consecutive years and, except for the little amount that they

⁵² MK 11640, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*, XI, 199.

⁵³ IT4/393, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 393.

⁵⁴ Yusuf, 12:50.

⁵⁵ HM8535, Ahmad b. Hanbal, II, 346.

⁵⁶ Yusuf, 12:51.

⁵⁷ Yusuf, 12: 52-53.

⁵⁸ Yusuf, 12:54-56.

⁵⁹ BB3390, al-Bukhari, *al-Anbiya'*, 19.

⁶⁰ IT4/396, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 396.

saved for their own consumption, they stored all of the crops. This was followed by seven years of extreme famine. The famine was so drastic that when the Quraysh would torment believers in Mecca, Muhammad (saw) would curse them with the following words: *“Oh Allah, inflict upon them seven years of famine like the seven years of Prophet Joseph.”* So the Quraysh were struck with such a severe famine that it destroyed everything until they had to eat bones.⁶¹

The famine that struck Joseph’s community was not limited to areas surrounding Egypt. It extended to the lands of Canaan where his father, Jacob, and brothers lived. Jacob’s brothers set out for Egypt after they heard that the King was delivering a camel’s load of crops to those who were willing to pay for it.⁶² When Joseph’s brothers presented themselves to Joseph, he recognized them although they did not recognize their younger brother. They presented their situation to Joseph. After he prepared their provision, Joseph said, *“Bring me the brother [you left with] your father! Have you not seen me giving generous measure and being the best of hosts? You will have no more corn from me if you do not bring him to me, and you will not be permitted to approach me.”*⁶³ Joseph’s words were very important because they had also requested provision for their father and for their younger brother Benjamin. Joseph had accepted this request only for one time but he told them they would not get provision for the second time, unless they proved that they were telling the truth.⁶⁴ They said they would try to persuade their father, and Joseph told his servants to place their traded goods back into their saddlebags, so that they might recognize them when they went back to their family, and be eager to return.⁶⁵

When they returned to their father, Jacob, they explained to him that no more grain would be provided to them unless they travelled with their young brother. They said to their father, *“Father, we have been denied any more corn, but send our brother back with us and we shall be given another measure. We shall guard him carefully.”* Jacob responded, *“Am I to entrust him to you as I did his brother before? Allah is the best guardian and the Most Merciful of the merciful.”*⁶⁶ Then, when they opened their packs, they discovered that their goods for which they had received the provisions had been returned to them, they said, *“Father! We need no more [goods to barter]: look, our goods have been returned to us. We shall get corn for our household; we shall keep our brother safe; we shall be entitled to another camel-load of grain—an extra mea-*

⁶¹ B4693, al-Bukhari, Tafsir (Yusuf) 4.

⁶² IT4/396, Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, IV, 397.

⁶³ Yusuf, 12:58-60.

⁶⁴ IT4/396, Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, IV, 398.

⁶⁵ Yusuf, 12: 61-62.

⁶⁶ Yusuf, 12:63-64.

sure so easily achieved!”⁶⁷ Jacob said, “I will never send him with you, not unless you swear by Allah that you will bring him back to me except if you find yourself in an impossible position like being circled by enemy or having left with no other option.”⁶⁸ Then, when they had given him their pledge, he said, “Our words are entrusted to Allah,” and he continued, “My sons, do not enter all by one gate—use different gates. But I cannot help you against the will of Allah: all power is in Allah’s hands. I trust in Him; let everyone put their trust in Him.”⁶⁹

The brothers returned to Egypt, entered by different gates thinking it would help them remain out of sight and protect them against evil eyes, and went to Joseph for the promised provisions.⁷⁰ During this meeting, Joseph took Benjamin aside and revealed that he was his long lost brother by saying, “I am your brother, so do not be saddened by their past actions.” Once he had given them their provisions, Joseph arranged for a drinking-cup to be covertly placed in Benjamin’s bag. Then according to Joseph’s arrangement, someone cried out, “People of the caravan! You are thieves!” and the brothers turned astonished because they were not thieves. They inquired about the stolen item, “What have you lost?”

They were told that, “The king’s drinking-cup is missing. Whoever returns it will get a camel-load of grain.” Joseph’s brothers said, “By Allah! You must know that we did not come to make mischief in your land: we are no thieves.” When they asked them, “And if we find that you are lying, what penalty shall we apply to you?” they answered, “the penalty will be [the enslavement of] the person in whose bag the cup is found: this is how we punish wrongdoers.” Joseph began by searching their bags, then his brother’s, and he pulled the cup from Benjamin’s bag. This gave Joseph the opportunity to keep Benjamin with him. Allah (swt) had devised a plan for Joseph because he could not have detained his brother otherwise under the King’s law.⁷¹ Joseph’s brothers said to Joseph, “Mighty governor, he has an elderly father. Take one of us in his place. We can see that you are a very good man.” Joseph turned down their offer, saying “Allah forbid that we should take anyone other than the person on whom we found our property: that would be unjust of us.”⁷²

When they lost hope of persuading him, they withdrew to confer with each other and the eldest of them said, “Do you not remember that your father took a solemn pledge from you in the name of Allah and before that you failed in your duty with regard to Joseph? I will not leave this land until my father gives me leave or Allah decides for me—He is the best decider.” Then he continued,

⁶⁷ Yusuf, 12:65.

⁶⁸ Yusuf, 12:66.

⁶⁹ Yusuf, 12:66-67.

⁷⁰ IT4/400, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, IV, 400.

⁷¹ Yusuf, 12: 68-76.

⁷² Yusuf, 12:78-79.

*“so go back to your father and say, ‘Your son stole. We can only tell you what we saw. How could we guard against the unforeseen? Ask in the town where we have been; ask the people of the caravan we travelled with: we are telling the truth.’”*⁷³

After listening to them, their father, Jacob, said, *“No! Your souls have prompted you to do wrong! But it is best to be patient: May Allah bring all of them back to me—He alone is the All Knowing, the All Wise,”* and he turned away from them, saying, *“Alas for Joseph!”* His eyes went white with grief and he was filled with sorrow. His sons said, *“By Allah! You will ruin your health if you do not stop thinking of Joseph, or even die.”* Jacob said, *“I plead my grief and sorrow before Allah. I have knowledge from Allah that you do not have My sons, go and seek news of Joseph and his brother and do not despair of Allah’s mercy—only disbelievers despair of Allah’s mercy.”*⁷⁴

When they went back to try to get Benjamin, they presented themselves before Joseph and said, *“Mighty governor, misfortune has afflicted us and our family. We have brought only a little merchandise, but give us full measure. Be charitable to us: Allah rewards the charitable.”* Joseph said, *“Do you now realize what you did to Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant?”* and they cried, *“Could it be that you are Joseph?”* He said, *“I am Joseph. This is my brother. Allah has been gracious to us: Allah does not deny anyone who is mindful of Allah and steadfast in adversity the rewards of those who do good.”* They said, *“By Allah! Allah really did favor you over all of us and we were in the wrong!”* but he said, *“You will hear no reproaches today. May Allah forgive you: He is the Most Merciful of the merciful. Take my shirt and lay it over my father’s face: he will recover his sight. Then bring your whole family back to me.”*⁷⁵

When the caravan departed Egypt, their father, who lived far away in the lands of Canaan, was able to smell Joseph by Allah’s grace and because of his deep longing for Joseph. Although he knew, they would think it strange, he told this to those around him, *“You may think I am senile but I can smell Joseph,”* and the people said, *“By Allah! You are still lost in that old illusion of yours!”* When the caravan returned, Jacob placed Joseph’s shirt on to his face and his eyesight returned. He said, *“Did I not tell you that I have knowledge from Allah that you do not have?”* His sons said, *“Father, ask Allah to forgive our sins—we were truly in the wrong.”* Jacob replied, *“I shall ask my Lord to forgive you: He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”*⁷⁶

Later, when they presented themselves before Joseph, he drew his parents to him and said, *“Welcome to Egypt: you will all be safe here, Allah*

⁷³ Yusuf, 12:80-82.

⁷⁴ Yusuf, 12:83-87.

⁷⁵ Yusuf, 12: 88-93.

⁷⁶ Yusuf, 12: 94-98.

willing,” and took them up to [his] elevated throne. They all bowed down before him and he said, *“Father, this is the fulfillment of that dream I had long ago. My Lord has made it come true...”* He then recounted all of his Lord’s blessings toward him and concluded his words with the following prayer that can be repeated by every Muslim until the end of time, *“Lord! You have given me authority; You have taught me something about the interpretation of dreams; Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Let me die as a Muslim. Join me with the righteous.”*⁷⁷

The story of Joseph, the best of stories, had started with a dream, and it concluded with that dream coming true. The fact that this is the best of stories is not merely because we learned it through the grace of Allah Almighty, or because it tells us about a gracious prophet, or that it is recounted in the Holy Qur’an; it is because it teaches us about the love of Allah (swt) and has many lessons. One cannot compare Jacob’s longing or Zulaykha’s lust to Joseph’s divine love for Allah. This story that tells of Joseph’s rise from the well to the palace is especially relevant for society today. Jacob’s patience and trust in Allah after he was separated from his son; the jealousy and remorse of Joseph’s brothers; the chastity, loyalty, and authority of Joseph who fell victim to jealousy and was thrown down a well; the same Joseph who fell victim to a lie and was thrown into prison although he was innocent; and the same Joseph who was able to leave prison because of his awareness of Allah, patience, and of course the grace of his Lord are examples of these lessons. Still, the best lesson of all is represented in Jacob’s will to his sons, *“My sons, Allah has chosen [your] religion (Islam) for you, so make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment.”*⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Yusuf, 12: 99-101.

⁷⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:132.



PROPHET MOSES and PROPHET AARON TWO BROTHERS IN THE CHAIN OF PROPHETHOOD

إِبْنُ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَرَرْتُ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِي بِي عَلَى مُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ [عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ] رَجُلٌ آدَمُ طَوَالٍ
جَعْدٌ كَأَنَّهُ مِنْ رِجَالِ شَنْوَةَ...”

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “On the night of my night journey I passed by Moses, son of ‘Imran. He was a man light brown in complexion, tall. He had curly hair. He looked like one of the men of the Shanu’a...”

(M419, Muslim, al-Iman, 267)



عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ [رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا] أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ فَوَجَدَ الْيَهُودَ صِيَامًا يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”مَا هَذَا الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي تَصُومُونَهُ؟“ قَالُوا: هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَظِيمٌ أَنْجَى اللَّهُ فِيهِ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ وَغَرَّقَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ فَصَامَهُ مُوسَى شُكْرًا فَنَحْنُ نَصُومُهُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”فَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ وَأَوْلَى بِمُوسَى مِنْكُمْ.“ فَصَامَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
”إِنَّ مُوسَى كَانَ رَجُلًا حَيًّا.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ لَمَّا قَسَمَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ قِسْمَةَ حُنَيْنٍ قَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ مَا أَرَادَ بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ. فَأَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، فَتَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ:
”رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى، لَقَدْ أُوذِيَ بِأَكْثَرٍ مِنْ هَذَا فَصَبَرَ.“



عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا مَا قَالَ: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَوْمًا فَقَالَ:
”عُرِضَتْ عَلَيَّ الْأُمَمُ فَجَعَلَ يَمُرُّ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ مَعَهُ الرَّجُلُ وَالنَّبِيُّ ﷺ مَعَهُ الرَّجُلَانِ، وَالنَّبِيُّ ﷺ مَعَهُ الرَّهْطُ، وَالنَّبِيُّ ﷺ لَيْسَ مَعَهُ أَحَدٌ، وَرَأَيْتُ سَوَادًا كَثِيرًا سَدَّ الْأُفُقَ فَرَجَوْتُ أَنَّ تَكُونُ أُمَّتِي، فَقِيلَ هَذَا مُوسَى وَقَوْمُهُ...“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) came to Medina and saw the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Ashura’. The Prophet (saw) asked them about that. They replied, “This is a good day, the day on which Allah rescued the Israelites from their enemy. So, Moses fasted on this day.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*We have more claim over Moses than you.*” So, the Prophet (saw) fasted on that day and ordered the Muslims to fast on that day

(M2668, Muslim; al-Siyam, 128; B2004, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 69)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Indeed, Moses was a shy man.*”

(B4799, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Ahzab), 11)



‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) reported, “When the Prophet (saw) was distributing the war booty from Hunayn, a man from the Ansar said, ‘He (the Prophet), did not intend to please Allah in this distribution.’ So I went to the Prophet (saw) and informed him of that (statement) whereupon the color of his face changed and he said, ‘*May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses, for he was troubled with more than this, but he remained patient.*’”

(B4335, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi 57)



Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) reported, “the Prophet (saw) once came out to us and said, ‘*Some nations were displayed before me. A prophet would pass in front of me with one man, and another with two men, and another with a group of people. and another with nobody with him. Then I saw a great crowd covering the horizon and I wished that they were my followers, but it was said to me, “This is Moses and his followers.”*”

(B5752, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 42)



The Nile, the source of life for Egypt's burning desert, flowed more rapidly than ever on that day. A woman was in the river up to her knees; she looked steadily at the murky waters. Then she looked one last time at the delightful, innocent face of the child in her arms. As the tears she could not control began to fall and mix with the water of the Nile, she proclaimed to herself, "How can I put my child in the waters of this endless, mighty Nile!"

Still, she had to do it because she knew that if they found him, the Pharaoh's men would kill him without thinking twice about it. Perhaps the Nile could provide a lifeline for her son just as it did for Egypt. Indeed she had received a revelation from Allah, "...*Suckle him, and then, when you fear for his safety, put him in the river: do not be afraid, and do not grieve, for We shall return him to you and make him a messenger.*"¹

She slowly placed her son into the cradle and gently put it onto the water. She was entrusting him to his real owner. Indeed, this was not the last time she would see him. For it was Allah Almighty who had placed this trust, this inspiration, in her heart through His revelation.²

Now the fate of history was moved a bit further down in time and location to Pharaoh's palace. The basket with its precious cargo coursed down the Nile River, passing houses, boats, and people, unnoticed until it stopped at Pharaoh's palace. The Pharaoh's wife Asiya's deploring eyes looked at her husband, pointed with excitement at the little boy that the soldiers were carrying, "*Here is a joy to behold for me and for you! Do not kill him: he may be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son.*"³

Pharaoh recalled a recent dream of his in which he dreamed that a fire that started in the Temple of Jerusalem reached Egypt. But, for whatever reason, that fire had burn through Egypt but had not touched the Israelites. He had asked about this dream to his oracles and sorcerers. They told

¹ Al-Qasas, 28:7.

² Ta Ha, 20: 38-39.

³ Al-Qasas, 28:9; TT19/525, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XIX, 525.

him that the dream meant someone from among the Israelites would come from the Temple of Jerusalem and cause the destruction of Egypt. Alarmed by this interpretation, the Pharaoh took precautions and ordered all male children born to the Israelites to be slaughtered.⁴

At the time the Israelites lived in Egypt, Allah, Most High was testing the ruler of Egypt, the Pharaoh, and his men with bountiful crops, wealth and jewelry and in turn He was testing the Israelites with Pharaoh. Indeed Allah Almighty reminded the Jews of the Prophet's time concerning this episode so that they would learn lessons from it, "*Remember when We saved you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to terrible torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing only your women—this was a great trial from your Lord.*"⁵

This was, indeed, a severe test but it was also during this time that Allah Almighty, with His divine compassion, sent to them the guide who would save them from this persecution. This savior was Moses. Allah had devised a divine rescue for Moses, an Israelite,⁶ who was born during the time when the Israelites were killed at birth. According to this divine plan, his mother would place Moses in the river, the river would wash him onto its shore, and someone who was an enemy of both Allah and Moses would eventually take him from the shore.⁷

It was indeed Asiya's handmaidens who found Moses on the shore of the Nile.⁸ Without doubt, Pharaoh's orders meant that this child of the Israelites also had to be killed but Allah (swt) would introduce someone who had an intuition to the future, someone who stood with the righteous. Pharaoh's wife, Asiya, knew that what was being done to the children of the Israelites was unjust but she kept silent out of fear for her life. It was probably her inner voice that helped her overcome her fear and go face her husband when she heard that a small boy was found on the banks of Nile and that he was being taken to Pharaoh.

It was at this juncture that the divine plan overcame Pharaoh's precaution. Pharaoh spared the little boy's life for her sake despite his dream.⁹ However, neither he nor his men realized "*what they were doing.*"¹⁰ The ever merciful Allah Almighty was aware of the longing of the mother of the child. The mother had barely slept through the night because of her longing and she was about to reveal her secret that she was the mother. But Allah Most High had willed for her to be one of the believers and strength-

⁴ IF6/422, Ibn Hajar *Fath al-Bari*, VI, 422; al-Qasas, 28:4.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 49.

⁶ TB1/232, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 233.

⁷ Ta Ha, 20:38-39.

⁸ TB1/232, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 233.

⁹ TB1/232, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 233.

¹⁰ Al-Qasas, 28: 9.

ened her heart. The mother asked Moses' sister to follow him and she watched him from a distance, without others knowing about her.¹¹

Thus, according to the divine plan, young Moses was now a resident in the Pharaoh's palace. They immediately started to look for wet nurses to breastfeed Moses but Allah Most High ordained that he would refuse to feed from these wet nurses. Right at this moment, Moses' sister approached them and offered to tell them about a household which could bring him up and take good care of him. This person was evidently the mother of Moses. They accepted the offer and thus the mother was reunited with Moses. He was restored to her so that she might be comforted, not grieve, and know that Allah's promise is true.¹²

Moses would live from then on next to his enemy albeit in the warmth of his mother and with the amenities of a palace life. Still, he would always be under the watchful eye of Him, who said, *"I showered you with My love and planned that you should be reared under My watchful eye."*¹³ At this moment he was knowledgeable and intuitive but he had not completely matured. He would be given wisdom and maturity upon reaching manhood.¹⁴

One day while he was walking in the city, Moses witnessed a fight. An Israelite had been fighting an Egyptian. It seems that the Israelite recognized Moses and cried out to him for help. Moses stepped into the fight and struck the Egyptian one ferocious blow. He immediately fell to the ground and died. However, it was the Israelite who had been at fault in this fight. Moses was overcome with grief and immediately asked for forgiveness and prayed to Allah, *"My Lord, because of the blessings You have bestowed upon me, I shall never support those who do evil."*¹⁵ However, the news had spread and the elders of the city condemned Moses to death. When the news reached him, he left the city, fearful and wary. He prayed, *"My Lord, save me from people who do wrong,"*¹⁶ and he set out for the city of Midian, on the eastern shores of the Gulf of 'Aqaba.

When he arrived at the desert oasis of Midian, he saw a few shepherds watering their flocks. He noticed two women and their flock of sheep. They were standing well back, hesitant to approach the waterhole and keeping their flock of sheep back so they would not mix with the flocks of the other shepherds. Moses asked them why they were staying behind. The two young women explained that their father was an old man and the task

¹¹ Al-Qasas, 28: 10-11.

¹² Al-Qasas, 28: 11-13; Ta Ha, 20: 40.

¹³ Ta Ha, 20:39.

¹⁴ Al-Qasas, 28:14

¹⁵ Al-Qasas, 28: 15-17.

¹⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 20-22.

of caring for the sheep was now their responsibility, *"We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take their sheep away: our father is a very old man."* Moses volunteered to take the women's sheep to the waterhole, where he easily pushed in among the men already there. After completing this task, Moses' energy was totally spent. He was hungry and also anxious. He sat under the shade of a tree and began to supplicate Allah, *"My Lord, I am in dire need of whatever good thing You may send me."*¹⁷ When the women returned to their father, who was the Prophet Shu'ayb, and told him of Moses he surmised that Moses must be tired and hungry so he instructed his daughters to invite him. One of the two women returned to Moses. She conducted herself with modesty, shyness, and covered her face and said to Moses, *"My father is asking for you: He wants to reward you for watering our flocks for us."*¹⁸

Consequently, Moses roused himself and accepted the invitation. They sat together and Moses related his story. Shu'ayb allayed his fears and told Moses that he had safely crossed the Egyptian border; he was now in Midian and was safe from any people who may do him wrong. One of the daughters approached her father privately and advised him to hire Moses. She said, *"Father, hire him: a strong, trustworthy man is the best to hire."*¹⁹ Shu'ayb offered Moses the safety and security of his own family. He decided to give him one of his daughters in marriage on the condition that he work for eight years, or ten if Moses agreed to stay on for further two years. In the Holy Qur'an it is reported that he said to Moses, *"I would like to marry you to one of these daughters of mine, on condition that you serve me for eight years: if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will. I do not intend to make things difficult for you: Allah willing, you will find I am a fair man."*²⁰ Moses accepted his offer.²¹ This is how Moses made a deal with Shu'ayb to work for him for eight or ten years in return for food and marrying one of his daughters.²²

After Moses had completed his term of service that he had pledged to his father-in-law, he was overcome by homesickness. He began to miss his family and the land of Egypt which he had left quite a time ago. Even though he was afraid of what would happen if he returned, he experienced a strange longing to return to the land of his birth. Moses gathered his family together and made the long journey back to Egypt. While Moses and his family were trekking back across the desert, they became lost. It

¹⁷ Al-Qasas, 28: 24.

¹⁸ DM672, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 56; al-Qasas, 28: 23-25.

¹⁹ Al-Qasas, 28: 25-26.

²⁰ Al-Qasas, 28:27.

²¹ Al-Qasas, 28:28.

²² IM2444, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 5.

was then during a cold dark night that Moses saw what appeared to be a fire burning in the distance on Mount Tur (Sinai). He told his family to stay where they were. He had hopes of either getting directions or being able to carry some fire back to warm his family.²³ Whereas he found something completely unexpected, he walked toward the fire, and, as he did, he heard a voice, “Moses, I am Allah, the Lord of the Worlds”²⁴ and “I have chosen you for Myself!”²⁵ So the time had come when Allah Most High would once again send a messenger to stand against a world full of polytheism, disbelief, injustice, and tyranny and Moses was the blessed chosen person for this task.

Was he not indeed brought up for this exact mission and there it was, the revelation, the sign of prophethood! Allah Most High had spoken to him, had told him he would be His prophet and had shown him His miracles. His Lord had told Moses, “Throw down your staff!”²⁶ When Moses saw his staff moving like a snake, he fled in fear and shock. He started to move away in fear when Allah (swt) said to him, “Moses! Draw near! Do not be afraid, for you are one of those who are safe. Put your hand inside your shirt and it will come out white but unharmed—hold your arm close to your side, free from all fear...”^{27 28}

The Lord of the Worlds had also decreed against whom Moses would use these miracles. “We sent Moses with Our signs and clear authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah...”²⁹ Allah, Most High, ordered Moses to go to Pharaoh first and to resort to his miracles if need be, “Go to Pharaoh, for he has truly become a tyrant.”³⁰ Moreover Allah said to Moses, “These [miracles] shall be two signs from your Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs; they are truly wicked people.”³¹

Moses had a heavy, yet sacred, burden on his shoulders; he pleaded for assistance from his Lord to better fulfill his mission; He asked Allah (swt) to open his chest, to make his task easy and to grant him eloquence, self-confidence, and contentment by loosening the knot from his tongue. Furthermore, perhaps, most importantly, he called upon Allah to strengthen him with a trusted and capable Companion in prophethood, his brother Aaron.³² The answer was to his satisfaction, “Moses, your request is granted.”³³

Indeed, out of his grace, Allah Almighty granted Moses his brother Aaron as a prophet.³⁴ Henceforth, Allah counted Aaron among other

²³ Al-Qasas, 28:29.

²⁴ Al-Qasas, 28:30.

²⁵ Ta Ha, 20:41.

²⁶ Al-Qasas, 28:31.

²⁷ Al-Qasas, 28:31-32.

²⁸ Ta Ha, 20:17-22.

²⁹ Al-Ghafir, 40:23-24.

³⁰ Ta Ha, 20:24.

³¹ Al-Qasas, 28:32.

³² Al-Qasas, 28:25-35.

³³ Ta Ha, 20:36.

³⁴ Maryam, 19:53.

prophets,³⁵ he was given guidance,³⁶ and he was bestowed with His favors.³⁷ Alongside Moses, Aaron is also given a scripture that distinguished right from wrong, a light, and a reminder for those who are mindful of Allah.³⁸

Allah Almighty bestowed gifts upon Moses in addition to Aaron. This blessing involved inner peace and confidence in his ability to fulfill his mission. Allah (swt) said, *“We shall strengthen you through your brother; We shall give you both power so that they cannot touch you. With Our signs you, and those who follow you, will triumph”*³⁹ and *“Do not be afraid, I am with you both, hearing and seeing everything.”*⁴⁰ According to some reports the Prophet (saw) said, *“On the day Allah spoke to him, Moses wore a wool dress, a wool cloak, a wool hat and trousers made of wool. His shoes were made out of donkey leather...”*⁴¹

When Moses went to the throne of Pharaoh, Moses first said to him, *“Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of all the Worlds,”*⁴² and pointed out to him that his duty was to *“say nothing about Allah but the truth.”*⁴³ Is this not the main duty of all messengers? As a matter of fact, on the day Allah gave him revelation at Mount Tur, Allah Almighty reminded Moses of this and asked him to tell his interlocutors that, *“I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me. The Hour is coming—though I choose to keep it hidden—for each soul to be rewarded for its labor. Do not let anyone who does not believe in it and follows his own desires distract you from it, and so bring you to ruin.”*⁴⁴

These guidelines highlighted by Allah, Most High, are there to limit our inner desires, to change the view that sees life as composed only of this worldly life and to replace it with a viewpoint that would bring forward the notions of truth, law, and justice, to always bear in mind that we will be held accountable for every single step we take in life. But, was it conceivable to think that Pharaoh, who came from generations of rulers who for centuries ruled their own world with a claim to godhood, would accept the rule of Allah who said he was “the Truth” and “the only One”? Pharaoh began by mocking Moses and then accused him of ingratitude and finally he threatened him; convinced that he would defeat and humiliate him, he asked Moses to show miracles in order to demonstrate that he was indeed sent by Allah. Allah (swt) had prepared Moses for this request. Moses quickly showed the miracles of the “white hand” and the “staff.” However,

³⁵ Al-Nisa', 4:163.

³⁶ Al-An'am, 6:84.

³⁷ Al-Saffat, 37:114.

³⁸ Al-Anbiya', 21:48.

³⁹ Al-Qasas, 28:35.

⁴⁰ Ta Ha, 20:46.

⁴¹ T1734, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 10.

⁴² Al-A'raf, 7:104.

⁴³ Al-A'raf, 7: 105

⁴⁴ Ta Ha, 20:14-16.

Pharaoh claimed Moses was now a learned sorcerer and that the manifest signs Moses was able to show by the permission of Allah were magic and illusions that were performed to drive the people out of their lands.⁴⁵

Heeding the advice of his councilors, Pharaoh summoned the country's sorcerers to respond to Moses in kind. A contest was set up between Moses and the Egyptian magicians. In an effort to prove that Moses was lying, he made him compete with his most talented sorcerers. Still, the result would not be what Pharaoh wanted; Moses' staff would swallow the illusions of those sorcerers who merely played a trick on the eye. The result was striking. The sorcerers quickly understood that what they were facing was not sorcery and they collectively fell in prostration declaring their belief in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron. Once Moses and Aaron left, the magicians, as it is told, were put to death. Pharaoh ordered the hands and feet of the sorcerers to be cut off diagonally and he had them hung because they had professed faith in Allah Most High without his blessings.⁴⁶

The tension was high and troubled days would follow one after another. Pharaoh initiated yet another phase of oppression and terror against the Israelites.⁴⁷ In response, Moses appeased the believers and told them, *"Turn to Allah for help and be steadfast: the earth belongs to Allah—He gives it as their own to whichever of His servants He chooses—and the happy future belongs to those who are mindful of Him."*⁴⁸ But they complained to Moses, *"We were being persecuted long before you came to us, and since then too."* He cautioned his people, *"Your Lord may well destroy your enemy and make you successors to the land to see how you behave,"*⁴⁹ and *"My people, if you have faith in Allah and are devoted to Him, put your trust in Him."*⁵⁰ At the same time, he put the matter of Pharaoh and his men, about whom he had no hope left in regards to their salvation, to Allah Most High, *"And Moses said, 'Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor and wealth in this present life and here they are, Lord, leading others astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they see the agonizing torment.' Allah said, 'Your prayers are answered, so stay on the right course, and do not follow the path of those who do not know.'"*⁵¹

Finally, the long-awaited good news arrived and Allah (swt) called to his messengers, *"Your prayers are answered, so stay on the right course, and do not follow the path of those who do not know."*⁵² He then ordered Moses, *"Go*

⁴⁵ Al-Shu'ara', 26:18-34.

⁴⁶ Al-A'raf, 7:111-125; Ta Ha, 20:-62-71; TB1/245, al-Tabari, Ta'rikh, I, 245.

⁴⁷ Al-A'raf, 7: 127

⁴⁸ Al-A'raf, 7: 128.

⁴⁹ Al-A'raf, 7: 129.

⁵⁰ Yunus, 10:84.

⁵¹ Yunus, 10:88.

⁵² Yunus, 10:89.

*out at night with My servants and strike a dry path for them across the sea. Have no fear of being overtaken and do not be dismayed.”*⁵³

Pharaoh heard that the Israelites had set out on their journey during the night. Gathering the army took all night and Pharaoh’s army did not leave the confines of the city until dawn. It was not long before the Israelites could look back into the distance and see the dust raised by the approaching army. It was also not long before those in the front ranks of the Israelites had reached the edge of the Red Sea. The distance between the two parties was closing by the minute. And then, thinking this was the end for them and that they had chosen wrongly, the Israelites turned to Moses and lamented, *“We shall definitely be caught.”*⁵⁴ But Allah’s messenger had absolute faith in the divine will and said, *“No! My Lord is with me; He will guide me.”*⁵⁵ Indeed, his patience and trust would not go unanswered; Allah Most High spoke to Moses and said, *“Strike the sea with your staff!”*⁵⁶

As soon as Moses struck the water of the sea with his staff yet another miracle occurred, right before the eyes of the Israelites. The sea parted in half right in the middle, each side like a mighty mountain. Hence, the “dry path” that Allah speaks of in the Holy Qur’an appeared. Moses and his followers entered this “path of salvation.” Startled initially at this sight, Pharaoh and his army followed them swiftly across the dry seabed. When the last of the Israelites reached the other side, Pharaoh and his army were still marching swiftly toward them on this miraculous pathway.⁵⁷ Right at that moment the sea, just as it had parted under Allah’s orders, merged and drowned the Pharaoh and his army. Thus, the long years of suffering by Moses and the Israelites through the hands of a tyrant who was drowned under mighty waves came to an end. The curtain had finally fallen on Pharaoh’s tyranny.⁵⁸

However, the Israelites would soon forget about Allah Almighty, who had freed them from the tyranny of Pharaoh and had given them countless blessings. The first signs of this forgetfulness appeared soon after the crossing of the sea. As they set out on their journey, they came upon a people who both made and worshipped idols. It was reported that they said, “Moses, make a god for us like theirs.” To Moses these words spoken by his people were a sign that even more difficult challenges awaited in the future. In response to this request Moses reprimanded them for their words and reminded them, once again, about the supreme majesty of Allah.⁵⁹

⁵³ Ta Ha, 20:77; al-Shuara, 26:52.

⁵⁴ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 52-61.

⁵⁵ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 52-62.

⁵⁶ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 52-63.

⁵⁷ TBI/249, al-Tabari, *Ta’rikh*, I, 249.

⁵⁸ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 52-66.

⁵⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:138-140.

Allah, Most High, requests mankind to follow the principles that He himself has decreed for them. Thus, Allah (swt) summoned Moses to Mount Tur in order to convey to him these principles and His warnings that would secure his people happiness both in the worldly realm and in the Hereafter. Before Moses left for Mount Tur he appointed his brother Aaron as a leader over his people.⁶⁰ In the period of forty days Moses experienced the privilege to speak to Allah, an extraordinary blessing that only a handful of prophets ever enjoyed. Although, Allah Most High did not grant Moses His request to see him, He gave Moses the tablets of the Torah which included His divine orders.⁶¹ As this was taking place on Mount Tur, the Israelites were in the midst of fashioning an idol shaped as a calf and worshipping it.⁶² Moses returned to his people to convey to them Allah's guidance and faced this unexpected turn of events. Furious and aggrieved, he said to them, "How foul and evil is what you have done in my absence! Were you so keen to bring your Lord's Judgement forward?" He then turned to his brother Aaron to take him to account; he was angry and grabbed him by the beard, at the same time he pulled Aaron toward him by the head. He bellowed at his brother demanding that Aaron explain why he disobeyed the instructions he had given him. Aaron told Moses that the people had overpowered him and almost killed him and spoke in detail about his innocence. In response, Moses sought his Lord's mercy and prayed for his and Aaron's forgiveness.⁶³

Moses' struggle against the Israelites was a long, arduous road full of unforgettable lessons. As Allah Almighty's messenger, Moses reminded his people about the principles that order the relationship between the Holy Creator and mankind. In the Holy Qu'ran, Allah mentions that Moses was given commandments,⁶⁴ which were found in the messages of all of Allah's prophets, except for a few that are specific to the Israelites. When the Jews asked the Prophet (saw) thousands of year later about the commandments that were revealed to Moses, he said, "*Do not take partners with Allah; do not steal; do not fornicate. Do not take the life that was made impermissible by Allah without a valid reason; do not take an innocent person to the rulers for him to be killed; do not engage in magic; do not engage in usury; do not accuse virtuous women of fornication; do not escape from the battle field. And, specifically for you Jews, do not violate the prohibitions specific to Saturdays.*"⁶⁵

⁶⁰ TB1/249, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 250.

⁶¹ Al-A'raf, 7:143-145.

⁶² Al-A'raf, 7:148.

⁶³ Al-A'raf, 7:150-151.

⁶⁴ Al-Isra', 17:101.

⁶⁵ T2733, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 33.

Therefore, Moses, who spent all his life struggling against disbelief and injustice, and his closest aide and brother Aaron, are found in the history of prophets as friends of Allah (swt), who led a nation to salvation all the while facing obstacles resulting from the actions of their own people. Since all the episodes of Moses' life are full of important lessons, Allah Almighty and his Prophet (saw) frequently gave references to Moses' life. In fact, Moses is the prophet who is mentioned the most in the Holy Qur'an. Moses is a testament to the tahwid; he is the prophet to whom Allah (swt) spoke directly and the one who remembered his Creator with every breath.

Ibn 'Abbas (ra) reported the following description of Moses by the Messenger of Allah (saw), who saw him on the night journey (Isra'): *"On the night of my night journey I passed by Moses, son of 'Imran. He was a man light brown in complexion, tall. He had curly hair. He looked like one of the men of the Shanu'a..."*⁶⁶ and, in another instance, he said, while passing through the Azraq Valley, *"It is as if I am seeing Moses coming down from the mountain track, and he is calling upon Allah loudly (saying: Here I am at your service!)"*⁶⁷

Throughout history there have been Muslims who have shown the greatest of veneration for Moses, especially for his exemplary struggle on the side of faith against the Pharaoh. Indeed, when the Prophet (saw) arrived in Medina and saw that the Jews of Medina were observing the fast on the day of 'Ashura', he asked them the reason for this. They said, "This is a good day, the day on which Allah rescued the Israelites from their enemy. So, Moses fasted on this day." The Prophet (saw) said, *"We have more claim over Moses than you."* So, the Prophet (saw) fasted on that day and ordered the Muslims to fast on that day.⁶⁸

Our Prophet often emphasized how beloved Moses and Aaron were to his heart. For example, when he left on campaign, 'Ali (ra), whom he designated as a deputy in his absence, started to shed tears and upon seeing this, the Prophet (saw) consoled him by drawing a parallel between him and the case of Moses and Aaron. On that day when 'Ali said to the Prophet (saw), "Are you leaving me behind with women and children who stay behind?" The Prophet (saw) replied, *"Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me?"*⁶⁹ Likewise, when the Prophet (saw) gave an example to discourage shamelessness he referenced the case of Moses by saying, *"Indeed, Moses was a shy man."*⁷⁰

⁶⁶ M419, Muslim, al-Iman, 267; B3239, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 7.

⁶⁷ M420, Muslim, al-Iman, 268.

⁶⁸ M2658, Muslim, al-Siyam, 128; al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 69.

⁶⁹ HM1463, Ibn Hanbal, 1, 171; NS8432, al-Nasa'i, al-Sunan al-Kubra, V, 120.

⁷⁰ B4799, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab), 11; M6147, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 156.

Allah's Messenger also reminisced and gave references to Moses when he faced difficulties from his people. When he learned that one of the Medinan Companions of the Ansar disputed his distribution of the booty won in the Battle of Hunayn, the color of the Prophet (saw)'s face changed and he said, *"May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses, for he was troubled with more than this, but he remained patient."*⁷¹

In addition, Allah's Messenger mentioned the nation of Moses in several other of his traditions. For example, in one instance he told his Companions (ra) that he was shown the scene of the Day of Judgement, *"Some nations were displayed before me. A prophet would pass in front of me with one man, and another with two men, and another with a group of people and another with nobody with him. Then I saw a great crowd covering the horizon and I wished that they were my followers, but it was said to me, 'This is Moses and his followers.'"*⁷²

In another instance, the Prophet (saw) told his Companions (ra) that he would be the first person to raise his head after the second blowing of the trumpet. He then added: *"(after raising my head) I will see Moses holding the Throne, and I will not know whether he had been in that state all the time or after the blowing of the trumpet."*⁷³

Moses and his brother Aaron were two great heroes in the struggle for truth and justice which has continued since the creation of the universe. They were two brothers in the chain of prophethood. Their noble, dignified, and patient stance against a powerful figure such as the Pharaoh was admirable. These two prophets never ceased inviting their people to the path of truth despite their betrayal; they joined together to make sure that people's hearts would have belief in Allah (swt). The injustice and evils against which they struggled continue to exist today, although perhaps in different forms. In other words, Moses and Aaron were two historical figures whom we should ponder and take as examples, and we should not absently allow them to be lost on the shelves of history.

⁷¹ B4335, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 57.

⁷² B5752, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 42; M527, Muslim, al-Iman, 374.

⁷³ B4813, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Zumar), 4.



PROPHET DAVID and PROPHET SOLOMON THE PROPHET KINGS



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”خَفَّفَ عَلَى دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ الْقُرْآنَ فَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ بِدَوَابِّهِ فَتُسَرَّجُ، فَيَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ قَبْلَ
أَنْ تُسَرَّجَ دَوَابُّهُ، وَلَا يَأْكُلُ إِلَّا مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) (saw) said, “The reciting of the Zabur (Psalms) was made easy for David. He used to order that his riding animals be saddled, and while they were being saddled he would be able to finish reciting the Zabur before they were saddled. And he would never eat except from the earnings of his manual work.”

(B3417, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 37)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مَا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَحَبُّ الصِّيَامِ إِلَى اللَّهِ صِيَامُ دَاوُدَ كَانَ يَصُومُ نِصْفَ الدَّهْرِ وَأَحَبُّ
الصَّلَاةِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ صَلَاةُ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَانَ يَرْقُدُ شَطْرَ
الَّيْلِ ثُمَّ يَقُومُ ثُمَّ يَرْقُدُ آخِرَهُ...”



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَنَّ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنَ دَاوُدَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ لَمَّا بَنَى بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ سَأَلَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خِلَالَ
ثَلَاثَةِ سَأَلِ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حُكْمًا يُصَادِفُ حُكْمَهُ فَأُوتِيَهُ وَسَأَلَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَأُوتِيَهُ وَسَأَلَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حِينَ فَرَغَ مِنْ بِنَاءِ
الْمَسْجِدِ أَنْ لَا يَأْتِيَهُ أَحَدٌ لَا يَنْهَزُهُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةُ فِيهِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَهُ مِنْ خَطِئَتِهِ
كَيَوْمٍ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.”



عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”كَانَ مِنْ دُعَاءِ دَاوُدَ يَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ
حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنْ الْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ.”



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*With Allah the best fasting is that of David. He would fast half of the year. And
the best prayer is that of David for he slept half of the night and then he stood
for prayer and (then) slept for the reminder of it...*”

(M2740, Muslim, al-Siyam, 190)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*After Solomon, son of David, finished building Bayt al-Maqdis, he asked Allah
for three things: (First) Judgement that was in harmony with His Judgement,
and he was given that. (Second) he asked Allah for a dominion that no one after
him would have, and he was given that. And (third), when he finished building
the Masjid, he asked that ‘no one should come to it, intending only to pray there,
but he would emerge free of sin as the day his mother bore him.’”*

(N694, al-Nasa’i, al-Masajid, 6)



According to Abu al-Darda’ (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*It
used to be from the supplication of David that he would say, ‘O Allah, indeed, I
ask You for Your love and the love of those who love You, and for the action that
will cause me to attain Your love, O Allah, make Your love more beloved to me
than myself, my family and cold water.’”*

(T3490, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 72)



It was one of the most difficult prospects in the history of the world; a small group of people were face to face with an army that was exponentially larger in number and much more powerful. Under the command of king Talut (Saul), the Israelites were marching against the unjust king Goliath.

When King Talut left Jerusalem, and set out with his forces, he said to them, *“Allah will test you with a river. Anyone who drinks from it will not belong with me, but anyone who refrains from tasting it will belong with me; if he scoops up just one handful (he will be excused).”*¹ Still, when they arrived at the river, *“they all drank [deep] from it, except for a few.”* Eventually when King Talut and those who had kept the faith crossed the river, (those who had drunk from the river) said, *“We have no strength today against Goliath and his warriors.”* But those who knew that they were going to meet their Lord said, *“How often a small force has defeated a large army with Allah’s permission! Allah is with those who are steadfast.”*² And, despite their decreasing numbers, when they met Goliath and his warriors, they genuinely implored their Lord for assistance by saying, *“Our Lord, pour patience on us, make us stand firm, and help us against the disbelievers.”*³ (In response,) Allah Almighty, who had said in his Holy Book, *“Call on Me and I will answer you,”*⁴ did not leave them alone against the unjust King Goliath. *“And so with Allah’s permission they defeated them. David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him sovereignty and wisdom and taught him what He pleased.”*⁵ As a result, David became the first prophet who was granted both kingship and prophethood.⁶

David was the eleventh-generation grandchild of the prophet Isaac.⁷ He is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as *Dawūd* or *Dawīd*. He lived before the Common Era between the years 1015-975 in the areas surrounding Palestine and he ruled over the Israelites according to the Commandments revealed to Moses. Jewish literature contains a vast amount of information

¹ Al-Baqara, 2:249.

² Al-Baqara, 2:249.

³ Al-Baqara, 2:250.

⁴ Ghafir, 40:60.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:251.

⁶ “Da’ud,” *DīA*, IX, 22.

⁷ ST1/54, Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, I, 54.

on David. Some of this information has become part of Muslim culture through certain works of history and reports from the traditions of the Prophet (saw). Yet, much of this information is not in harmony with one of the prophetic qualities shared by all prophets according to Islam, the quality of *'iṣma*, the Muslim belief that the prophets were protected by Allah (swt) from sinning. This is why believers should follow the teachings which are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and in the traditions of the Prophet (saw) which have an unbroken and strong chain of transmission. An example of a distorted report on David is a story that is mentioned in the Old Testament and in some of the Muslim exegetical works, which claim that David laid eyes on the wife of one of his commanders. Some claim that this purported incident is related to the following verses:

*"(O Muhammad,) Have you heard the story of the two litigants who climbed into his private quarters? When they reached David, he took fright, but they said, 'Do not be afraid. We are two litigants, one of whom has wronged the other: judge between us fairly— do not be unjust— and guide us to the right path. This is my brother. He had ninety-nine ewes and I just the one, and he said, "Let me take charge of her," and overpowered me with his words.' David said, 'He has done you wrong by demanding to add your ewe to his flock. Many partners treat each other unfairly. Those who sincerely believe and do good deeds do not do this, but these are very few.' [Then] David realized that We had been testing him, and so he asked his Lord for forgiveness, fell down on his knees, and repented."*⁸

Some reports seek to establish a link between David's kneeling on the ground and asking repentance for a major sin that he allegedly committed. It is claimed that David, who had ninety-nine wives, intended to seize this wife of his commander, which would make the number of his wives a complete hundred. This claim has found its place in some Muslim sources⁹ despite the fact that it does not come to us through an unbroken chain of transmission.¹⁰ Moreover this story contradicts the true character of Prophet David about whom the Holy Qur'an mentions laudatory words and our Master the Prophet said, *"He was foremost among people in worship to Allah."*¹¹

The word "David" carries the meaning of "the most beloved" and "the apple of one's eye" in Hebrew.¹² It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an sixteen times. It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, in addition to the story referenced above, that David was given the book of Psalms,¹³ and in the Holy

⁸ Saad, 38: 21-24.

⁹ TT21/181, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XXI, 181.

¹⁰ IT7.60, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, VII, 60.

¹¹ T3490, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Da'awat*, 72.

¹² "Da'ud," *DIA*, IX, 21.

¹³ Al-Nisa', 4:163.

Qur'an it is stated, "We wrote in the Psalms, as We did in [earlier] Scripture: 'My righteous servants will inherit the earth.'" ¹⁴ The Holy Qur'an also mentions that because of Allah's benevolent graciousness, David had the ability to soften iron ¹⁵ and make coats of mail, ¹⁶ that he was a man of strength who always turned to Allah ¹⁷ (swt) who strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and a decisive way of speaking, ¹⁸ and that he was granted knowledge. ¹⁹

Our Master the Prophet sometimes referenced the lives of other prophets in order to provide moral lessons to his Companions (ra). David was one of those prophets who was often referenced by Muhammad (saw). Noticeable in the reported traditions of the Prophet (saw) are details about David's work life and his habits of worship. For example, Muhammad (saw) said that both Moses and David worked as shepherds, just like himself. ²⁰ In another tradition, our Master said the following about David's trade and how he earned a living: "The reciting of the Zabur (Psalms) was made easy for David. He used to order that his riding animals be saddled, and while they were being saddled he would be able to finish reciting the Zabur before they were saddled. And he would never eat except from the earnings of his manual work." ²¹ In another tradition the Prophet (saw) gave the example of David earning his own living, despite the fact that he was a king, as an ideal for those who seek to provide permissible sustenance: "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor." ²² Similarly, in some traditions we find mention of specific personal virtues of David. One of these was the beauty of David's melodious voice. This is why an enchanting, beautiful voice in the Muslim world is described as "Davidian." There were individuals with Davidian voices in the time of Allah's Messengers as well. One night the Prophet (saw) heard a beautiful recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) and he complimented him in the following way: "If you could have seen me as I was listening to your recitation (of the Holy Qur'an) last night! You are in fact endowed with a sweet voice like that of David, Prophet of Allah, himself." ²³

Our beloved Prophet often mentioned David with reference to his worship to Allah (swt) and he gave David as an example to his Companions (ra). The Messenger of Allah said, "With Allah the best fasting is that of David. He would fast half of the year. And the best prayer in the station of Allah

¹⁴ Al-Anbiya', 21:105.

¹⁵ Saba', 34:10.

¹⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21:80.

¹⁷ Saad, 38:17.

¹⁸ Saad, 38:20.

¹⁹ Al-Naml, 27:15.

²⁰ EM 577, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 202.

²¹ B3417, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 37.

²² B2072, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 15.

²³ M1852, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 236.

is that of David for he slept half of the night and then he stood for prayer and (then) slept for the remainder of it..."²⁴ He gave David's acts of worship as an example to those among his Companions (ra) who wanted to increase their worship of Allah. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr was one of these Companions (ra). When he told the Prophet that he wanted to observe the fast on all days of the year and stand for prayer every night, our Master responded to him by saying, "*Fast as David, Allah's Messenger, did; no fasting is superior to the fasting of David.*" When 'Abd Allah asked the the Prophet how David observed the fast, the Prophet said David would fast every other day, hence observing the fast for half a year.²⁵

In the tenth century before the Common Era, Allah Almighty bestowed a son on David whom David named Solomon, which was synonymous with the word "*sālim*" which means "correct, truthful, perfect." Solomon is praised in the Holy Qur'an in the following words: "He was an excellent servant who always turned to Allah."²⁶ It is also mentioned that he would have a high station and a good future.²⁷ Moreover, Solomon was bestowed with rare blessings that amounted to divine praise. He was a Prophet who was given knowledge.²⁸ He was taught the speech of the birds.²⁹ He understood the language of the ants.³⁰ The wind³¹ and the *jinn*³² were governed³³ by him. And he was given a share of everything.³⁴

Jewish literature contains a diverse set of information about Solomon, as in the case of David. Although the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet transmitted to us through a strong chain of transmission do not contain detailed accounts about Solomon, his solutions to judicial matters are covered in the Qur'anic verses and in the traditions of the Prophet. For instance, it is reported that two men who were in a dispute came to David and Solomon's court and is recounted in the Holy Qur'an in the following way: "*And remember David and Solomon, when they gave Judgement regarding the field into which sheep strayed by night and grazed. We witnessed their Judgement.*"³⁵ In this instance one man had a flock of sheep that strayed overnight into the field of another man and had caused damage. Both men came to King David for Judgement. King David argued that the value of the sheep should match the value of the damage done to the field. Thus he ruled that the sheep be given to the owner of the field. However, Solomon offered a different opinion. He suggested that the owner of the sheep be given the field and the owner of the field be given the sheep.³⁶ He argued

²⁴ Muslim, al-Siyam, 190.

²⁵ B6227, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 38.

²⁶ Saad, 38:30.

²⁷ Saad, 38:40.

²⁸ Al-Naml, 27:15.

²⁹ Al-Naml, 27:16.

³⁰ Al-Naml, 27:18.

³¹ Al-Anbiya', 21:81.

³² Al-Naml, 27:17.

³³ NM4140, Hakim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 1551 (2/589).

³⁴ Al-Naml, 27:16.

³⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21:78.

³⁶ NM4138, Hakim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 1550 (2/588).

that the owner of the sheep should take the field to cultivate until it was brought back to its previous, undamaged condition, while the other man should take the sheep and make use of their wool, milk, and the lambs until his field was repaired. If the field returned to its former state, then the field owner should take his field and give back the sheep to their owner. Upon hearing Solomon's reasoning, David accepted his son's wise counsel and adjudicated the case accordingly.

It is well known that Solomon stood apart even as a child because of his judicious command over matters. Once he was faced with the case of two women, each of whom had an infant. A wolf had come and taken away the infant child of one of them, whereupon the other had said, "It has taken your child," The first woman said, "But it has taken your child." So they both brought the case before King David who judged that the living child be given to the lady who was older. Following this ruling both women went to Solomon and informed him (of the case). He said, "Bring me a sword, the baby will be cut in two, each woman will receive half." The younger woman said, "May Allah be merciful to you! Give the baby to her, just do not kill him." Thus, Solomon declared the younger woman to be the rightful mother since a mother would even give up her baby to save its life. In this way Solomon was able to reverse King David's Judgement.³⁷

It was reported that King David had requested Solomon to finish the construction of the temple that he had started to build in Jerusalem after his death.³⁸ King Solomon fulfilled his father's will and built first Bayt al-Maqdis and then a spectacular palace in Jerusalem. He was full of peace for fulfilling his father's request and felt the inner-peace of building a temple that would become a house of Allah. After finishing the construction of the temple, he expressed his gratefulness to Allah with the following words, "Lord forgive me! Grant me such power as no one after me will have—You are the Most Generous Provider."³⁹

Our Prophet said Solomon asked Allah (swt) for three things and he described these in the following way: *"After Solomon, son of David, finished building Bayt al-Maqdis, he asked Allah for three things: (First) Judgement that was in harmony with His Judgement, and he was given that. (Second) he asked Allah for a dominion that no one after him would have, and he was given that. And (third), when he finished building the Masjid, he asked that 'no one should come to it, intending only to pray there, but he would emerge free of sin as the*

³⁷ B3427, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 40; M4495, Muslim, al-Aqdiya, 20; HM8263, Ahmad b. Hanbal, II, 322.

³⁸ TB1/285, al-Tabari, Ta'rikh, I, 285.

³⁹ Saad, 38:35.

day his mother bore him.”⁴⁰ In another report on this tradition of the Prophet (saw), it is mentioned that the the Prophet added, “*The first two of Solomon’s requests were granted to him and I hope he was granted the third.*”⁴¹

Solomon had such dominance over the affairs of his time that it was impossible for anyone who witnessed this to not be impressed. The rule he had built with his army formed by *jinn*, humans, and birds⁴² was not granted to anyone else throughout history. Solomon’s palace was built using the most advanced technique of his time and wonderful pieces of art were placed there with an impeccable sense of aesthetics. Anyone who saw the palace was in awe of it. Bilqis, the queen of Sheba, was one of those who deeply admired the magnificence of Solomon’s kingdom.

Solomon had learned about Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, through the word carried by Hudhud, a hoopoe which was a member of his army, “*But the hoopoe did not stay away long: he came and said, ‘I have learned something you did not know: I come to you from Sheba with firm news. I found a woman ruling over the people, who has been given a share of everything—she has a magnificent throne—[but] I found that she and her people worshipped the sun instead of Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem alluring to them, and diverted them from the right path: they cannot find the right path.*”⁴³

Upon receiving this news, Solomon sent the sun-worshipping people of Sheba a letter, which began with the words, “*In the name of Allah, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy,*”⁴⁴ to invite them to the straight path and to call them to submit to his rule. In his letter Solomon said to Bilqis, “*Do not put yourselves above me, and come to me in submission to Allah.*”⁴⁵ Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, was startled to see Solomon’s request to submit all her dominion to him. She discussed her options with the elders of her lands. She did not want her country to be destroyed in a potential war, so she decided to send gifts to Solomon and to await the news that would be brought back by her envoys. However, just like all other prophets who always chose earning Allah’s pleasure over any material possession and gain, Solomon returned Bilqis’ gifts and he said the following words that underlined how decisive, dignified, and attached to Allah he was: “*What! Are you offering me wealth? What Allah has given me is better than what He has given you, though you rejoice in this gift of yours.*”⁴⁶

King Solomon, in his letter to Bilqis, which started with the name of Allah, had informed Queen Bilqis that his power originated in the divine

⁴⁰ N694, al-Nasa’i, al-Masajid, 6.

⁴¹ IM1408, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 196.

⁴² NM4140, al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 1551 (2/589); al-Naml, 27:17.

⁴³ Al-Naml, 27:22-24.

⁴⁴ Al-Naml, 27:30.

⁴⁵ Al-Naml, 27:31.

⁴⁶ Al-Naml, 27:36-37.

realm and that his force was not one they could resist. Rather than taking offense at Solomon's words and actions, the Queen of Sheba consulted her advisers and decided to visit Solomon's palace where she saw unprecedented riches. When she entered the hall paved with glass she thought it was a deep pool of water and bared her legs to make sure they would not get wet. Seeing this, King Solomon said to her, *"It is just a hall paved with glass,"* and Bilqis responded to this by saying, *"My Lord, I have wronged myself: I devote myself, with Solomon, to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."*⁴⁷ Bilqis immediately renounced sun worship and vowed to accept the teaching of Allah and encourage her people to do the same.

It was said that the grandiosity and beauty of the palace of Solomon reflected his power and wealth. Queen Bilqis was taken aback by these wonders but her astonishment grew even more when she saw her own throne in Solomon's palace. She thought to herself, "How could my own throne that I left in my palace be here, in King Solomon's palace?" Solomon had asked the following of his counselors before Bilqis arrived in his palace: *"Counselors, which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?"*⁴⁸ In response, *"One of them who had some knowledge of the Scripture said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye'"* and *"Solomon saw it set before him."*⁴⁹

The Prophet Solomon was committed to Allah and completely submitted to Him. These vast riches were granted to him as a blessing from Allah and he had requested them in order to be grateful to his Lord.⁵⁰ He used his wealth to earn the pleasure of Allah, to bring people's hearts closer to Allah, and to warm their hearts to Islam, the only true religion in Allah almighty's eyes.⁵¹ He never failed to be thankful to his Lord for His blessings. Solomon continued to impart lessons to mankind even as he gave his final breath. The Holy Qur'an records how the *jinn* continued their work as if Solomon was overseeing them even though he had given his final breath.⁵² This is clear evidence against the [misperceived] idea that *jinn* can foresee the future.

David and Solomon beautifully exemplified in their lives the fact that sovereignty, wealth, and all other possession should be seen as blessings from Allah and a means to earn Allah Almighty's pleasure and to get closer to Him. They tried to earn the love of Allah (swt) although they had all the fame, power, and high stations one could have imagined. Our Prophet

⁴⁷ Al-Naml, 27:44.

⁴⁸ Al-Naml, 47:38.

⁴⁹ Al-Naml, 47:38.

⁵⁰ Saad, 38:35

⁵¹ Al 'Imran, 3:19.

⁵² Saba', 34:14.

tells us that David used to pray to Allah with the following words: “O Allah, indeed, I ask You for Your love and the love of those who love You, and for the action that will cause me to attain Your love, O Allah, make Your love more beloved to me than myself, my family and cold water.”⁵³

⁵³ T3490, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 72.



ZACHARIAH, JOHN and JESUS THREE MESSENGERS WHO WERE BETRAYED BY THEIR PEOPLE

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”كَانَ زَكَرِيَّا نَجَّارًا.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Zachariah was a carpenter.”
(M6162, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 169)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ يَمَسُّهُ الشَّيْطَانُ يَوْمَ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ إِلَّا مَرْيَمَ وَابْنَهَا.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَا مِنْ النَّاسِ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا قَدْ أَخْطَأَ أَوْ هَمَّ بِخَطِيئَةٍ لَيْسَ يَحْيَى بَنَ زَكَرِيَّا.“



عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”خَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا مَرْيَمُ، وَخَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا خَدِيجَةُ.“



حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَةُ بْنُ الصَّامِتِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَنْ قَالَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ [لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ] وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَأَنَّ عِيسَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَابْنُ أُمِّتِهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ وَأَنَّ
الْجَنَّةَ حَقٌّ وَالنَّارَ حَقٌّ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ شَاءَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Satan touches every son of Adam on the day when his mother gives birth to him with the exception of Maryam and her son.*”

(M6135 Muslim, al-Fada'il, 147)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*There is no one among mankind, except John, son of Zachariah, who never errs or even thinks to make an error.*”

(HM2689, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293)



According to 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*The best of the world's women was Maryam (during her lifetime), and the best of the world's women was Khadija (during her lifetime).*”

(B3815, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20)



'Ubada b. al-Samit (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*He who said, 'There is no deity but Allah, He is One and there is no associate with Him, that Muhammad is his servant and His messenger, that Jesus Christ is the servant of Allah and the son of His mother and he (Jesus Christ) is His word which He communicated to Maryam and is His spirit, that Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact,' Allah will make him (he who affirms these truths) enter Paradise through any one of its eight doors that he may like.*”

(M140, Muslim, al-Iman, 46)



achariah was sent to the Israelites to teach them the divine commandments. His lineage extended to David, and from him all the way to Abraham. He was one of the last messengers in a series of prophets who were sent down to the Israelites. He was also one of the men of faith who had gathered to serve in the *Bayt al-Maqdis*. He spent his life inviting others to the path of Allah (swt) and serving at the temple in Jerusalem at a time when denial and disbelief were at their height. At the same time, he earned his livelihood by working as a carpenter.¹

Zachariah had married a girl named Isha', daughter of a man named Faquz. His other daughter, Anna, was married to a wise man named 'Imran b. Masan. 'Imran was a leading, respected rabbi of the Israelites. Anna and Isha', Zachariah's wife, were sisters and Anna had been unable to conceive a child for many years.² Over time, Anna's longing for a baby further increased and she started to implore Allah day and night to grant her a baby. After a while she understood that her prayers were accepted and she became pregnant.³ Utterly delighted, she dedicated her yet unborn baby to Allah and His path. She said, "*Lord, I have dedicated what is growing in my womb entirely to You; so accept this from me. You are the One who hears and knows all.*"⁴

It was customary at that time to dedicate young boys to the service of *Bayt al-Maqdis*. The young boys would be handed over to the rabbis for the study of the Torah and for service to the Temple and when they reached adulthood they would be free to leave the Temple. Anne had wished for a boy so she had made this dedication. 'Imran passed away before he was able to see the birth of his child. When it was time to deliver the baby, the result was contrary to Anna's assumption; she had given birth to a baby girl. Still, she had dedicated her child to the service of *Bayt al-Maqdis*. She was disenchanted by this and yet, she took refuge in submitting to Allah

¹ M6162, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 169; IM2150, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 5.

² KFI/228, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 228.

³ IT2/33, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, II, 33.

⁴ Al 'Imran, 3:35.

Almighty and she prayed.⁵ The Holy Qur'an narrates this supplication in the following way: *"But when she gave birth, she said 'My Lord! I have given birth to a girl'—Allah knew best what she had given birth to: the male is not like the female; 'I name her Maryam and I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from the rejected Satan.'"*⁶

Anna felt she had to follow through with her promise to dedicate her child to *Bayt al-Maqdis*. She embraced her baby and set out for the Temple. She was going to take the baby she carried in her arms to the Temple and hand her to the man of faith.⁷ In this way she could fulfill her vow. The scholars at the Temple were disputing among themselves about who would be responsible for the upbringing of Maryam, for she was their leader 'Imran's daughter, a most valuable trust. Her upbringing would bring significant honor to whoever would be responsible for this duty. Still, who would be entrusted with Maryam? Zachariah claimed that, because he was married to Maryam's aunt, he would have a better claim to be responsible for Maryam's shelter and education. Other scholars argued Maryam was the daughter of their most learned colleague and hence they also had a claim in this matter. As a result they decided to draw lots among themselves to decide who would take charge of Maryam.⁸

The scholars threw into the river their quill pens and whoever's pen stayed afloat would be the person to take charge of Maryam. All quill pens except for Zachariah's sank to the bottom of the river.⁹ Therefore, Maryam, who would, in the future, miraculously give birth to a Messenger of Allah, was entrusted to another prophet, Zachariah, the Prophet of the Israelites.¹⁰

Her Lord graciously accepted Anna's prayer and made Maryam grow in goodness, like a unique flower.¹¹ Allah, Most High, chose Maryam, made her pure and elevated her above all women.¹² Our Master the Prophet, mentioned this unique status of Maryam in the following way: *"Satan touches every son of Adam on the day when his mother gives birth to him with the exception of Maryam and her son."*¹³ Maryam would miraculously give birth to her son, Jesus, and she would become the mistress of all the women among the inhabitants of Paradise.¹⁴

Zachariah gave Maryam a special individual sanctuary in the Temple. Maryam stayed in this room at *Bayt al-Maqdis* by herself. Zachariah would bring her what she needed and no one else had access to this sanctuary.¹⁵ Whenever Zachariah went in to see her in her sanctuary, he found her

⁵ KFI/228, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 228.

⁶ Al 'Imran, 3:36.

⁷ KFI/228, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 228.

⁸ KFI/228, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, IV, 86; Al 'Imran, 3:44.

⁹ KFI/228, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 228-229.

¹⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:37.

¹¹ Al 'Imran, 3:37.

¹² Al 'Imran, 3:42.

¹³ M6135, Muslim, *al-Fada'il*, 147.

¹⁴ T3873 T3893, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Manaqib*, 60, 63.

¹⁵ KC4/71, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, IV, 71.

supplied with provisions that he was certain he had not brought to her.¹⁶ Zachariah asked Maryam how it was that she had these provisions. Maryam responded every time by saying it was Allah who provided these provisions.¹⁷ This provisioning continued for countless times and Zachariah was convinced that the power that had the ability to provide for Maryam was powerful enough to provide anything. He decided to ask Allah for an offspring. His wife was old and barren but his faith in the all-powerful Allah had led him to pray for a child.¹⁸ Zachariah was getting old. He had silver hair covering his head, his body was ailing, and his old age was having an effect on him. With a sense of urgency he opened his hands in prayer and prayed to his Allah in the following way: *“Lord, my bones have weakened and my hair is ashen grey, but never, Lord, have I ever prayed to You in vain. I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] when I am gone, for my wife is barren, so grant me a successor—a gift from You.”*¹⁹

Zachariah hoped he would have a son. The Israelites had strayed away from the straight path so long that they had forgotten the Day of Judgment; they were rebellious to the extent that they were willing to spill the blood of Allah’s messengers. Zachariah had seen his share of the oppression of the Israelites; he had experienced numerous difficulties and tortures. People around them were also speaking ill of him and his wife because they could not conceive a child. Zachariah did not have any more power to tolerate the oppression of his people. He was concerned that they would stray from the straight path after his death. He wanted to be blessed with a son who would take over the mission of prophethood, and have the wisdom and the duty to call people to the path of Allah (swt).²⁰ It was not long after this that Allah Almighty accepted Zachariah’s prayer. Allah said, *“The angels called out to him, while he stood praying in the sanctuary: ‘Allah gives you news of John, confirming a Word from Allah. He will be noble and chaste, a prophet, one of the righteous.’”*²¹

Zachariah was delighted by this news for he would have a son whose name was chosen by Allah (swt).²² He was astounded by the marvelous news and for good reason! How would his wife be able to conceive a child in her old age? He was full of happiness and he asked, *“‘Lord, how can I have a son when my wife is barren, and I am old and frail?’”*²³ He said, *“This is what your Lord has said, ‘It is easy for Me: I created you, though you were nothing before.’”*²⁴

¹⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3:37.

¹⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3:37.

¹⁸ TT6/359, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, VI, 359-360.

¹⁹ Maryam, 19: 4-5.

²⁰ BN2/57, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 57.

²¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:39.

²² Maryam, 19:7.

²³ Maryam, 19:8.

²⁴ Maryam, 19:9.

Zachariah wanted Allah (swt) to show him a sign so his heart could find peace and be content. He said, “Give me a sign, Lord.” Allah did not let this request go unanswered either, “Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to anyone [even though you are healthy] for three full [days and] nights.”²⁵

Allah (swt) had told Zachariah that he would not be able to speak even though he wanted to speak to people. He would want to speak and, despite being healthy, he would not have the ability to speak²⁶ and he would have to signal to people what he wanted. That is exactly what happened. Zachariah signaled to his people to praise Allah morning and evening.²⁷

After a while John, news of whom was given by divine revelation, was born. His childhood was different than that of other children. When other children his age would ask him to join them in play, he would say, “I was not brought to this world to play.”²⁸ He was always tender and soft-hearted; he spent his whole life in purity.²⁹ He was kind to his parents.³⁰ Referring to his pure character, our Master the Prophet said, “There is no one among mankind, except John, son of Zachariah, who never errs or even thinks to commit a mistake.”³¹

At the time this divine miracle regarding John was unfolding, another miracle was being witnessed in *Bayt al-Maqdis*. Maryam, who was spending her days in worship and contemplation, heard a voice saying the following words: “Maryam, Allah has chosen you and made you pure: He has truly chosen you above all women.”³² The same voice continued, “Maryam, be devout to your Lord, prostrate yourself in worship, bow down with those who pray.”³³ Indeed the command was from Allah Almighty. Maryam, whom the the Prophet had praised with the following words: “The best of the world’s women is Maryam (during her lifetime), and the best of the world’s women is Khadija (during her lifetime),”³⁴ had now received her much deserved reward and she had received divine revelation.

After many years alone in the Temple, Maryam left her family and secluded herself in a place east of the city.³⁵ One day when she was in a conversation with herself, she saw a man whom she had never seen before. He was incredibly good-looking³⁶ and perfect.³⁷ She was afraid he would harm her so she said to him, “I seek the Lord of Mercy’s protection against you: if you have any fear of Him [do not approach!]”³⁸ It was no one other than Jibril whom she had seen in the form of a perfect man. Jibril said to her, “I

²⁵ Maryam, 19:10.

²⁶ TT18/152, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XVIII, 152.

²⁷ Maryam, 19:11.

²⁸ TT18/155, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XVIII, 155.

²⁹ Maryam, 19:13.

³⁰ Maryam, 19:14.

³¹ HM2689, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293

³² Al ‘Imran, 3:42.

³³ Al ‘Imran, 3:43.

³⁴ B3815, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 20.

³⁵ Maryam, 19: 16.

³⁶ SR15/9054, al-Sahrawi, *Tafsir*, XV, 9054.

³⁷ Maryam, 19:17.

³⁸ Maryam, 19:18.

am but a Messenger from your Lord, [come] to announce to you the gift of a pure son.”³⁹ Maryam’s confusion simply increased.

She said, “How can I have a son when no man has touched me? I have not been unchaste.”⁴⁰ Jibril told her, “*This is what your Lord said, ‘It is easy for Me—We shall make him a sign to all people, a blessing from Us.’ And so it was ordained.*”⁴¹

That is how Allah (swt) gave Maryam the joyful news about her son Jesus, who would be held in honor in this world and the next, and who would be near to Allah.⁴² Allah’s provision had come true. Difficult days awaited Maryam. How was she to explain her pregnancy to those around her? She was worried people would think she was an unchaste woman. For this reason, she hid her pregnancy from everyone. How could anyone conceive of a virgin being pregnant?⁴³ She withdrew to “*a distant place*” as the Holy Qur’an puts it,⁴⁴ to Bethlehem, a few kilometers from Jerusalem.⁴⁵

The time to deliver the baby had come. Maryam grasped the trunk of a palm tree and exclaimed, “*I wish I had been dead and forgotten long before all of this!*”⁴⁶ The baby was born soon after this despondent exclamation. Because of Allah’s limitless power, Maryam had given birth to a baby son who had no father. Indeed, Maryam’s sadness and plight intensified. As she was pondering all of this, she heard once again the voice that had previously brought her the blessed news. It said, “*Do not worry: your Lord has provided a stream at your feet and, if you shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you, it will deliver fresh ripe dates for you, so eat, drink, be glad. And say to anyone you may see, ‘I have vowed to the Lord of Mercy to abstain from conversation, and I will not talk to anyone today.’*”⁴⁷

Allah, Most High, was consoling Maryam. The young mother had shaken off the feeling of pain and fear thanks to divine aid and she had decided to embrace her baby and return to her people. But, when she returned to the city, people started to accuse her in the following way, “... ‘*Maryam! You have done something terrible! Sister of Aaron! Your father was not an evil man; your mother was not unchaste!*’”⁴⁸

What could she say, how could she convince them that the infant baby was conceived without a father? She pointed at the baby, implying with her signals that they should ask him. “*They said, ‘How can we converse with an infant?’*”⁴⁹ But, as a sign of Allah’s miracles, the baby spoke to them: “*I am a servant of Allah. He has granted me the Scripture; made me a prophet,*

³⁹ Maryam, 19:19.

⁴⁰ Maryam, 19: 20.

⁴¹ Maryam, 19: 21.

⁴² Al ‘Imran, 3:45.

⁴³ IT5/221, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, V, 221.

⁴⁴ Maryam, 19:22.

⁴⁵ IT5/223, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, V, 223.

⁴⁶ Maryam, 19:23.

⁴⁷ Maryam, 19:24-26.

⁴⁸ Maryam, 19:27-28

⁴⁹ Maryam, 19: 29.

*made me blessed wherever I may be. He commanded me to pray, to give alms as long as I live, to cherish my mother. He did not make me domineering or graceless. Peace was on me the day I was born, and will be on me the day I die and the day I am raised to life again.”*⁵⁰

This event startled the Israelites. They dropped the stones they had collected to stone Maryam to death.⁵¹ Allah, in His infinite mercy, had helped Maryam in her difficult time through a divine miracle. According to our Master the Prophet, Jesus was one of only three who spoke in the cradle.⁵²

The Jews kept silent after seeing that Jesus, who was born without a father, spoke in the cradle. Nevertheless, even this miracle was not sufficient to make them accept the truth and they began to accuse Maryam and slander her. They became malicious and accused her without any evidence of having an illegitimate relationship with Zachariah. Therefore, they began to plan to kill their prophet. This was neither the first nor the last time that the Israelites had taken the innocent lives of prophets. Although Zachariah proved his innocence, it was not sufficient for the unruly mob and they eventually slew Zachariah.⁵³

It is certainly challenging to conceive of a fatherless birth but those who believe in the creation of Adam can easily comprehend that this was also within the power of Allah Almighty. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, *“In Allah’s eyes Jesus is just like Adam: He created him from dust, said to him, ‘Be!’ and he was.”*⁵⁴ The miraculous element in Adam’s creation was simply being repeated. This was the time when the complete submission and faith of those who believed was tested. This was the moment when one’s merit for Paradise was being determined, as our Prophet explained, *“He who said, ‘There is no deity but Allah, He is One and there is no associate with Him, that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger, that Christ is His servant and the son of his mother and he (Christ) is His word which He communicated to Maryam and is His Spirit, that Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact,’ Allah will make him (he who affirms these truths) enter Paradise through any one of its eight doors which he may like.”*⁵⁵ As Zachariah’s blessed soul reached the gates of Paradise, this heinous murder by the Israelites was recorded as a dark chapter in human history.

Consequently, Maryam had no guardian and it seems the Jews still wanted to kill Jesus because he was conceived without a father. Maryam

⁵⁰ Maryam, 19: 30-33.

⁵¹ KF1/239, Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, I, 239.

⁵² B3436, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48; M6509, Muslim, al-Birr, 8.

⁵³ KF1/235, Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, I, 235, 239.

⁵⁴ Al 'Imran, 3:59.

⁵⁵ M140, Muslim, al-Iman, 46.

was not safe in this land so she took the infant Jesus and set out for Egypt. This is how Jesus spent a portion of his childhood in Egypt. After living in Egypt for twelve years, Jesus and his mother went to the village of Nazareth near Damascus. Jesus stayed there until he turned thirty.⁵⁶

John and Jesus were born within approximately six months of each other.⁵⁷ They lived together for a long time. When John came of age Allah Almighty spoke to him, referring to the Torah,⁵⁸ *“John, hold on to the Scripture firmly.”*⁵⁹ Thus, John had become a prophet. It is stated in the Holy Qur’an that while John was still a boy, he was given wisdom and the ability to adjudicate disputes among people.⁶⁰

Allah, Most High, commanded John to abide by five commandments and to command the Israelites to abide by them as well but John was pre-occupied. So Jesus said to John, *“Indeed Allah has commanded you to abide by five commandments and to command the Israelites to abide by these as well. Either you command them, or I shall command them.”* So John said, *“I fear that if you precede me in this, then the earth may swallow me, or I shall be punished,”* so he gathered the people in the Bayt al-Maqdis and spoke to them the following words:

*“Indeed Allah has commanded me to abide by five commandments and commanded you to abide by them as well. The first of them is that you worship Allah and not associate anything with him... And Allah commands you to perform the ritual prayers...And He commands you to fast...And He commands you to give charity...And He commands you to remember Allah...”*⁶¹

By that time Jesus had also come of age. He was of brown complexion,⁶² with straight hair,⁶³ medium height,⁶⁴ and he had red cheeks.⁶⁵ According to the Prophet, Jesus resembled ‘Urwa b. Mas‘ud al-Thaqafi,⁶⁶ a noble man of the city of Ta’if. His status was such that when the disbelievers of Quraysh said, “Why was this Qur’an not sent down to a distinguished man from either of the two cities?”⁶⁷ one of those names they had in mind was that of ‘Urwa b. Mas‘ud. It is reported that ‘Urwa (ra) followed the Prophet on his way back from Ta’if to Medina and caught up with him before his arrival so that he could become a Muslim in his presence. He returned to his people to tell them about Islam but unfortunately they had him killed.⁶⁸

Jesus lived in Nazareth until he was thirty and he received his first revelation through angel Jibril. Jibril told him he was chosen as a prophet

⁵⁶ KF1/240, Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, I, 240-241.

⁵⁷ KF1/228, Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, I, 229.

⁵⁸ KC11/86, al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, XI, 86.

⁵⁹ Maryam, 19:12.

⁶⁰ Maryam, 19:12.

⁶¹ T2863, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 78; HM17953, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 202.

⁶² B3441, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

⁶³ M419, Muslim, al-Iman, 267.

⁶⁴ B3239, al-Bukhari, Badu’ al-Khalq, 7.

⁶⁵ T3130, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 17.

⁶⁶ M430, Muslim, al-Iman, 278.

⁶⁷ Al-Zukhruf, 43:31.

⁶⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, al-Isti‘ab, 564-565.

by Allah Almighty and that He was commanding him to call people to His path.⁶⁹ In this period, when Jesus was recently gifted with being chosen a Prophet, the Israelites were plotting to attack him. Herod, the ruler of Palestine at that time, and some Jewish rabbis were not happy with John calling people to accept the tawhid and for people to be merciful and to share their possessions. He promoted equality and he called them to worship the one and only Allah (swt). If people had accepted and adopted these teachings they might have damage Herod's interests and power. The major problem for Herod arose when John protested against the ruler's decision to go ahead with an illegitimate marriage. As a result, Herod ordered his men to kill John and the hatred that had once been used to take Zachariah's life was now directed toward John, who was also slain.⁷⁰ The Holy Book gives news of agonizing torment for those who were the murderers of prophets and those who killed those who spoke up about injustice.⁷¹

Jesus was now by himself in the struggle to promote the tawhid. He was publicly declaring that he was a prophet of Allah, that he was given a divine revelation, and that he was given a scripture. Nevertheless, most of the Israelites were obstinate and they demanded that Jesus show them miracles just like they had demanded miracles from previous prophets. It was reported that Jesus faced his people and told them the following:

*"I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I will make the shape of a bird for you out of clay, then breathe into it and, with Allah's permission, it will become a real bird; I will heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead back to life with Allah's permission; I will tell you what you may eat and what you may store up in your houses. There truly is a sign for you in this, if you are believers. I have come to confirm the truth of the Torah which preceded me, and to make some things lawful to you which used to be forbidden. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. Be mindful of Allah, obey me: Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him—that is a straight path."*⁷²

Jesus performed these miracles by Allah's grace but the Israelites labeled these as "clearly nothing but sorcery"⁷³ and they continued their denial of Allah. "When Jesus realized they [still] did not believe, he said, 'Who will help me in Allah's cause?' The disciples said, 'We will be Allah's helpers; we believe in Allah—witness our devotion to Him.'"⁷⁴ Jesus chose twelve disciples from among those who believed in him so they would help him with calling people and educating them about the path of Allah (swt). The appoint-

⁶⁹ KF1.240, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, I, 241.

⁷⁰ TB1348, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, I, 348.

⁷¹ Al 'Imran, 3:21.

⁷² Al 'Imran, 3:49-51.

⁷³ Al-Ma'ida, 5:110.

⁷⁴ Al 'Imran, 3:52.

ment of these twelve disciples had to do with the twelve tribes that made up the Israelites.⁷⁵ Jesus told the disciples to fast for a full month and said that their prayers at the end of this period would be accepted. Once they completed the fast,⁷⁶ the disciples asked him this question: “Jesus, son of Maryam, can your Lord send down a feast to us from heaven?”⁷⁷ Their request puzzled Jesus. Did they still not fully believe that Allah had appointed him a prophet? He said, “Beware of Allah if you are true believers.”⁷⁸ The disciples responded to him, “We wish to eat from it; to have our hearts reassured; to know that you have told us the truth; and to be witnesses of it.”⁷⁹ Thereupon request, Jesus, son of Maryam, made the following supplication: “Lord, send down to us a feast from heaven so that we can have a festival—the first and last of us—and a sign from You. Provide for us: You are the best provider.”⁸⁰ Allah Almighty responded to his supplication by saying, “I will send it down to you, but anyone who disbelieves after this will be punished with a punishment that I will not inflict on anyone else in the world.”⁸¹

Jesus spoke to the people about the true path by continuously travelling to different cities and towns of Palestine. In the Holy Book, Allah Almighty tells us the following about Jesus: “We sent Jesus, son of Maryam, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed—a guide and lesson for those who take heed of Allah.”⁸² The message that Jesus promoted was the same message that was promoted by other messengers: “Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”⁸³

It was reported that Jesus’ teachings caused unrest among the Jewish scholars, who were distorting the true teachings of their religion, and the Roman administrators, who were their allies. They were planning a cruel plot against Jesus just like that faced by those in the chain of prophethood before him. They were about to spill yet another prophet’s blood. As the Roman soldiers were searching for Jesus, one of the disciples betrayed him and showed them his location in return for a certain amount of money. But his betrayal did not go unrequited; Allah, Most High, made him resemble Jesus at the time the soldiers tried to arrest Jesus and they had him punished instead. He struggled to break free, and shouted, “I am not Jesus!” but to no avail. The soldiers who had arrested him handed him over to the Israelites, who first tortured him and finally crucified him.⁸⁴ It is clear that these people believed they had crucified Jesus. The Holy Qur’an mentions

⁷⁵ New Testament, Matthew, 19/28; Luke 22:30.

⁷⁶ IT3/226, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, III, 226.

⁷⁷ Al-Ma’ida, 5:112.

⁷⁸ Al-Ma’ida, 5:112.

⁷⁹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:113.

⁸⁰ Al-Ma’ida, 5:114.

⁸¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:115.

⁸² Al-Ma’ida, 5: 46.

⁸³ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 117.

⁸⁴ IT2/45,1 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, II, 451.

the following about their incorrect belief, *“And (they) said, ‘We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah (saw).’ They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, though it was made to appear like that to them; those that disagreed about him are full of doubt, with no knowledge to follow, only supposition: they certainly did not kill him.”*⁸⁵

Allah, Most High, had protected his Messenger from the excesses of the Israelites. Allah (swt) had declared in the following verses that Jesus would not die by their hands: *“Allah said, ‘Jesus, I will take you back and raise you up to Me: I will purify you of the disbelievers. To the Day of Resurrection I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieved. Then you will all return to Me and I will judge between you regarding your differences.”*⁸⁶ Thus, Allah raised Jesus to His station, saved His messenger from the hands of disbelievers and purified and exalted him.

Jesus, who had brought news of a messenger named Ahmad⁸⁷ who would follow him, occupies a special place in the Muslim culture. Important reports in our Prophet’s traditions make frequent reference to Jesis and state that he will descend⁸⁸ to earth close to the end of time and he will continue to spread and call people to the message of the Prophet. Some reports note that his descent to earth will be a harbinger of the approach of the apocalypse⁸⁹ and that he will fight to preserve Islam.⁹⁰ There are numerous interpretations surrounding these narrations, just as the Qur’anic verse which mentions that Jesus will be raised to the station of Allah has received multiple interpretations. According to the majority of interpretations, Jesus will descend to earth in physical form, which presumes that his ascent was also in physical form. Other interpretations hold that the descent of Jesus means that the spirit of his character will be adopted by those who will follow his character and values.⁹¹

Clearly, Zachariah, John, and Jesus were all prophets who were sent to lead the Israelites. These prophets lived in the same period and among the same society. They commonly invited people to worship the one Allah (swt) and they struggled to establish good in their society. Moreover, Maryam, the virgin mother of Jesus, occupies a special position among all other servants of Allah with her chastity, Allah-consciousness, submission, and obedience. The miracle Maryam carried in her womb was a major test for her. This miracle also presented mankind with a choice between belief and disbelief.

⁸⁵ Al-Nisa”, 4:157.

⁸⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3:55.

⁸⁷ Al-Saff, 61:6.

⁸⁸ B2476, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 31.

⁸⁹ M7285, Muslim, al-Fitan, 39.

⁹⁰ D4324, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 14.

⁹¹ “Isa,” DIA, XXII, 473.



KHIDR

THE UNEXPECTED DIVINE AID

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي بْنُ كَعْبٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
... ”يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مُوسَى، لَوَدِدْنَا لَوْ صَبَرَ
حَتَّى يُقَصَّ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ أَمْرِهِمَا.“

According to Ubayy b. Ka'b (ra), (after narrating the story of Moses and Khidr) the Prophet said, ... “May Allah be Merciful to Moses. If he had remained patient (there could have been more events between them), we could have been told further about those stories as well.”

(B122, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 44)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْخَضِرُ لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى فَرْوَةٍ بَيْضَاءَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَرُ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ خَضِرَاءَ.“





According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Khidr (the green man) was named so because when he sat over a barren white land, it turned green with foliage.*”

(B3402, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 27; T3151, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 18)





When Moses was delivering a sermon before his people, he was asked, “Who is the most learned person among the people?” Upon hearing the question, Moses thought that since he was Allah’s messenger on earth there would be no one more learned than himself,¹ so he replied, “I am the most learned,” whereas he should have said, “Allah knows best,” and by doing so he would have ascribed knowledge to Allah alone. Thus, Allah (swt) revealed to him to go to the junction of the two seas where he would meet a slave of His who was more learned than him.

So Moses asked his Lord how he would be able to meet this person. Allah Almighty instructed Moses to take a fish in a vessel. Allah (swt) said, “*Take a fish and put it in a basket (and set out), and where you will lose the fish, you will find him.*” So Moses (took a fish and put it in a basket and) set out, along with his servant Joshua b. Noon. He told the youth to watch the fish and inform him when it left.² He then told him: “*I will not rest until I reach the place where the two seas meet, and I will march on if I cannot, even if it takes me years!*”³ However, when they reached the place where the two seas met, Moses took a nap under the shadow of a rock. Right at that moment the fish wriggled (came alive) out of its vessel, made its way into the sea, and swam away.⁴ The youth had seen the fish come to life, wriggle out, and slip away into the sea but Satan made him forget to relate this to Moses.⁵ Thus, it was this place where the fish slipped into the sea where Moses would meet the servant of Allah, who was more learned than Moses himself.

When Moses awoke, they continued their journey until they were exhausted and hungry. Moses said to the young attendant, “*Give us our lunch! This journey of ours is very tiring.*”⁶ Only then did his companion recall that the fish they had brought with them had gotten away. Joshua said to Moses, “*Remember when we were resting by the rock? I forgot the fish—Satan made me forget to pay attention to it—and it [must have] made its way into the sea.*”⁷

¹ AU2/291, al-‘Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, II, 291.

² B4726, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (Kahf) 3.

³ Al-Kahf, 18:60.

⁴ Al-Kahf, 18:61.

⁵ B4726, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (Kahf) 3.

⁶ Al-Kahf, 18:62.

⁷ Al-Kahf, 18:63.

Moses knew instantly that this was the sign for the place where he would find the more learned man. The two immediately returned by retracing their steps to that area.⁸ When they arrived at the same place where the rock was they found Khidr covered in a garment. Moses greeted him. The man said astonishingly, "Is there any such greeting in your land?" Moses said, "*I am Moses.*" The man asked, "Moses of the Israelites?" Moses replied, "Yes."

When Khidr again asked, "So what is it that you want?" Moses said, "*I came to you so that you may teach me of the truth which you were taught.*" Upon hearing this Khidr said to Moses, "Is it not sufficient for you that the Torah is in your hands and that divine revelation comes to you, O Moses!"⁹ and he continued by saying, "O Moses! You have something of Allah's knowledge which He has taught you and which I do not know; and I have something of Allah's knowledge which He has taught me and which you do not know." Still, Moses insisted by saying, "*May I follow you so that you can teach me some of the right guidance you have been taught?*"¹⁰ Khidr answered him in the following way: "*You will not be able to bear with me patiently. How could you be patient in matters beyond your knowledge?*"¹¹ Moses said, "*Allah willing, you will find me patient. I will not disobey you in any way.*"¹² In response, Khidr said to him, "If you follow me then, do not query anything I do before I mention it to you myself."¹³ Moses accepted this condition and they travelled together.

While Moses and Khidr were walking along the coast they saw a ship and requested the crew on the ship to allow them to come aboard. The crew on the boat recognized Khidr so they allowed them on the ship without fare. After being aboard on the ship for a while, Khidr went to scuttle the ship. Upon seeing what seemed like a despicable action to a people who had been generous to them both, Moses said to Khidr, "*How could you make a hole in it? Do you want to drown its passengers? What a strange thing to do!*"¹⁴ Thereupon Khidr reminded Moses about his promise and said, "Did I not tell you that you would never be able to bear with me patiently?"¹⁵ In return, Moses asked Khidr for his forgiveness, "*Forgive me for forgetting. Do not make it too hard for me to follow you.*"¹⁶

Moses had genuinely forgotten his promise when he spoke against Khidr's action. Then a sparrow flew down and sat on the edge of the ship and dipped its beak once in the sea. Khidr said to Moses, "My knowledge

⁸ Al-Kahf, 18:64.

⁹ B4726, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Kahf) 3.

¹⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:66.

¹¹ Al-Kahf, 18:67-68.

¹² Al-Kahf, 18:69.

¹³ Al-Kahf, 18:70.

¹⁴ Al-Kahf, 18:71.

¹⁵ Al-Kahf, 18:72.

¹⁶ Al-Kahf, 18:73.

and your knowledge, compared to Allah's knowledge is equivalent to what this sparrow has taken out of the sea."¹⁷

After a while they both disembarked from the ship. As they walked along the coast, they encountered a young boy and Khidr killed him. Moses was startled and he said to Khidr, "*How could you kill an innocent person when He has not killed anyone! What a terrible thing to do!*"¹⁸ Khidr replied knowing that Moses would once again dispute his action, "Did I not tell you that you would never be able to bear with me patiently?"¹⁹ Moses responded with the following words: "*From now on, if I dispute anything you do, banish me from your company—you have put up with enough from me.*"²⁰

Then they both proceeded until they came to a village. They asked the inhabitants for food but were refused hospitality. At that moment, they found in the village a wall about to collapse and Khidr set it up straight with his own hand without charging anything for it. Moses was again startled at his actions because he thought helping such inhospitable people, who had refused to give them food, for free was senseless. He could not help himself and said accusingly to Khidr, "*But if you had wished you could have taken payment for doing that.*"²¹ Then Khidr said to Moses, "This is where you and I part company. I will tell you the meaning of the things you could not bear with patiently."²²

He then continued to tell him the truth of the matter that had unfolded during their journey. Khidr said, "The ship belonged to some needy people who made their living from the sea and I damaged it because I knew that coming after them was a king who was seizing every [serviceable] ship by force."²³ That is how, when that king, whose name was Hudad b. Budad,²⁴ came to seize the ship he found it damaged and left it alone. When the king left the ship, the crew repaired it with the help of a piece of wood.²⁵

Khidr then explained why he killed the boy. "The young boy had parents who were people of faith, and so, fearing he would trouble them through wickedness and disbelief, we wished that their Lord should give them another child—purer and more compassionate—in his place."²⁶ Had this boy grown up, he would have gotten involved in wrongdoing and non-belief. His parents would have joined him in his rebellion against Allah because of their love for the boy.²⁷

As for the wall, Khidr explained, "The wall belonged to two young orphans in the town and there was buried treasure beneath it belonging to

¹⁷ B4726, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Kahf) 3

¹⁸ Al-Kahf, 18:74.

¹⁹ Al-Kahf, 18:75.

²⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:76.

²¹ M6163, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 170; Al-Kahf, 18:77.

²² Al-Kahf, 18:78.

²³ Al-Kahf, 18:79.

²⁴ B4726, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Kahf) 3.

²⁵ M6165, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 172.

²⁶ Al-Kahf, 18:80-81.

²⁷ M6165, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 172.

them. Their father had been a righteous man, so your Lord intended them to reach maturity and then dig up their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. I did not do [these things] of my own accord: these are the explanations for those things you could not bear with patience.”²⁸ It was reported that the treasure that was hidden beneath the wall was composed of accumulated gold and silver.²⁹

This story reported to us by our Prophet was also spoken of in the *sūra* of al-Kahf of the Holy Qur’an. However, it does not mention certain features of the story, such as the names of Khidr and Joshua b. Noon, the conversation between Moses and his people, the fish wriggling into the sea, the bird sitting at the edge of the ship and dipping its beak once in the sea, and the fact that the boy that Khidr killed had an inherent disbelieving nature.³⁰

The Holy Qur’an simply designates the person who experienced all of these events alongside Moses by saying, “*And found one of Our servants—a man to whom We had granted Our mercy and whom We had given knowledge of Our own,*”³¹ and does not mention further details such as this individual’s name or the location or the time in which he lived. Although we cannot know for certain that this story is about Khidr, Muslim scholars largely share the view that the person mentioned in this story is Khidr.³² Indeed, the fact that the collections of the traditions of the Prophet also provide the name of this individual as Khidr³³ strengthen this position. However, since the Holy Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet do not provide detailed information about these issues, such as the true nature of Khidr, when and where he lived, whether he was a prophet, a saint (*wali*), or an angel, the nature of Khidr has continued to be a source of dispute over the centuries.

The Qur’anic verses and the traditions of the Prophet do not give detailed information about Khidr because, just as in similar stories related in the Holy Qur’an, the primary goal is to provide illustrations and lessons for mankind rather than to give them historical information. As a matter of fact, our Holy Lord says the following about all of these stories: “...*Here are the illustrations! We offer people such illustrations so that they may reflect.*”³⁴ In another verse, Allah, Most High, says, “*So [Muhammad], We have told you the stories of the prophets to make your heart firm and in these accounts truth has come to you, as well as lessons and reminders for the believers.*”³⁵

²⁸ Al-Kahf, 18:82; M6165, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 172.

²⁹ T3152, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 18.

³⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:60-82.

³¹ Al-Kahf, 18:65.

³² “Hızır,” *DİA*, XVII, 406.

³³ B74, al-Bukhari, al-‘ilm, 16.

³⁴ Al-Hashr, 59:21.

³⁵ Hud, 11:120.

After narrating the story of Moses and Khidr, our Prophet said, “*May Allah be merciful to Moses. If he had remained patient (there could have been more events between them), we could have been told further about those stories as well.*”³⁶ This is yet another sign for us that the reason for him narrating this story was for us to take lessons from it. When we approach the story of Khidr and Moses with this point in mind, we understand that the presence of someone more learned than Moses, a Prophet, explains to us that only Allah (swt) provides wisdom and that He can grant wisdom and knowledge to whomsoever He wills. Our Creator warns us that “*...Above everyone who has knowledge there is the One who is all knowing.*”³⁷ This verse reminds us that no one person can possess all knowledge and that there is always another lesson.

The story of Moses and Khidr also direct us to understand that human beings should strive for knowledge in order for them to be provided with it by Allah (swt). In fact, our Prophet said this regarding knowledge, “*Knowledge is only acquired through learning,*”³⁸ which points to the fact that knowledge can only be acquired through hard work. This is also true in the case of Moses. Indeed, Moses, more likely, because he was given divine revelation, initially thought himself as the most learned person among Allah’s creation. Upon his Lord’s warning that told him that there was a more learned person than him, Moses set out on a journey in pursuit of this knowledge. This is a sign of the importance and sacrifice that Moses exhibited toward knowledge.

Accordingly, when one approaches the series of events that unfolded between Moses and Khidr, the lesson from these events is clear, which is that we have to understand that there may be reasonable causes behind what may seem to be wrong or bad actions. Indeed, Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur’an, “*You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: Allah knows and you do not,*”³⁹ which tells us that seemingly bad actions or things may, in reality, be good. In fact, the events that are related to us about Moses and Khidr reveal to us that in each event there were signs of a deeper wisdom which only Allah (swt) knows.

Although the stories in the Holy Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet are related to people in order for them to take lessons from them, the everlasting curiosity of mankind led over many centuries to a debate

³⁶ B122, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 44.

³⁷ Yusuf, 12:76.

³⁸ Al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 10 — chapter title —.

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:216.

concerning Khidr's true identity. In these debates the very first dispute was about the nature of Khidr's name. The word Khidr has variations in Arabic sources, such as "*al-khādir*, *al-khadr* and *al-khīdr*." Khidr means green or a verdant location.⁴⁰ Indeed, the Prophet (saw) said the following, "*Khidr (the green man) was named so because when he sat over a barren white land, it turned green with foliage.*"⁴¹

Muslim scholars debated many things regarding the figure of Khidr. One of the most important was the debate about whether Khidr was a mortal man who lived and died in this world or whether he was an immortal servant of Allah (swt). The notion that Khidr might be an immortal servant, who has been alive throughout history is related to the idea of the "water of life." This is supposedly the same water in which the fish, which is mentioned⁴² in some reports from the Prophet's traditions, came alive upon contact. It was argued that Khidr also drank from this water of life, which was believed to bring the dead from the grave and was a source of immortality, which means that he will live until the end of time. This led to the belief that Khidr was an intermediary, who helped those who are in dire conditions, someone through whom Allah provides his servants with blessings and provision. In these accounts Khidr was depicted not as "a good servant of Allah" who has lived and died in the past, but as someone with supernatural abilities.⁴³ Moreover, in some reports of the traditions of the Prophet, Khidr was interpreted to mean the person who will face Dajjal (anti-Christ) during the end of times,⁴⁴ thereby supporting the view espoused by many scholars of Sufism that Khidr will live until the end of time. However, the majority of Muslim scholars pointed to the Qur'anic verses, "*We have not granted everlasting life to any other human being before you...*"⁴⁵ and "*Every soul will taste death...*"⁴⁶ along with our Prophet's saying, "*After one hundred years there will be no soul left alive that is living now,*"⁴⁷ to argue that Khidr, just like any other human being, was a mortal soul.⁴⁸

If we accept that Khidr died in the past, a new question concerning the period of his life emerges. The events between Moses and Khidr might be interpreted to mean that Khidr lived in the same period as Moses. The information related in a report that Khidr was one of the nobles of the Israelites, that he learned about the true religion from an ascetic, and that he fled to an island when others learned that he was propagating this religion supports this view.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ LA14/1185, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, XIV, 1185.

⁴¹ B3402, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 27; T3151, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 18

⁴² B4727, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Kahf) 4; T3149, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 18.

⁴³ "Hızır," *DİA*, XVII, 410-411.

⁴⁴ M7375, Muslim, al-Fitan, 112.

⁴⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21:34.

⁴⁶ Al-'Imran, 3:185.

⁴⁷ B601, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 40; Muslim, al-Fada'il al-Sahaba, 217.

⁴⁸ "Hızır," *DİA*, XVII, 407.

⁴⁹ IM4030, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 23.

Others have debated whether Khidr, this upright servant of Allah, was a prophet, basing their arguments on the information that he lived at the same time as Moses but that he was privy to some information about the unseen realm that Moses did not know. Indeed, the unseen realm cannot be known through mortal reason and emotions. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty clearly stated that knowledge about the unseen realms belonged to Him alone.⁵⁰ Some have argued that, because Khidr possessed unseen knowledge about events that would unfold in the future,⁵¹ he was a prophet of Allah who received this knowledge from Him through revelation. The Qur'anic statement that Khidr was granted mercy⁵² also led some learned scholars to argue that "Khidr was given prophethood."⁵³ While some scholars of Sufism argued that Khidr was a saint (*walī*), and not a prophet, others disputed this view and argued that it was not possible that a *walī* could be more learned than a prophet of Allah. Others still argued that Khidr was an angel in human form.⁵⁴

In addition to the depictions of Khidr that are cited in the Holy Qur'an or in the traditions of the Prophet, there are perceptions of Khidr that originate from sources that are not directly related to Islam. Hence, there are those who believe that Khidr will live until the end of time, arguing that Khidr drank from the "water of life," which is also known as the "spring of immortality" or *āb-i ḥayāt*. This view resembles certain myths that can be found in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Legend of Alexander the Great, and some Jewish sources. And yet, none of the reports we have about Khidr mention that he was immortal. While Jewish literature contains some information about Khidr that resembles the story of the Iliad, the Torah does not contain any information about either Khidr or the Iliad.⁵⁵ In the same manner, "The Festival of *Hidirallaz*," which is commonly found in some societies and cultures, takes its name from a combination of the names Khidr and Elias. This name originated from the folk belief that Khidr and Elias, both of whom supposedly drank from the spring of immortality, help those in need, one in the water and the other on land. The name *Hidirrellez* indicates the beginning of the season of spring, when the two are believed to have met. This belief holds that Khidr and Elias meet on every sixth day of the month of May and that nature was injected with life on this day. There is no doubt that this legendary belief, which originates in pre-Islamic cultural, has no place in Islam.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Al-An'am, 6:59; Al 'Imran, 3:179.

⁵¹ Al-Kahf, 18:82.

⁵² Al-Kahf, 18:65.

⁵³ KC11/16, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, XI, 16; KE2, al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf*, II, 685.

⁵⁴ HI2/288, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabat*, II, 288-289.

⁵⁵ "Hızır," *DİA*, XVII, 407-408.

⁵⁶ "Hidrellez," *DİA*, XVII, 313-314.

In addition to these accounts, we find that there is a folk belief that holds Khidr as a timeless, symbolic legendary hero who will live until the end of time and that he extends a hand of assistance to those in need, wherever they may be. Accordingly, Khidr is believed to help those in dire need and he sometimes poses as a beggar in order to test people and to teach moral lessons about the importance of giving charity. Indeed, some folk stories mention Khidr as a beggar who demands help and say that he suddenly disappears if the person from whom he asked help does not extend him aid. In other versions of this story, Khidr suddenly appears when someone in a dire situation asks Allah (swt) for help and upon granting that person the help needed Khidr again suddenly disappears even before the person assisted can express his or her gratitude. While we cannot know for sure whether Khidr appears to test people or to give them aid, it is certain that this folk belief keeps alive the notion of mutual help and solidarity among people. Common phrases that are found in Turkish such as “Khidr appears only when you are in need” and “Make all your nights a Night of Power, know all your guests as Khidr,” as well as the naming of hospital emergency rooms in Turkish as “*Hizir Acil* (Khidr Emergency)” are all expressions of this belief.

Thus, the Qur’anic perspective of Khidr, about whom the Holy Qur’an says is “*one of Our servants*,”⁵⁷ and the popular folk belief that extends symbolic supernatural features to Khidr, diverge from one another. While in the Holy Qur’an and in reports from the Prophet, Khidr is a servant of Allah (swt) who lived in the past, in folk legends Khidr is the symbolic embodiment of the divine aid. What is noteworthy in this context is that aid is granted only by Allah and not by Khidr and that it is only Allah from whom aid is asked.⁵⁸ This is because our Lord clearly informs us that assistance is only from Him, “*...help comes only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise*”⁵⁹ and “*Do you [Prophet] not know that Allah has power over everything? Do you not know that control of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him? You [believers] have no protector or helper but Allah.*”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Al-Kahf, 18:65.

⁵⁸ Al-Fatiha, 1:5.

⁵⁹ Al ‘Imran, 3:126.

⁶⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:106-107.



THE OTHER PROPHETS THE RINGS IN THE CHAIN OF PROPHECY

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ... فَغَضِبَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ حَتَّى رُئِيَ فِي وَجْهِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ:
”لَا تَفْضُلُوا بَيْنَ أَنْبِيَاءِ اللَّهِ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), ... (When the Prophet (saw) learned that one of the Ansar had gotten into an argument with a Jew over which prophet was superior), he became angry and this was reflected in his face, and he said, “*Do not give superiority to any of Allah’s prophets...*”

(B3414, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 35; M6151, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 159)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”... وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ إِخْوَةٌ لِعَلَّاتٍ، أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ شَتَّى، وَدِينُهُمْ وَاحِدٌ.“



أَخْبَرَنِي سَالِمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ لَمَّا مَرَّ بِالْحَجْرِ قَالَ:
”لَا تَدْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونُوا بَاكِينَ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ
مَا أَصَابَهُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ لُوطًا، لَقَدْ كَانَ يَأْوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ...“



عَنْ سَعْدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”دَعْوَةُ ذِي الثُّونِ إِذْ دَعَا وَهُوَ فِي بَطْنِ
الْحَوْتِ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. فَإِنَّهُ لَمَّ يَدْعُ بِهَا رَجُلٌ
مُسْلِمٌ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ اللَّهُ لَهُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “...*the prophets’ mothers are different, but they are paternal brothers and their religion is one.*”

(B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48)



Salim b. ‘Abd Allah said that his father (‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar) (ra) said that when the Prophet (saw) passed by (the ruins of) al-Hijr (which was in the land of the Thamud people), he said, “*Do not enter the homes of those who were oppressors unless you do so weeping that what befell them will befall you.*”

(B3380, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 17)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*May Allah bestow His mercy on Lot. He had taken refuge in a strong fortress...*”

(B4694, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Yusuf) 5)



According to Sa’d (b. Abi Waqqas) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*When Dhu ‘l-Nun (Jonah) was in the belly of the whale, he prayed as follows: ‘There is no god but You, glory be to You. I was among the wrong doers’ (al-Anbiya’, 21:87). If a Muslim prays for something in this fashion, Allah will always answer him.*”

(T3505, al-Tirmidhi al-Da’awat, 81)



A Jew came to our Prophet and said, “O Abu ‘l-Qasim! One of your Companions slapped my face.” Our Master the Prophet asked him, “Who slapped you?” When the Jew told him who had slapped him, our Prophet summoned the Companion (ra) to him. When this man appeared, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked, “Did you slap him?” The man, who began by saying, “I heard him swear an oath in the market saying, ‘By Him Who made Moses superior to all human beings,’” confessed that he had been offended by these words, lost his temper, and slapped the Jew.¹ This was because he could not stomach the fact that he had said, “I swear by Allah who made Moses superior to all human beings,” while the Messenger of Allah (saw) was in their presence.

As for the Jew, he reminded Allah’s Messenger of the agreement between them (that is, the Prophet and the Jews) and the assurances which had been given to them and asked for an account for this behavior. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) became angry and this anger was clearly expressed by his face. Then he said, “Do not give superiority to any of Allah’s prophets, for when the trumpet is blown, everyone on the earth and in the heavens will become unconscious except those whom Allah will exempt. The trumpet will be blown for a second time and I will be the first to be resurrected to see Moses holding Allah’s throne. I will not know if the unconsciousness which overcame Moses on the Day of Mt Sinai had been sufficient for him, or if he had awakened before me.² And I do not say of anyone ‘He is better than Yunus b. Matta (Jonah b. Amittai).’”³

This behavior on the part of our Master the Prophet is a different expression of the Qu’anic declaration, whose intention is to indicate that one should make absolutely no distinction among the prophets, “The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, as do the faithful. They all believe in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers. ‘We

¹ B2412, al-Bukhari, al-Khusumat, 1.

² B3414, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 35.

³ M6151, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 159.

*make no distinction between any of His messengers'...*⁴ With respect to the reasons why they were sent, their communications, and their missions, there is no difference among the prophets. Nevertheless the fact that Allah Almighty said, “We favored some of these messengers above others. Allah spoke to some; others he raised in rank,”⁵ and characterized some of the prophets in a noble verse by saying, “Be steadfast [Muhammad], like those messengers who are ‘ulūw ‘l-‘azim,”⁶ where ‘ulūw ‘l-‘azim means “of firm resolve,” shows that they had certain differences with respect to virtue. When they are seen as ordinary human beings, the fact that there is no distinction among them gains importance. Indeed, although our Master the Prophet said in a *ḥadīth* that he would be the first to be resurrected in the Hereafter, by saying that Moses could be resurrected before him, he emphasized that only Allah (swt) knew who was more virtuous.

All of the prophets, who were guides on the path of the right way, created, in the form of a chain, an evolutionary course corresponding to the development of mankind—all following the same principles of faith. This evolution reached perfection in Muhammad (saw) who was described in the Holy Qur'an as *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (the seal of the prophets).⁷ In fact, our Master the Prophet expressed this by saying, “...the prophets' mothers are different, but they are paternal brothers and their religion is one.”⁸

The stories of the prophets who were sent to past communities and nations are among the most important parts in the Noble Qur'an. The stories of the prophets form about one-third of the contents of the Holy Qur'an. These stories, as object lessons concerning the experiences of past peoples, are, together, like a work of wisdom meant to save people from bad behavior and going astray and to encourage them in fulfilling their servanthood to Allah. Thus, through these stories, the Holy Qur'an describes concrete mistaken behavior and the correct posture toward this behavior. These stories serve many purposes, above all providing lessons in order to avoid mistaken actions and encourage behavior leading one to the right path. Furthermore, these stories describe the communications of the prophets and the behavior of their communities and of their various peoples toward them in order to strengthen belief in the tawhid in the heart. Those addressed in revelation took a lesson from the difficulties and trials that the prophets faced and could learn to be patient and be thankful for their blessings.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:285.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:253; al-Isra', 17:55.

⁶ Al-Ahqaf, 46:35.

⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:40.

⁸ B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48

Apart from the prophets who were given books, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, few details are given about the others in the stories concerning them in the *hadiths* of the Noble Messenger or in the Holy Qur'an. Still, there are stories and information related to some, but not all, of the prophets in the words of the blessed Prophet. Sometimes Muhammad (saw) explained the stories of past prophets. Among the Arabs in the Jahiliyya period, there were in fact gatherings for telling stories and there were famous story tellers at fairs. In the event, the stories which were told in the Jahiliyya for enjoyment consisted mostly of heroic adventures. As for our Prophet, he used stories as a teaching vehicle. He related the exemplary tales of past prophets to his Companions (ra) in private discussion circles, sometimes giving names to the stories and sometimes adding his own comments.⁹ In this way, our Master the Prophet prevented the spread of baseless stories concerning past prophets, which were common in the Jahiliyya period and which did not conform to the essence of Islam.

Although the honorable Messenger did not give details about people and places with respect to these stories and related matters, it appears that he gave special importance to them. In some stories about the prophets, the Prince of the prophets did not mention them by name, but simply began by saying, *"one of the prophets."*¹⁰ For example, *"An ant bit one of the prophets, so he ordered that the nest of the ants be burnt. Then Allah revealed to him, 'It is because one ant bit you that you burnt a nation among the nations that glorify Allah?'"*¹¹

On other occasions our Master the Prophet did mention certain prophets by name. Among them are those mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: Adam, Idris, Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Abraham, Isma'il (Ishmael), Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Shu'ayb, Aaron, Moses, David, Solomon, Job, Dhu 'l-Kifl, Jonah, Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Luqman, Ezra, and Dhu 'l-Qarnayn are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an but there is disagreement over whether they were prophets or not.

Idris was a prophet who was favored in the Holy Qur'an by being described as *"He was a man of truth, a prophet,"*¹² and was further described in a verse as being raised to a high position, *"We raised him to a high position."*¹³ In the commentary on the high position to which he was raised, it is said that he was raised to a rank close to Allah (swt), to Paradise, or to the fourth heaven.¹⁴ Indeed, our Master the Prophet said, *"When I was brought*

⁹ B3436, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48; B78, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 19; M6949, Muslim, al-Riqaq, 100.

¹⁰ B3124, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 8.

¹¹ B3019, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 153; M5850, Muslim, al-Salam, 149.

¹² Maryam, 19:56.

¹³ Maryam, 19:57.

¹⁴ IT5/240, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, V, 240.

up during the Mi'raj (ascension to Heaven), I saw Idris in the fourth heaven."¹⁵ The Prophet (saw) described his encounter with Idris during the Mi'raj, saying, "We reached the fourth heaven... (Shortly afterwards) I came to Idris and greeted him. He said, 'You are welcome O brother prophet.'"¹⁶

Another prophet who was mentioned by our Prophet was Hud. Our Lord on High had sent Hud to the people of 'Ad. Hud summoned his people to the right faith, saying, "My people, serve Allah: you have no god other than Him. Will you not take heed?"¹⁷ But the leaders of his people denied him and said, "We believe you are a fool" and "We think you are a liar."¹⁸ He responded, "My people, there is nothing foolish about me! On the contrary, I am a messenger from the Lord of all the Worlds: I am delivering my Lord's messages to you. I am your sincere and honest advisor. Do you find it so strange that a message should come from your Lord, through a man in your midst, to warn you? Remember how he made you heirs after Noah's people, and increased your stature: remember Allah's bounties, so that you may prosper."¹⁹

Thereupon they rebuffed him, saying, "Have you really come to tell us to serve Allah alone and to forsake what our forefathers served? If what you say is true, bring us the punishment you threaten."²⁰

Hud replied, "You are already set to receive your Lord's loathing and anger. Are you arguing with me about mere names [of idols] you and your forefathers invented, names for which Allah has given no sanction? Just wait; I too am waiting."²¹

A while later, as a result of their rejection of Hud, his people saw some clouds headed toward them. They thought that these were rain clouds, but Hud said that they were winds sent by Allah (swt) and that they bore a terrible punishment.²² Afterwards, Allah Almighty made a howling and freezing wind blow for seven days and eight nights over this unbelieving people. And thus the people were laid out like uprooted empty palm trunks. No trace of them was left.²³ As for those who believed, they were saved by Allah's mercy.

Our Prophet used to mention Hud from time to time. In fact, during his Farewell Pilgrimage, he asked Abu Bakr, while passing through a valley, "O Abu Bakr! What valley is this?" He replied, "'Ufsan Valley." Then the Prophet (saw) said, "Hud and Salih passed through it on red camels with reins of palm fibers. They were wearing woolen cloaks over coarse woolen garments. They were reciting the talbiya while making the Hajj to the Ka'ba."²⁴ In this way he explained what happened to Hud and Salih.

¹⁵ T3157, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 19; HM13775, Ibn Hanbal, III, 261.

¹⁶ B3207, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-khalq, 6; M411, Muslim, al-Iman, 259.

¹⁷ Al-A'raf, 7:65.

¹⁸ Al-A'raf, 7:66.

¹⁹ Al-A'raf, 7:67-69.

²⁰ Al-A'raf, 7:70.

²¹ Al-A'raf, 7:71.

²² Al-Ahqaf, 46:24.

²³ Al-Haqq, 69:4-8; Fussilat, 41:16.

²⁴ HM2067, Ibn Hanbal, I, 232.

Salih was the prophet Allah (swt) sent to the people of Thamud (the people of the town of al-Hijr).²⁵ When Salih was sent to them, his people, he said, “... O my people! Worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. It was He who brought you into being from the earth and made you inhabit it, so ask forgiveness from Him and turn back to Him: my Lord is near, and ready to answer.”²⁶

Then they said, “Salih, we used to have such great hope in you. Will you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? We are in grave doubt about what you are asking us to do.”²⁷ And, “You are nothing but a man like us. Show us a sign, if you are telling the truth.”²⁸

Salih responded, “My people, this camel belongs to Allah, a sign for you, so leave it to pasture on Allah’s earth and do not harm it, or you will soon be punished.”²⁹ But his people paid little attention to his warning and had a man of position and power among them hamstringing the camel.³⁰ Then they said, “Salih, bring down the punishment you threatened, if you really are a messenger!”³¹ Thereupon Salih said, “Enjoy life for another three days.”³²

When they arose in the morning a terrible howling sound overwhelmed them. The lightening was so intense that they could not stand. Then Allah Almighty destroyed them and levelled them.³³

Our Master the Prophet told these stories in order to inform his community of the fate of past communities who were rebellious and stubborn toward Allah’s messengers and in order for them not to have the same fate. Indeed, while passing through the regions in which the Thamud had lived, he wanted his followers to take certain precautions. When, while returning from the Tabuk campaign, they lodged in the valley of al-Hijr, which was known as the place where the people of Salih had lived, the Prophet warned his Companions (ra) not to drink from the wells which had been used by the Thamud.³⁴ In this way, our Master the Prophet wanted his Companions (ra) to learn a lesson from the fate of previous communities. In fact, he also informed them that the places where these peoples had lived could be visited in order to take a lesson from their fate and in order to shed tears over it and contemplate it. As he said, “Do not enter the homes of those who were oppressors unless you do so weeping that what befell them will befall you.”³⁵ It is also true that this warning was extremely important to Muslims with respect to keeping the sense of history alive. Indeed there are sublime commands in many verses in the Holy Qur’an to visit the

²⁵ Al-Naml, 27:45.

²⁶ Hud, 11:61.

²⁷ Hud, 11:62.

²⁸ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:154.

²⁹ Hud, 11:64.

³⁰ B3377, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 17.

³¹ Al-A’raf, 7:77.

³² Hud, 11:65.

³³ Hud, 11:66-68; al-Hijr, 15:83-84; al-Shams, 91:14.

³⁴ B3379, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 17.

³⁵ B3380, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 17; M7465, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 39.

places associated with previous communities and nations in order to take a lesson from them,³⁶ for example, *“Allah’s ways have operated before your time: travel through the land, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved.”*³⁷

Another prophet mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (saw) was Lot. The Holy Qur’an emphasizes in particular his sound judgement, wisdom, knowledge, prophethood, and righteousness.³⁸ The people of Lot, like the peoples of other prophets, did not believe in his prophethood and called him a liar.³⁹ Lot said to his people, *“Will you not be mindful of Allah? I am a faithful messenger to you: be mindful of Allah and obey me. I ask no reward from you, for my only reward is with the Lord of the Worlds.”*⁴⁰ And, *“How can you practice this outrage? No other people has done so before. You lust after men rather than women! You transgress the bounds.”*⁴¹

Thereupon, his people wanted to expel him from his country in order to keep him and his followers away from their shameless behavior,⁴² saying, *“Lot! If you do not stop this, you will be driven away.”*⁴³ And Lot replied, *“How can you lust after men instead of women? You are a foolish people.”*⁴⁴

Then Allah Almighty sent his angels to destroy them.⁴⁵ The angels appeared in the guise of ordinary men and came as guests to the home of Lot. He thought that they were strangers in the region⁴⁶ and was afraid that his people would harm them in a shameless manner.⁴⁷

When the people of the city learned that these guests had arrived, they went to Lot’s house in revelry.⁴⁸ Lot said to them, *“These are my guests, do not disgrace me. Fear Allah, and do not shame me.”*⁴⁹ But the people of the city turned strongly against Lot and said, *“Have we not told you not to interfere [between us] and anyone else?”*⁵⁰ Lot replied, *“My daughters are here if you must.”*⁵¹ However, the immoral group answered, *“You know very well that we have no claim whatever to your daughters. You know very well what we want.”*⁵²

In response to what these people had done, Lot beseeched Allah, saying, *“If only I had the strength to stop you or could rely on strong support!”*⁵³ And, *“My Lord, help me against these people who spread corruption!”*⁵⁴ And, *“Lord, save me and my family from what they are doing!”*⁵⁵ His guests understood his situation and said to him, *“Lot, we are your Lord’s messengers. They will not reach you.”*⁵⁶ And, *“We have brought you what they said would never happen: we have brought you the Truth. We speak truly, so leave in the dead of the night with your household and walk behind them. Let none of you*

³⁶ Al-An’am, 6:11; al-Nahl, 16:36; al-Naml, 27:69.

³⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3:137.

³⁸ Al-Anbiya’, 21:74.

³⁹ Al-Qamar, 54:33.

⁴⁰ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:161-165.

⁴¹ Al-A’raf, 7:80-81.

⁴² Al-A’raf, 7:80-82.

⁴³ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:167.

⁴⁴ Al-Naml, 27:55.

⁴⁵ Al-Hijr, 15:58.

⁴⁶ Al-Hijr, 15:61-62.

⁴⁷ Hud, 11:77.

⁴⁸ Al-Hijr, 15:67.

⁴⁹ Al-Hijr, 15:68-69.

⁵⁰ Al-Hijr, 15:70.

⁵¹ Al-Hijr, 15:71.

⁵² Hud, 11:79.

⁵³ Hud, 11:80.

⁵⁴ Al-Ankabut, 29:30.

⁵⁵ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:169.

⁵⁶ Hud, 11:81.

look back. Go where you are commanded.”⁵⁷ And, “Only your wife will suffer the fate that befalls the others. Their appointed time is the morning: is the morning not near?”⁵⁸

Then, leaving his wife behind, Lot took his family and departed from there. Just as the sun was rising, a terrible howling sound overwhelmed them and laid them out. A shower of clay stones rained upon them.⁵⁹ And so, except for his wife, Lot and his family were saved.⁶⁰

Our Master the Prophet mentioned Lot, saying, “May Allah bestow His mercy on Lot. He had taken refuge in a strong fortress...,”⁶¹ and recalled how he had taken refuge in Allah (swt). In this way he used Lot’s determination to carry out his struggle to promote the tawhid as an example to his Companions (ra). On the one hand, our Master the Prophet demonstrated Lot’s determined struggle, and, on the other hand, he warned his community not to engage in reprehensible acts like homosexuality, which was widespread among the people of Lot, saying, “What I fear most from my umma is the behavior of the people of Lot.”⁶² When we consider that homosexuality is widespread today and that there is an attempt to treat it like a natural sexual preference, then the rightfulness of this concern of our Master the Prophet is readily apparent. It is a mistake to use the name of Lot in association with this reprehensible act, which is called *lūtilik* or *liwāṭa* in various books. Instead, it is more proper today to refer to it with such terms as homosexuality or same-sex relations.

Allah Almighty sent Shu‘ayb as a prophet to the people of Midian.⁶³ Shu‘ayb was the father-in-law of Moses. Moses married his daughter on condition that he serve him for eight years or ten years.⁶⁴ Shu‘ayb summoned his people to believe in Allah (swt). Because his people were notorious for deceit in the use of weights and measures in pursuit of trade, he warned them about this in particular, saying, “My people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. Do not give short measure nor short weight. I see you are prospering, but I fear you will have torment on an overwhelming Day. My people, in fairness, give full measure and weight. Do not withhold from people things that are rightly theirs, and do not spread corruption in the land. What lasts with Allah is best for you if you are believers. I am not your keeper.”⁶⁵

His people responded, “Shu‘ayb, does your prayer tell you that we should abandon what our forefathers worshipped and refrain from doing whatever we please with our own property? Indeed you are a tolerant and sensible man.”⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Al-Hijr, 15:63-66.

⁵⁸ Hud, 11/81.

⁵⁹ Al-Hijr, 15:73-74; Hud, 11:82-83.

⁶⁰ Al-Saffat, 37:134-135; al-Shu‘ara’, 26:170-171.

⁶¹ B4694, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Yusuf) 5; M6144, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 153.

⁶² T1457, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 24; IM2563, Ibn Maja, al-Hudud, 12.

⁶³ Al-A‘raf, 7:85.

⁶⁴ Al-Qasas, 28:25-29; IM2444, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 5.

⁶⁵ Hud, 11:84-86.

⁶⁶ Hud, 11:87.

He answered, *“My people, can you not see? What if I am acting on clear evidence from my Lord? He Himself has given me good provision: I do not want to do what I am forbidding you to do, I only want to put things right as far as I can. I cannot succeed without Allah’s help: I trust in Him, and always turn to Him. My people, do not let your opposition to me bring upon you a similar fate to the peoples of Noah or Hud or Salih; the people of Lot are not far away from you. Ask forgiveness from your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance: my Lord is merciful and most loving.”*⁶⁷

However, his people continued to be obstinate, saying, *“Shu’ayb, we do not understand much of what you say, and we find you very weak in our midst. But for your tribe we would have stoned you, for you have no great status among us.”*⁶⁸

Finally, he resorted to telling this people, who lived in a verdant valley but paid no heed to the blessings around them, only that their punishment was very near. *“My people, does my tribe have more power over you than Allah? How can you ignore Him? My Lord is fully aware of everything you do. My people, do whatever is within your power, and I will do likewise. Soon you will know who will receive a disgraceful punishment and who is a liar. Watch out, and so will I.”*⁶⁹

Then one morning they were overcome by a terrible earthquake. They fell to their knees and could not get up from where they were. It was as if Shu’ayb’s people had never lived there.⁷⁰ Only Shu’ayb and those who believed him were saved. Thus, just as the people of Thamud had become distant from the mercy of Allah and were destroyed, the people of Midian were also destroyed.⁷¹ If they had believed and had not acted contrary to Allah (swt), countless blessings would surely have been given to them from the heavens and earth. However, they denied Allah and He destroyed them because of their sins.⁷²

Job was another prophet whom our Master the Prophet mentioned to his Companions (ra). He is singled out in the Holy Qur’an for his patience.⁷³ And there his behavior in response to all of the blessings which Allah (swt) sent to him is emphasized. Once while he was taking a bath, a large number of golden yellow locusts, which were very valuable at that time, converged upon him and he opened his clothing and tried to collect them. In response to this behavior, Allah said, *“O Job! Did I not make you rich enough to dispense with what you see now?”* Job answered, *“Yes, O Lord!*

⁶⁷ Hud, 11:88-90.

⁶⁸ Hud, 11:91.

⁶⁹ Hud, 11:92-93.

⁷⁰ Al-A’raf, 7:90-92.

⁷¹ Hud, 11:94-95.

⁷² Al-A’raf, 7:96.

⁷³ Saad, 38:44.

*But I cannot make an exception with respect to the other blessings that You have given.*⁷⁴

It is clearly indicated here that Job agreed in advance that all blessings came from Allah Almighty and did not deny them. But the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Job was his patience. In fact, Job was not able to recover from the illness with which he had been afflicted for something like eighteen years.⁷⁵ Eventually he could no longer endure this illness and beseeched Allah (swt) to cure him, saying, *"Suffering has truly affected me, but you are the Most Merciful of the merciful."*⁷⁶ Then Allah (swt) accepted his prayer so that this would be a lesson to his servants. He cured his illness, eliminating his troubles and sorrows.

The Messenger of Allah also mentions the prophets Elijah, Elisha and Dhu 'l-Kifl, who are described in the Holy Qur'an as good persons.⁷⁷ Elijah said to his people, *"Have you no fear of Allah? How can you invoke Baal and forsake the Most Gracious Creator, Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers?"*⁷⁸ They accused Elijah of lying and for this reason were consigned to Hell.⁷⁹

Another prophet whose story our Master the Prophet mentioned in detail was Jonah. While stating that no distinction should be made among the prophets with respect to their virtue, our Prophet used Jonah as an example, saying, *"I do not say that there is anyone better than Jonah b. Matta (Amittai)"*⁸⁰ and *"None of you should say that I am better than Jonah."*⁸¹ Thus, on the one hand, he declared that Jonah was a righteous servant and a prophet and, on the other hand, warned his community that no prophet, including himself, was superior to the others. Similar expressions related to the Prophet Jonah are found in other *ḥadīths* of the Noble Messenger on various occasions.⁸² This shows at the same time that Jonah occupied an important place in the life and thought of the Prophet (saw).

Jonah, who is referred to in the Holy Qur'an as *dhā 'l-nūn*,⁸³ meaning "the man with the fish," and *ṣāhib al-ḥūt*,⁸⁴ meaning "the man in the whale," became angry when his people would not believe that he had been sent as a prophet and left them.⁸⁵ On his journey he boarded a ship.⁸⁶ When he boarded the ship, it rocked left and right and could not go forward. Jonah realized why it could not go forward. It was because he had gotten angry with his people, abandoned the mission that Allah (swt) had given him, and had fled. Realizing his mistake, Jonah told those on the ship why the

⁷⁴ B7493, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35.

⁷⁵ MK22177, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, XXV, 283.

⁷⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21:83-84.

⁷⁷ Al-An'am, 6:85; Saad, 38:48.

⁷⁸ Al-Saffat, 37:124-126.

⁷⁹ Al-Saffat, 37:127-128.

⁸⁰ B3415, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 35.

⁸¹ B3412, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 35; DM2774, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 33.

⁸² B4805, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Saffat) 1; M6160 Muslim, Fada'il, 167.

⁸³ Al-Anbiya', 21:87.

⁸⁴ Al-Qalam, 68:48.

⁸⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21:87.

⁸⁶ Al-Saffat, 37:140.

ship would not go forward and he wanted them to throw him overboard. However, they did not have the courage to throw a prophet overboard and decided to draw lots. The lot fell to Jonah and he was thrown from the ship.⁸⁷ After being thrown from the ship, Jonah was swallowed by a fish by the order of Allah (swt).⁸⁸ While in a sorrowful state in the belly of the fish, he invoked Allah,⁸⁹ saying, *“There is no god but You, glory be to You, I was among the wrong doers.”*⁹⁰

Allah Almighty accepted his prayer and saved him from the situation in which he had found himself.⁹¹ Allah (swt) then cast Jonah up on a desolate shore⁹² and grew a tree with broad leaves to shade him.⁹³ Afterwards he returned to his people who had become more than 100,000.⁹⁴ They accepted the prophethood of Jonah and became believers.⁹⁵

Our Master the Prophet taught his Companions (ra) the prayer which Jonah made while in the belly of the fish and which was accepted by Allah, saying, *“Yunus (Jonah) made the following prayer while in the belly of the fish: ‘There is no god but You, glory be to You, I was among the wrong doers.’”*⁹⁶ *If a Muslim prays for something in this fashion, Allah will always answer him.”*⁹⁷

Once, when the Noble Messenger, who told the story of Jonah to his Companions (ra) so that they could learn a lesson from it, was going through the Pass of Harsha between Mecca and Medina, he asked them which pass this was. When they answered, “the Pass of Harsha,”⁹⁸ the blessed Prophet said, *“It is as if I can see Jonah wearing a wool cloak and riding a red she-camel while holding the reins woven from palm fibers as he passed through this valley reciting the talbiya.”*⁹⁹

In addition to these prophets mentioned in the stories related by our Master the Prophet, Dhu ‘l-Qarnayn, Ezra, and Luqman are clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as prophets. Dhu ‘l-Qarnayn, to whom Allah gave power and strength and the means to obtain whatever he needed, is described in the Holy Qur’an as one who made journeys to the East and West.¹⁰⁰

As for Ezra, the Holy Qur’an states, *“The Jews said, ‘Ezra is the son of Allah,’ and the Christians said, ‘the Messiah is the son of Allah’: they said this with their own mouths, repeating what earlier disbelievers had said. May Allah thwart them! How far astray have they been led!”*¹⁰¹ Our Prophet says nothing about whether or not Ezra was a prophet.¹⁰²

As for Luqman, Allah Almighty endowed him with wisdom so that

⁸⁷ MSh31857, Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, Fada’il, 6; *al-Saffat*, 37:141.

⁸⁸ *Al-Saffat*, 37:142.

⁸⁹ *Al-Qalam*, 68:48.

⁹⁰ *Al-Anbiya’*, 21:87.

⁹¹ *Al-Anbiya’*, 21:88; *al-Saffat*, 37:143-144.

⁹² *Al-Saffat*, 37:145.

⁹³ *Al-Saffat*, 37:146.

⁹⁴ *Al-Saffat*, 37:147; T3229, *al-Tirmidhi*, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, 37.

⁹⁵ *Al-Saffat*, 37:148; MSh31857, Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, Fada’il, 6.

⁹⁶ *Al-Anbiya’*, 21:87.

⁹⁷ T3505, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Da’awat*, 81; HM1462, Ibn Hanbal, I, 170.

⁹⁸ M421, *Muslim*, *al-Iman*, 269.

⁹⁹ IM2891, Ibn Majid, *al-Manasik*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Al-Kahf*, 18:83-98.

¹⁰¹ *Al-Tawba*, 9:30.

¹⁰² D4674, *Abu Da’ud*, *al-Sunna*, 13.

¹⁰³ *Luqman*, 31:12.

¹⁰⁴ *Luqman*, 31:13.

he would be thankful.¹⁰³ He is remembered mostly for the wise advice that he gave to his son: *“My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah. Attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.”*¹⁰⁴

*“[And Luqman continued], My son, if even the weight of a mustard seed were hidden in a rock or anywhere in the heavens or earth, Allah would bring it [to light], for He is all subtle and all aware. Keep up the prayer, my son; command what is right; forbid what is wrong; bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to be aspired to. Do not turn your nose up at people, nor walk about the place arrogantly, for Allah does not love arrogant or boastful people. Go at a moderate pace and lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is the braying of asses.”*¹⁰⁵

The stories and parables that our Master the Prophet told us about the earlier prophets have been important elements in maintaining the continuity and resilience of Muslim society. The prophets whom Allah (swt) has sent to mankind throughout history were not just these. This is clear from our Lord's words, *“We have mentioned to you some of the earlier prophets and some we have not mentioned to you.”*¹⁰⁶ In addition to the aforesaid prophets, many other prophets and societies have come and gone. The aforementioned prophets are important with respect to both creating an historical awareness and making it easy for all Muslims to understand that Allah's unchanging laws related to the rise and fall of societies will continue until the Day of Judgement. These stories that were told were also important for the effect they had in boosting the morale of all Muslims, above all that of our Prophet.¹⁰⁷ This is because the history of a society is its memory and its memory is the foundation of its identity. A society which loses its memory loses its identity. Anything which establishes the identity of a society, from the past to the present, should not be forgotten.

Thus, rather than excluding the experiences of the past prophets from our own lives and simply telling their stories as if they were fairy tales, should we not rethink them at each opportunity with respect to the lessons they provide, as the Noble Qur'an, which says, *“Have they not travelled in the land and seen how those before them met their end?”*¹⁰⁸ warns many times,¹⁰⁹ and, by internalizing them, adopt them and use them as examples of the way that Allah's messengers lived their lives?

¹⁰⁵ Luqman, 31:16-19.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:164.

¹⁰⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:184; al-An'am, 6:10.

¹⁰⁸ Fatir, 35:44.

¹⁰⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:137; al-An'am, 6:11.



THE PREVIOUS COMMUNITIES (UMMAS) READING HISTORY THROUGH LESSONS

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: كَانَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُحَدِّثُنَا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
حَتَّى يُضْبِحَ مَا يَقُومُ إِلَّا إِلَى عُظْمِ صَلَاةٍ.

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) said
“the Prophet of Allah (saw) used to tell us the stories of the Israelites
until morning. He would only get up when it was time
for the obligatory prayer.”

(D3663, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm, 11)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”... حَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ...”



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شَبْرًا شَبْرًا، وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ، حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحَرَ
ضَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”الْكَلِمَةُ الْحِكْمَةُ ضَالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ، فَحَيْثُ وَجَدَهَا فَهُوَ أَحَقُّ بِهَا.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“... tell others the stories of the Israelites, for it is not sinful to do so...”

(B3461, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 50)



According to Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
*“You will follow the ways of those nations who came before you, span by span
and cubit by cubit, so much so that even if they had entered the hole of a lizard,
you would follow them.”*

(B7320, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 14)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The wise statement is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it,
then he is more worthy of (learning and applying) it.”*

(T2687, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 19)



According to Suhayb (ra), one day after the zuhr prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) moved his lips as if about to speak. Then someone said, “O Messenger of Allah! You moved your lips when doing the zuhr prayer.” Thereupon, our Master the Prophet said, *“One of the prophets was surprised at the state of his community. And so he said, ‘Who can stand against them?’ Then Allah revealed to him that they must choose between suffering from His wrath or the assault of their enemies. They preferred to be punished by Allah. Death was then inflicted upon them so that seventy thousand died in one day.”*

In addition to this story, Suhayb (ra) also reported the following story that was told by our Prophet: *“There was a king who had a fortuneteller who predicted the future for him. This fortuneteller said to the king, ‘Find a perceptive boy for me and let me teach him my knowledge. I am afraid that I may die and there will be no one among you who knows it.’ They found a boy fitting this description and ordered him to frequent the fortuneteller and to learn his knowledge. So the boy began frequent visits to the fortuneteller.*

On the boy’s route there was a monk living in a hermitage —at that time there were probably Muslims staying there. The boy began asking the monk questions each time he passed him, and he would not leave him until he answered him, so the monk said, ‘I only worship Allah.’ The boy began to spend more time with the monk and arrived late at the fortuneteller’s. The fortuneteller sent word to the boy’s family saying, ‘He hardly ever comes to me.’ The boy told this to the monk who said, ‘When the fortuneteller asks you where you’ve been, tell him: “I was with my family.” And when your family asks you where you’ve been, then tell them that you were with the fortune-teller.’

While continuing in this manner, one day the boy passed by a large group of people being held back by a beast. Some of them said it was a lion which had detained them. So, the boy took a rock and said, ‘O Allah! If what the monk says

is true, then I ask you to kill this animal (with this stone).’ Then he threw the stone and killed the animal. The people began asking each other who killed it, and some of them replied, ‘It was this boy.’ They were alarmed and said, ‘This boy has learned a knowledge that no one else has learned.’ A blind man who had heard about him, came to him and said, ‘If you can return my sight, I will give you such and such.’ The boy said, ‘I do not want anything from you. However, if your sight is returned to you, would you believe in the One who gave it back to you?’ The blind man said, ‘Yes.’ Then the boy prayed to Allah. He returned his sight and the blind man became a believer.

The story of the boy was brought to the attention of the king who sent for them (the boy, the monk, and the blind man). The king said, ‘I will kill each of you in a different way.’ He called for the monk and the man who had been blind. He placed a saw upon the forehead of one of them and killed him. Then he killed the other one by a different means. Then he gave orders for the boy and said, ‘Take him to such and such mountain and throw him from its peak.’ They brought him to that mountain, and when they reached the place from where they intended to cast him, they themselves began tumbling off of that mountain; and all of them fell down until no one remained except for the boy. Then he returned and the king ordered that he be brought to the sea and cast into it. So he was brought to the sea, but Allah drowned those who were with him, and He saved him. Then the boy said to the king, ‘You will not be able to kill me until you tie me to the trunk of a tree and shoot me, and when you shoot me, you say: “In the name of Allah, the Lord of this boy.”’ So he ordered that he be tied. Then when he shot him, he said, ‘In the name of Allah, the Lord of this boy.’ The boy placed his hand upon his temple where he was shot and then he died. The people said, ‘This boy had knowledge that no one else had! We believe in the Lord of this boy!’ The king was told, ‘Your efforts have been thwarted by the opposition of these three. Now all of these people oppose you.’ So he had ditches dug and wood was put into them and lit. Then he had all of the people gathered together and said, ‘Whoever leaves his religion, then we will leave him. And whoever does not leave, we will cast him into this fire.’ Then he began casting them into that ditch.

Here our Prophet recited the following verses of the sūra of al-Buruj, ‘Perish the makers of the trench, of the fuel-stoked fire (for burning the believers). They sat down and witnessed what they were doing to the believers. Their only grievance against them was their faith in Allah, the Mighty, the Praiseworthy,’¹ and then added that the boy was buried.²

¹ Al-Buruj, 85:4-8.

² T3340, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 85.

Our Master the Prophet used these and similar stories and tales concerning past societies who struggled with faith as a means of teaching about the history of the struggle for belief and the unity of Allah and as a means of instructing his Companions (ra). By means of exemplary stories about past peoples, he aimed to teach Muslims about belief, acts of worship, and morals. He told these stories to his Companions (ra) at length when he felt it was necessary to ensure that this goal was realized, he told these stories to his Companions (ra) at length. As ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) said, “the Prophet of Allah (saw) used to tell us the stories of the Israelites until morning. He would only get up when it was time for the obligatory prayer.”³

These stories ought to have attracted the great interest and curiosity of our Prophet himself and of the Companions (ra) who heard them. He could not have helped but to have wished that he had more information concerning the details of the story about Moses and the righteous servant, which is mentioned in the Noble Qur’an. As the Prophet (saw) said, “*May Allah bestow His mercy on Moses! If he had remained patient (and not interfered in the case of the righteous servant), we would have been told further about what had occurred between them.*”⁴

Furthermore, the Companions (ra) asked the sublime Prophet questions about many stories concerning the past communities, nations, and prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur’an. Sometimes misunderstandings arose about the past communities, which resulted in these questions, and he resolved them. Indeed, once when he was asked if Saba, which is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, was a place name or a woman’s name, he clarified a mistaken view, saying, “*Saba is neither the name of a woman nor of a place. Rather, it was a man among the Arabs who had ten sons...*”⁵

The Companions (ra), who were in contact with many Jews in the society of Medina, could have been interested in certain stories and information about their culture. The Noble Messenger, who was aware of such interest, wanted useful information and lesson-giving stories to be preserved for his community and theoretically could be transmitted to them from the Jews according to the *ḥadīth*, “*...tell others the stories of the Israelites, for it is not sinful to do so...*”⁶ Furthermore, in addition to his own message, he wanted to transmit to his Companions (ra) lesson-giving and cautionary stories and information about past communities and nations in general

³ D3663, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm, 11; HM20166, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 438.

⁴ B3401, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 27; M6163, Muslim, Fada’il, 170.

⁵ T3222, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 34.

⁶ B3461, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 50.

and the ancient Israelites in particular. Although these stories might have been the result of historical realities, it is also possible that they were told in the sense of giving the moral of a story in order to be able to make a certain point.

According to the *ḥadīths*, “Neither believe the People of the Book and nor disbelieve them...”⁷ and “Do not ask the People of the Book anything...,”⁸ he warned his followers to be careful about passing on information from the People of the Book. Nevertheless, as the historical record shows, a lot of information concerning past communities, which was called *isra’īliyyāt*, subsequently entered certain *ḥadīths* and these so-called *isra’īliyyāt* stories and information were Islamized.

The Prince of the prophets usually preceded the stories that he told of past communities by saying, as if relating a fairy tale, such things as “A prophet among the prophets,”⁹ “There was a king among kings,”¹⁰ or “There was a man from one of the communities which came before you.”¹¹

Just as in the Holy Qur’an, Moses, the Prophet of the Israelites, is the prophet about whom our Master the Prophet gives the most information. Sometimes the Prophet (saw) clearly mentions certain people related to the Israelites. In one case, the Messenger of Allah (saw) began by saying, “There was among the Israelites someone called al-Kifl...” and then, with respect to committing sin, told the story of this person who did not fear Allah (swt).¹²

Our sublime Prophet certainly had different reasons for telling these stories. Sometimes he avoided stories of past communities which had been widespread in the Jahiliyya period but which did not conform to the essence of Islam; and sometimes, by mentioning the struggles and patience of past prophets and communities,¹³ he tried to strengthen the morale of his community in the person of his Companions (ra) when they faced difficulties. Indeed, this moral encouragement, in which the difficulties which befell past prophets were mentioned, was sometimes found in the Holy Qur’an for the Prophet in particular¹⁴ and for all Muslims in general.¹⁵ In the Holy Qur’an, this was sometimes done, as with the examples of the *aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd* (the makers of the trench)¹⁶ and the *aṣḥāb al-kaḥf* (the people of the cave),¹⁷ in order to emphasize the determination of certain people from past communities in their struggle to preserve their faith.

⁷ B7542, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 51.

⁸ HM14685, Ibn Hanbal, III, 338.

⁹ B3124, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 8; M4555, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 32.

¹⁰ T3340, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 85.

¹¹ B6480, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 25.

¹² T2496, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyaḥ, 48; HM4747, Ibn Hanbal, II, 23.

¹³ B3852, al-Bukhari, Manaḥib al-ansar, 29.

¹⁴ Al ‘Imran, 3:184; al-An‘am, 6:34.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:214.

¹⁶ Al-Buruj, 85:4-10.

¹⁷ Al-Kahf, 18:10-25.

On the one hand, the Noble Prophet described certain righteous acts performed by past ummas in order to strengthen the determination of the Companions (ra) in their struggle, and, on the other hand, pointed out certain mistaken behavior and excesses committed by previous communities, above all the Israelites.¹⁸ In this way he used them as object lessons to implicitly warn the Muslims.

Accordingly, he informed his followers that the most important fault to occur among the Israelites was that some of them did not avoid eating, drinking, and mixing with others although they had been warned that Allah (swt) had forbidden them to do so.¹⁹ In fact the errors and excesses of past communities, above all the Israelites, are mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur'an. In this way, Allah's Messenger wanted to create an awareness of history among the Muslims; and he wanted all of them to fully understand that, with respect to the rise and fall of societies, Allah's laws remained unchanging. There is no doubt that he made a strong impression on the minds of the Companions (ra) with respect to the hopes of the Muslims as they faced the future. This was because the past of a society is its memory and its memory is its identity. A society which loses its memory loses its identity. Whatever creates the identity of a society, from the past to the present, should not be forgotten. Thus the information, stories, and legends about past communities which are found in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna are among the elements which ensure that Muslim society takes a lesson from the experiences of the past.

The laws which are called *sunnat Allāh* in the Holy Qur'an and which harmonize social differences are unchanging.²⁰ Another purpose of the aforesaid stories is that they remind us that Muslims could follow the path of past communities and that the *sunnat Allāh* is just as valid for Muslims today as it was for past societies. It is important for us to know in this respect what happened to past communities. These stories should not simply be heard and told as "ancient fables,"²¹ but should be told and understood as object lessons and warnings, as found in the Holy Qur'an²² and as presented by our Master the Prophet, in order not to fall in to the same errors.

Many of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are associated with the Israelites in the lore of the People of the Book. It is known that, in the early years of the Medina period, the sublime Prophet sometimes liked to emulate the People of the Book in matters for which he had received no

¹⁸ IM4001, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 19.

¹⁹ D4336, Abu Da'ud, al-Malahim, 17.

²⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:62.

²¹ Al-Mu'minun, 23:83.

²² Al 'Imran, 3:137; al-Nahl, 16:36.

divine instruction.²³ In fact, after the Hijra to Medina, Allah's Messenger saw that the Jews kept the fast of the day 'Ashura'. When he asked the reason for this, he was told that this day was important for it was on this day that Allah (swt) had saved the Israelites from their enemies and that Moses had spent this day fasting. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said to the Jews, "We are more worthy of Moses (that is, of maintaining his tradition) than you," and so he fasted on that day and ordered his Companions (ra) to do the same.²⁴

Our Master the Prophet also used to pray, saying, "(O Allah) who revealed the Torah, Gospel, and Qur'an."²⁵ This was because in the Holy Qur'an there was a clear distinction between the People of the Book and polytheists/idol worshippers. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an praised some of the practices of the People of the book. For instance, the people of Quba", who followed the rule of cleaning with water, which is found in the Torah, are praised in the Holy Qur'an.²⁶ And the Messenger of Allah (saw) learned the reason for this from them when he came to Quba'.²⁷

Nevertheless, the Prophet did not want his Companions (ra) to read the falsified books of the earlier religions.²⁸ This was because some Jews and Christians had changed these divine revelations.²⁹ The process of change began mainly when generations subsequent to the apostles who were around each prophet began to say what they did not do and do what they did not command.³⁰

Therefore it was important to have generations (Companions (ra), apostles) to preserve the communications of the prophets and to pass them on to subsequent generations as they had heard them from those who had preceded them. The superiority of this community which has meticulously preserved the Holy Qur'an and the sources of the Sunna is with us today. Nevertheless, when Ziyad b. Labid, a wise man from Medina, asked, "We read the Holy Qur'an, we have our children read the Holy Qur'an, and they have their children read the Holy Qur'an and so on until the Day of Judgement, so how could this knowledge be lost?" The Prophet (saw) gave the following warning about the future of the Muslims, "*The Jews and Christians had read the Torah and Gospel, but did the contents not avail them of nothing?*"³¹

It appears from certain reports that the blessed Prophet was asked similar questions on various occasions. Each time he said emphatically

²³ B3558, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M6062, Muslim, Fada'il, 90.

²⁴ IM1734, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 41; HM2832, Ibn Hanbal, I, 311.

²⁵ D5051, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 97, 98; T3400, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 19.

²⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:108.

²⁷ HM24334, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 6.

²⁸ DM443, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 39.

²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:79.

³⁰ HM4379, Ibn Hanbal, I, 458.

³¹ HM17612, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 160.

that the elimination of knowledge of past communities by Jews and Christians came about either by scholars who removed content from their religion and made mistaken interpretations of it or by the disappearance of genuine scholars who could interpret the faith.³² In this way he advised Muslims to be extremely careful in interpreting the Holy Qur'an.

The fact that information about past communities survived in the culture of Islam, that some of these stories were found in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, which are the direct primary sources of this information, and that some of these stories, although found among the People of the Book, were later spread by Muslim narrators all contributed to creating, on the one hand, a sense of history, and, on the other hand, a special culture for Muslims.

Thanks to these stories, first the generation of the Companions (ra) and then subsequent generations of Muslims learned the following: Islam was not a religion devised by the merciful Prophet at a certain time in history. The Holy Qur'an confirmed the books which came before him³³ and corrected those aspects which had been falsified. Therefore, while the stories and legends of past communities are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, the religion of the newly emerged Muslim society was considered to be in fact the primordial faith which had existed since the beginning of history and its followers were considered to have been the most righteous, the most just, and the most worthy. While this was done, thanks to the language and style of these stories, an attempt was made, at the same time, to give Muslim society a philosophy of history and a way to read the day in the light of historical events.

The expression "past communities," which was used to mean pre-Islamic religions and cultures was a general expression which included many sub-topics. In the Holy Qur'an, the peoples who lived before Islam are referred to with such expressions as "*many from the past*,"³⁴ "*those who went before*,"³⁵ "*those before you*,"³⁶ and "*former generations*."³⁷ The most important among them were the Israelites to whom the two most important religions based on divine revelation were addressed. Thus the Prophet (saw) meant the Jews and Christians when he used the expression "*those before you*."

Apart from Judaism and Christianity, it is true that, with respect to contact via divine revelation, there were other religions and cultures about

³² HM22646, Ibn Hanbal, V, 266.

³³ Al-Baqara, 2:91.

³⁴ Al-Waqi'a, 56:13, 39.

³⁵ Al-Mulk, 67:18.

³⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:183

³⁷ Ta Ha, 20:51.

which there is no definite information. According to some commentaries, the expression *zukur al-awwalin* (the scriptures of earlier religions),³⁸ could imply that some of them were of divine origin. In this connection, when interpreted in the widest sense, it could be said that this expression referred to past communities and nations and that it meant all the nations descended from Ham, Shem, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah who was considered the second father of mankind after Adam.³⁹

There was no difference between the attitude of our beloved Prophet toward past communities and toward the religions and nations of the People of the book. This attitude toward the People of the Book was not only toward them as such but also toward their intellectual world, religion, and culture. In fact, the *hadiths* which give the general outline of the Prophet's view of past cultures generally express a contrary position toward them and more particularly reflect an opposing attitude toward Judeo-Christian culture.

In his view of past communities, Allah's messenger ordered and advise his followers to oppose them and not to resemble them. But by this he meant those matters related to the beliefs, rules, customs, and traditions of past communities and nations which Islam did not approve of and forbade. In one *hadith* the Prophet (saw) said, "*The hour (of the Day of Judgement) will not be established until my followers copy the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span by span, and cubit by cubit.*" When he was asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Do you mean by those (nations) the Persians and the Byzantines?" he said, "*Who else but them?*"⁴⁰ In this *hadith* the Persians and Byzantines are mentioned in particular because they were the two most powerful states of the time. In another *hadith* reported by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, our Prophet said, "*You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit, so much so that even if they entered a hole of a lizard, you would follow them.*" And when the Companions (ra) who were there asked him if he meant the Jews and Christians, he replied, "*Whom else?*"⁴¹

In Islam, the beliefs, perceptions, and rules of other religions and cultures were interpreted according to the principles of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna. In this respect there would be no obstacle to establishing contact with foreign cultures in a way that would harm the bases of the faith and belief of Muslims. To the contrary, Muslims were encouraged to acquire knowledge from other past cultures and civilizations in ways that would

³⁸ Al-Shu'ara', 26:196.

³⁹ T3931, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 69; HM20375, Ibn Hanbal, V, 11.

⁴⁰ B7319, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 14

⁴¹ B7320, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 14.

be of benefit. This in fact is one of the meanings of the *ḥadīth* which says, *“The wise statement is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it, then he is more worthy of (learning and applying) it.”*⁴²

In both the Holy Qur’an and the *ḥadīths*, one of the important matters mentioned with respect to past communities was the divine punishment that was given to them. The primary punishments which were inflicted materially and spiritually in different forms were deluge,⁴³ flood,⁴⁴ being turned into apes and pigs,⁴⁵ suffering and hardships,⁴⁶ (violent and deafening) earthquake,⁴⁷ flood, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood,⁴⁸ drowning in the sea,⁴⁹ a cold and howling wind,⁵⁰ and a stone-bearing wind.⁵¹ While the past communities and nations on which these punishments were inflicted were sometimes mentioned generally in the Holy Qur’an and Sunna as *“how many generations,”*⁵² at other times they were mentioned by name: the people of Noah,⁵³ the people of Lot,⁵⁴ (the people of) ‘Ad,⁵⁵ (the people of) Thamud,⁵⁶ (the people of) Midian,⁵⁷ (the people of) al-Rass,⁵⁸ the Forest Dwellers, and the Tubba’.⁵⁹

These punishments were inflicted because these peoples denied their prophets, despite the performance of the miracles that they had wanted them to perform,⁶⁰ because of the various devices they resorted to in order to disavow them,⁶¹ and because they tormented and even killed their prophets.⁶² This destruction was inflicted by Allah (swt) on those who symbolized tyranny and taking extreme measures against people, such as Pharaoh, Qarun, and Hamam.⁶³

The Holy Qur’an tells us how and why these peoples and persons were destroyed, and reminds us at every opportunity that there is a great lesson and warning here for those who understand.⁶⁴ Thus an attempt was made to keep the historical sense of Muslims alive as a guide to the future and stress was laid on learning lessons from historical events. Among the reasons mentioned for inflicting punishment were the past communities’ denial of the prophets,⁶⁵ mocking the prophets and the divine message that they brought,⁶⁶ being ungrateful for the blessings that were given and being spoiled,⁶⁷ by insisting on the false religions of their ancestors,⁶⁸ by causing corruption on earth,⁶⁹ by asking many unnecessary questions the object of which was not to learn anything and to fall into conflict about the prophets,⁷⁰ and by ignorantly comparing some parts of the divine books which were sent to them with others.⁷¹

⁴² T2687, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 19.

⁴³ Al-‘Ankabut, 29:14.

⁴⁴ Saba’, 34:16.

⁴⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5:60.

⁴⁶ Al-A’raf, 7:94.

⁴⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:78.

⁴⁸ Al-A’raf, 7:133.

⁴⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:136.

⁵⁰ Al-Qamar, 54:19.

⁵¹ Al-Qamar, 54:34.

⁵² Al-An’am, 6:6.

⁵³ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:105.

⁵⁴ Hud, 11:89.

⁵⁵ Al-Haqqa, 69:6.

⁵⁶ Qaaf, 50:12.

⁵⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:85.

⁵⁸ Al-Furqan, 25:38.

⁵⁹ Qaaf, 50:14.

⁶⁰ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:154-158.

⁶¹ Nuh, 71:22-25.

⁶² Al-‘Imran, 3:21.

⁶³ Al-‘Ankabut, 29:39.

⁶⁴ Al-Hijr, 15:73-75; al-Shu’ara’, 26:158.

⁶⁵ Al-Zumar, 39:25.

⁶⁶ Al-Ra’d, 13:32; al-Anbiya’, 21:41; Ghafir 40:83.

⁶⁷ Al-Qasas, 28:58.

⁶⁸ Al-Zukhruf, 43:23-25.

⁶⁹ Al-Naml, 27:48-51.

⁷⁰ B7288, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itisam, 2; M3257, Muslim, al-Hajj, 412.

⁷¹ HM6668, Ibn Hanbal, II, 179.

In addition to these punishment which were mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna as having been inflicted on past communities and nations, the many blessings and privileges given to the Israelites compared to other nations were also mentioned,⁷² and it was stated that, except for what Jacob made unlawful for himself, every kind of food was made lawful for them.⁷³ In this respect it is often stated in the Holy Qur'an that gratitude for these blessings was expected from the Israelites.⁷⁴

It is reported that they frequently had a close association with Allah.⁷⁵ For example, it is stated that they were saved from Pharaoh's oppression when they were brought through the sea,⁷⁶ they were saved from degrading suffering,⁷⁷ they were settled in a good place and provided with good things as sustenance,⁷⁸ they were shaded with clouds and sent manna and quails without any trouble to them,⁷⁹ a spring of water was made to gush for them from a rock,⁸⁰ and all kinds of pulses and vegetables were made available for their use.⁸¹ However, when the inner fat of animals was forbidden to them,⁸² they devised a way to circumvent this ban by selling the fat and consuming its price and so they were reproached.⁸³

In addition the Messenger of Allah (saw) made comparisons between all the communities of the past and his community and all the prophets of the past and himself. For instance, in the *ḥadīth*, "*The period of your stay (in this world) as compared to the previous communities is like the period equal to the time between the zuhr prayer and sunset*,"⁸⁴ he emphasized the short life span of this community compared to past communities. In these comparisons, he also pointed out his common religious practices with those of the previous prophets,⁸⁵ and sometimes stated that his community was superior to previous communities and gave the reason for this.⁸⁶

We can give as an example of this the *ḥadīth* which declares that the 'isha' prayer—in some reports this was the afternoon prayer⁸⁷—was the reason for the superiority of this community over other communities because no other community on earth had performed it.⁸⁸ The same comparison was made in the *ḥadīth* which stated that, although Friday prayer had been made obligatory for previous communities, it was only done by his community in a regular fashion.⁸⁹ Sometimes this comparison was made with respect to multitude when it was done by the Muslims and the community of Moses.⁹⁰ When the Prophet (saw) said that the people of 'Ad were destroyed by the west wind, he made a comparison by saying

⁷² Al-Dukhan, 44:32; al-Jathīya, 45:16.

⁷³ Al-'Imran, 3:93.

⁷⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:40.

⁷⁵ Al-A'raf, 7:138.

⁷⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:49.

⁷⁷ Al-Dukhan, 44:30.

⁷⁸ Yunus, 10:93.

⁷⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:57.

⁸⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:60.

⁸¹ Al-Baqara, 2:61.

⁸² Al-An'am, 6:146.

⁸³ B2224, al-Bukhari, al-Buyū', 103; M4052, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 73.

⁸⁴ B557, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-salat, 17.

⁸⁵ HM5735, Ibn Hanbal, II, 99.

⁸⁶ D421, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 7; HM22416, Ibn Hanbal, V, 237.

⁸⁷ HM27767, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 397.

⁸⁸ B862, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 161.

⁸⁹ HM10367, Ibn Hanbal, II, 491.

⁹⁰ HM3806, Ibn Hanbal, I, 402.

that he was helped by the wind of Saba' (Sheba).⁹¹

The Noble Messenger did not want his Companions (ra) to benefit from the lands used by the peoples who were punished nor did he want them to drink from the wells from which they had drunk. When, while returning from the Tabuk Campaign, he and his Companions (ra) camped in the valley of al-Hijr, which was where the Thamud, the people of the prophet Salih were destroyed, he warned his Companions (ra) in particular about doing these things.⁹² He reminded them that the natural environment could affect the sensitivity of people; and emphasized that they should take a lesson from this situation in which they found themselves. Indeed our Prophet said that they could visit the places of these peoples in order to take a lesson from them and to weep over the state into which they had fallen.⁹³ This attitude was, at the same time, tantamount to a very important warning to Muslims with respect to maintaining an historical awareness. In many verses of the Noble Qur'an we find the following sacred declarations about visiting the places connected with past communities and nations: *"Have they not travelled through the land and seen how their predecessors met their end?"*⁹⁴ and *"Allah's ways have operated before your time: travel throughout the land, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved."*⁹⁵

⁹¹ B3205, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-khalk, 5; M2087, Muslim, al-Istisqa', 17.

⁹² B3378, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 17.

⁹³ B4419, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 81; M7465, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 39.

⁹⁴ Al-Rum, 30:9.

⁹⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:137.



PHARAOH, HAMAN, and QARUN THE THREE RUTHLESS ENEMIES OF TAWHID

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”حَسْبُكَ مِنْ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ: مَرْيَمُ ابْنَةُ عِمْرَانَ، وَخَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ، وَفَاطِمَةُ
بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَآسِيَةُ امْرَأَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ.“

According to Anas (b. Malik) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Sufficient for you (as examples) among the women of mankind are Maryam bint ‘Imran, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Fatima bint Muhammad, and Asiya the wife of Pharaoh.”

(T3878, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 61)



عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَوْمَ بَدْرٍ، فَقُلْتُ قَتَلْتُ أَبَا جَهْلٍ،
قَالَ: "اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ؟" قَالَ: قُلْتُ: اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ،
فَرَدَّدَهَا ثَلَاثًا، قَالَ: "اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَ وَعْدُهُ، وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ،
وَهَزَمَ الْأَحْزَابَ وَحْدَهُ، انْطَلِقْ فَأَرِنِيهِ"، فَانْطَلَقْنَا، فَإِذَا بِهِ، فَقَالَ: "هَذَا فِرْعَوْنُ
هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ."





Ibn Mas‘ud (ra) said, “On the day of (the battle of) Badr, I went to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘I killed Abu Jahil.’ The Prophet said, ‘(Did you kill him) *for the love of Allah, who is the only god?*’ I answered, ‘(Yes, I killed him) for the love of Allah, who is the only god.’ He (the Prophet) repeated his question three times. Then he said, ‘*Allah is most great. Praise be to Allah who always keeps his promise, who helps his servant, and who alone inflicts defeat on all parties! Let’s go, and show him to me.*’ We departed. We had a look at him and then he said, ‘*This (Abu Jahil) was the pharaoh of our umma.*’”

(HM4247, Ibn Hanbal, I, 445)





The Pharaoh (Ramses II) played an unforgettable role in history throughout his life. There was a terrible fire. The flames which arose from Jerusalem reached as far as Egypt. They were now burning Egypt. The attempts of the Egyptians to save their lives and flee here and there were futile. One by one they fell into the claws of the flames. However, it was interesting that the fire which had no pity on the Egyptians did not touch the Israelites. After the fire turned all of their homes to ash, it headed for the palace. The Pharaoh, who saw that the circle was narrowing, thought that he could not escape. Suddenly a ball of flame opened its mouth and came toward him. He closed his eyes like a sacrificial animal ready to meet its fate. He awoke from this dream feeling a terrible heat on his face.

The Pharaoh summoned his astrologers and described to them his dream. He wanted them to explain it. Their explanations were as depressing as his dream: "A man will appear from the place of origin of the Israelites, who are now living under your rule, that is, from the area around Jerusalem, and this man will be the cause of the destruction of Egypt."

A solution had to be found immediately. One suggestion, although cruel and terrible, stuck in the mind of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh listened carefully to this suggestion and then immediately gave an order. All the newborn male children of the Israelites were to be killed. Slaves who worked outside under difficult conditions were to be tasked with simple jobs in homes. The worst, dirtiest, and most degrading jobs were to be done by the Israelites rather than the slaves.¹

The entire administrative, military, economic, judicial, and religious organization in Egypt, whose lands were given life by the Nile and which was a civilized country which had developed its own unique religion and concept of art, had been maintained for thousands of years by the pharaohs through a system of rule which had been passed on from dynasty to

¹ TT19/516, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan*, XIX, 516.

dynasty and from father to son. Socially and individually, they had such a strong influence on society that, in the eyes of the ordinary Egyptian, the pharaohs even ensured, in a certain respect, the continuation of life; and in Egypt they were at the center of religious life.²

In the organization and operation of the state, the pharaohs certainly received help from others. Around the pharaoh there were undoubtedly high-ranking palace officials who were assumed to be close to him. Those who participated in the administration of the country had a say in how it functioned. They were the advisors to the Pharaoh. Among them were the chief priests who carried great weight. This was because the pharaohs consulted with them in all matters related to religion and belief, which directly concerned all aspects of life. Thus they constituted the cadre which controlled the administrative organization which gave direction to the life of Egypt and the Egyptian.

Now all the tasks and responsibilities, rights and authority related to the country derived from the Pharaoh. Over time, Egypt had made considerable progress. Thanks to the blessing granted by the Nile, the desert bloomed and everywhere there were well-watered verdant gardens. Among these gardens the Egyptians constructed lofty buildings.³

The Israelites, who were the object of the Pharaoh's terrible plan, came from the lineage of Jacob. The descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob were divided into twelve tribes.⁴ They settled in Egypt during the time of Joseph. Allah Almighty, while testing the Israelites with the abundant riches with which he had granted the Pharaoh and his men also tested them with the Pharaoh. In fact, Allah on High reminded the Jews of that time of the following incident so that they could learn a lesson from the past: *"Remember when We saved you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to terrible torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing only your women—this was a great trial from your Lord."*⁵ This was indeed a severe test. The new-born sons of the Israelites were mercilessly killed and the Israelites were treated socially as second-class people and shunned. However, Allah Almighty in His grace sent during that same time the luminary who would save them from this great distress, Moses.

Allah (swt) inspired the heart of a woman, who, for some unknown reason —she may have loved him because he was her son or felt sorry for him for what might happen in the future— wanted to place her little one

² "Firavun," *DIA*, XIII, 119.

³ *Al-A'raf*, 7:137.

⁴ *Al-A'raf*, 7:160.

⁵ *Al-Baqara*, 2:49.

in a chest and leave him in the river. This child, who was taken under divine protection, was destined to become a prophet.⁶ Subsequently the plan was fulfilled replete with lessons. He would be taken from the river by someone who would be the enemy of both Allah (swt) and Moses himself.⁷ In fact the Pharaoh's men found Moses at the bank of the river.⁸ Following the orders of the Pharaoh, he should have been killed immediately. However, divine fate inspired someone who was very close to the Pharaoh to prevent this crime. This was the Pharaoh's wife Asiya. When she learned that a male child had been found at the bank of the river, she went to the Pharaoh right away and said, *"Here is a joy to behold for me and for you! Do not kill him: he may be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son."*⁹

The Pharaoh was caught between his dream and the suggestion of his beloved wife. However, he was overcome with feelings of love and spared the child's life. But no one was aware of this.¹⁰ Indeed, sometime later Allah's promise was fulfilled. After a period of maturation, prophethood was bestowed upon Moses.¹¹ Included in the knowledge revealed to Moses was that there was no god but Allah, that He alone should be worshipped, and accountability on the Day of Judgement and in the hereafter.¹² Allah on High said, *"Do not let anyone who does not believe in this and follows his own desires distract you from it, and so bring you to ruin!"*¹³ His prophethood was confirmed by such miracles as turning his staff into a snake when it was thrown on the ground and the white hand.¹⁴ His brother Aaron was also given the mission of prophet to assist him.¹⁵ Eventually the goal was revealed: *"We sent Moses with our signs and clear authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun..."*¹⁶

These three enemies of the faith were all extremely self-absorbed. But they exhibited this self-absorption in different ways. The Pharaoh claimed divinity and authority over all aspects of life; the chief priest Haman said that he was in contact with the sacred and he derived profit from this; and Qarun was proverbial for his riches and was overcome with pride, having forgotten that his wealth was given to him in trust and was a test for him. In other words, the Pharaoh represented the oppressive ruler and oppressive government; Haman represented the oppressive mind and knowledge; and Qarun represented the oppressive profiteer and land holder.

Moses was first commanded to go to the Pharaoh, *"Go to Pharaoh, for he has truly become a tyrant."*¹⁷ When necessary Moses performed for the

⁶ Ta Ha, 20:38-39; al-Qasas, 28:7.

⁷ Ta Ha, 20:39.

⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:8.

⁹ Al-Qasas, 28:9.

¹⁰ Al-Qasas, 28:9.

¹¹ Al-Qasas, 28:30; Ta Ha, 20:41.

¹² Ta Ha 20:14-15.

¹³ Ta Ha, 20:16.

¹⁴ Ta Ha, 20:17-22; al-Qasas 28:31-32.

¹⁵ Maryam, 19:53; al-Furqan, 25:35.

¹⁶ Ghafir, 40:23-24.

¹⁷ Ta Ha, 20:24.

Pharaoh the miracles which had been given to him, “...These shall be two signs (given to you) from your Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs; they are truly wicked people.”¹⁸

Moses and Aaron appeared before the Pharaoh and declared that they were the prophets sent by the Lord of the Worlds,¹⁹ and that they would only speak the truth about Allah (swt).²⁰ How contrary were the principles that they recited to the Pharaoh’s concept of life and world view! He should restrain his desires. He should observe the law, rights, and justice. He should live with thought for the Hereafter. He should take each step with the notion of accountability. This approach was completely contrary to the established way of life. It shook the foundation of the Pharaoh’s order. Indeed, when Moses and Aaron described these truths, the first reaction of the Pharaoh and his men was directly related to the world and worldliness, “Have you come to turn us away from the faith we found our fathers following, so that you and your brother can gain greatness in this land?”²¹ and “He means to use his sorcery to drive you out of your land! What do you suggest?”²²

The Pharaoh’s threat to Moses’ emphasis on the tawhid, saying, “If you take any god other than me, I will throw you into prison”²³ was connected to “me” and “the self,” which were again attached to his earthly desires. His thought and reasoning were wrapped in the color of dark arrogance, “Are we to believe in two mortals like us? And their people are our servants.”²⁴

The Pharaoh, who came from a lineage which was accustomed to rule their own world for centuries by means of divinity, could not conceive of submitting to the will of Allah, who was described as the one and true god, and subjecting himself to it. He immediately turned to Moses and, confident that he would overcome and embarrass him, demanded that he prove that he was really sent by Allah (swt). Moses immediately performed the miracles of the white hand and the staff. However, the answer of the Pharaoh, whose heart was conditioned not to believe, who turned a blind eye to reality, and was blind to danger, was the familiar one of those who disbelieve. He turned to those in his presence and said, “This man is a learned sorcerer.”²⁵

The Pharaoh, who thought that Moses was practicing magic, assembled all the magicians in the country in order to respond to him in like manner. His goal was to demonstrate that Moses was a liar and that he, the Pharaoh, was the only god. And he wanted to be able to maintain his sov-

¹⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:32.

¹⁹ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:16.

²⁰ Al-A’raf, 7:105.

²¹ Yunus, 10:78.

²² Al-Shu’ara’, 26:35.

²³ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:29.

²⁴ Al-Mu’minun, 23:46-47.

²⁵ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:34.

ereignty and rule over all his people. It never occurred to him that Moses could speak the truth. This was because, in a word, it did not suit his interests. Thus he thought he would make Moses compete with the magicians under his command. If the magicians could defeat Moses, it would be revealed that Moses was exerting himself only on his own behalf and not for the sake of Allah (swt). In order to be able reach a more objective verdict, they decided to make the competition a holiday and to have it done before the people who were gathered at mid-morning.²⁶ The result, however, was not as the Pharaoh had wished. Moses' staff overwhelmed all the tricks of the magicians based on deception and sleight of hand. Perhaps not the Pharaoh, but his magicians understood the truth. They immediately fell to their knees and said, *"We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron!"*²⁷

The Pharaoh realized that the circle of belief around him was gradually enlarging and his own area of action was narrowing. He still looked for the problem in the same place and asked the same questions: about his world, his sovereignty in it, his self, his ego, and his divine dealings which he was used to. He could not accept the truth and screamed at the magicians, *"How dare you believe in Him before I have given you permission? This is a plot you have hatched to drive the people out of this city! Soon you will see!"*²⁸

Afterwards the Pharaoh did what he knew best, he resorted to violence. He threatened to amputate the hands and feet of the magicians and crucify them. However, the magicians had found the truth. They struck the Pharaoh at his most vulnerable point, saying, *"We shall never prefer you to the clear sign that has come to us, or to Him who created us. So decide whatever you will: you can only decide matters of the present life—we believe in our Lord, [hoping] He may forgive us our sins and the sorcery you forced us to practice—Allah is better and more lasting."*²⁹

At this time there occurred an incident which shook the Pharaoh even more. His wife Asiya declared that she believed in Moses and his Lord. Then the Pharaoh forgave Moses because of the love that he had felt for him for many years. So, subsequently, the Pharaoh realized that he had no choice and began to focus on his own close circle. First he subjected Asiya to a terrible torture in order to make her renounce her belief. He attached his wife to four stakes in the ground and then put a large mill stone on her stomach. She was tortured until she died.³⁰ According to another report,

²⁶ Ta Ha, 20:58-59

²⁷ Al-A'raf, 7:115-122; Ta Ha, 20:65-73.

²⁸ Al-A'raf, 7:123.

²⁹ Ta Ha, 20:72-73.

³⁰ MA20445, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, XI, 246.

she was tortured under the sun, that she was shaded by the wings of angles when the Pharaoh's men left her, and that she saw her house in heaven.³¹ In short, Asiya did not abandon her faith under this torture, having gone from her previous contrary religion to faith in Allah Almighty in whose existence and unity she believed. Allah (swt) would praise this woman, who was subjected to torture by her very own husband because of her faith, and use her as an example to those subjected to terrible treatment for praying to Him, beseeching Him, and believing in Him. Asiya, who knew that the Pharaoh's world was temporary and disregarded it, spoke as follows to her Lord: "Lord, build me a house near You in the Garden. Save me from Pharaoh and his actions; save me from the evildoers."³²

Centuries later Allah's Messenger would recall her among the women of Paradise³³ and say, "Sufficient for you (as examples) among the women of mankind are Maryam bint 'Imran, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Fatima bint Muhammad, and Asiya the wife of Pharaoh."³⁴

The Prophet (saw) described another act of the Pharaoh's tyranny to his Companions (ra). According to this story, there was a believing woman named Mashita who was a servant of the Pharaoh's daughter. One day while combing the hair of the Pharaoh's daughter, the comb fell from her hand. When she picked it up, she said, "In the name of Allah." The Pharaoh's daughter then asked her, "(Do you mean) my father?" The woman said, "No. (I mean in the name of) Allah who is my Lord and the Lord of your father." The Pharaoh's daughter then said, "I will inform my father," and she told her father what had happened. The Pharaoh summoned the woman and asked her, "O woman! Do you have a lord other than me?" The woman said, "My Lord and your Lord is Allah." The Pharaoh ordered that a vessel made of copper be heated and that the woman and her children be thrown into it. The woman was prepared for death but said to the Pharaoh, "I have a request." The Pharaoh asked, "What is your request?" The woman said, "I would like my bones and the bones of my children to be buried together." The Pharaoh said, "It would be right and a duty for us to do this." Then, one by one, the children of the women were thrown into the vessel before her eyes. Finally the Pharaoh came to the last child who was a nursing infant. His mother seemed to waver, but when he said, "O mother! Go ahead! The punishment of this world is easier to bear than the punishment of the Hereafter." And so he was thrown into the fire. On the night of the

³¹ NM3834, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 1436 (2/496).

³² Al-Tahrim, 66:11.

³³ HM2668, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293.

³⁴ T3878, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Manaqib*, 61.

Prophet (saw)’s ascent to heaven, the Mi’raj, he noticed a pleasant fragrance and he asked Jibril what it was. Jibril told him this story and informed him that this wonderful fragrance was that of the woman who had combed the hair of the Pharaoh’s daughter and her children.³⁵ According to the report of Ibn Maja, this fragrance came from the grave of the woman, her two sons, and her husband.³⁶

The treatment to which Asiya, the magicians, and believers were subjected revealed a new chapter in the eras of tyranny and torture which believers have faced since the world was established. Those who consider life to consist only of this world and try to protect their power only consider present conditions and circumstances, as always, and bring to mind the Pharaoh and follow his behavior. Some of the Pharaoh’s leading men told him that he should not leave Moses and his people, who did not believe in him or his gods, to freely spread such corruption in the land.³⁷ So the Pharaoh made a plan, saying, *“Kill the sons of those who believe with him; spare only their women.”*³⁸ *“We have complete power over them.”*³⁹ *“Leave me to kill Moses—let him call upon his Lord!—for I fear that he may cause you to change your religion, or spread disorder in the land.”*⁴⁰

While this plan was being carried out to the letter, Allah Almighty, as a sign of his infinite mercy, continued to send intercessors to the Pharaoh and his men to remind them of the truth and He presented them with spectacles from which they could learn a lesson. Indeed a man from the Pharaoh’s inner circle, but who believed in Moses and concealed this, tried to appeal to the ruler’s reason and common sense, saying, *“How can you kill a man just for saying, ‘My Lord is Allah?’ He has brought you clear signs from your Lord—if he is a liar, on his own head be it—and if he is truthful, then at least some of what he has threatened will happen to you. Allah does not guide any rebellious, outrageous liar.”*⁴¹

But the Pharaoh could not renounce his disbelief while he struggled to prove his claim to divinity, which was under suspicion and threat. Thus he decided to challenge the god that Moses mentioned. He turned to his chief priest Haman and said, *“Haman, light me a fire to bake clay bricks, then build me a tall building so that I may climb up to Moses’ Allah: I am convinced that he is lying.”*⁴²

According to various traditions, Haman carried out the Pharaoh’s order with relish and built a tower. This was because if he could prove that

³⁵ HM2822, Ibn Hanbal, I, 309; NM3835, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 1436 (2/497).

³⁶ IM4030, Ibn Maja, *al-Fitan*, 23.

³⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:127.

³⁸ Ghafir, 40:25.

³⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:127.

⁴⁰ Ghafir, 40:26.

⁴¹ Ghafir, 40:28.

⁴² Al-Qasas, 28:38.

Moses was a liar, he would, above all, ensure his own position. Indeed, the Pharaoh went up to this tower and shot an arrow into the sky.⁴³ By this action he meant to say, "Would anyone take another god's word against my divinity? Moses is a liar. There is no god other than me! If there is such a being, one could fight with him even in the sky and I can shoot an arrow at him!" In his speeches he continued to make the same point, "*Councilors, you have no other god that I know of except me.*"⁴⁴ "*I am your Lord!*"⁴⁵ And "*My People, is the Kingdom of Egypt not mine? And these rivers that flow at my feet, are they not mine? Do you not see?*"⁴⁶

However, Allah's comment on this behavior of the Pharaoh and his supporters was made clear: "*Pharaoh and his armies behaved arrogantly in the land with no right—they thought they would not be brought back to Us.*"⁴⁷

In light of this clear stubbornness and disbelief, Allah (swt) inflicted on the Pharaoh and his men scarcity and drought which lasted many years, saying they should ponder these things and take a lesson from them. Nevertheless, when something good came their way, they said, "*This is our due,*" and when something bad came they ascribed it to the evil omen of Moses and those with him. When they were reminded that these bad things were a lesson, they said, "*We will not believe in you, no matter what signs you produce to cast a spell on us.*" So, because of their lack of foresight, stubbornness, and arrogance, Allah gave them more severe lessons. He unleashed a flood, cause an invasion of locusts, lice, and frogs, and mixed blood with the water. With each disaster they would have recourse to Moses and ask him to pray to relieve them of it. If this torment ceased, they said they would follow the right path and promised that they would free the Israelites. However, when they were relieved of the torment thanks to the prayer of Moses, they went back on their word and broke their oath.⁴⁸

The rejection, arrogance, and stubbornness were reflected in the persecution and torture inflicted on Moses and those who believed in him. But in order to strengthen their faith, Allah on High ordered them to build their houses in Egypt and make them places of worship, and he gave the good news of Paradise to believers.⁴⁹ Patience and prayer... this was always the advice that Allah gave to those who were subjected to various hardships or torture because of their beliefs: "*You who believe, seek help through steadfastness and prayer, for Allah is with the steadfast.*"⁵⁰ This now was the command addressed to Moses and those who believed in him. It is signifi-

⁴³ TT19/581, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan*, XIX, 581.

⁴⁴ Al-Qasas, 28:38.

⁴⁵ Al-Nazi'at, 79:24.

⁴⁶ Al-Zukhruf, 43:51.

⁴⁷ Al-Qasas, 28:39.

⁴⁸ Al-A'raf, 7:130-135.

⁴⁹ Yunus, 10:87.

⁵⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:153.

cant that one of the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* states that those who do not continue to do the ritual prayer will be with the Pharaoh, Haman, Qarun, and Ubayy b. Khalaf on the Day of Judgement.⁵¹

Eventually, the good news that Moses and those who believed in him were expecting arrived. Allah (swt) said to his messenger, *“Go out at night with my servants and strike a dry path for them across the sea!”*⁵² *“... You will surely be pursued.”*⁵³

The Pharaoh learned that Moses and the Israelites had set out at night and at daybreak he went in pursuit of them intending to completely annihilate them. The Pharaoh's army, which travelled fast, soon caught up with them. The distance between the two quickly closed. The Israelites were distressed because the sea appeared before them. At that moment when they thought, *“We shall definitely be caught,”* Moses said, *“My Lord is with me”* and reaffirmed his belief and trust in Allah. Then Allah (swt) immediately revealed to his messenger how they could be saved and said, *“Strike the sea with your staff!”*⁵⁴

In the middle of the water, a dry road appeared just as Allah (swt) had promised. Moses and those who believed in him entered this road of salvation. The Pharaoh and his army followed them. When the last Israelite set foot on the opposite shore and the last of the Pharaoh's soldiers was in the middle of the sea, the miracle was fulfilled. At precisely that moment, by order of Allah, the sea returned to normal and the waves came together over the heads of the Pharaoh and his army.⁵⁵

While Moses and those who believed in him were experiencing the joy of salvation, the Pharaoh, who was in the last struggle of his life against the water that enveloped him, suddenly found himself accounting for his fate, but he had no one to blame but himself.⁵⁶

He realized in his heart and mind that for years he had been drowning in a sea of unbelief and oppression. The guide who would save him from this sea had also come from the water, from the Nile. He had lived with him in the palace for a long time. Later he left, but then returned and he insistently and fearlessly called him to the truth. But in response to all of this, he closed his eyes and plugged his ears.

The time was up. And the reckoning, ...he makes his decision and cries out with the last breath in his lungs: *“I believe there is no Allah except the one the Israelites believe in. I submit to Him,”*⁵⁷ In the collections of *ḥadīths*,

⁵¹ HM6576, Ibn Hanbal, II 169; DM2749, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 13.

⁵² Ta Ha, 20:77.

⁵³ Al-Shu'ara', 26:52.

⁵⁴ Al-Shu'ara', 26:60-63.

⁵⁵ Al-Shu'ara', 26:63-66.

⁵⁶ Al-Dhariyat, 51:40.

⁵⁷ Yûnus, 10:90.

there are some reports which state, while describing this event, that out of fear that Allah's mercy would reach the Pharaoh because he became a believer at the end, Jibril filled his mouth with mud so that he could not cry out.⁵⁸ The Pharaoh's situation is described in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"Now? When you had always been a rebel, and a troublemaker! Today We shall save only your corpse as a sign to all posterity. A great many people fail to heed Our signs."*⁵⁹

The Pharaoh and his men had caused hardship and torture. But divine punishment was not like anything devised by man: *"They will be brought before the Fire morning and evening. On the Day the Hour comes, it will be said, 'Throw Pharaoh's people into the worst torment.' In the Fire they will quarrel with one another: the weak will say to the haughty, 'We were your followers, so can you now relieve us from some share of the Fire?' but they will say, 'We are all in this together. Allah has judged between His creatures.'"*⁶⁰

With this Judgement, the account books of the Pharaoh and his associates were closed. In the *ḥadīths* it is mentioned that the Jews of Medina accepted the day of 'Ashura' as the day on which Allah (swt) saved Moses and his people from the Pharaoh and his fate and drowned the Pharaoh and his people in the sea and therefore fasted on this occasion.⁶¹ While taking an oath from Ibn Suriya, who was a Jew, the Prophet (saw) mentioned the Pharaoh, saying, *"I remind you by Allah Who saved you from the people of Pharaoh, made you cleave the sea, shaded you with clouds, sent down to you manna and quails, sent down to you the Torah to Moses, do you find stoning (for adultery) in your Book?"*⁶²

During the Battle of Badr, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) went to the Prophet (saw) and told him that he had killed Abu Jahl. The Prophet (saw), saying, *"(Did you kill him) for the love of Allah, before Whom there is no other god?"* made Ibn Mas'ud confirm that he had killed Abu Jahl by swearing an oath three times. Then the Noble Messenger said, *"Allah is most great! Praise be to Allah who fulfilled his promise, granted victory to his servant, and alone defeated the parties! Let us go and you can show him to me."* They went and looked at him. Then the Prophet (saw) said, *"This was the Pharaoh of his nation."*⁶³

The Prophet (saw) stood before the bodies of the polytheists killed at Badr and addressed them saying, *"Allah has punished all of you. While I was a faithful man, you accused me of being a traitor. While I was a right man,*

⁵⁸ T3107, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 10; HM2821, Ibn Hanbal, I, 309.

⁵⁹ Yunus, 10:91-92.

⁶⁰ Ghafir, 40:46-48.

⁶¹ M2658, Muslim, al-Siyam, 128; B3397, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 24.

⁶² D3626, Abu Da'ud, al-Qada' (al-Aqdiyya), 27.

⁶³ HM4247, Ibn Hanbal, I, 445.

you accused me of going astray.” Then he turned toward Abu Jahl b. Hisham and said, *“This man acted more wickedly toward Allah than Pharaoh. This was because Pharaoh, when he realized that he was going to die, confessed to the unity of Allah. But when Abu Jahl realized he was going to die, he prayed to al-Lat and al-‘Uzza.”*⁶⁴ In this way, the Prophet (saw) compared Abu Jahl with the Pharaoh.

After the Pharaoh, the banner of oppression and injustice, which were shown to the faith and to believers, was taken by another icon of evil. For the partisans of Allah (swt) next had to deal with one who represented the world, worldliness, and the self, with respect to being distinguished by pride and arrogance. This person was a clear danger and threat to Moses and those who believed in him. This new enemy was Qarun.

Qarun, who was from the people of Moses, possessed enormous wealth. His treasures were such that even their keys could have weighed down a group of strong men.⁶⁵ Qarun loved to be ostentatious. He enjoyed flaunting his wealth before people. In fact, with this behavior he gave an overtone of war against the religious system brought by Moses and Aaron and tried to upset, if not destroy, it. This was because he saw it as the most natural right to spend his wealth only on himself, and in this respect he was insatiable. One day, while going about in all his pomp, finery, and ostentation, certain words reached his ear. Some people whom Allah (swt) described as *“those whose aim was the life of this world”* said, *“If only we had been given something like what Qarun has been given: he really is a fortunate man.”*⁶⁶ In response, people who knew the truth answered, *“Alas for you! Allah’s reward is better for those who believe and do good deeds: only those who are steadfast will attain this.”*⁶⁷

Qarun was pleased with the disturbances that he caused in society. He thought that the religion that Moses brought would sooner or later be destroyed. In spite of this, as a sign of His incomparable and boundless mercy, Allah Almighty continued to remind him of the universal truths spoken by righteous people in society. These people, who were the friends of Allah (swt), the truth, and justice, said, *“Do not gloat, for Allah does not like people who gloat. Seek the life to come by means of what Allah has granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in the world. Do good to others as Allah has done to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah does not love those who do this.”*⁶⁸ As for Qarun, he said, *“This wealth was given to*

⁶⁴ MK12067, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-kabir*, XI, 302.

⁶⁵ Al-Qasas, 28:76.

⁶⁶ Al-Qasas, 28:79.

⁶⁷ Al-Qasas, 28:79-80.

⁶⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:76-77.

me on account of the knowledge I possess.” He paid absolutely no attention to their warnings.⁶⁹

According to tradition, when Moses ordered the Israelites to pay alms, Qarun assembled the Israelites and asked them, “This man has commanded you to perform ritual prayer and other things and you have tolerated them. Will you add to this burden by giving him your wealth?” The Israelites responded, saying, “We will not add to this burden by giving him our wealth (as alms). What do you think should be done?” Qarun said, “My thought is this. Let us send a prostitute to him from among the Israelites. Let us say that he wants to be with her and let us spread this scandal.” And they agreed to do this. When Moses called upon Allah to curse Qarun, Allah (swt) commanded the earth to submit to Moses. When Moses commanded the earth to swallow them, it first swallowed them to their heels, then to their knees, and then completely. They immediately cried out for help, saying, “O Moses, O Moses!” Finally, the respite that Allah (swt) had given came to an end and Qarun, who was incapable of seeing reality, sank deep below the earth along with his palace.⁷⁰ Some people who were there took an important lesson from this event and confessed to the truth as follows: “Alas [for you, Qarun]! It is Allah alone who gives what He will, abundantly or sparingly, to whichever He will of His creatures: if Allah had not been gracious to us, He would have caused the earth to swallow us too. Those who deny the truth will never prosper.”⁷¹

There is no doubt that the Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun represented self-absorption in contrast to truth, justice, and human dignity. They were the most important symbols of the effort to establish a form of rule the sole purpose of which was to satisfy their desires, and of a point of view which made it impossible for them to submit to the common and universal values of all the divine religions. They were examples of the kind of thinking which cannot at all accept that everything of value in the world, all material and spiritual riches, come in fact from Allah (swt) and will eventually return to Allah, that these riches were given as a test, and thus they should be used for right and good purposes. Instead, they expended all their efforts to foil the divine summons.

These examples, selected by Allah (swt), are significant with respect to showing how, when focused on worldly affairs, self-absorption, desire, and ambition affect people. The result is always the same. One who is trapped

⁶⁹ Al-Qasas, 28:78.

⁷⁰ Al-Qasas, 28:81; NM3536, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 1327 (2/409); MSh31834, Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, al-Fada'il, 4.

⁷¹ Al-Qasas, 28:82.

in such behavior forgets Allah Almighty, the Hereafter, and accountability on the Day of Judgement. He invents different gods with his own hands. Even if he is not aware of it, he has concrete and abstract idols like the polytheists of the Jahiliyya period. He does not escape their command. As for the truth, he realizes it when beholding the sorrowful scenes of the Day of Judgement. But it is too late. The truth is this: such personalities have opposed virtually every prophet who communicated the diving message to mankind since the creation of the world. In one form or another this has always been the case. Therefore, one should approach these narratives, which were related by Allah (swt) and his Messenger, and the persons and events mentioned therein, not simply as “stories,” but with an awareness of them as “signposts” from each of which lessons should be learned.



THE EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA and NAJASHI (NEGUS) THE JUST RULER

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ... فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”لَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ يَا أَهْلَ السَّفِينَةِ هِجْرَتَانِ.“

According to Abu Musa (ra), the Prophet said (concerning the Muslims who emigrated to Abyssinia), “O you people of the ship! You will have (the reward of) two emigrations.”

(B3876, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 37)



عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَتْ... فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ بَارِضَ الْحَبَشَةِ مَلِكًا لَا يُظْلَمُ أَحَدٌ عِنْدَهُ فَالْحَقُّوا بِبِلَادِهِ حَتَّى يَجْعَلَ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ فَرْجًا وَمَخْرَجًا مِمَّا أَنْتُمْ فِيهِ...”



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَاتَ الْيَوْمَ عَبْدٌ لِلَّهِ صَالِحٌ أَصْحَمَةٌ“ فَقَامَ فَأَمَّنَّا وَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: نَعَى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ النَّجَاشِيَّ صَاحِبَ الْحَبَشَةِ،
الْيَوْمَ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ فَقَالَ: ”اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ.“



Umm Salama (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to his Companions (who were being tormented in Mecca), “*There is a king in Abyssinia who does not oppress anyone. Remain in his country until Allah shows you a way out from the current situation . . .*”

(BS18232, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, IX, 17)



Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*Today, Ashama (the Negus), a righteous servant of Allah, has died.*’ Then he stood up and led us in the funeral prayer for him.”

(M2208, Muslim, *al-Jana’iz*, 65)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) informed us of the death of the Negus, who was the king of the Abyssinians, on the day that he died and said, ‘*Ask Allah’s forgiveness for your brother.*’”

(B1327, al-Bukhari, *al-Jana’iz*, 60)



Approximately seven years had passed since the emigration from Mecca to Medina. The Muslims were getting accustomed to living in their new home. They were now at peace. But this was not, in fact, the first emigration of the Muslims. The long-suffering Muslims had made their first emigration to Abyssinia. Eventually, by the grace of Allah (swt), the Muhajirun to Medina and the Muhajirun to Abyssinia met in Medina. One of the Muhajirun was the beloved wife of Ja'far b. Abi Talib, namely, Asma' bint 'Umayy (ra), a Muslim who had emigrated to Abyssinia.¹ Asma' went to visit Hafsa, the daughter of 'Umar (ra), at her home. Like her, she was an emigrant to Abyssinia. At exactly that time, 'Umar wanted to see his daughter and appeared before them. He asked his daughter, "Who is this girl?" Hafsa introduced her, saying, "Asma', the daughter of 'Umayy." He then teased her, saying, "Is she the Abyssinian, the sea-faring lady?" Asma' said, "Yes." 'Umar turned to Asma' and said, "We preceded you (to Medina), so we have a greater right than you over the Messenger of Allah (saw)." Asma' became angry at these words, and replied, "No, by Allah! While you were with the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was feeding the hungry among you, and advised the ignorant among you, we were in the far-off hateful land of Abyssinia, and that was all for the sake of the Messenger of Allah. By Allah! I will neither eat any food nor drink anything until I inform the Messenger of Allah of all that you have said. There we were frightened and endured torment. I will mention this to the Prophet (saw) and will not tell a lie or shorten or add to what you have said."²

'Umar had angered Asma' (ra) on a sensitive subject concerning the Emigration. In light of the various sufferings that they had endured, his words had caused offense. She immediately went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) to explain to him what had happened. The response of our Prophet sprinkled water on Asma's heart: *"He is not more worthy of me or closer to me*

¹ H17/489, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VII, 489.

² B4230, al-Bukhari, *al-Maghazi*, 39.

than you. He and those who emigrated with him will be rewarded for one emigration.³ O people of the ship! You will be rewarded for two emigrations. One to Abyssinia and the other to Medina, the emigration to the Prophet.”⁴

The happiness of Asma’ upon hearing these words of the Messenger of Allah (saw), which were good news, was indescribable. The other seafarers who wanted to hear these blessed words of the Prophet from Asma’s mouth went to see her. In their view, nothing in the world could be of greater import or give greater joy than this testimony from the Prophet (saw) concerning the emigration to Abyssinia. This was so much so that some of the Companions (ra) frequently went to Asma’ and wanted to hear these words of Allah’s Messenger again and again.⁵

When our beloved Prophet declared that the Muhajirun to Abyssinia would be rewarded for two emigrations, he was quite justified. This was because in the early years of Islam they were subjected to oppression and repression by the Meccan polytheists. When the sun of guidance which had arisen in the cave of Hira in Mecca in 610 began to spread its rays, the oppression of the Muslims by the Meccan idolaters began to intensify. The Muslims, who were subjected to insults and torture, began to fear for their lives. Mecca, their beloved home where they had been born and raised, was becoming oppressive.⁶

Five years had passed since the Messenger of Allah (saw) received his first revelation. It was the month of Rajab in 615.⁷ Believing he had no alternative in light of the persecution and torture that his Companions (ra) were suffering, the Prophet of Mercy advised them to emigrate in order to save themselves from this situation. This was certainly not easy to do, that is, to leave everything behind and go to a country about which they knew nothing. However, when done for a lofty purpose, such as living the religion in which they believed, this action was worth taking. This was because Allah the Exalted said to these blessed people, *“As for those who emigrated in Allah’s cause after being wronged, We shall give them a good home in this world, but the reward of the Hereafter will be far greater, if they only knew it.”*⁸ The place to which the believers had to travel in order to be able to be in receipt of these divine good tidings was Abyssinia, a country which Allah’s Messenger liked and trusted.⁹

Abyssinia was known to the Muslims at that time as a place to which one went to trade and which could be reached by sea. Moreover, it was the

³ M6411, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 169.

⁴ HM19930, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 412; B3876, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 37.

⁵ M6411, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 169.

⁶ BS18232, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, IX, 17; IS214, Ibn Ishaq, Sira, I, 214; HS2/164, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 164.

⁷ ST1/203, Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, I, 204.

⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:41.

⁹ MA9743, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, V, 384; HS2/164, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 164.

preferred place of emigration because it was safe. The various regions of Arabia would not accept these people because they belonged to a new religion. Abyssinia, which had adopted Christianity, a heavenly religion, and which had a just ruler, was the most appropriate place for emigration. In fact, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*There is a king in Abyssinia who does not oppress anyone. Remain in his country until Allah shows you a way out from the current situation...*”¹⁰ Therefore, permission was given to emigrate to the country of the Negus, whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) had praised and trusted and characterized on his death by saying, “*Today, Ashama (the Negus), a righteous servant of Allah, has died.*”¹¹

The first emigration of Islam was thus carried out to Abyssinia. Eleven men and four women among the Companions (ra) boarded ship at the port of al-Shu‘ayba, crossed the Red Sea, and set foot on African soil in Abyssinia. Among the first Muhajirun were ‘Uthman, his wife Ruqayya, who was a daughter of our Prophet, Abu Salama and his wife Umm Salama, al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam, Mus‘ab b. ‘Umayr, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf, ‘Uthman b. Maz‘un, Abu Hudhayfa b. ‘Utba and his wife Sahla bint Suhayl, ‘Amir b. Rabi‘a and his wife Layla bint Abi Hasma, Abu Sabra, Khatib b. ‘Amr, and Suhayl b. Bayda’ (ra).¹²

According to Umm Salama (ra), who was among those who had emigrated, the Muhajirun stayed with the Negus in Abyssinia, and he was the best host. There they could practice their religion in safety. No one was hostile to their religion or said a disparaging word about it.¹³ A few months after this first emigration which was made to Abyssinia, there were some unfounded rumors that the situation in Mecca had improved. So, some of the Muslims returned to Mecca. However, when they discovered that the polytheists there had increased their oppression, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave permission to a second group to emigrate to Abyssinia. Approximately one year after the first emigration, a new group of over one hundred people, including Ja‘far b. Abi Talib (ra), the son of the paternal uncle of our Prophet, made a second emigration to Abyssinia.¹⁴

In addition to the second emigration, many people, some alone and some with their families, left Mecca. When word spread that the Muslims were happier in the country to which they had taken refuge than in their own, the Meccans were quite agitated. The Meccan polytheists, who paid close attention to their own interests, regarded the situation of the Muslims

¹⁰ BS18232, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, IX, 17; IS247, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 247.

¹¹ B1320, al-Bukhari, *al-Jana‘iz*, 54; M2208, Muslim, *al-Jana‘iz*, 65.

¹² ST1/203, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqat*, I, 204.

¹³ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

¹⁴ ST1/203, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqat*, I, 206-207; EU1/189, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, I, 189.

who had settled in Abyssinia, practiced their religion in peace, and who were not held in contempt by anyone, as a future threat. Consequently, the leaders of the tribe of Quraysh assembled without delay and decided to send an envoy to Abyssinia in order to get the Muhajirun expelled. They delegated two distinguished individuals who were highly talented and politically astute to go to Abyssinia. They were 'Amr b. al-'As and 'Abd Allah b. Abi Rabi'a, both of whom later became prominent Companions (ra). This delegation made its way to Abyssinia, presented itself to the Negus and his commanders, and gave them all kinds of gifts. Their goal was to ensure that the Negus would not allow these helpless people to take refuge in his country and would send them back.¹⁵

When the delegation arrived in Abyssinia, they presented the valuable gifts that they had brought to the king's commanders before meeting the king himself. In this way they wanted to ensure support for themselves when they were taken before the Negus. Pointing out that the Muhajirun had not converted to Christianity when they had come to Abyssinia, they tried to provoke the Negus and those in his circle against them. Eventually they took the floor and informed the Negus of their demands:

"O King! Some foolish young men of ours have come to your land. They have left the religion of their people and have not entered your religion. They have invented a religion that neither we nor you recognize. The nobles of their people, their fathers, uncles, and clans have sent us to you concerning them, to bring them back, for they know best how to handle them and they know best about their faults."¹⁶

The Negus listened to what they had to say and then stated that he could not decide what to do without hearing from those who had taken refuge with him,¹⁷ and so he summoned a group of Muslims to his presence. The group, led by Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra), appeared before the Negus. They did not bow to him. Ja'far, who was a young and courageous Companion, took the floor and described their situation in a very concise manner as follows:¹⁸

"O King! We were an ignorant people, worshipping idols, eating dead meat, committing immoral acts, severing ties of kinship, and mistreating neighbors. The strong among us would devour the weak. We were like that until Allah sent us a Messenger from among us. We knew of his lineage, his sincerity, his trustworthiness, and his dignity. He called us to Allah,

¹⁵ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

¹⁶ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202; IS247, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 248.

¹⁷ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

¹⁸ HM4400, Ibn Hanbal, I, 461.

to believe in Him alone, to worship Him, and to give up what we and our fathers used to worship of rocks and idols. And he commanded us to speak the truth, render back trusts, uphold ties of kinship, treat neighbors well, and refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us to commit immoral acts, speak falsehoods, consume the wealth of orphans, and slander chaste women. He instructed us to worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him. He commanded us to pray, give the *zakāt*, and fast.”

Ja‘far recited the fundamental principles of Islam and then continued, saying, “We believed in him and followed that which he had brought. So we worshiped Allah alone and did not associate anything with him. We regarded as forbidden that which he forbade to us and we regarded as permissible that which he permitted to us. But our people turned against us. They tortured us and tried to make us give up our religion and go back to worshipping idols instead of Allah and so that we would regard as permissible that which we used to regard as permissible of evil things. But when they persecuted us and mistreated us, and tried to make us give up our religion, we came to your land and chose you over all others. We sought your protection and hoped that we would not be mistreated in your land, O King!”¹⁹

The Negus then wanted him to recite some of the verses which he said had been divinely revealed. So he recited part of the *sūra* of Maryam (Maryam) which described the coming of John (the son of Zachariah) and Jesus into the world. The Negus and his commanders, who were affected by these verses, were moved to tears. Afterwards, the Negus said, “By Allah! This and what Moses brought came from the same source.” Then he said to the Meccan envoys, “Go away! I will never turn them over to you. I will not do this!” ‘Amr b. al-‘As, who was confronted with this response, went before the Negus the next day and claimed that the Muslims had slandered Jesus. The Negus summoned the Muslims again in order to learn what they thought about Jesus. Ja‘far said to him, “We say about him what our Prophet told us about him. He was the servant of Allah, His prophet, His spirit, and His word that He bestowed on the Virgin Maryam.” When he heard this, the Negus reached down to the ground and picked up a stick and then said, “By Allah! What you say about Jesus the son of Maryam is no different (from what we say) than this stick (that is, of no consequence).”²⁰

¹⁹ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202; IS247, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 248-249.

²⁰ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

The Muslim Muhajirun continued to live about thirteen years in peace in the country of the Negus. During this time Abyssinia became their homeland.

Some of the Muhajirun returned to Mecca and some went to Medina, after the Hijra, at various times and under various circumstances. As for the last group which included Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra), they returned to Medina in 628 at the time of the conquest of Khaybar. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who saw Ja'far at Khaybar, embraced him and kissed him between his eyebrows.²¹ Then he said, *"I can't imagine what would make me happier, the conquest of Khaybar or the return of Ja'far."*²²

After the conquest of Khaybar, a share of the booty was set aside for the Muhajirun from Abyssinia along with a share for those who participated in the conquest. The spoils of war were thus given to the Muhajirun who had not yet returned by ship from Abyssinia, and to Ja'far and his Companions (ra) as well as to fighting warriors. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, who was among the seafarers receiving a share, proudly described to people what had happened years later. Indeed, he reported that some Muslims who had become angry about what had presumably happened to them, said, in effect, *"We preceded you in the emigration to Medina."*²³

In the seventh year of the Hijra, Allah's Messenger, who was sent as the mercy to the worlds, sent a letter to Abyssinia and the other surrounding countries inviting them to Islam. In fact it is mentioned in the sources that the Prophet sent two letters to the Negus via 'Amr b. Umayya al-Damiri. One of them invited the Negus to Islam. The other contained the Messenger of Allah (saw)'s request that the Negus send to him Umm Habiba bint Abi Sufyan, who was among the Muhajirun in Abyssinia, to him for betrothal, along with all the other Muhajirun to Medina.²⁴ Umm Habiba, whose father Abu Sufyan was at that time the leader of the polytheists, had emigrated to Abyssinia with her husband but he had died there. Upon the Prophet's request, the Negus solemnized the nuptials of Umm Habiba (ra) and our Prophet with a bridal gift of 4,000 gold dinars²⁵ and transported her and the other Muhajirun by ship to Medina.²⁶ The Negus sent with the Muhajirun returning to Medina various gifts to our Prophet and a delegation. The Prophet (saw) was very grateful to the Negus and personally greeted his delegation.²⁷

The letter that the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent to the Negus Ashama,

²¹ D5220, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 145-146.

²² BS13876, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VII, 157.

²³ M6410, Muslim, *Fada'il al-sahaba*, 169.

²⁴ EU4/181, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, IV, 181-182.

²⁵ BS14103, BS14681, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VII, 217, 362.

²⁶ TL2/37, Ibn Khaldun, *Ta'rikh*, II, 37.

²⁷ BN3/98, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 98-99.

who had opened his arms to the Muslims who had taken refuge with him, and which invited him to become a Muslim read as follows:

“In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. To the Negus Ashama the King of Abyssinia from Muhammad the Messenger of Allah.

Become a Muslim! I convey to you my praise of Allah, who is the only god, who is the true king, the holy, the giver of immunity, the protector, and the savior. I testify that Jesus the son of Maryam was the spirit of Allah and was the word of Allah that He placed in (the womb of) the virgin, chaste, pure, and honorable Maryam. In this way Maryam became pregnant with Jesus. However Allah created Adam with his power and his breath, He also created Jesus with his spirit and breath.

I invite you to believe in Allah who is one and without partner, to always obey Him, to follow me, and to believe in the revelations which have come to me. This is because I am the Messenger of Allah. I had sent Ja'far, the son of my paternal uncle, to you along with a group of Muslims. Give up the oppression and tyranny (which they had suffered) at the time they had come to you. I call upon you and your army (to believe) in Allah. I communicate this to you and I advise you in this matter. Accept my advice! Be among those who are subject to sound guidance!”²⁸

The Negus gave a positive reply to the invitation of Allah's Messenger and became a Muslim. In fact there is a letter in the sources belonging to him in which he states that he had adopted Islam. It reads as follows:

“In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. From the Negus Ashama b. Abjar to Muhammad the Messenger of Allah.

O Prophet of Allah! May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessing be upon you. There is no god but Allah. It is Allah who led me to Islam.

O Messenger of Allah! Your letter describing the nature of Jesus has now reached me. You have sworn by the Lord of the heavens and earth that Jesus is as you have said. No more need be said. We met with those whom you sent to us. The son of your paternal uncle and his Companions were our guests. I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah. You are righteous and have been affirmed (by Allah). I pledged allegiance to you and the son of your paternal uncle. I submitted to the Lord of the Worlds through his agency. O Messenger of Allah! I am sending to you my son Arha b. Ashama b. Abjar. I keep my word. If you wish me to come to you O Messenger of Allah, I will come. I testify that what you have said is true. Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah!”²⁹

²⁸ TB2/131, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, II, 131-132.

²⁹ TB2/131, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, II, 132; BN3/104, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 104-105.

The Negus was a wise ruler who valued what was right and acted justly. When the Muslims were in dire straits he welcomed them and later he was guided to embrace Islam. Influential in his submission to Islam were the facts that he was a Christian, that Jesus had brought the good news of the Messenger of Allah (saw), and that the information transmitted to him from the Messenger of Allah (saw) had long since overlapped with experience. On the day that the Negus, the King of Abyssinia, died, our Prophet informed his Companions of his death and said, “*Today Ashama (the Negus), a righteous servant of Allah, has died*” and, acting as the imam, led his Companions (ra) in the funeral prayer for him.³⁰ Saying, “*Ask Allah’s forgiveness for your brother,*”³¹ he fulfilled his final duty to the just king.

The Messenger of Allah expressed his gratitude for the hospitality and charitableness shown by the Abyssinians, who welcomed those who took refuge with them in the most difficult of times, by saying, “*Leave the Abyssinians alone as long as they leave you alone.*”³²

The diplomatic relations that Allah’s Messenger established with the Negus revealed his political genius. By means of these relations, which were established when Islam was still quite new, the Negus was introduced to Islam, the principles which Islam embraced were explained, and in this way it was recognized that the origin of Islam and Christianity was basically the same. Thus, the Negus, whose enthusiasm for Islam was assured, opened the doors of his country to the Muslims and the diplomatic efforts of the Meccan polytheists came to naught. The hospitality that the Negus showed to the Muhajirun whose religion was different from his was, at a time when the Muslims were struggling for survival and overwhelmed and trapped in a corner, almost an escape door, a source of hope, and an important turning point.

³⁰ M2208, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 65.

³¹ B1327, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 60; M2205, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 63.

³² D4302, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 8; N3178, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 42.



THE JAHILIYYA PERIOD OPPRESSION, TYRANNY, IGNORANCE



عَنْ جُنْدَبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْبَجَلِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ قُتِلَ تَحْتَ رَايَةٍ عُمِيَّةٍ، يَدْعُو عَصَبِيَّةً، أَوْ يَنْصُرُ عَصَبِيَّةً،
فَقَتَلَهُ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ.“

According to Jundab b. ‘Abd Allah al-Bajali (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “One who is killed under the banner of being blind (to his cause), who raises the cry of family or supports his own tribe, dies the death of one belonging to the days of the Jahiliyya.”

(M4792, Muslim, al-Imara, 57)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَطَبَ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ فَتَحَ مَكَّةَ فَقَالَ: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عُيْبَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَتَعَاطَمَهَا بِآبَائِهَا فَالنَّاسُ رَجُلَانِ: رَجُلٌ بَرٌّ تَقِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ هَيْنٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَالنَّاسُ بَنُو آدَمَ وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ مِنَ التُّرَابِ..."



أَنَّ أَبَا مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيَّ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: "أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُونَهَا: الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ..."



عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ يَقُولُ: "أَلَا إِنَّ كُلَّ رَجُلٍ مِنْ رَبِّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ لَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تَظْلَمُونَ. أَلَا وَإِنَّ كُلَّ دَمٍ مِنْ دَمِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ وَأَوَّلُ دَمٍ أَضْعُ مِنْهَا دَمُ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ..."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ بِحَدِيثٍ يَرْفَعُهُ قَالَ: "النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ كَمَعَادِنِ الْفِضَّةِ وَالذَّهَبِ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَقَّهُوا..."



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave a sermon to the people on the day of the conquest of Mecca and said, “O people! Allah has removed from you the conceit of the Jahiliyya and its reverence of forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: a man who is righteous, fears Allah, and is honorable before Allah, and a wicked man, who is wretched and despicable before Allah. People are children of Adam and Allah created Adam from the dust.”

(T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 49; D5116, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 110, 111)



According to Abu Malik al-Ash‘ari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “There are four things surviving in my umma from the Jahiliyya period which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting of lineage, reviling the genealogies of others, seeking rain by stars, and wailing for the dead.”

(M2160, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 29)



According to Sulayman b. ‘Amr, his father (ra) said he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say on the Farewell Pilgrimage, “Know that all claims to usury (interest) from the Jahiliyya period have been abolished. You will have your capital. Deal not unjustly and you will not be dealt with unjustly. Know that all claims for blood-vengeance from the Jahiliyya period have been abolished. The first of those murdered among us whose blood-vengeance I remit is al-Harith b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib...”

(D3334, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 5; T3087, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 9)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported in a ḥadīth that he heard directly from the Messenger of Allah (saw) that he said, “People are like mines of gold and silver. Those who were excellent in the Jahiliyya period are excellent in Islam. It suffices that they understand (the religion) well...”

(M6709, Muslim, al-Birr, 160; B3336, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 2)



The Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) used to get together and talk about their memories of the Jahiliyya period. Sometimes they would weep in these meetings and sometimes they would be joyful.¹ Sometimes some of the Companions (ra) would come to our Master the Prophet and tell him things they had done in the Jahiliyya period which they regretted and they would ask for his judgement. One day a man came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and described to him the nature of his life before he had converted to Islam, saying, “O Messenger of Allah! We were people of the Jahiliyya period. We used to worship idols. We used to kill our children. I had a daughter. When she reached the age of worshipping the idols, I would summon her and she would immediately come to me joyfully. One day I summoned her and she came after me. I went to a well which was nearby and which belonged our family. I took my daughter by the hand and threw her in the well. The last thing I remember was her screaming, “Father dear! Father dear!” When the Messenger of Allah (saw) heard these words, tears welled up in his eyes. One of those who was there became angry at the man for upsetting the Messenger of Allah (saw). As for Allah’s Messenger, he said, “*Pay it no mind! He is describing something which upset him.*” And he wanted the man to repeat what he had told him. He did so and again the Prophet (saw) wept so much that his tears soaked his blessed beard. The Prophet of Mercy, who was deeply affected by this incident, turned to his Companion who had regretted this act which he had committed before Islam had warmed his heart and said, “*Allah has removed (responsibility for) evils done during the Jahiliyya. As for you, begin (life) anew!*”²

During the Jahiliyya period, people witnessed cruel practices in all aspects of life. The most striking event of the darkness of the Jahiliyya occurred when a father buried his daughter alive. In the time before Islam, which superseded idolatry as a system of belief, people behaved cru-

¹ M6035, Muslim, Fada’il, 69; T2850, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 70.

² DM2, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 1.

elly not only toward their Lord but also toward the entire world and all creation.

In the Jahiliyya period, it was considered shameful for one to have a daughter. This was because women were seen as the cause of bad luck in society.³ When one had a daughter he became gloomy and his face darkened.⁴ Some people of the Jahiliyya who were in this terrible psychological state felt that they had no choice but to bury their daughters.⁵ As the Holy Qur'an states, *"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? How ill they judge!"*⁶ Some people put their children to death out of fear of poverty.⁷ But there were Hanifs like Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl who, in order to save a girl from death, would pay her expenses to her father and raise her himself.⁸ In any case, Islam forbade this reprehensible act⁹ and declared that anyone who buried his daughter alive, for any reason, would be held responsible on the Day of Judgement.¹⁰

The mentality of the Jahiliyya was reflected in various attitudes and behaviors in different areas of life, such as belief, acts of worship, ethics, and social life. This mentality, which, with respect to belief, adhered to polytheism and did not recognize the prophets of the revealed books, considered tyranny, oppression, and force to be virtues in social life. Injustice was the basis of law, ignorance was the basis of education and teaching, and tribal solidarity was the basis of politics. In contrast to this, among the city dwellers who lead a settled life, there was an awareness of an organized system of government in the hands of the elite. As for the principles on which sovereignty was based, it was the sovereignty of power and group solidarity (*aṣabiyya*). This barbarous mentality, which was not economically developed, ascribed to the virtues of generosity and heroism based on tyranny, looting, and pillaging.¹¹

In a geographical region in which the inspiration of the revelation brought by Abraham was forgotten and idolatry supplanted the belief in the tawhid, the social relations of the people floundering in unbelief were in complete chaos. Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra), who was among those who emigrated to Abyssinia, summarized the conditions of the time when he said to the Negus, "We were an ignorant people, worshipping idols, eating dead meat, committing immoral acts, severing ties of kinship, and mistreating neighbors. The strong among us would devour the weak."¹² As for ensuring

³ HM26562, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 240.

⁴ Al-Nahl, 16:58.

⁵ DM2, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 1.

⁶ Al-Nahl, 16:59.

⁷ Al-Isra', 17:31.

⁸ B3828, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 24.

⁹ B6473, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 22.

¹⁰ Al-Takwir, 81:8, 9.

¹¹ On the concepts of *jahil* (ignorant) and *hilm* (the opposite of *jahil*), see FL1/489, FL2/93, Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam maqayis al-lughah*, I, 489, II, 93; RT3-RT4, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 102, 129.

¹² HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

the maintenance of the Jahiliyya mentality, it was based on the concept of imitating the ancestors and blindly following them. This fanatical attitude, which was based on neither divine revelation nor on human reason, made it possible for the people of that time to continue the superficial religion and customs of their forefathers.

During the Jahiliyya period the Arabs were divided between those who were settled and lived in the cities and those who were nomadic and lived in the desert. They also had a social class system in which people were free, slaves, or freed slaves. Male and female slaves belonged to their owners and were bought and sold like property and they could be inherited. The prevailing system of rule was based on a tribal social structure, one in which a person's prestige depended on the tribe to which he belonged, and one in which race, color, lineage, and wealth were regarded as measures of superiority. Among the tribes there was no lack of blood feuds and fighting for all kinds of reasons. However, fighting was episodic because shedding blood was forbidden during certain sacred months.

Tribal spirit and sense of solidarity, which were called *'aṣabiyya*, and which ensured that the members of the tribe acted together, were very strong. This attitude on the part of the polytheists was referred to as *ḥamiyyat al-jāhiliyya* in the Holy Qur'an, and the disbelievers were criticized for it because it contributed to excessive tribalism, which led to fanaticism, hatred, rage, violence, and hostility.¹³ Those who wanted to bring back *ḥukm al-jāhiliyya* (rule according to the time of pagan ignorance), which gave precedence to tribalism and the notion of racial superiority in place of equality and justice, were despised in the Holy Qur'an.¹⁴ The sense of *'aṣabiyya*, which the Prophet (saw) defined as "*Defending one's tribe even when it was wrong*,"¹⁵ was abolished by Islam, which accepted only piety as a measure of superiority among people.¹⁶ Indeed, in the sermon that Allah's Messenger gave on the day of the conquest of Mecca, he stated that all mankind came from Adam, and Adam was created from dust, saying, "*O people! Allah has removed from you the conceit of the Jahiliyya and its reverence of forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: a man who is righteous, fears Allah, and is honorable before Allah, and a wicked man, who is wretched and despicable before Allah. People are children of Adam and Allah created Adam from the dust.*"¹⁷

At every opportunity our beloved Prophet tried to establish the brotherhood of Islam in place of tribal solidarity. In fact once when an argument

¹³ Al-Fath, 48:26.

¹⁴ Al-Ma'ida, 5:50.

¹⁵ D5119, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 111, 112.

¹⁶ Al-Hujurat, 49:13; HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

¹⁷ T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49; D5116, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 110, 111.

occurred between the Ansar and the Muhajirun the two parties began to shout, "Grow up, Ansar!" and "Grow up, Muhajirun!" The Prophet (saw) heard this and reacted to such racist-like behavior by saying, "What is this Jahiliyya shouting!"¹⁸ In addition, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Whoever is killed under the banner of a people aroused by making tribal/racist propaganda or by supporting tribalism/racism dies the death of the people of the Jahiliyya."¹⁹ Bilal al-Habashi, who was a black Abyssinian slave, and Abu Dharr (ra), got into an argument in which Abu Dharr reproached Bilal because his mother was a Negro. The Messenger of Allah heard this and warned him, saying, "O Abu Dharr! Did you reproach him because of his mother? This means that you still have traces of one who is from the Jahiliyya period."²⁰

On the matter of inheritance, before the coming of Islam women were deprived of all rights and inheritance was considered to be the right of men. In Islam the right of inheritance was given to women according to the degree of relationship.²¹ Every inheritance previously shared in the Jahiliyya period continued in the manner in which it had been shared but inheritances after the coming of Islam were subject to Islamic rules.²² Even after the people of the Jahiliyya were ennobled with Islam, it was not possible to immediately abandon this spirit of tribalism which lurked in all aspects of life. From time to time the Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) to give up their old habits, saying, "There are four things surviving in my umma from the Jahiliyya period which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting of lineage, reviling the genealogies of others, seeking rain by stars, and wailing for the dead."²³

"Passion for one's tribe," which completely dominated the mentality of the Jahiliyya, was based on being powerful. Therefore marriage and having sons in particular were very important in this context. This is because the tribesmen were exceedingly boastful about their lineage.²⁴ While men were recognized as having great freedom in matters of marriage and divorce, women's rights in these matters were ignored. With Islam women were given the right to marry upon their own request.²⁵

According to 'A'isha (ra), there were four forms of marriage in the Jahiliyya period. One of them was the present-day marriage based on affinity (two persons connected by intermarriage of blood-relations of each). In another form, a man who wanted his child to be from a certain lineage would send his wife to the person of his choice so she could become preg-

¹⁸ M6582, Muslim, al-Birr, 62.

¹⁹ M4792, Muslim, al-Imara, 57.

²⁰ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22; M4313, Muslim, al-Ayman, 38.

²¹ DM2920, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 8.

²² D2914, Abu Da'ud, al-Fara'id, 14; IM2485, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 21.

²³ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29.

²⁴ Al-Takathur, 102:1-2.

²⁵ M3476, Muslim, al-Nikah, 66.

nant by him. In yet another form, up to ten men would have sexual relations with one woman, and whichever man was pleased with the child who was born would accept him. And in the final form, a woman had sexual relations with a large number of men. After she became pregnant and then gave birth, she would solicit the assistance of a *qā'if* (a professional physiognomist) who would examine the child and determine by its appearance who its father was from among those men who had had relations with its mother. Allah (swt), upon sending our Prophet to the world, established what is the present-day form of marriage among Muslims and abolished all other forms from the Jahiliyya period.²⁶ Another form of marriage called *shighār* was practiced in the Jahiliyya period. In this case a man would marry off his daughter to someone who would marry off his daughter to him in return without the payment of a bride price.²⁷ This form of marriage and the one called *mut'a*, whereby a man would marry a woman for a certain period, were also forbidden.²⁸ Furthermore, the number of wives that one could have at one time, which previously had been unlimited, was limited.²⁹ Thus the practices which opened the way to confusing relationships and which were products of the mentality of the Jahiliyya were forbidden.

All customs and traditions of the people of the Jahiliyya which, in particular, were detrimental to women in the matter of marriage were abolished by Islam. Because of the reign of tyranny at that time, the right of women, who had no say in marriage, to inheritance and property was in the hands of men. In fact, when a man died, his next of kin had the right to take all of his estate including his surviving spouse. If one of his next of kin wished to do so he could marry that woman using the initial bride price, or he could marry her off to another and keep the bride price. If they wished, they didn't have to marry off the woman and could hold her for ransom. If she died, they would take her estate. The kin of a deceased man had more rights over his widow than her family. This unjust situation was ended with the verse,³⁰ *"You who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, nor should you treat your wives harshly, hoping to take back some of the bride-gift you gave them..."*³¹ And the verse, *"Do not marry women that your fathers married—with the exception of what is past—this is indeed a shameful thing to do, loathsome and leading to evil,"*³² also forbade passing on women to heirs as inherited property.

²⁶ D2272, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 32-33.

²⁷ B5112, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 29.

²⁸ M5005, Muslim, al-Sayd, 22.

²⁹ D2241, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 24, 25; IM1952, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 40.

³⁰ B4579, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nisa') 6; D2089, D2090, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 21, 22.

³¹ Al-Nisa', 4:19.

³² Al-Nisa', 4:22.

In the Jahiliyya period the right of ending a marriage belonged exclusively to the husband. Divorce was effective according to the arbitrary decision of the husband. If requested, widows could be inherited by the family of the husband.³³ A man could divorce his wife for countless reasons, such as simply to torment her or to prevent her from marrying another by taking her back after he divorced her. He could divorce her, take her back before the end of her *'idda* period (the time required to determine if she were pregnant), and divorce her again.³⁴ One method of divorce in the Jahiliyya period was the *ḡihār*. In this case, saying, "You are for me like my mother's back," the man made it forbidden for her to have relations with him (that is, he declared their relationship incestuous). In such a case, the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared that the husband should carry out certain acts of atonement.³⁵

As for the form of divorce called *ilā'*, the husband would swear an oath not to have relations with his wife for a certain time (after which the marriage would automatically be dissolved).³⁶ In the form of divorce called *khul'*, a wife could divorce her husband in exchange for paying a certain amount. The Messenger of Allah approved of this form of divorce and it was practiced by his Companions (ra). Islam forbade a man to divorce and then return to his wife countless times and limited this to three times (after which the divorce was final), thus he could return to her only twice.³⁷ As a result of the principles established by Islam related to marriage and divorce and as practiced by the Prophet (saw), the arbitrariness of the institution of marriage and the family as found in the Jahiliyya period was ended. And this institution became honorable and sacred. In the name of preventing the victimization of women and protecting one's lineage, marriage was taken seriously and certain principles were introduced concerning divorce.³⁸

Because women had no voice in marriage and divorce before the coming of Islam, women and girls were not valued in that period. With the exception of wealthy upper-class women in the cities, women were generally used as chattel in the Jahiliyya period. Some slave girls were forced into prostitution so that their owners could profit from them. Later, as revealed in certain verses of the Holy Qur'an, forcing such women into prostitution was forbidden.³⁹ In addition, the Holy Qur'an warned women "*not to flaunt their finery as they did in the pagan past (tabarruj al-jāhiliyya)*."⁴⁰ The Zoroas-

³³ B4579, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nisa') 6.

³⁴ MU1242, al-Muwatta', al-Talaq, 29; T1192, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 16.

³⁵ T1200, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 20.

³⁶ B5273, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 12; N3527, al-Nasa'i, al-Talaq, 53.

³⁷ MU1242, al-Muwatta', al-Talaq, 29.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:229-230.

³⁹ M7552, Muslim, al-Tafsir, 26.

⁴⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:33.

trian custom of allowing men to have sexual relations with women during their menstrual periods, which was practiced in the Jahiliyya period, was also forbidden.⁴¹ Furthermore, all customs which shunned women, such as not eating, drinking, or sitting with them during their menstrual period were abolished.⁴²

Throughout the years during which the customs of the Jahiliyya predominated, if a person wanted to adopt a child, the child simply took his name, was treated as his natural child, and could inherit from him.⁴³ Indeed, the noble Companions (ra) referred to Zayd, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (saw), as “Zayd the son of Muhammad.”⁴⁴ With the revelation of the verse, “Name your adopted sons after [their] real fathers, this is more equitable in Allah’s eyes—if you do not know who their fathers are [they are your] ‘brothers-in-religion’ and protégés,”⁴⁵ adopted children were named after their biological fathers.

It is possible to see traces of tribalism in the penal system before Islam. This was because at that time the principle of individual responsibility for crime was not respected. A crime committed against an individual was considered to be a crime committed against the tribe; and as a result the tribes fought each other for long periods. For years they would pursue blood vengeance. Blood vengeance was the most important element in maintaining ‘aṣabiyya. Every tribe had enemies based on blood vengeance and this enmity lasted for generations. Allah’s Messenger declared in his Farewell Address that every object of pride from the Jahiliyya period, whether blood or wealth, was under his foot.⁴⁶ And he said, “Know that all claims to usury (interest) from the Jahiliyya period have been abolished. You will have your capital. Deal not unjustly and you will not be dealt with unjustly. Know that all claims for blood-vengeance from the Jahiliyya period have been abolished. The first of those murdered among us whose blood-vengeance I remit is al-Harith b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib...”⁴⁷

For crimes committed in the Jahiliyya, *qīṣāṣ* (retaliation) and *diyya* (paying compensation) were widely practiced. However, as in all matters, the punishment to be carried out depended on if one were free or slave, rich or poor, or male or female. In fact when an incident occurred at the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw) between the Jewish tribes of the Banu ‘l-Nadir and Banu Qurayza which required resolution based on inequality and superiority a verse was revealed and these tribes were addressed and

⁴¹ M694, Muslim, al-Hayd, 16; DM1160, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 112.

⁴² D258, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 102; N289, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 181.

⁴³ B5088, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 16.

⁴⁴ M6262, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 62.

⁴⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:5.

⁴⁶ D4588, Abu Da’ud, al-Diyat, 24; IM2628, Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 5.

⁴⁷ D3334, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 5; T3087, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 9.

asked if they wanted a judgement according to the rules of the Jahiliyya period.⁴⁸ Our beloved Prophet did not ever accept discriminating against people because of such things as their origin, lineage, or wealth and always gave judgements based on the principles of fairness, justice, and equality. Indeed, once when a woman named Fatima, who was from a powerful tribe, had committed theft and members of her tribe wanted her to be treated leniently, he said, *“The nations before you went astray because if a noble person committed theft, they used to let him go; but if a weak person among them committed theft, they used to inflict the legal punishment on him. I swear by Allah who holds my soul in His hand, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad committed theft, I would cut off her hand!”*⁴⁹

In the Jahiliyya period the Arabs generally derived their livelihood from trade. In the Holy Qur’an it is mentioned that they organized trade caravans in the winter (to Yemen) and in the summer (to Syria).⁵⁰ In addition commercial centers were established at the same time at the Ka’ba and in the surrounding area. And at certain times of the year, fairs were organized in the area. The fairs at ‘Ukaz, Majanna, and Dhu ‘l-Majaz played an important role in both the economic and cultural life of the Arabs. Because trade was well developed at that time, various kinds of commercial transactions came into being. However, most of them were aimed at ensuring unfair profits. In the Jahiliyya period, one could pay the price of a female camel yet unborn with its foal when it was born.⁵¹ Fees were charged for impregnating animals.⁵² Purchased food was sold to others before possession was taken of it.⁵³ Fruit was sold while it was still on the tree and unripe; and one who purchased it in this manner suffered possible damage.⁵⁴ One could meet on the road caravans brining goods to the city, buy all the goods, and then sell them at black-market prices.⁵⁵ Among other forms of buying and selling was the attempt to increase the price of goods by intervening between buyer and seller (*najsh*).⁵⁶ In addition, there were many different sales tactics which did not conform to the principle of clarity and thus made it possible for the opposite party to be harmed or cheated.⁵⁷

Moreover, there was a clearly dominant class in commercial life. Interest and usury were used as a means of cheating, deceiving, crushing, and exploiting people; and they were widely applied in many forms. In his Farewell Sermon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following about this unjust form of profit: *“Know that all claims to usury (interest) from the*

⁴⁸ D4494, Abu Da’ud, al-Diyat, 1; N4736, al-Nasa’i, al-Qasama, 8-9.

⁴⁹ B6788, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 12; N4902, al-Nasa’i, Qat’ al-sariq, 6.

⁵⁰ Quraysh, 106:1-2.

⁵¹ B2143, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 61.

⁵² B2284, al-Bukhari, al-Ijara, 21.

⁵³ B2126, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 51.

⁵⁴ B2193, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 85.

⁵⁵ B2166, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 72.

⁵⁶ B2142, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 60; M3815, Muslim, al-Buyu’, 11.

⁵⁷ B2133, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 54; M3808, Muslim, al-Buyu’, 4.

*Jahiliyya period have been abolished. You will have your capital. Deal not unjustly and you will not be dealt with unjustly...*⁵⁸ Islam forbade all forms of buying and selling which aimed at cheating people and obtaining unjust profit and did not respect the principles of fairness and justice. Instead it established *ḥalāl* (religiously permissible) forms of sale based on mutual consent.

Because tribal warfare was very widespread in the Jahiliyya period, the wealth obtained from booty had an important place in economic life. However, no system was observed in the division of booty. There was simply unrestrained looting and pillaging of the booty acquired. With the coming of Islam certain principles were observed in the distribution of booty. Instead of pillaging it, which was a primitive practice, the law of the distribution of booty was established.⁵⁹

Before Islam, alcoholic drinks, gambling, prostitution and other forms of reprehensible entertainment were common. While these kinds of activities were subsequently banned, other Arab customs and traditions which were in harmony with the faith continued or underwent certain changes. Indeed, in the Jahiliyya period, people had a holiday celebration twice a year and enjoyed themselves at those times. When the Prophet (saw) went to Medina, he said, “*You had two holidays when you would enjoy yourselves. Allah has replaced them with something better for you. They are the feast of breaking the fast of Ramadan (e’īd al-fiṭr) and the feast of sacrifice (e’īd al-aḍḥā).*”⁶⁰

Some practices which were considered meritorious in the Jahiliyya period continued to be acceptable to the extent that they were in harmony with Islam. There was no interference in humane and ethical values which were not contrary to belief in the tawhid. And some customs, by strengthening the rules of Islam, ensured the continuity of social life. Among the Arabs, the existence of *ḥanīfs* who believed in monotheism, the institution of the *ḥilf al-fudūl* (a pact among several clans of the Quraysh before Muhammad’s mission), which was established to prevent injustice and oppression, and the importance given to such values as generosity, visiting one’s kin, neighborliness, hospitality, loyalty, and fidelity were excellent features of society despite its corruption. It was for this reason that the Messenger of Allah (saw) advised Sa’iba, with whom he had made a commercial partnership in the Jahiliyya period, “*O Sa’iba! Continue in the Islamic period the meritorious practices that you did in the Jahiliyya period.*

⁵⁸ D3334, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 5; T3087, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 9.

⁵⁹ D2703, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 128; DM2027, al-Darimi, al-Adahi, 23.

⁶⁰ N1557, al-Nasa’i, al-Idayn, 1.

⁶¹ HM15585, Ibn Hanbal, III, 425.

*Host the guest, see to the needs of the orphan, and be good to your neighbor!*⁶¹ Furthermore, when Hakim b. Hizam went to the Prophet and asked him if there was any objection to such actions done in the Jahiliyya period as freeing a slave, giving *sadaqa*, and behaving well toward one's relatives, he answered, *"You have accepted Islam with all of the previous virtues that you practiced."*⁶² The Messenger of Allah also said, *"People are like mines of gold and silver. Those who were excellent in the Jahiliyya period are excellent in Islam. It suffices that they understand (the religion) well..."*⁶³ Thus he declared that when people have a genuine understanding of their values and take hold of them, they will always be distinguished from others.

The Messenger of Allah brought about an enormous transformation in Arab society. He created a revolution in a society dominated by barbarism and nomadism, transforming it into a society of knowledge of Allah. He succeeded in uniting people around the doctrine of the oneness of Allah (tawhid), in belief, morality, law, in short, in every aspect of life. He first introduced faith to hearts which had been hardened from lack of love and mercy and then brought the hearts together by presenting them with the best examples of the brotherhood of Islam. He abolished all means of pride attached to wealth and lineage in the Jahiliyya period.⁶⁴ In place of its false values, he established principles which governed the relations of people: among oneself, one's Lord, and all creation. He indisputably closed all hearts which were open to the mentality of the Jahiliyya period.⁶⁵ Allah's Messenger, who cleansed society of all traces reminiscent of that period,⁶⁶ brought about an enormous change which encompassed the transformation from Jahiliyya society to Islamic civilization.

⁶² M324, Muslim, al-Iman, 195.

⁶³ M6709, Muslim, al-Birr, 160; B3336, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 2.

⁶⁴ D4588, Abu Da'ud, al-Diyat, 24.

⁶⁵ B6882, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 9

⁶⁶ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22.



THE JAHILIYYA PERIOD SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE



عَنْ صَفِيَّةَ، عَنْ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“مَنْ أَتَى عَرَّافًا فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ لَهُ صَلَاةٌ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً.”

Safiyya (ra) reported from some of the wives of the Prophet (saw) that he said, “Whoever goes to a sorcerer (seer) and asks him something, his prayers extending to forty nights would not be accepted.”

(M5821, Muslim, al-Salam, 125)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ :
”اجْتَنِبُوا الْمُؤَبَقَاتِ : الشَّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ ، وَالسَّحْرُ .“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ، عَنْ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ :
”تَعَلَّمُوا مِنْ أَنْسَابِكُمْ مَا تَصِلُونَ بِهِ أَرْحَامَكُمْ ...“



أَنَّ أَبَا مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيَّ حَدَّثَهُ ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ :
”أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُوْنَهُنَّ : الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي
الْأَنْسَابِ ، وَالْإِسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ ، وَالنِّيَاحَةُ ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ : ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا تُصَدِّقُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا تُكَذِّبُوهُمْ ، وَقُولُوا : آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ .“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ :
”يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ أُمَّتِي سَبْعُونَ أَلْفًا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ، هُمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَسْتَرْقُونَ وَلَا
يَتَطَيَّرُونَ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ .“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Avoid the deadly sins of polytheism and (practicing) sorcery.”

(B5764, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 48)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Take care to establish your relationships with your relatives and learn your degrees of relationship!”*

(HM8855, Ibn Hanbal, II, 374)



It was reported from Abu Malik al-Ash'ari (ra) that the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are four things surviving in my umma from the Jahiliyya period which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting of lineage, reviling the genealogies of others, seeking rain by stars, and wailing for the dead.”*

(M2160, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Do not believe the People of the Book, and do not disbelieve them, but say, ‘We believe in Allah and what has been sent down to us...’ (Al ‘Imran, 3:84).”*

(B7542, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 51)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Seventy thousand of my followers will enter Paradise without being held accountable, and they are those who do not cast spells and do not see an evil omen in things, and put their trust in their Lord.”

(B6472, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 21)



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u'awiya b. al-Hakam (ra) was from the tribe of Sulam. He went to Medina after becoming a Muslim. He described a memory of something that he had experienced while living there. "Once while I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (saw) in the mosque, someone in the congregation sneezed. While in the midst of prayer, I said, '*yarhamaka 'llāh* (May Allah bless you.)' This disturbed some of the people there and they looked at me disapprovingly. So I said, 'What's wrong? Why are you looking at me?' Then they began to slap their knees with their hands. Realizing that they wanted me to be quiet, I became quiet. The Messenger of Allah finished praying and—may my mother and father be a sacrifice, I swear that I have never seen anyone before or after him who gave better instruction—he neither frowned at me, nor struck me, nor scolded me. He only said, '*This is prayer time. There is no talking during prayer for it consists of glorifying Allah, testifying to His greatness, and reciting the Holy Qur'an.*' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I am someone who has recently been saved from the Jahiliyya. Allah Almighty brought Islam to us. Some of us go to sorcerers. (What do you think of that?)' The Messenger of Allah said, '*Do not go to them!*' I said, 'Some of us also believe in bad omens. (What do you think of that?)' The Messenger of Allah said, '*This is a concept that is common among them. It should not keep them from their work!*'"¹

Going to sorcerers and relying on sorcery, as mentioned by Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam (ra), were rather common practices in the Jahiliyya period. At that time, the Arabs believed that the sorcerer was a source of important knowledge and could resolve their problems. Because they believed in the occult, they used to go to sorcerers in order to understand the truth and to resolve cases among them. According to the Arabs, the sorcerer was in contact with extraordinary powers and thanks to this had a knowledge of the past and future. According to their belief, the sorcerers resolved

¹ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

disputes, interpreted dreams, found lost things, knew of acts of adultery, illuminated such crimes as theft and murder, and cured the sick. Furthermore, when they declared war on a tribe, they would consult sorcerers. They were resorted to for Judgements in social disputes and family misunderstandings, and they were sought out to inform people of all kinds of disasters that could happen in the future.²

According to the thought of the Jahiliyya, every sorcerer had *jinn*s who brought him secret knowledge; and thanks the *jinn*s, the sorcerer acquired knowledge of which ordinary people were unaware. The Arabs of the Jahiliyya, believed in the existence of the *jinn*s, although they could not see them, and thought that they had an influence on such people. After the diviner or sorcerer contacted the *jinn*, he would speak in a form of rhyme called *saj'*. He thus used a certain affecting literary style to strengthen his position before his listeners. To speak in *saj'* was deemed to be an indication of inspiration or revelation from an extraordinary entity. It was for this reason that the polytheists judged the Qur'anic revelations to be the "word of a poet" or the "word of a soothsayer."³

The value of the knowledge of the sorcerers, who had an important place in the thought of the Jahiliyya, and whether or not it should be believed were matters of interest to people who had newly converted to Islam. In fact, 'A'isha (ra) said of this knowledge, "Some people asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) about the sorcerers and he said, '*They are nothing.*' Then they said, 'O Messenger of Allah! But sometimes what they say is true.' The Prophet (saw) answered, '*These (true) words are from the jinn. The jinn snatch them away (from Heaven) and whisper them into the ears of their friend (the sorcerer) like the cackling of a hen. Then he (the sorcerer) mixes it (the true words) with a hundred lies (and presents them to people).*'"⁴

Although he stressed the falsehood of the sorcerers, our Master also states here that they could obtain some correct information from the *jinn* and that sometimes they could say something true. The Holy Qur'an states the following about the infiltration of the knowledge of Satan and the *jinn*: "*We have adorned the lowest heaven with stars, and made them a safeguard against every rebellious devil: they cannot eavesdrop on the Higher Assembly—pelted from every side, driven away, they will have perpetual torment—if any [of them] stealthily snatches away a fragment, he will be pursued by a piercing flame.*"⁵ Our theologians who have commented on these verses have stated

² "Kāhin," *DIA*, XXIV, 170, 172.

³ Al-Haqqā, 69:41-42.

⁴ M5817, Muslim, al-Salam, 123; B7561, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 57.

⁵ Al-Saffat, 37:6-10.

that the actions of Satan and the *jinn* in infiltrating knowledge from Heaven ended after Muhammad (saw) was sent as the Prophet and pointed out that the information that the sorcerers gave about the future was far from true.⁶

In the Noble Qur'an and the *hadiths*, every kind of superstition, false belief, and practice which supposedly can affect a person's fate, which aims to assist one by means of an entity other than Allah (swt), and which keeps people from true sources of knowledge and, for various reasons, from applying that knowledge, is clearly and absolutely rejected and forbidden. It can be seen that in almost all of his actions the Prophet (saw) struggled against superstitions. He definitely did not like the predictions of sorcery or the activities of the sorcerers and he absolutely disapproved of wages earned from sorcery.⁷ He forbade fortunetelling which, by various techniques, was an art which gave information about the future or the unknown, which revealed hidden personality traits, and which seems to have existed as a form of false belief or folklore in almost every nation.⁸

The Prophet (saw) forbade resorting to diviners and sorcerer who claimed to be able to provide information from the unseen, such as predicting the future of a child by looking at the shape of his body; and he said, "*Whoever goes to a sorcerer (seer) and asks him something, his prayers extending to forty nights would not be accepted.*"⁹ In various *hadiths* it is stated that whoever consults a soothsayer denies what was revealed to Muhammad (saw)¹⁰ and that sorcerers and those who believe in sorcery will not be able to enter Paradise.¹¹ It would be appropriate to understand these and similar *hadiths* as *tarhib*, that is, as traditions warning one of evil.

At the time of the birth of Islam, such practices as exorcism, casting knots, blowing on people, and examining divining arrows and the stars to make predictions were widespread along with idolatry. Thus Islam took a strong position against them. The Prophet (saw) considered the practice of magic and sorcery to be among the most destructive of sins. Indeed, he mentioned it right after associating a partner with Allah: "*Avoid the deadly sins of polytheism and (practicing) sorcery.*"¹²

Throughout history, man, who has always been curious about mysterious things, has tried to discover and understand what is unknown and to acquire knowledge about the future. Consequently from the earliest times man has been interested in claims made about hidden dimensions and the future. This human characteristic prepared the foundation for the appear-

⁶ KC15/66, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, XV, 66, 67.

⁷ D3428, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (al-Ijara), 39.

⁸ "Fal," *DiA*, XII, 138-139.

⁹ M5821, Muslim, al-Salam, 125.

¹⁰ HM9532, Ibn Hanbal, II, 429; T135 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 102.

¹¹ HM11123, Ibn Hanbal, III, 15.

¹² B5764, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 48; M262, Muslim, al-Iman, 145.

ance and popularization in society of magic, sorcery, divination, soothsaying, and the like. Over time, in order to meet the need and proclivity of people for knowledge of the unseen, the unknown, and the secret, various persons called sorcerers, magicians, diviners, mediums, and the like appeared. These people claimed that they had powers of mystical perception, that they were in contact with unseen beings, and that they possessed certain knowledge that ordinary people could not know.

Sorcery, which was an important source of knowledge at that time, is frequently mentioned on various occasions in the Holy Qur'an. In the relevant verses, it is stated that the revelations that Allah sent to Muhammad (saw) and the other prophets were true; they were not magic nor were the prophets magicians. The campaign of opposition and defamation carried out by magicians against past prophets is mentioned; and it is stated that magicians were incorrigible liars and deceivers.¹³

There was another kind of knowledge which was found among the Arabs in the Jahiliyya period. This was the knowledge of popular astronomy and meteorology called *anwā'*. This knowledge was derived from the state of the weather, changes in climate, and the movement of the stars. They analyzed natural phenomena, such as the stars, rainfall, warming and cooling, the flooding of streams, changes in vegetation, abundance and famine, and the appearance of various winds and storms, and then, attributing these things to some kind of divinity, they prayed to them for what they anticipated. They fell into unbelief by seeing the stars as the creators of certain natural events. The Prophet (saw) despised such false beliefs and declared that it was Allah (swt) who created rain. And he stated that those who associated rainfall with the rising and setting of a star worshipped it and denied Allah.¹⁴

Among other things, Arabs were able to interpret in various ways the flight of a shooting star. As 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (ra) explained, "A member of the Ansar from among the Companions of the Prophet informed me of an incident in which a shooting star illuminated the sky one night when they were sitting together with the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw) then asked them 'What did you think of such a thing in the Jahiliyya period?' They responded, 'Allah and his Messenger know best. But we used to say that a great man was born on that night and a great man had died on that night.' Then the Prophet (saw) said, 'These stars streak across the sky

¹³ Al-A'raf, 7:116; Yunus, 10:76 77; Ta Ha, 20:69; al-Zukhruf, 43:30; al-Dhariyat, 51:52.

¹⁴ B846, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 156; M231, Muslim, al-Iman, 125; "Envā," *DIA*, XI, 257-258.

neither at the death of anyone nor at the birth of anyone. Allah Almighty issues a command when He decides to do something. Then (the Angels) supporting the Throne sing His praises, then the dwellers of heaven who are near to them sing His praises until the praise of Allah reaches those who are in the heaven of this world. Then those who are near the supporters of the Throne ask the supporters of the Throne, 'What has your Lord said?' And they accordingly inform them what He said. Then the dwellers of heaven seek information from them until this information reaches the heaven of this world. In this process of transmission (the jinn snatches) what they manage to overhear and take it to their friends (the sorcerers). And when the Angels see the jinn they attack them with meteors. What they manage to snatch is correct but they mix it with lies and make additions to it."¹⁵

In the Jahiliyya period there were other means by which people obtained knowledge; and the Prophet sometimes used them himself or advised people to use them. One was an interesting method of acquiring knowledge called *qiyāfa*. In this case, one examined a person's physical appearance and limbs and speculated on his lineage, morals, and character. This was an important branch of knowledge in the culture of Arab society in the Hijaz before Islam. By means of the science of *qiyāfa*, which was based not only on experience but also on speculation, physiognomancy (*firāsa*), and discernment (*baṣīra*), reliable results, like those ensured by the science of medicine today, could certainly not be achieved. Nevertheless, some tribes became famous in this branch of knowledge which provided genealogical information according to the resources of that time. The Banu Mudlij, Banu Lakha, and Banu Nizar were considered the experts in *qiyāfa* and *firāsa*.¹⁶

'A'isha (ra) reported the following anecdote about *qiyāfa*: "One day Zayd b. Haritha and his son Usama were in bed with their heads covered with a velvet cloth and bare feet. A physiognomist (*qā'if*) named Mujazziz from the Mudlij tribe appeared. The Messenger of Allah was also there. Mujazziz said, 'These feet no doubt belong to each other (that is, the two men were related).' The Messenger of Allah was pleased to hear this. His face brightened and he came to me in a joyful mood and said, 'Didn't you see that Mujazziz just now looked at Zayd b. Haritha and Usama b. Zayd and said, 'These feet no doubt belong to each other.'"¹⁷

Before Islam Zayd (ra) had been a freed slave and adoptive son of our Prophet. Some doubt had been raised about the paternity of his son Usama

¹⁵ M5819, Muslim, al-Salam, 124; T3224, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 34.

¹⁶ "Kiyāfe," *DīA*, XXV, 508.

¹⁷ B6770, B6771, al-Bukhari, al-Fara'id, 31; M3617, M3619, Muslim, al-Rada', 38, 40.

whom the Prophet (saw) also loved very much. Zayd was white skinned and Usama was black skinned and this difference had led to gossip about their relationship. Thus the Noble Messenger was pleased when Mujazziz declared that they were biologically related. The fact that he was pleased with this shows that he was relieved to learn the truth about Usama's lineage and that he considered *qiyāfa* to be important.

A similar incident concerned 'Uwaymir who had made an oath of imprecation (*li'ān*) four times accusing his wife of sleeping with another man. The words that the Prophet (saw) said related to what the child would look like when his wife gave birth show that he was experienced with regard to *qiyāfa*, based on *baṣīra*, *firāsa*, and *faṭāna* (cleverness).¹⁸

The following report provides rather significant information showing another source of knowledge at the time of the Prophet. One day the student 'Urwa said to 'A'isha (ra), his teacher and maternal aunt, "O dear mother! I am not surprised at your understanding. After all you are the wife of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the daughter of Abu Bakr. I am also not surprised at your knowledge of poetry and the history of the people of the Jahiliyya. After all you are the daughter of Abu Bakr. This is because he was one of the most knowledgeable people (on these matters). However, I am surprised about your knowledge of medicine. How was it obtained?" 'A'isha (ra) patted 'Urwa on the shoulder and replied, "My dear 'Urwa! The Messenger of Allah became ill near the end of his life. At that time Arab delegations from every region arrived and recommended various medications. I treated him with these medications and thus I learned about them."¹⁹

The poetry that 'Urwa (ra) mentioned here and the knowledge of lineage were important sources of knowledge in both the Jahiliyya period and in the Islamic period. Poetry in particular was one of the most powerful means of communication at that time. Poetry has always been identified with Arab society. Events of daily life, relationships, and political, social, and cultural news related to society were reflected in poetry. It was for this reason that Ibn 'Abbas (ra) stated that it was necessary to look into the poetry of the Jahiliyya in order to understand the "foreign" words in the Holy Qur'an for this poetry constituted the "anthology" of the Arabs (*ḍiḥān al-'Arab*).²⁰ The Jahiliyya poetry was characterized as the *ḍiḥān al-'Arab* because it reflected contemporary life and the cultural level.²¹ Some-

¹⁸ B4745, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 1.

¹⁹ HM24884, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 66.

²⁰ BS21727, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, X, 404.

²¹ TL1/539, Ibn Khaldun, Ta'rikh, I, 539.

times poetry was the product of nonsense and ignorance. Sometimes the verses of the poets would disparage false claims of Arab lineage. When this happened, the poem would be truth itself. In Arabic it became a means of expressing the truth. As the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated, when in the right, poetry in the language of the unbelievers would be almost Muslim.²²

The inspirational/revelatory aspect of poetry helped relate it to unseen knowledge. The poet was one who, in the eyes of the Arabs, was in contact with unseen beings and who could communicate knowledge obtained from these beings to society. Attempts to besmirch the revelation brought by the Prophet by comparing it to the poetry of the time were based on the fact that the Holy Qur'an was also based on unseen knowledge. The Jahiliyya Arabs who said, "*Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?*" thus tried to say that the Holy Qur'an was not of divine origin.²³ In the Noble Qur'an, Allah responded to them by saying, "*We have not taught the Prophet poetry, nor could he ever be a poet. This is a revelation, an illuminating Qur'an to warn anyone who is truly alive.*"²⁴

Ansāb, that is, the knowledge of lineage, was, like poetry and oratory, another important part of the culture of the Arabs during the Jahiliyya. They were very proud of this knowledge compared to other forms of knowledge. On the one hand, knowledge of *ansāb* united those of the same lineage and, on the other hand, allowed them to boast to others about their fame and glory and to revile them; and all this constituted the fundamental basis of poetry in Arabic literature. In this regard, there were "genealogists" called *nassābs* who knew the families and relations of every tribe. It is known that sometimes Allah's Messenger obtained information on this subject concerning various tribes from Hassan b. Thabit and Abu Bakr (ra). The *ḥadīth*, "*Take care to establish your relationships with your relatives and learn your degrees of relationship!*"²⁵ and ones like it, helped ensure that knowledge of one's lineage was acquired and maintained. As a result, a science and literature of lineage arose and many books were composed about it.²⁶

The Messenger of Mercy forbade boasting of lineage and denigrating the lineage of others, saying, "*There are four things surviving in my umma from the Jahiliyya period which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting of lineage, reviling the genealogies of others, seeking rain by stars, and wailing for the dead.*"²⁷ As the Prophet (saw) indicated, there was no doubt prestige in

²² M5885, M5886, M5887, Muslim, al-Shi'r, 1.

²³ Al-Saffat, 37:36.

²⁴ Ya Sin, 36:69.

²⁵ HM8855, Ibn Hanbal, II, 374.

²⁶ "Ensāb," DĪA, XI, 244-248.

²⁷ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29; HM10821, Ibn Hanbal, II, 526.

having a noble lineage.²⁸ Thus, only boasting of nobility is being forbidden here, not personal merits and ancestral distinction, and demeaning the lineage of others.

In the Jahiliyya period, sorcerers and diviners were also an important source of knowledge for the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians. The members of these two religions were deemed to be more knowledgeable by illiterate Arab society. This society consulted the People of the Book on various matters related to religion, this world and the Hereafter. A perfect example of this is that after our Prophet received his first revelation in Mecca, his wife Khadija met with the Christian sage Waraqa b. Nawfal and asked him about what Muhammad (saw) had experienced.²⁹ The fact that the Quraysh even asked the Jews if Muhammad was really a prophet also shows the tendency to inquire of People of the Book.³⁰

The Jews who lived in the Hijaz had an important influence on the Arabs because they were People of the Book. Indeed, the Arabs felt inferior because they lacked a book and a prophet, “[The idolaters] swore their most solemn oath that, if someone came to warn them, they would be more rightly guided than any [other] community.”³¹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) took a more cautious approach concerning the People of the Book who were an important source of knowledge in the Jahiliyya period. As he advised in a *ḥadīth*, “Do not believe the People of the Book, and do not disbelieve them, but say, ‘We believe in Allah and what has been sent down to us...’”³² And a noble verse, which our Master the Prophet recommended be recited, stated, “We [Muslims] believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes. We believe in what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of them. It is to Him that we devote ourselves.”³³ In another *ḥadīth* the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that there was no harm in transmitting (information about exemplary things) from the Israelites.³⁴ However, this declaration of our Master the Prophet and *ḥadīths* stating that there was discomfort because ‘Umar (ra) read the Torah out of curiosity³⁵ imply that one should be careful and selective in acquiring knowledge from the People of the Book.

As we have seen, the people of the Jahiliyya period, who were a society to which no prophet or book had been sent,³⁶ believed in sources of information like sorcerers and diviners, whom they believed were in con-

²⁸ D2047, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 2.

²⁹ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

³⁰ HM4438, Ibn Hanbal, I, 465.

³¹ Fatir, 35:42.

³² Al ‘Imran, 3:84; B7542, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 51.

³³ Al ‘Imran, 3:84.

³⁴ T2669, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 13.

³⁵ DM443, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 39.

³⁶ Ya Sin, 36:6.

tact with *jinns* or supernatural powers and thus could provide them with knowledge of the future. Or, they made certain deductions from various false beliefs concerning the movement of the stars (*anwā'*) or meteors. All peoples have been curious and interested in unknown and majestic things. According to the Holy Qur'an, knowledge of the invisible world can only be learned from Allah (swt) and Allah informs only those whom he wishes of this knowledge.³⁷

After the coming of Islam, Allah's Messenger did not consider it right to try to yearn for or maintain the mentality of the Jahiliyya.³⁸ In this connection he always opposed sorcery and false beliefs. He gave no value to the sources of such knowledge and instead brought good news to those who did not include it in their lives, *"Seventy thousand of my followers will enter Paradise without being held accountable, and they are those who do not cast spells and do not see an evil omen in things, and put their trust in their Lord."*³⁹

As for matters like *qiyāfa* and genealogy, they were accepted by our Master the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who transmitted revelations, which were a source of knowledge which was absolute and about which there was no doubt, forbade unconditionally everything that contradicted revelation during the time in which he lived. As for sources of information which might interfere with divine knowledge, he approached them carefully. But he had a positive attitude toward sound sources of knowledge which were common products of the time and which were generally accepted by everyone.

³⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:179; al-Nahl, 16:77.

³⁸ B6882, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 9.

³⁹ B6472, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 21.



THE JAHILIYYA PERIOD BELIEFS and ACTS OF WORSHIP



أَنَّ أَبَا مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيَّ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ: الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ وَالطَّعْنُ فِي
الْأَنْسَابِ وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ...”

According to Abu Malik al-Ash'ari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Four things survive in my umma from among the customs of the Jahiliyya
which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting about nobility (of
lineage), disparaging the genealogy (of others), requesting rain from the stars,
and wailing for the dead...”

(M2160, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“لَا فَرَعَ وَلَا عَتِيرَةَ.”



أَنَّهُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ حَلَفَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَالَ فِي حَلْفِهِ: بِاللَّاتِ فَلْيَقُلْ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ...”



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَطَمَ الْخُدُودَ، وَشَقَّ الْجُيُوبَ، وَدَعَا بِدَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ.”



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: أَبْغَضُ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثَلَاثَةٌ:
”مُلْحِدٌ فِي الْحَرَمِ، وَمُبْتَغٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَمُطْلَبٌ دَمَ امْرِئٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ
لِيَهْرِيْقَ دَمَهُ.”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“(In Islam) *neither the sacrifice (in Rajab) of a fara’a (first offspring of a flock or herd) nor an ‘atīra (a ewe) is permitted.*”
(B5473, al-Bukhari, al-‘Aqiqa, 3; M5116, Muslim, al-Adahi, 38)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Whoever among you swears an oath and in it says, ‘by al-Lat,’ afterwards should say, ‘There is no god but Allah...’*”
(M4260, Muslim, al-Ayman, 5)



According to ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*He who slaps his cheeks (in a funeral procession), tears his clothes, and wails and screams in the fashion of the Jahiliyya is not one of us.*”
(B1294, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 35)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*The most hateful persons to Allah are three: (1) a heretic in the Haram (sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina); (2) a person who wants to practice and maintain in Islam the traditions of the Jahiliyya; (3) and a person who wants to shed somebody’s blood unjustly.*”
(B6882, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 9)



Islam honored the world with its appearance in 610 and from that point on the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to summon mankind, beginning with those closest to him, to faith in Allah (swt). As the number of believers increased over time, the Quraysh increased their pressure and violence against them. When the harsh pressure and torture inflicted by the polytheists could no longer be tolerated, the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to search for ways to relieve the suffering of the Muslims. As a result of this search, he told the first “Party of Muhajirun” composed of fifteen people to go to Abyssinia which was ruled by a man who had not oppressed anyone and to stay there until Allah showed them a way to exit from their dilemma.¹ In response, the Quraysh sent a delegation to Abyssinia to bring back the handful of Muslims who had emigrated to, and taken refuge in, that country. A debate took place in the presence of the just ruler, the Negus Ashama, between this delegation and the group of Muslims. The emigrant Ja’far b. Abi Talib (ra) refuted the allegations of the Quraysh in an historic speech in which he summarized the changes that Islam had brought to their lives: “O King! We were an ignorant people, worshipping idols, eating dead meat, committing immoral acts, severing ties of kinship, and mistreating neighbors. The strong among us would devour the weak. We were like that until Allah sent us a Messenger from among us. We knew of his lineage, his sincerity, his trustworthiness, and his dignity. He called us to Allah, to believe in Him alone, to worship Him, and to give up what we and our fathers used to worship of rocks and idols. And he commanded us to speak the truth, render back trusts, uphold ties of kinship, treat neighbors well, and refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us to commit immoral acts, speak falsehoods, consume the wealth of orphans, and slander chaste women. He instructed us to worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him. He commanded us to pray, give the *zakāt*, and fast.”

¹ HS2/164, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 164.

Ja'far described the fundamental principles of Islam and then went on to say, "We believed in him and followed that which he had brought. So we worshiped Allah alone and did not associate anything with him. We regarded as forbidden that which he forbade to us and we regarded as permissible that which he permitted to us. But our people turned against us. They tortured us and tried to make us give up our religion and go back to worshipping idols instead of Allah and so that we would regard as permissible that which we used to regard as permissible of evil things. But when they persecuted us and mistreated us, and tried to make us give up our religion, we came to your land and chose you over all others. We sought your protection and hoped that we would not be mistreated in your land, O King!" After this speech, the Negus did not agree to turn the Muhajirun over to the Quraysh and decided to maintain his hospitality toward them.²

In this way Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra) described the miraculous transformation that Allah's Messenger brought about in their lives and the two different lives they had led, one before being illuminated by Islam and then the one in which they were honored by it. The first period was one of darkness in which the Abrahamic summons to Allah began to be forgotten, in which religious, humane, and moral values were lost, and in which man became alienated from himself and from his Lord. The second period was one of bliss in which this darkness was illuminated with the light of Islam from the Messenger of Allah (saw). The segment of time before Islam was one in which mankind was convulsed in unbelief, oppression, and injustice and in which ignorant practices prevailed. It was called the "period of ignorance (Jahiliyya)" befitting those who lived at that time.

The term "*jāhiliyya*" comes from the Arabic root *j h l* (*jahl*). In addition to meaning "without knowledge" and "ignorant," it also has the sense of "rude, brutish, and barbarous." The word *jahl* is the opposite of *ilm* (knowledge) and *hilm* (justice and moderation, self-mastery and dignity of bearing). Thus the term *jāhiliyya* means not only the opposite of knowledge but also of *hilm*, which is to behave in a wise and cultured manner, and to act modestly, tolerantly, forgivingly, and in a civilized way. Thus, with respect to belief or world view, the lack of knowledge of the Jahiliyy era was an expression of the opposite of the wisdom and enlightenment of Islam.³ In fact, the Holy Qur'an criticized the people of the Jahiliyya period not only because of their ignorance but also because of their lack of

² HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

³ LA9/713, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, IX, 713-714.

hilm.⁴ The Jahiliyya period is defined as the time encompassing the beliefs and social life of the Arabs before Islam. In addition, *jāhiliyya* can also be defined to include sinful and seditious behaviors reminiscent of the mentality of that time.

It seems that the concept of the Jahiliyya was used in different ways in the discussions of Allah's Messenger and his Companions (ra). Indeed, there are recollections of the Jahiliyya in many *ḥadīths*.⁵ The Prophet (saw) mentioned it when warning his Companions (ra) about traces that he saw in their behavior from the Jahiliyya period.⁶ And the Companions (ra) asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) to judge certain of their behaviors from that period.⁷ In the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the mentality of the Jahiliyya is generally reflected in describing the human relations of that time and social and legal matters and an attempt is made to replace this mentality with the values of Islam. The Holy Qur'an criticized the hypocrites at the Battle of Uhud because they took an unjust position toward Allah (swt) and had notions similar to those in the Jahiliyya period. And it called the idolatrous mentality which could not be saved from suspicion and hesitation based on Jahiliyya fantasies, *ẓann al-jāhiliyya*.⁸ Those who wished to return to the *ḥukm al-jāhiliyya*, that is, the rule of the Jahiliyya, were warned⁹ and the wives of the Prophet (saw) were cautioned not to *tabarruj al-jāhiliyya*, that is, not to flaunt their finery as was the custom in the Jahiliyya.¹⁰ In the Holy Qur'an the expression *ḥamiyyat al-jāhiliyya* (zeal of ignorance) is used to mean the fanaticism, injustice, extreme tribal partisanship, racism, hatred, fury, and violence in belief, morals, attitudes and behaviors which put the stamp on the Jahiliyya period; and the unbelievers who had the fanaticism of the Jahiliyya in their hearts were criticized because of this.¹¹

Degenerate religious beliefs constituted the bases of the mentality and practices of the Jahiliyya. It was possible to see traces of false beliefs in every corner of life. The people of this era, which was experiencing an interval of divine revelation so to speak, had forgotten the divine revelation of Abraham. The religious values which had existed had meanwhile degenerated and had evolved into values which were far different from their original form. The Arabs, who had believed in Allah alone since the time of Abraham, had, over time, become blindly attached to their ancestors and the memory of their ancestors and this led them to belief in polytheism. Idolatry, which ensured the continuation of the mentality of the Jahiliyya

⁴ Al-Fath, 48:26.

⁵ M6035, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 69; T2850, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 70.

⁶ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22.

⁷ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

⁸ Al-'Imran, 3:154.

⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5:50.

¹⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:33.

¹¹ Al-Fath, 48:26.

and was also transformed into fanaticism, was the mentality of following the ancestors. The Holy Qur'an refers to those who had this mentality as saying, *"We saw our fathers following this tradition; we are only following in their footsteps."*¹² The greatest struggle of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was against this mentality. The unconditional attachment to, and imitation of, their ancestors who had worshipped idols is also criticized in the Holy Qur'an. This obstinate mentality is described there as follows: *"But when it is said to them, 'Follow the message that Allah has sent down,' they answered, 'No, we follow the ways of our fathers.' Even though their fathers understood nothing and were not guided?"*¹³ It is also stated in the Holy Qur'an that, on the Day of Judgement, they would use the excuse that they had followed the path of their polytheist fathers as the reason for going astray.¹⁴ Such an attitude, which was based on neither divine communication nor mental reasoning but only on blindly and unquestioningly following their polytheist fathers, constituted the basic feature of the mentality of the Jahiliyya.

Apart from a small number of *ḥanīfs*, the people of the Jahiliyya period, whose situation Allah summarized in the Holy Qur'an, saying, *"We have not given them any books to study nor sent any warner before you,"*¹⁵ continued to live in the state of ignorance, with regard to religion, which they had inherited from their ancestors. There were also people who had abandoned the "*ḥanīf* religion" of Abraham¹⁶ and adopted polytheism but who had the interesting idea of believing in Allah in addition to worshipping idols. Basically, when the people of that time were asked, *"Who owns the earth and all who live in it?"* they replied, *"Allah."*¹⁷ They agreed that Allah (swt) had created the world.¹⁸ They sought refuge in Him in difficult situations.¹⁹ They believed that He provided sustenance.²⁰ And they swore oaths by Him.²¹

At the same time, they worshipped idols which they viewed as intermediaries between them and Allah (swt) and hoped that they would bring them close to Allah.²² These people, who were criticized in the Holy Qur'an because they had abandoned Allah and sought the intercession of things which could do them neither harm nor good,²³ sometimes sought out these false gods in the hope of getting their assistance²⁴ and sometimes to win honor and respect.²⁵ Among the objects deemed worthy of worship in the Jahiliyya were rocks, trees, idols made of mud or clay, statues, and stone pillars. Each tribe had an idol to which it attributed divine power.

¹² Al-Zukhruf, 43:23.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:170; al-Ma'ida 5:104.

¹⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33:67.

¹⁵ Saba', 34:44.

¹⁶ Al-An'am, 6:161.

¹⁷ Al-Mu'minun, 23:84-89; al-Ankabut, 29:61-63.

¹⁸ Al-Zukhruf, 43:87; al-Mu'minun, 23:84-89.

¹⁹ Al-An'am, 6:40-41.

²⁰ Yunus, 10:31.

²¹ Al-An'am, 6:109.

²² Al-Zuman, 39:3.

²³ Yunus, 10:18.

²⁴ Ya Sin, 36:74.

²⁵ Maryam, 19:81.

And they were worshipped in various ways. There were many idols having various names and shapes in the different regions of the Arabian Peninsula,²⁶ especially in the Hijaz. In and around the Ka'ba there were 360 idols.²⁷ In addition, there was an idol to be worshipped in every home. The greatest of the idols were al-Lat, Manat, al-'Uzza, who are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as the ones to which their ancestors were attached,²⁸ and Hubal. Animals were sacrificed to them.²⁹ Oaths were sworn by them.³⁰ And food was offered to them.³¹ Some idols were stationary and some were movable. Some could be fed when hungry. In the narrative culture of that time, there were striking references reflecting the polytheistic tradition of the Jahiliyya mentality. For example, according to a report about Mujahid, a leading member of the Followers, which was transmitted from his master who freed him, one day the family of his master gave him a bowl full of cream and milk and wanted him to take it as a gift to their gods. However, because they feared these gods, they strictly warned him not to consume any of it en route. He took the bowl but when he placed it before the idols, a dog came and ate the cream and drank the milk. Then the dog relieved itself on the idol. It was also reported that when people of the Jahiliyya would set out on a journey they would take four stones with him, three to be used as a trivet for their cooking pot and one to worship.³² It was reported too that, in the Jahiliyya period, when they found a beautiful stone they would worship it; and that, when they could not find a stone, they would collect some sand and then bring a milk camel and completely soak the pile of sand with her milk, and as long as they remained there they would worship this pile of sand.³³

The concept of idolatry, which was at the heart of the mentality of the Jahiliyya, brought together a kind of faith which attributed divinity to almost every entity, and many false beliefs and superstitions. The people of the Jahiliyya, who were completely confused with respect to faith, tried to fill the emptiness in their faith by sanctifying to various entities and increasing the number of false gods. They attributed sons and daughters to Allah, made the *jinns* partners with Him,³⁴ accepted the angels as females,³⁵ and honored the daughters of Allah.³⁶ In addition, divine power was attributed to various celestial bodies and stars among the entities. Also among the customs surviving from the Jahiliyya was the notion that the stars provided sustenance to man by causing rain. In this regard the Mes-

²⁶ B4355, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 63.

²⁷ M4625, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 87.

²⁸ Al-Najm, 53:19-23.

²⁹ Al-An'am, 6:136.

³⁰ M4260, Muslim, al-Ayman, 5.

³¹ DM3, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 1.

³² DM3, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 1.

³³ DM4, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 1.

³⁴ Al-An'am, 6:100.

³⁵ Al-Zukhruf, 43:19.

³⁶ Al-Isra', 17:40.

senger of Allah (saw) said, “*There are four things surviving in my umma from the Jahiliyya period which they cannot (easily) abandon. They are boasting of lineage, reviling the genealogies of others, seeking rain by stars, and wailing for the dead.*”³⁷ He strongly urged his community to avoid such behaviors, saying that participating in them was tantamount to denying Allah (swt).³⁸ The Prophet (saw) also corrected the idea surviving from the Jahiliyya period which associated a meteor with the birth or death of a great man.³⁹ In like manner, when an eclipse of the sun occurred on the day that Ibrahim, the son of the Messenger of Allah (saw), died, he said, with respect to linking these two events, that the sun and the moon were two of the signs of Allah and that their eclipses had nothing to do with the death or birth of anyone.⁴⁰

Before Islam there were many false beliefs which aimed at obtaining information about the future by observing the movements of the stars, getting the help of *jinns* or various other popular practices. Sorcerers, diviners, and soothsayers in particular had an important place as sources of knowledge who could provide information about the unknown. The people of the Jahiliyya believed that sorcerers had supernatural powers and therefore sought them out, thinking that they possessed knowledge on virtually every matter, be it an individual or group issue. It was thought that the sorcerers, who were believed to practice their craft using different methods, could influence people with magic or spells. Because casting spells was widespread in the Jahiliyya, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to communicate Islam his contemporaries believed that he was casting spells or was a necromancer who was trying to affect people with his words.⁴¹ Magic, defined as polytheism, and false beliefs such as casting spells,⁴² were among the things against which the Messenger of Allah (saw) had his greatest struggle. Saying that the sorcerers deceived people with their falsehoods,⁴³ he emphasized that their words should definitely not be believed.⁴⁴

During the Jahiliyya period, people also sought out omens as a means of obtaining information from the unseen world in addition to sorcerers. The people of the time made decisions about what to do in the future by drawing lines in the sand (*khaṭṭ al-raml*),⁴⁵ by observing the flights of birds (*‘iyāfa*), by throwing stones or date pits on the ground (*tarq*),⁴⁶ by interpreting the physical characteristics of a person (*qiyāfa*), or by drawing lots with divining arrows (*azlām*).⁴⁷ Before making a decision on almost any impor-

³⁷ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 29.

³⁸ B1038, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa’, 28; M231, Muslim, al-Iman, 125.

³⁹ M5819, Muslim, al-Salam, 124.

⁴⁰ D1178, Abu Da’ud, al-Istisqa’, 4.

⁴¹ Al-Ahqaf, 46:7; al-Hijr, 15:15; al-Furqan, 25:8.

⁴² N4084, al-Nasa’i, al-Muharaba, 19.

⁴³ B7561, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 57.

⁴⁴ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

⁴⁵ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

⁴⁶ D3907, Abu Da’ud, al-Tibb, 23.

⁴⁷ B3906, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 45.

tant matter, people would usually draw lots with divining arrows in front of their idols. They believed that the idols would confirm the decision made according to the arrow that was drawn.⁴⁸ Using divining arrows to seek one's fortune, characterized as a heinous act of Satan in the Holy Qur'an, was forbidden by Islam.⁴⁹ Allah's Messenger defined such practices as idolatry because fate was not left to Allah but to the will of other entities.⁵⁰

Before Islam there were among the Arabs a number of widespread superstitions which were regarded as ominous or associated with certain ominous entities. The people of the Jahiliyya, who believed that there was bad luck associated with houses, women, and horses,⁵¹ considered owls to be ill omens because the dead left their graves in the form of owls.⁵² Belief in *jinn*s or *ghūls*,⁵³ who were Satan-like enigmatic creatures who inhabited deserted places and would harm people, was also common in the Jahiliyya period.⁵⁴ The Arabs, who would not get married in the month of Shawwal because they considered it inauspicious,⁵⁵ also thought the month of Safar was inauspicious and would not do the minor pilgrimage (*umra*) during that time.⁵⁶ In addition, there was the belief that in Safar there was stomach pain which could infect others or stomach worms.⁵⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized that there was absolutely no basis to beliefs which consisted only of people's suspicions and delusions and which made life unbearable by considering certain things to be ill omened and attributing evil to them (*tasha'um*).⁵⁸ Allah's Messenger (saw), who declared that entities cannot harbor within themselves bad luck, rejected attributing such power to them because this was a source of polytheism which constituted the fundamental character of the people of the Jahiliyya and was contrary to belief in the tawhid which was the basis of Islam. He advised that if people were fearful of something they should seek refuge in Allah (swt).⁵⁹

Various objects were used for protection against the evil eye, in which there was widespread belief among the Arabs of the Jahililyya. The Arabs believed that amulets and charms, called *tamā'im* in Arabic, would protect them from the evil eye. Indeed they were convinced that charms hung from the necks of their camels could protect them from the evil eye and misfortune. As for the Prophet (saw), he believed in the reality of the evil eye,⁶⁰ but he forbade seeking help from such objects, instead of Allah (swt), in order to be protected from it;⁶¹ and he ordered the amulets hanging from the necks of camels to be removed and thrown away.⁶²

⁴⁸ B3906, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 45.

⁴⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5:3, 90.

⁵⁰ D3907, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 23; HM16010, Ibn Hanbal, III, 477.

⁵¹ HM26562, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 240.

⁵² D3915, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 24.

⁵³ ShU5/238, al-Suyuti, *Sharh 'ala Muslim*, V, 238.

⁵⁴ M5795, Muslim, al-Salam, 107.

⁵⁵ ST8/60, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 60-61; ShN9/209, al-Nawawi, *Sharh 'ala Muslim*, IX, 209.

⁵⁶ B1564, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 34; D3914, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 24.

⁵⁷ M5797, Muslim, al-Salam, 109; D3915, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 24.

⁵⁸ B5707, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 19.

⁵⁹ D3910, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 24; IM3538, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 43.

⁶⁰ B5740, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 36.

⁶¹ D3883, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 17; IM3530, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 39.

⁶² M5549, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 105.

Before Islam, people also performed certain acts of worship required by their distorted beliefs. These acts bore traces of their corrupt interpretation of the Abrahamic tradition and of their idolatrous mentality. Chief among the acts of worship which were widespread among the Arabs was the Hajj. The polytheists used a method of intercalation (*nasī'*) in order to move the time of Hajj as an act of worship to a suitable season of the year, the spring and summer. As a result the Hajj was performed only once in 33 years in the month of Dhu 'l-Hijja, which was its proper season. In the Jahiliyya period, polytheism was mixed with almost every aspect of the Hajj. The interior of the Ka'ba was filled with idols. Various idols were also erected at other places of worship, such as al-Safa, al-Marwa, and Mina.⁶³ As the Holy Qur'an describes, "*Their prayers before the House [of Allah] are nothing but whispering and clapping,*"⁶⁴ and even the circumambulation had become corrupted, for they circumambulated the Ka'ba while naked. Later Allah's Messenger (saw) forbade this behavior.⁶⁵ During the circumambulation the polytheists used to make the *talibiya* (the invocation made upon entering the state of ritual purity) as follows: "At your service. There is no one associated with you except for one. But you have mastery over him and he does not have master over you."⁶⁶

Before Islam, the polytheists used to make the *sa'y* (ritual of traversing) between al-Safa and al-Marwa. The tribes of the Ghassan and al-Ansar avoided this. This was because they would enter a state of ritual purity and do the *talibiya* for the idol Manat and they considered it a sin to do the *sa'y* between al-Safa and al-Marwa which were opposite of it.⁶⁷ According to another *ḥadīth*, the tribe of the al-Ansar used to do the *talibiya* for two idols called Isaf and Na'ila which were located next to the sea; then they would come to Mecca, do the *sa'y* between al-Safa and al-Marwa, and then shave (that is, leave the state of ritual purity).⁶⁸ After the Ansar became Muslims, they said that doing the *sa'y* was a burden for them. Thereupon, the following verse was revealed, "*al-Safa and al-Marwa are among the rites of Allah, so for those who make a Hajj or an 'Umra to the House [of Allah], it is no offence to circulate between the two.*"⁶⁹ In this way Hajj practices mixed with polytheism were cleansed by Islam; and the Messenger of Allah (saw) returned the act of worship of the Hajj to its purity at the time of Abraham. In this respect, the Prophet (saw) participated in Hajj practices which were contrary to those of the polytheists. An example of this is

⁶³ B1643, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 79; M3081, Muslim, al-Hajj, 261.

⁶⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:35.

⁶⁵ B4655, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Tawba) 2.

⁶⁶ M2815, Muslim, al-Hajj, 22.

⁶⁷ B1643, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 79; M3080, Muslim, al-Hajj, 260; M3083, Muslim, al-Hajj, 263.

⁶⁸ M3079, Muslim, al-Hajj, 259.

⁶⁹ B4495, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 21.

that, in contrast to the polytheists, he set out from Muzdalifa to Mina before the sun rose.⁷⁰ The Messenger of Allah also changed the custom of the polytheists whereby the *'umra* was not done during the Hajj month. In the Jahiliyya period, doing the *'umra* during the Hajj months was considered the worst sin that could be committed. Therefore they also used to call the month of Muharram the month of Safar for doing this. So, when the Prophet (saw) went to Mecca he ordered his Companions (ra) to change their Hajj intentions for the *'umra* on the fourth day after entering the state of ritual purity for the Hajj.⁷¹ Thus it was also possible to do the *'umra* at the time of the Hajj.

In the Jahiliyya period sacrificing an animal as an act of worship originated from the tradition of Abraham; and the Arabs continued this practice in order to bring themselves close to their gods. They used to make their sacrifices, and make vows, to the idols in the Ka'ba or to other gods during the time of the Hajj or at other times. The sacrifice, like other acts of worship, lost its original meaning. It was completely encumbered with arbitrary and unfounded rules and polytheistic elements. Thus, once, before Islam, when the Quraysh offered Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, who was a *hanīf*, some meat from an animal that they had sacrificed on behalf of their idols, and he said that he could not eat the meat of an animal which had been sacrificed in the name of something other than Allah, and he castigated them, saying, "Allah created the sheep and He has sent the water for it from the heavens, and grown the grass for it from the earth. And now you slaughter it in the name of something other than Allah!"⁷²

The people of the Jahiliyya used to sacrifice the first born of a camel to idols and pour its blood over their heads; and they would throw the hide of the animal on a tree. This kind of sacrifice was called *fara'a*, and the animal which was sacrificed for the idols and eaten during the first ten days of Rajab was called *'atira*.⁷³ The Prophet (saw) declared, "(In Islam) *there is no fara'a or 'atira*,"⁷⁴ rejected sacrificing animals in the name of idols and erected stones, and forbade sacrificing animals without mentioning the name of Allah (swt).⁷⁵ He stipulated that sacrificing animals was for the pleasure of Allah.⁷⁶ He also forbade the customs of slaughtering animals at graves⁷⁷ and of not riding a camel intended for sacrifice, which was believed to be a sin.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the Noble Messenger forbade eating the meat of camels sacrificed⁷⁹ as a sign of Arab munificence (pride).⁸⁰ He also

⁷⁰ B1684, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 100.

⁷¹ B1564, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 34; N2815, al-Nasa'i, Manasik al-hajj, 77.

⁷² B3826, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 24.

⁷³ D2833, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 19, 20.

⁷⁴ B5473, al-Bukhari, al-'Aqiqa, 3; M5116, Muslim, al-Adahi, 38.

⁷⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5:3.

⁷⁶ D2830, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 19-20; N4236, al-Nasa'i, al-Fara' wa 'l-'atira, 3.

⁷⁷ D3222, Abu Da'ud, al-Jana'iz, 68, 70.

⁷⁸ B1706, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 112.

⁷⁹ D2820, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 13-14.

⁸⁰ AV8/12, 'Azimabadi, 'Awn al-ma'bud, VIII, 12.

stated that cutting the humps from camels and the tails from sheep while they were alive was considered dead meat.⁸¹

Before Islam, people considered certain animals to be forbidden to them (*bahīra*). They would select them to serve as votive offerings (in order to provide mīke for their gods for example) in order to be saved from a plague; and after they were free of the plague, they forbade anyone to use them. Some animals (*sā'iba*, a female camel freed for the gods, *hām*, a male camel used for breeding purposes) were also exempt from being sacrificed to the idols.⁸² With the coming of Islam, all these false practices related to sacrifice in the Jahiliyya period were forbidden.⁸³ A few of them were made to conform to the new faith. For example, during the Jahiliyya, when a child was born an animal was sacrificed for him. With the appearance of Islam, this same custom was continued.⁸⁴ Allah's Messenger allowed the custom of the Jahiliyya whereby an animal was sacrificed in the month of Rajab to continue on condition that this was done for the pleasure of Allah (swt); and in fact this was not restricted to Rajab but could be done in any month.⁸⁵ In like manner the Prophet (saw) allowed the practice of making votive offerings to continue in Islam. However, he forbade votive offerings for any entity other than Allah or for reasons that could not be considered legitimate.⁸⁶

Fasting as an act of worship was known by the people of the Jahiliyya, but it was practiced in different ways. It is known that they fasted on the day of 'Ashura'. When Muslims were commanded to fast during Ramadan, Allah's Messenger made fasting on the day of 'Ashura' voluntary.⁸⁷ However, the Prophet (saw) forbade the Jahiliyya form of fasting known as the "quiet fast," whereby one fasted for a day without speaking.⁸⁸

Before Islam, people used to swear by Allah (swt), idols, al-Lat, al-'Uzza, the Ka'ba and by their mothers and fathers.⁸⁹ The custom of swearing oaths was widespread among the Arabas both before and after Islam. The new religion forbade swearing by anything other than Allah. The Messenger of Allah, saying, "*Whoever swears an oath should only do it in the name of Allah,*"⁹⁰ eliminated swearing by idols, ancestors, and *tāghūt* (pre-Islamic deities).⁹¹ It was not easy for Muslims to give up swearing these kinds of oaths because they were so accustomed to it. It was perhaps for this reason that Allah's Messenger said, "*Whoever among you swears an oath and in it says, 'Let him swear by al-Lat,' afterwards should say, 'There is no god but Allah*

⁸¹ T1480, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sayd, 12; IM3216, Ibn Maja, al-Sayd, 8.

⁸² M7193, Muslim, al-Janna, 51.

⁸³ Al-Ma'ida, 5:103; al-An'am, 6:139; B4623, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma'ida) 13.

⁸⁴ D2843, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 20, 21.

⁸⁵ D2830, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 19, 20; N4236, al-Nasa'i, al-Fara' wa 'l-'atira, 3.

⁸⁶ B6704, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa 'l-nudhur, 31; T1524, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nudhur wa 'l-ayman, 1.

⁸⁷ B4501, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 24.

⁸⁸ B3834, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 26; D2873, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 9.

⁸⁹ M4259, Muslim, al-Ayman, 4; N3800, al-Nasa'i, al-Ayman, 6; N3804-N3805, al-Nasa'i, al-Ayman, 9-10.

⁹⁰ M4259, Muslim, al-Ayman, 4.

⁹¹ M4257, Muslim, al-Ayman, 3; N3800, al-Nasa'i, al-Ayman, 6; N3805, al-Nasa'i, al-Ayman, 10.

. . .”⁹² Furthermore, the Noble Messenger wanted people to swear not by the Ka’ba but “by the Lord of the Ka’ba.”⁹³ The Messenger of Allah (saw) also forbade making an oath or vow about something over which he had no control,⁹⁴ or to commit sin,⁹⁵ or to rebel against Allah (swt), or to sever ties of kinship,⁹⁶ or to torture himself by walking barefoot.⁹⁷

Before Islam, most polytheists, apart from the *hanīfs* who believed in the unity of Allah, were doubtful about the Hereafter.⁹⁸ In fact, they denied it, saying, “*There is only our life in this world: we die, we live, nothing but time destroys us.*”⁹⁹ The people of the Jahiliyya, who had such a view, thought that after they died they would turn into a pile of earth and bones and that the idea of resurrection was just an ancient fable¹⁰⁰ As a result they stubbornly resisted the revealed verses and the Messenger of Allah (saw) who communicated them. Forgetting how they were created, they denied the afterlife, saying, “*Who can give life back to bones after they have decayed?*”¹⁰¹ Having only this concept of the Hereafter,¹⁰² the polytheists, who mocked and lied about Allah’s verses, arranged the funeral ceremonies for their deaths. And they had the custom of standing for funeral processions to show respect.¹⁰³ And, at that time, they would spread the word of one’s death by lamenting and wailing. The Messenger of Allah, considering these to be Jahiliyya customs, forbade wailing in a loud voice after one died.¹⁰⁴ Among the other customs of the Jahiliyya, when a woman’s husband died, she had to go into mourning, she could not wear finery, and she could not use perfume.¹⁰⁵ Saying, “*He who slaps his cheeks (in a funeral procession), tears his clothes, and wails and screams in the fashion of the Jahiliyya is not one of us,*” Allah’s Messenger (saw) introduced practices appropriate to the human disposition for funeral processions and mourning.¹⁰⁶

Before Islam, man had become estranged from his own natural disposition and his Lord who created him and had been searching for Him in ignorance. He had forgotten the religion of Abraham and had mixed belief in the unity of Allah with polytheism. He had tried to maintain a number of acts of worship which had lost their former purity because of the distortion of beliefs. Idolatrous religious beliefs constituted the basis of the Jahiliyya mentality and traces of them could be seen in every aspect of life. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who was commanded to bring light to this dark age, brought divine revelation to mankind for the last time. After imprinting on the minds of the people the existence and oneness of Allah and

⁹² M4260, Muslim, al-Ayman, 5; N3807, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 12.

⁹³ N3804, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 9.

⁹⁴ D3274, Abu Da’ud, al-Nudhur, 12; N3823, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 17; N3880, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 41.

⁹⁵ N3823, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 17.

⁹⁶ N3819, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 16; N3823, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 17.

⁹⁷ T1544, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nudhur ve al-ayman, 17; N3846, al-Nasa’i, al-Ayman, 33.

⁹⁸ Fussilat, 41:54.

⁹⁹ Al-Jathiya, 45:24.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Mu’minun, 23:82, 83.

¹⁰¹ Ya Sin, 36:78.

¹⁰² Al-Jathiya, 45:24.

¹⁰³ B3837, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 26.

¹⁰⁴ M2160, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 29; IM1485, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 17.

¹⁰⁵ D2299, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 41-43; N3570, al-Nasa’i, al-Talaq, 67.

¹⁰⁶ B1294, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 35.

the truth of His unity, he eliminated all practices which were infected with the polytheism of the Jahiliyya. While confirming practices based on the pure Abrahamic tradition, he also renewed some of them. As for all false beliefs which had subsequently entered the faith, they were eliminated. He encouraged virtuous behavior, saying to his Companions (ra), who had asked him if good deeds done in the Jahiliyya period still had merit, “*You become a Muslim by continuing to do the good deeds that you did in the past.*”¹⁰⁷ He stated that one should remain faithful to oaths made in the Jahiliyya because one who was a Muslim should keep his promises.¹⁰⁸ It was in this way that he brought about a transformation in the lives of people, a transformation which did not forgo the good and virtuous practices of the past and reformed the existing mentality in conformity with the belief system of Islam. In addition to creating this new order, which affected the lives of people in every respect, the Noble Messenger tried to prevent people from returning to their old customs. This was because the Jahiliyya was not simply a mentality which survived in the time in which he lived, for it had the quality of being able to reemerge in every period after the appearance of Islam. It was for this reason that Allah’s Messenger stated that every Prophet, before being sent on his mission, lived in a Jahiliyya age;¹⁰⁹ and he mentioned that those who wished to maintain the mentality of the Jahiliyya, despite Islam, were among the most hateful people to Allah (swt).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ B1436, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 24.

¹⁰⁸ T1585, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 30.

¹⁰⁹ T3168, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 22.

¹¹⁰ B6882, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 9.



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE ROSE SCENTED LAST MESSENGER WITH AN ILLUMINATED FACE

قَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ: سَأَلْتُ أَبِي عَنْ سِيرَةِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فِي جُلُسَائِهِ، فَقَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ ﷺ، دَائِمَ الْبَشْرِ، سَهْلَ الْخُلُقِ، لَيِّنَ الْجَانِبِ، لَيْسَ بِفَظٍّ وَلَا غَلِيظٍ، وَلَا
صَخَّابٍ وَلَا فَحَّاشٍ، وَلَا عَيَّابٍ وَلَا مُشَاحٍ، يَتَغَافَلُ عَمَّا لَا يَشْتَهِي، وَلَا يُؤَيِّسُ
مَنْهُ رَاجِيهِ وَلَا يُخَيِّبُ فِيهِ...

Husayn (ra) reported, “I asked my father about the conduct of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in his assemblies and he replied, ‘Allah’s Messenger (saw) was always happy and easy mannered. There was always a smile and a 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 kept 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...”

(TS352 al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 160)



حَدَّثَنَا حِرَامُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ بْنُ حُبَيْشٍ بْنُ خَالِدِ بْنِ خُلَيْدِ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ الْخُزَاعِيُّ،
حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، عَنْ أُخْتِهِ أُمِّ مَعْبَدٍ وَاسْمُهَا عَاتِكَةُ بِنْتُ خَالِدِ
الْخُزَاعِيَّةِ قَالَتْ... فَقَالَ: صِفِيهِ لِي، قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، رَجُلٌ ظَاهِرُ الْوَضَاءَةِ،
أَبْلَجُ الْوَجْهِ، حَسَنُ الْخُلُقِ، بَسَامًا، وَلَيْسَ نَحِيلاً، وَلَا مُدْلِمًا، وَلَا مُطْهَمًا،
أَبْيَضُ، وَسِيمٌ، ثَقِيلٌ، أَدْعَجُ الْعَيْنَيْنِ، أَهْدَبُ الْأَشْفَارِ...



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رضي الله عنه، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: لِهِنْدِ بْنِ أَبِي هَالَةَ التَّمِيمِيِّ وَكَانَ
رَبِيبًا لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: صِفْ لَنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَلَعَلَّكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ أَثْبَتَ
مِنَّا لَهُ مَعْرِفَةً قَالَ: كَانَ بِأَبِي هُوَ وَأُمِّي، طَوِيلَ الصَّمْتِ، دَائِمَ التَّفَكِيرِ،
مُتَوَاتِرَ الْأَحْزَانِ، إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ تَكَلَّمَ بِجَوَامِعِ الْكَلِمِ، لَا فَضْلَ وَلَا تَقْصِيرَ، وَإِذَا
حَدَّثَ أَعَادَ، وَإِذَا وَعَظَ جَدَّ وَمَادَ، وَإِذَا خُولِفَ أَعْرَضَ وَشَاحَ، يَتَرَوَّحُ إِلَى
حَدِيثِ أَصْحَابِهِ، يُعْظِمُ النِّعْمَةَ وَإِنْ دَقَّتْ، وَلَا يَذُمُّ ذَوَاقًا، وَيَنْتَسِمُ عَنْ مِثْلِ
حَبِّ الْغَمَامِ.



According to Hizam b. Hisham b. Hubaysh, Khalid b. Hulayd b. Rabi'a al-Khuzai's narration from his grandfather through his mother, Umm Ma'bad whose name was 'Atiqah bint Khalid al-Khuzaiyya (ra) and who was the sister of his grandfather related:

“... (My husband Abu Ma'bad) told to me 'Describe him (Allah's Messenger) to me.' I told him, 'Of course. He was a man with obvious beauty and cleanliness, a glowing countenance, a good disposition with no bulging stomach disgracing him or a small head disparaging him. He was overtly handsome and wholly beautiful, his eyes are wide, very white and black and his eyelashes are long...”

(SM3485, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, *al-Ahad wa al-Mathani*, V, 629-631)



When 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas said to the Prophet (saw)'s stepson Hind b. Abi Hala al-Tamimi (ra) “Describe Allah's Messenger (saw) to us for you are probably the one among us who knew him the best,” Hind began by saying, “May my mother and father be sacrificed for him,” and then continued, “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 (ra). 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.”

(SM1231, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, *al-Ahad wa al-Mathani*, II, 418)





Many 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 'Atiqah 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,¹ 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"² and wait for the travelers in the desert in order to offer them food and drinks. 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

¹ IBS190, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, p. 190.

² IBS924, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, p. 924.

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."³ 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 Khadija 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, "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

³ SM3485, Abu Bakr al-Shaybani, *al-Ahad wa al-Mathani*, V, 631.

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.

(ra). 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 *wassas*, meaning the person who describes best, to describe the Prophet (saw)’s complexion, appearance, and form, Hind said, “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. He only parted his hair in the middle if it could be easily done, and when this could not be done easily, and a comb etc. was needed to do it, then he did not part his hair in the middle. Occasionally he used to part his hair in the middle with a comb etc. 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 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, but his chest was broad and wide. His forearm was long and palms were wide. 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

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

⁷TS8, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 11.

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

"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 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 (ra) 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

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

⁹ TS352, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 160.

There is detailed information about the complexion, physical appear-

ance, 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 “*Ṣifat al-nabi*,” “*Ṣifat rasūl Allāh*,” “*Manāqib*,” and “*Fadā’il*,” the term “*Shamā’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. In addition to the term “*Shamā’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.”¹¹ 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.¹²

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.¹³

Face:

He had a very beautiful smiling face, and an easy-going countenance.¹⁴

Height:

He was neither very tall nor short-statured.¹⁵

Hair:

His hair was neither very curly nor very straight, and sometimes hung over his shoulders and sometimes over his earlobes.¹⁶ He would sometimes let his hair fall upon his forehead, and sometimes arrange it by parting it.¹⁷ He had a little white in his hair and beard.¹⁸

Hands:

His hands were as soft and fragrant as brocade and silk. Sometimes

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

¹¹ LA12/985, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XII, 985.

¹² “Hilye”, *DīA*, XVIII, 44.

¹³ M6105, M6108, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 124-126.

¹⁴ M6071, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 98; M6066 Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 93.

¹⁵ M6066, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 93; TS26, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 17.

¹⁶ M6067, M6069, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 94-96.

¹⁷ M6062, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 90.

¹⁸ B3548, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 23; M6073, Muslim, *al-Fada’il*, 100.

when he cuddled the children on their cheeks, the fragrance of his hands would not go away for days.¹⁹

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.”²⁰

Smiling, which was characterized by the Prophet as charity,²¹ 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.”²²

Sitting:

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) sat, he sometimes had his knees drawn up supported by his hands,²³ and sometimes he sat cross-legged.²⁴ (When he rested in the mosque) he was seen lying down with one of his feet over the other.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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.²⁷

Clothing:

The clothing that he liked the most was the shirt.²⁸ The sleeves of his shirts would extend down to his hands.²⁹ Al-Bara’ b. ‘Azib (ra) said that the Prophet’s red patterned clothing suited him.³⁰

He lived like a normal person. For example, he would care for his own clothing, milk his sheep and do his own work.³¹

He wore simple clothes. He said, “*If anyone wears a garment for gaining fame, Allah will clothe him in a similar garment on the Day of Resurrection.*”³²

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

¹⁹ M6052, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 80.

²⁰ T3642, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 10; TS229, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Shama’il*, 99.

²¹ T1956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 36.

²² B3035, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 162; TS231, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 100.

²³ D4846, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 22.

²⁴ D4850, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 26.

²⁵ EM1185, al-Bukhari, *Adab al-mufrad*, 405.

²⁶ ST1/379, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 379.

²⁷ TS124, TS125, TS126, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 55.

²⁸ TS56, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 29; IM3575, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 8.

²⁹ TS58, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 30.

³⁰ TS65, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 32.

³¹ TS343, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 154.

³² D4029, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 4; IM3606, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 24.

³³ T3639, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9; TS224, al-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 speech.³⁴

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 his wives,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

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

³⁵ D3769, Abu Da'ud, *al-At'ima*, 16; MA5247, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, III, 184.

³⁶ MA19543, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 415.

³⁷ B1637, al-Bukhari, *al-Hajj*, 76; M5280, Muslim, *al-Ashriba*, 117.

³⁸ T1883, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Ashriba*, 12; HM1140 Ibn Hanbal, I, 136.

³⁹ B5631, al-Bukhari, *al-Ashriba*, 26.

⁴⁰ M5287, Muslim, *al-Ashriba*, 123; TS211 al-Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 91.

⁴¹ M6017, Muslim, *al-Fada'il*, 55.

⁴² M6036, Muslim, *al-Fada'il*, 70.

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 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

He was just like a person who ignited a fire and when insects and moths begin to fall into it he tried to save them from falling into it; 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 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

⁴³ M6026, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 63.

⁴⁴ M6027, M6028, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 64-65.

⁴⁵ M6032, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 67.

⁴⁶ M6033, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 68.

⁴⁷ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 79.

⁴⁸ M6045, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 77.

⁴⁹ M6006, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 48.

⁵⁰ M6018, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 56.

⁵¹ M5954, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 16.

⁵² M5955, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 17.

⁵³ M5959, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 20.

⁵⁴ M5953, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 15.

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



THE BLESSED NAMES OF THE PROPHET (SAW)



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”سَمُّوا بِاسْمِي، وَلَا تَكْتَبُوا بِكُنْيَتِي، فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ أَقْسِمُ
بَيْنَكُمْ.“

According to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Name yourselves (your children) after me (by my name) but do not call (yourselves) by my kunya (patronymic), for I have been sent as al-Qasim (distributor), and I distribute among you (what needs to be distributed).”

(B6196, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109; M559,1 Muslim, al-Adab, 5)



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُسَمِّي
لَنَا نَفْسَهُ أَسْمَاءً فَقَالَ: ”أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَحْمَدُ وَالْمُقَفِّي وَالْحَاشِرُ
وَنَبِيُّ التَّوْبَةِ وَنَبِيُّ الرَّحْمَةِ.“



عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ سَمِعَ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَنَا أَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يُمَحِّي بِيَ الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا
الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشِرُ النَّاسَ عَلَى عَقْبِي وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ.“ وَالْعَاقِبُ الَّذِي
لَيْسَ بَعْدَهُ نَبِيٌّ.



عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ قَالَ: لَقِيتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ
قُلْتُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ صِفَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي التَّوْرَةِ. قَالَ: أَجَلٌ، وَاللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ لَمَوْصُوفٌ فِي التَّوْرَةِ بِبَعْضِ صِفَتِهِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا
أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا“، وَحِرْزًا لِلْأُمِّيِّينَ، أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي
سَمَّيْتُكَ الْمُتَوَكِّلَ، لَيْسَ بِفَظٍّ وَلَا غَلِيظٍ وَلَا سَخَابٍ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ، وَلَا
يَدْفَعُ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَلَكِنْ يَغْفُو وَيَغْفِرُ...



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: سَمِعَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا تُطْرُونِي كَمَا أَطْرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا:
عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ.“



Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) said, "Allah's Messenger (saw) called himself to us with the following names: *"I am Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Muqaffi (the last in succession of the prophets), al-Hashir (behind whom people gather), the Prophet of repentance, and the Prophet of Mercy."*

(M6108, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 126)



According to al-Zuhri, he heard Muhammad b. Jubayr b. Mut'im report on the authority of his father (ra) that the Prophet (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."* Al-'Aqib means the one after whom no prophet will come."

(M6105, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 124; B3532, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 17)



Ata' b. Yasar reported, "I met 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As (ra) and asked him, 'Tell me about the description of Allah's Messenger (saw) who is mentioned in the Torah.' He replied, 'Yes. 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 warner 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...*'"

(B2125, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 50)



According to Ibn 'Abbas, he heard 'Umar (ra) say from the minbar, "I heard the Prophet (saw) say, *'Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger.'*"

(B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48)





‘Abd 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 expressed in an Arabic phrase, “*al-asmā’ tanzilu min al-samā’*,” which means that names descend from the sky, in other words, Allah Almighty decrees and records certain appropriate names to His appropriate servants.

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

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

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

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 (saw).*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 *hadiths*⁸ 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 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 ‘Umra in the month of Dhu al-Qa’da in the sixth year after the emigration. The people of Mec-

² Al-Saff, 61: 6.

³ HM763, Ibn Hanbal, I, 98.

⁴ Al-Fath, 48: 29.

⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3: 144.

⁶ Muhammad, 47: 2.

⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

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

⁹ M3376, Muslim, al-Hajj, 507.

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

ca 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 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

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

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

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

you. The man went to Allah's Messenger 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 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 ra'ūf and raḥīm toward the believers."¹⁹ al-Ra'ūf and al-Raḥīm, two of the beautiful names of Allah, mean "kindness" and "mercy."

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 "rahmatun 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 the the Prophet. Similarly the Lord Almighty

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

¹⁵ B2120, B2121, al-Bukhari, al-Buyū', 49.

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

¹⁷ D4966, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 67; HM9863, Ibn Hanbal, II, 454.

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

¹⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 128.

²⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 41, 67.

²¹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 45; al-Talaq, 65: 1; al-Tahrim, 66: 1.

²² Al-A'raf, 7: 157-158.

²³ Al-Anbiya', 21: 107.

²⁴ M6108, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 126.

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 “*You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak!*”²⁷ and “*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, the one who is worthy of trust mentioned in the verse, “*he is obeyed there and worthy of trust,*”²⁹ is Jibril, and according to others it is the Prophet.³⁰ Muslim exegetes interpret “the convincing proof” mentioned in the verse, “*People, 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” 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 (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 malhama.*”³⁶ Based on the information given by the great linguist Ibn Manzur the word *malhama* 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

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 23; al-Anfal, 8: 41.

²⁶ Al-Isra’, 17: 1.

²⁷ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 1.

²⁸ Al-Muddaththir, 74: 1.

²⁹ Al-Takwir, 81: 21.

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

³¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 174.

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

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

³⁴ M6108, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 126.

³⁵ M6105, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 124; B3532, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 17.

³⁶ MS31684, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Fada’il, 1; HM19850, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 405.

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

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 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 Mercy.” 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 warner 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...”³⁹

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 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.”⁴⁰

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

³⁸ Al-Hajj, 22: 39.

³⁹ B2125, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 50.

⁴⁰ Al ‘Imran, 3: 159.

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 who took the list up to four hundred names and even to thousands 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),⁴¹ *dā’ī* (inviter), *sirāj* (lamp), and *munīr* (illuminating)⁴² which are mentioned in verses of the Holy Qur’an. Sometimes, 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, Yasin, or Ha Min 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. According to some other interpretations, 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. For example, various phrases of praise and esteem such as “*Fahr-i Âlem, Fahr-i Kâinât, Seyyid-i Kâinât, Hâce-i Kâinât, Resûl-i Kibriyâ, Resûlû’s-Sekaleyn, Resûl-i Ekrem, Hâtemü’l-Enbiyâ, Server-i Enbiyâ, Seyyidü’l-Mürselîn, Rahmetün li’l-âlemîn, Risâlet-Meâb, Risâlet-Penâh, Zât-ı Risâlet, Nebiyy-i Muhterem, Sultânü’l-Enbiyâ, Mahbûb-i Âlem, Mahbûb-i Kibriyâ*” are uttered and written in books along with other deferent phrases such as “*Cenâb-ı Efendimiz hazretleri*.”

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,

⁴¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 119.

⁴² Al-Ahzab, 33: 45-46.

it needs to be emphasized that one should not go to extremes in this matter as all other matters of Islam. In fact, ‘Umar (ra) heard the Prophet say, “*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.*”⁴³

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. For example, Sheikh Galip addressed Allah’s Messenger as follows:

“O my master, you are Ahmad, Mahmud and Muhammad,
You are the confirmed Sultan sent by Allah.”

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.

⁴³ B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

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

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



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE MOST DISTINGUISHED SERVANT OF ALLAH

عَنْ عَبَّاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”ذَاقَ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ مَنْ رَضِيَ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا رَسُولًا.“

‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib (ra) heard Allah’s Messenger (saw) say, “One who accepts Allah as Lord, Islam as religion and Muhammad as a prophet-messenger of Allah enjoys the taste of faith.”

(HM1778, Ibn Hanbal, I, 208)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ...”



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ رَافِعٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ:
يَخْتَصِمَانِ فِي مَوَارِيثَ وَأَشْيَاءَ قَدْ دَرَسَتْ فَقَالَ:
”إِنِّي إِنَّمَا أَقْضِي بَيْنَكُمْ بِرَأْيِي فِيمَا لَمْ يُنْزَلْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْأَرْضُ فَأُكْسَى الْحُلَّةَ مِنْ حُلَلِ الْجَنَّةِ ثُمَّ أَقُومُ عَنْ يَمِينِ
الْعَرْشِ لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْخَلَائِقِ يَقُومُ ذَلِكَ الْمَقَامَ غَيْرِي.”



حَدَّثَنِي جُنْدَبٌ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِخَمْسٍ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ:
”إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي مِنْكُمْ خَلِيلٌ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدْ اتَّخَذَنِي خَلِيلًا
كََمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا.”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*Whoso obeys me obeys Allah, and whoso disobeys me disobeys Allah...*"
(M4749, Muslim, al-Imara, 33)



According to a *ḥadīth* that 'Abd Allah b. Rafi' heard from Umm Salama (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) 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.*"
(D3585, Abu Da'ud, al-Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*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 creation will be in that place other than I.*"
(T3611, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 1)



Jundab (ra) said that five days before the Prophet (saw)'s death he heard him say, "*I stand acquitted before Allah that I took any one of you as friend (and thus finding a second friend along with Allah's friendship), for Allah has taken me as His friend, as he took Ibrahim as His friend.*"
(M1188, Muslim, al-Masajid, 23)



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."* 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.

In 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

¹ Al-Nisa', 4: 65; B2359 al-Bukhari, al-Musaqat, 6.

² Al 'Imran, 3: 179; al-Nisa', 4: 136; al-Fatih, 48: 9.

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) 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 on His Messenger, Allah (swt) considered 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* transmit-

³ HM1778, Ibn Hanbal, I, 208.

⁴ B15, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 8.

⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 56.

⁶ Kur'an Yolu, IV, 359.

⁷ Al-Fath, 48: 9.

⁸ Al-Tawba, 9: 65.

⁹ Muhammad, 47: 7.

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

ted 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 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 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.

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

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

¹² Al ‘Imran, 3: 31.

¹³ Al-Nisa’, 4: 13.

¹⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4: 14.

¹⁵ Al-Anfal, 8: 13.

¹⁶ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 33.

¹⁷ Al-Tawba, 9: 3.

¹⁸ Al-Tawba, 9: 29.

¹⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 59.

²⁰ Al-Fath, 48: 10.

²¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 80.

²² Al-Najm, 53: 2-4.

²³ D3586, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

²⁴ Al-Hashr, 59: 7.

²⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

²⁶ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

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 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 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 *hadith* 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 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

²⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 151.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 275.

²⁹ M4048, Muslim, al-Musakat, 71.

³⁰ Al-A'raf, 7: 157.

³¹ Al-Tur, 52: 48.

³² D3585, Abu Da'ud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

³³ D3586, Abu Da'ud, Qada' (Aqdiyya), 7.

³⁴ Al-Anbiya', 21: 107.

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.

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 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

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

³⁶ Al-Duha, 93: 6-8.

³⁷ Elmalılı, *Hak Dini*, VIII, 5898.

³⁸ Al-Qalam, 68: 4.

³⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 45-46.

⁴⁰ Al-Nisa', 4: 113.

⁴¹ Al-Tur, 52: 48.

⁴² T3611, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 1.

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 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 that I am better than Jonah b. Matta,”*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 surely pleased with him and he is well pleased with his Lord.⁵⁴

⁴³ Al-Isra’, 17: 79.

⁴⁴ M6170, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 2.

⁴⁵ M1188, Muslim, al-Masajid, 23.

⁴⁶ M6297, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 87.

⁴⁷ Al-Saff, 61: 6.

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

⁴⁹ Al-Sharh, 94: 1-4.

⁵⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 285.

⁵¹ B4631, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma’ida) 4.

⁵² Al-Ahqaf, 46: 35.

⁵³ M4386, Muslim, al-Qasama, 31.

⁵⁴ Al-Duha, 93: 5.



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE PERSON WHO MERITS THE MOST RESPECT

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: ...فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ: كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ! مَا يُخْرِيكَ
اللَّهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ،
وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ...

‘A’isha (ra), the mother of the believers, said: “...Khadija replied (to Muhammad), ‘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...’”

(B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1)



عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ: ﴿وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ﴾...
خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ حَتَّى صَعِدَ الصَّفا... فَقَالَ:
”أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلًا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ سَفْحِ هَذَا الْجَبَلِ أَكُنْتُمْ
مُصَدِّقِي؟“ قَالُوا: مَا جَرَّبْنَا عَلَيْكَ كَذِبًا...



عَنِ الْمِسْوَرِ بْنِ مَخْرَمَةَ وَمَرْوَانَ يُصَدِّقُ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا حَدِيثَ صَاحِبِهِ قَالَا:
...فَرَجَعَ عُرْوَةُ إِلَى أَصْحَابِهِ، فَقَالَ: أَيُّ قَوْمٍ، وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ وَفَدْتُ عَلَى الْمُلُوكِ،
وَوَفَدْتُ عَلَى قَيْصَرَ وَكِسْرَى وَالنَّجَاشِيِّ وَاللَّهِ إِنْ رَأَيْتُ مَلِكًا قَطُّ، يُعْظِمُهُ أَصْحَابُهُ
مَا يُعْظِمُ أَصْحَابُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ مُحَمَّدًا...



Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) said, “When the verse, ‘*Warn your nearest kinsfolk*’ (al-Shu‘ara’, 26: 214) was revealed, Allah’s Messenger (saw) went out, and when he had ascended the hill of al-Safa he called out loud, ‘... *Do you see? If I inform you that cavalrymen are proceeding up the side of this mountain, will you believe me?*’ They said, ‘We have never heard you telling a lie ...’”

(B4971, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Lahab) 1)



Al-Miswar b. Makhrama and Marwan (ra) (whose narrations attest each other) said, “... ‘Urwa (b. Mas‘ud) returned to his people and said (on their way back after the Hdaybiyya talks), ‘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 be by his courtiers as much as Muhammad (saw) is respected by his Companions...’”

(B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15)



Throughout history, the Ka'ba was damaged numerous times for various reasons and continuously repaired by the tribes living in Mecca. During the life of the Prophet, the Ka'ba, 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'ba up to the level where the Black Stone 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-āmīn*" (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.

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, Khadija (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, Khadija, who herself was highly moral, appreciated his righteousness and proposed marriage to him.

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

¹ HS2/18, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 18-19; BS3991, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, III, 436, BS9289, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, V, 116.
² HM15585, Ibn Hanbal, III, 425.

³ B3668, al-Bukhari, *Fada'il ashab al-nabi*, 5.

⁴ B3, al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-wahy*, 1.

they objected to the teachings that he brought. 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

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?’”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

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

⁵ B7, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

⁶ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 214.

⁷ B4971, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Lahab) 1.

⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 33.

⁹ Saad, 38: 4-8.

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

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 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.

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

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

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

¹⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49: 1.

¹⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49: 2.

¹⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

¹⁷ Al-Nur, 24: 52, 54.

¹⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 31.

¹⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 65.

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

This honorable status given to the Prophet (saw) by Islam shaped the Companions' relationship with him. The 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 (ra)."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 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 *"Do not make your houses graves, and do not make my grave a place of festivity. But invoke blessings on me, for your blessings reach me wherever you may be."*²⁷ Thus, sending blessings upon the Prophet (saw) was not simply a remembrance or invocation to Allah for the Prophet. It was a means of remembering him, his teachings, and his *Sunna*. Believers who send praises and bless-

²¹ M2451, Muslim, al-Zakat, 143, B3344, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 6.

²² Al-Ahzab, 33: 57.

²³ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

²⁴ D2042, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 96, 97; B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48; D5230, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 151, 152; HM22554, Ibn Hanbal, V, 255.

²⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 56.

²⁶ T484, al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 21.

²⁷ D2042, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 96, 97.

ings 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.

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 'Imran, 3: 81.

²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 136, 285.



PREMINENCE OF THE PROPHET (SAW)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: ...فَغَضِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ حَتَّى عُرِفَ الْغَضَبُ
فِي وَجْهِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ:
“لَا تَفْضَلُوا بَيْنَ أَنْبِيََاءِ اللَّهِ...”

Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that ... (When Allah's Messenger learned that a man from the Ansar and a Jew were arguing about which prophet was superior) Allah's Messenger (saw) became angry and signs of anger could be seen on his face, and then said, *“Do not make distinction between the prophets of Allah.”*

(M6151, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 159)



حَدَّثَنَا جَابِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أُعْطِيَتْ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطَهُنَّ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ قَبْلِي: نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ
شَهْرٍ، وَجُعِلَتْ لِيَ الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَطَهُورًا، وَإِيَّيَا رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَدْرَكْتُهُ الصَّلَاةُ
فَلْيُصَلِّ، وَأُحِلَّتْ لِيَ الْغَنَائِمُ، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً، وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى
النَّاسِ كَافَّةً، وَأُعْطِيَتْ الشَّفَاعَةُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنْ مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ قَبْلِي كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ بَنَى بَيْتًا فَأَحْسَنَهُ وَأَجْمَلَهُ إِلَّا مَوْضِعَ
لَبَنَةٍ مِنْ زَاوِيَةٍ، فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ يَطُوفُونَ بِهِ وَيَعْجَبُونَ لَهُ، وَيَقُولُونَ: هَلَّا وُضِعَتْ هَذِهِ
الْلَبَنَةُ؟ قَالَ: فَأَنَا اللَّبَنَةُ، وَأَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”مَا مِنْ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ آمَنَ عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ
الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْهُ وَحْيًا أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ فَأَرْجُو أَنْ أَكُونَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



According to 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.)"

(B438, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 56; M1163, Muslim, al-Masajid, 3)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "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 that this brick be put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets."

(B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18; M5963, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 23)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) 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."

(B4981, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 1)



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 Fihnas’ 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.

According to the reports of Abu Hurayra (ra) and Abu Sa’id 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

¹ Al ‘Imran, 3: 181.

² Al-Baqara, 2: 245.

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

⁴ M6153, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 160; M6151, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 159; B2412, al-Bukhari, al-Khusumat, 1.

⁵ M6151, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 159.

⁶ B2411, al-Bukhari, al-Khusumat, 1.

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 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 Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, 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 Moses,¹³ raised others in rank, gave Jesus clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit, and equipped some others by various abilities.¹⁴ Likewise, when Allah 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 sūra of al-Baqara 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

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 285.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 4.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 136, 285.

¹⁰ B3412, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 35.

¹¹ Al-Qalam, 68: 49.

¹² Al-Ahqaf, 46: 35.

¹³ Al-Qasas, 28: 30.

¹⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 253.

¹⁵ Al-Isra', 17: 55.

¹⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21: 80.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 251.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 252.

¹⁹ Al 'Imran, 3: 81.

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 *umma* as well.²⁰ For example according to a tradition 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

Allah's Messenger (saw) was sent to guide the whole of humanity. Some Muslim scholars are of the opinion that Noah and Abraham had also been sent to all of humanity. Moreover, it is also a fact that universal principles such as the tawhid and belief in the Hereafter were always taught within the messages of the prophets sent to a specific nation or place.

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.

²⁰ T1553, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 5.

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

²² M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5.

²³ Al-Ahzab, 33: 26.

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

²⁵ Al-Anfal, 8: 69.

The Prophet (saw), who was the Messenger of Allah sent as a mercy to all people,²⁶ and to bring good news and warning to all people²⁷ and jinns,²⁸ was the last ring in the chain of prophets.²⁹ By saying, *“The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one,”*³⁰ Allah’s Messenger expressed his position among other prophets. He also clarified his position with the following comparison: *“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 that this brick be put in its place!’”* Then he continued his words as follows: *“So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets.”*³¹ 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.”*³²

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,³³ during the Battle of the Khandaq by sending a violent wind and invisible forces³⁴ and by putting panic into the hearts of the non-believers.³⁵ It is stated in the Holy Qur’an that Allah supported the believers with five thousand angels in the Battle of Badr.³⁶ Likewise, the Prophet was informed through divine revelation that the Byzantines, who had been defeated by the Persians, would soon be victorious against

²⁶ Al-Anbiya’, 21: 107.

²⁷ Saba’, 34: 28.

²⁸ DM47, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 8.

²⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

³⁰ B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

³¹ B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18; M5963, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 23.

³² B4981, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.

³³ Al-Tawba, 9: 40.

³⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 9.

³⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 26.

³⁶ Al ‘Imran 3: 13, 123-127.

the Persians,³⁷ and that Mecca would be conquered.³⁸ He was shown the greatest signs of his Lord during his night journey (*Isra'*) and ascension to the heavens (*Mi'rāj*).³⁹

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.⁴⁰ In fact, his preference to become a servant prophet instead of a king prophet was a reflection of this choice.⁴¹

All these features and superior characteristics of Allah's Messenger have received great attention within his *umma* and a rich and valuable literature recounting his distinguishing features and characteristics known as "*khaṣā'iṣ al-nabī*" (the distinguishing features of the Prophet) and "*dalā'il al-nubuwwa*" (the proofs of the prophethood) has appeared. Still, perhaps it would be 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."⁴² 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.⁴³

There was no one who was more compassionate to his family than he was.⁴⁴

He was the best and most benevolent of people.⁴⁵

None was more apt to seek council of his Companions (ra) than the Messenger of Allah (saw).⁴⁶

³⁷ Al-Rum, 30: 1-4.

³⁸ Al-Fath, 48: 27.

³⁹ Al-Isra', 17: 1; al-Najm, 53: 18.

⁴⁰ M6170, Muslim, Fada'il al-sahaba, 2.

⁴¹ MK10686, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, X, 288.

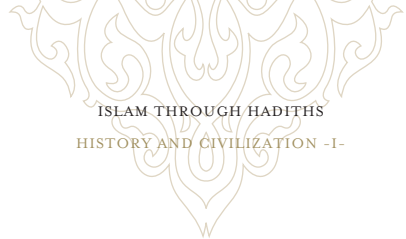
⁴² Al-Qalam, 68: 4.

⁴³ M6045, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 77.

⁴⁴ M6026, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 63.

⁴⁵ M2481, Muslim, al-Zakat, 167.

⁴⁶ T1714, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 35.



He never laughed loud enough to enable people to see his uvula, but he used to smile only.⁴⁷

Throughout his life, he never treated his wives or his servants in a way that would hurt them.⁴⁸

In short, “Allah’s Messenger had the best character among all of the people.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ B4828, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahqaf) 2.

⁴⁸ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79.

⁴⁹ T2015, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 69; M6015, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 54.



THE PROPHET (SAW) AS A HUMAN BEING



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّهُ رَجُلًا قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ يَا سَيِّدَنَا وَابْنَ سَيِّدِنَا وَخَيْرَنَا
وَابْنَ خَيْرِنَا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِتَقْوَاكُمْ وَلَا يَسْتَهْوِيَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ
اللَّهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهِ مَا أَحِبُّ أَنْ تَرْفَعُونِي فَوْقَ مَنْزِلَتِي الَّتِي أَنْزَلَنِي
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), one day a man (came to the Messenger of Allah and) addressed him saying, “O Muhammad! O our Master! O the son of our Master! O the best of us! O the son of the best of us!” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “O people! You should fear Allah and do not allow Satan to 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.”

(HM12579 Ibn Hanbal, III, 154)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: سَمِعَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ: "لَا تُطْرُونِي كَمَا أَطَرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا: عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ."



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: سُئِلْتُ مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَعْمَلُ فِي بَيْتِهِ؟ قَالَتْ: كَانَ بَشَرًا مِنَ الْبَشَرِ يَفْلِي ثَوْبَهُ وَيَحْلُبُ شَاتَهُ وَيَخْدُمُ نَفْسَهُ.



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَمْسًا. فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَزِيدَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ؟ قَالَ: "وَمَا ذَاكَ؟" قَالُوا: صَلَّيْتَ خَمْسًا. قَالَ: "إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ أَذْكُرُ كَمَا تَذْكُرُونَ وَأَنْسَى كَمَا تَنْسَوْنَ." ثُمَّ سَجَدَ سَجْدَتِي السَّهْوِ.



عَنِ الْأَعْرَابِيِّ وَكَانَتْ لَهُ صُحْبَةٌ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "إِنَّهُ لِيُغَانُ عَلَى قَلْبِي وَإِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ فِي الْيَوْمِ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ."



According to Ibn ‘Abbas, one day ‘Umar (ra) said on the pulpit, “I heard the Prophet (saw) say, *‘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.’*”

(B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48)



‘Aisha (ra) reported, “I was asked about what the Prophet (saw) would do when he was at home.” She replied to this question by saying, “He was a person like everybody else. He would clean his clothes, milk his sheep, and do his own daily work himself.”

(HM26724, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 256)



‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud) (ra) reported, “The Messenger of Allah led us in five rak‘as of prayer. We said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, has the prayer been extended?’ He said, *‘What is the matter?’* We said, ‘You have led us in five rak‘as (rak‘a) 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 of) forgetfulness.”

(M1284, Muslim, al-Masajid, 93)



According to al-Aghar al-Muzani (ra), who was one among the Companions of the Prophet, Allah’s Messenger (saw) 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.*”

(M6858, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 41)



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 (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

¹ IM1627, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 65.

² B3667, al-Bukhari, Fada'il ashab al-nabi, 5; IM1627, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 65.

³ Al-Zumar, 39: 30.

⁴ Al 'Imran, 3: 144.

⁵ B3668, al-Bukhari, Fada'il ashab al-nabi, 5.

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 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 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

⁶ B4454, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 84.

⁷ Al-Kahf, 18: 110.

⁸ T3619, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 2.

⁹ Yunus, 10: 16.

¹⁰ Al-Isra’, 17: 90-93.

¹¹ Hud, 11: 12.

¹² Al-Furqan, 25: 7.

¹³ Al-Furqan, 25: 20.

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.” 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 Master! 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 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

¹⁴ Al-Isra’, 17: 94.

¹⁵ Al-Isra’, 17: 95.

¹⁶ HM12579, Ibn Hanbal, III, 154.

¹⁷ B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

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

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

¹⁹ HI7/641, Ibn Hajar, *'Isaba*, VII, 641.

²⁰ B4001, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 12.

²¹ IM1897, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 21.

²² HI2/495, Ibn Hajar, *'Isaba*, II, 495.

²³ HM7116, Ibn Hanbal, II, 228.

²⁴ IM3312, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 30.

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 Once, on the day of the Festival of Sacrifice, the believers had performed the festival prayer and the dish called *tharīd* (sopped bread, meat and broth) was brought out. People gathered around the dish. However, when the number of people increased and there were not enough places for them to sit comfortably, Allah's Messenger decided to sit on his knees. Considering this way of sitting strange, a bedouin expressed his surprise by saying, "What kind of a way of sitting is this?" The Messenger of Allah replied, *"Allah has made me a respectable servant, and not an obstinate tyrant."*²⁶ 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'laba, 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,"²⁷ 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?"²⁸ 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 did the people understand that the man sitting there was Allah's Messenger (saw).²⁹

According to 'Aisha's description, Allah's Messenger used to do whatever an ordinary head of a family would do in his home.³⁰ He was a person like everybody else. He would clean his clothes, milk his sheep, and do his own daily works himself.³¹ It was possible to see him playfully joking with children,³² taking out his own grandchildren for a walk,³³ 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,³⁴ whether

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

²⁶ D3773, Abu Da'ud, *al-At'ima*, 17.

²⁷ H13/487, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, III, 487.

²⁸ B63, al-Bukhari, *al-'Ilm*, 6.

²⁹ B3906, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 45.

³⁰ EM540, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 190.

³¹ HM26724, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 256.

³² B6354, al-Bukhari, *al-Da'awat*, 31.

³³ MS32185, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, *al-Fada'il*, 23.

³⁴ TK4/439, al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, IV, 439.

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.”³⁵ 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.”³⁶

Allah’s Messenger (saw) continued his life among the people as one of them. Like everybody else, he would become sad,³⁷ happy,³⁸ or angry.³⁹ 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,⁴⁰ and at other times he shared peaceful and happy moments with them...⁴¹

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.⁴² 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.⁴³ On another occasion of ritual prayer he had begun reciting the *sūra* of al-Mu’minun and just as he was going to recite the verse mentioning Moses and Aaron,⁴⁴ he started to cough. When he realized that he was not going to be able to continue the recitation, he went down to *ruku’*.⁴⁵ 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 of his nightlong prayers.⁴⁶ 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.*”⁴⁷

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

³⁵ M1525, Muslim, al-Masajid, 286.

³⁶ MK4882, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-kabir, V, 140.

³⁷ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 62.

³⁸ B3556, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

³⁹ D4659, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 10.

⁴⁰ B2468, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 25.

⁴¹ D2578, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 61.

⁴² B344, al-Bukhari, al-Tayammum, 6; M1560, Muslim, al-Masajid, 309.

⁴³ M1284, Muslim, al-Masajid, 93.

⁴⁴ Al-Mu’minun, 23: 45.

⁴⁵ HM15468, Ibn Hanbal, III, 411.

⁴⁶ M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 81.

⁴⁷ M6858, Muslim, al-Zikr, 41.

fell down.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

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 date-groves. 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."*⁵²

The Companions (ra) were aware that the Prophet (saw) usually made personal choices in matters outside religion. The following incident reported by Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) not only shows that his taste was shaped by the culture in which he lived but also indicates the Companions' perception about the source of his actions and behavior. Khalid b. al-Walid went with Allah's Messenger to the house of Maymuna bint al-Harith (ra), who was the Prophet's wife and Khalid's aunt. They were offered a roasted mastigure (a lizard). A lady who knew that Allah's Messenger rarely started to eat any (unfamiliar) food before it was described and named asked May-

⁴⁸ B6185, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 104; B5968, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 102.

⁴⁹ M921, Muslim, al-Salat, 77.

⁵⁰ B5700, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 15.

⁵¹ B6886, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 14.

⁵² M6127, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 140.

muna, “Are you going to tell the Prophet what this is?” Then Maymuna told the Prophet (saw), “O Allah’s Messenger! It is the meat of a mastigure.” (On learning that) Allah’s Messenger withdrew his hand from it. Khalid b. al-Walid said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Is this unlawful to eat?” Allah’s Messenger replied, “No, but it is not found in the land of my people, so I do not like it.” Khalid (ra) said, “Then I pulled the mastigure toward me and ate it while Allah’s Messenger observed me.”⁵³

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), whose original name was al-‘As and was changed by the Prophet to ‘Abd Allah when he was a child,⁵⁴ 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.”⁵⁵ This 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!”⁵⁶ 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.”⁵⁷ 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.”⁵⁸

⁵³ B5391, al-Bukhari, al-At’ima, 10; N4322, al-Nasa’i, al-Fara’ wa al-atira, 26.

⁵⁴ H14/192, Ibn Hajar, *Tsaba*, IV, 193.

⁵⁵ D3646, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm, 3.

⁵⁶ D4659, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 10.

⁵⁷ B7169, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 20; D3583, Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

⁵⁸ D2134, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 37-38; N3395, al-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?*”⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ He compared himself in this world to a traveler temporarily resting under a tree.⁶¹

His close and distant friends, especially his relatives, maintained the usual human relations with him. Those who travelled with him,⁶² those who made business in his name,⁶³ 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,⁶⁴ there were those who played games like archery with him.⁶⁵ 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). 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,⁶⁶ 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.”⁶⁷ 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

⁵⁹ B4913, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Tahrim) 2; HM12444, Ibn Hanbal, III, 140.

⁶⁰ HS2/101, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 101; BN3/56 Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 56.

⁶¹ T2377, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 44; IM4109, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 3.

⁶² B344, al-Bukhari, al-Tayammum, 6.

⁶³ B3642, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 28; D3384, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 27.

⁶⁴ D5000, D5001, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 84.

⁶⁵ B2899, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 78.

⁶⁶ HI5/408, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, V, 408.

⁶⁷ T3619, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 2.

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."⁶⁸

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.⁶⁹ When he sneezed like an ordinary person, he would inform the people about the manners of sneezing;⁷⁰ when he ate something, he would explain the manners of eating;⁷¹ or when he overslept and missed a prayer, he would teach how to make up that prayer.⁷² 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.⁷³ 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 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 above-mentioned divine wisdom, the reason the Messenger of Allah (saw) was selected from among human beings.

⁶⁸ B2468, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 25.

⁶⁹ D3646, Abu Da'ud, al-Ilm, 3.

⁷⁰ B6224, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 126; HM9660, Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

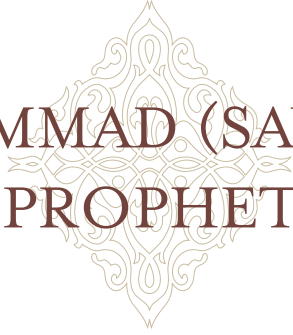
⁷¹ D3773, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 17; IM3275, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 12.

⁷² B344, al-Bukhari, al-Tayammum, 6.

⁷³ Al-Ahzab, 33: 21.



MUHAMMAD (SAW) AS A PROPHET



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: سَمِعَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا تُطَرُونِي كَمَا أَطَرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا:
عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ.“

According to Ibn ‘Abbas, one day ‘Umar (ra) said on the pulpit, “I heard the Prophet (saw) say, ‘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.’”

(B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48)



رَافِعُ بْنُ خَدِيجٍ قَالَ: قَدِمَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمَدِينَةَ... فَقَالَ:
 ”إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ إِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَخُذُوا بِهِ وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ رَأْيٍ
 فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: إِنَّ مَثَلِي وَمَثَلَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ قَبْلِي
 كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ بَنَى بَيْتًا فَأَحْسَنَهُ وَأَجْمَلَهُ إِلَّا مَوْضِعَ لَبَنَةٍ مِنْ زَاوِيَةٍ فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ
 يَطُوفُونَ بِهِ وَيَعْجَبُونَ لَهُ وَيَقُولُونَ هَلَّا وُضِعَتْ هَذِهِ اللَّبَنَةُ؟ قَالَ: فَأَنَا اللَّبَنَةُ وَأَنَا
 خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
 ”إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ أَتَى قَوْمًا فَقَالَ: يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ
 الْجَيْشَ بَعِثَنِي، وَإِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْعُرْيَانُ فَالْتَجَاءَ. فَأَطَاعَهُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ فَأَذْلَجُوا،
 فَأَنْطَلَقُوا عَلَى مَهْلِهِمْ فَنَجَوْا، وَكَذَّبَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا مَكَانَهُمْ، فَصَبَّحَهُمُ
 الْجَيْشُ، فَأَهْلَكَهُمْ وَاجْتَاكَهُمْ، فَذَلِكَ مَثَلُ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي، فَاتَّبَعَ مَا جِئْتُ بِهِ، وَمَثَلُ
 مَنْ عَصَانِي وَكَذَّبَ بِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
 ”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ...“



According to Rafi' b. Khadij (ra), when the Prophet (saw) came to Medina ... (after stating his own view about grafting date-palms), 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, keep it in mind that I am a human being."*

(M6127, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 140)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"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!' So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets."*

(B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18)



According to Abu Musa (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"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 Sunna), and the example of the one who disobeys me and disbelieves the truth that I have brought."*

(B7283, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 2; M5954, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 16)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"Whosoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whosoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah."*

(M4749, Muslim, al-Imara, 33; B7137, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 1)



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

¹ MS36889, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Maghazi, 34.

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

³ MS36889, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Maghazi, 34.

These 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 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 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*

⁴ Al-Shura’, 42: 13.

⁵ Al-Anbiya’, 21: 107; al-Nahl, 16: 64.

⁶ Al-Isra’, 17: 90-95; al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

⁷ Al-Isra’, 17: 47, 95; al-Anbiya’, 21: 5; al-Tur, 52: 29-30.

⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 93.

*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 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 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.

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

¹⁰ M6127, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 140.

¹¹ Al-Kahf, 18: 110.

¹² Al-Ahzab, 33: 40; D4252, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, I.

¹³ B3535, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18; M5963, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 23.

¹⁴ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 5.

¹⁵ Al-Saba’, 34: 28.

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

¹⁷ Yunus, 10: 37-38.

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. Even before you [Prophet],”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 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

¹⁸ Al-Hijr, 15: 9.

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

²⁰ ST43, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 146.

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

²² Al-Haqqa, 69: 44-47.

²³ Al-Najm, 53: 3-4.

²⁴ D3646, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm, 3.

²⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 67.

²⁶ M439, Muslim, al-Iman, 287; B7531, al-Bukhari, al-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. Furthermore his Lord advised the Prophet (saw), *"...Say [Prophet], 'Call on your "partners"! Scheme against me! Do not spare me! My protector is Allah: He has revealed the Scripture, and it is He who protects the righteous..."*³⁰ and thus emphasized the fact that He always protected His Messenger.

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,³¹ Uhud,³² the Khandaq, Hunayn,³³ and elsewhere,³⁴ sometimes in the form of a strong wind,³⁵ and sometimes in the form of creating panic in the hearts of the enemy.³⁶ Sometimes Allah Almighty showed the enemy to the believers as few, thus encouraging them,³⁷ and sometimes protected His Messenger by putting two visible guardians wearing white clothes on his right and left sides.³⁸ However, such divine assistance never led the Prophet (saw) to negligence. On the contrary, he always took the necessary precautions³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

The Prophet (saw), who fulfilled his mission in the best way under divine protection, was also protected against sin.⁴¹ 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

²⁷ Al-Tur, 52: 48.

²⁸ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 67.

²⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 113.

³⁰ Al-A'raf, 7: 195-196.

³¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 123.

³² B4054, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 18.

³³ Al-Tawba, 9: 25.

³⁴ Al-Tawba, 9: 26.

³⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 9.

³⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33: 26; M1163, Muslim, al-Masajid, 3.

³⁷ Al-Anfal, 8: 44.

³⁸ M6005, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 47.

³⁹ B2947, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 103; B3051, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 173.

⁴⁰ Al-Anfal, 8: 19; al-Tawba, 9: 40.

⁴¹ B4837, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Fatih) 2; M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 81.

blind Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum (ra) because he was trying to invite prominent members of the Quraysh to Islam.⁴² 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).⁴³ 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.”*⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶ Allah’s Messenger, who received the divine command to *“Warn your nearest kinsfolk,”*⁴⁷ 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 cavalrymen 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.”*⁴⁸

The Prophet (saw) explained this matter to his Companions (ra) by means of the following representation: *“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 Sunna), and the example of the one who disobeys me and disbelieves the truth that I have brought.”*⁴⁹

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

⁴² ‘Abasa, 80: 1-11; TT24/217, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-bayan*, XXIV, 217.

⁴³ Al-Anfal, 8: 67; M4588, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 58.

⁴⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 21.

⁴⁵ Al-Hajj, 22: 78.

⁴⁶ Al-Muddaththir, 74: 1-2.

⁴⁷ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 214.

⁴⁸ B4971, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Lahab) 1; M508, Muslim, al-Iman, 355.

⁴⁹ B7283, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 2; M5954, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 16.

neither in this world nor in the Hereafter. This is because obedience to Allah's Messenger means obedience to Allah Himself.⁵⁰ 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 Paradise and he said, *"Whosoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whosoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah."*^{51 52} He also informed us about the bad end of those who do not obey him by saying, *"By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who among 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), he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire."*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

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,"*⁵⁹ 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...

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..."*⁶⁰ 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."*⁶¹

⁵⁰ Al-Nisa', 4: 80; al-Anfal, 8: 20.

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

⁵² B7280, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 2.

⁵³ M386, Muslim, al-Iman, 240.

⁵⁴ Al-Nisa', 4: 80.

⁵⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 119.

⁵⁶ Al-'Imran, 3: 20; M3696, Muslim, Talaq, 35.

⁵⁷ Al-Qasas, 28: 56.

⁵⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 258, 264; al-Tawba, 9: 24.

⁵⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 45-46.

⁶⁰ Al-Nahl, 16: 125.

⁶¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 44.

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 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.)”*⁶²

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...”*⁶³ 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.”*⁶⁴ 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,”*⁶⁵ 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 servant-prophet rather than a king-prophet.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷

⁶² B79, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm 20; M5953, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 15.

⁶³ Al-A’raf, 7: 157.

⁶⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4: 65.

⁶⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 36.

⁶⁶ MK10686, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-kabir, X, 288.

⁶⁷ M6170, Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 2.

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.⁶⁸ 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."⁶⁹ 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 community⁷⁰ was clearly because of his station of prophethood which was granted to him by Allah (swt).

⁶⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 110.

⁶⁹ FH4/305, al-Qarafi, *Furuq*, IV, 305.

⁷⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 143.



THE PROPHET OF RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND FREEDOM



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ... ثُمَّ قَالَ:
”ذُرُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بكَثْرَةِ سُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى
أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَدَعُوهُ.“

Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) addressed us ... and 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.’”

(M3257, Muslim, al-Hajj, 412)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ رَافِعٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ: يَخْتَصِمَانِ فِي مَوَارِيثَ وَأَشْيَاءَ قَدْ دَرَسَتْ فَقَالَ: ”إِنِّي إِنَّمَا أَقْضِي بَيْنَكُمْ بِرَأْيِي فِيمَا لَمْ يُنْزَلْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ.“



عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ، وَإِنَّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ، وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْحَنَ بِحُجَّتِهِ مِنْ بَعْضٍ، وَأَقْضِي لَهُ عَلَى نَحْوِ مِمَّا أَسْمَعُ، فَمَنْ قَضَيْتُ لَهُ مِنْ حَقِّ أَخِيهِ شَيْئًا، فَلَا يَأْخُذْ، فَإِنَّمَا أَقْطَعُ لَهُ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ.“



According to a tradition that ‘Abd Allah b. Rafi‘ heard from Umm Salama (ra), the Prophet (saw) said to two men who were disputing over an 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.”*

(D3585, Abu Da‘ud, al-Qada‘ (Aqdiyya), 7)



According to Umm Salama (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“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.”*

(B6967, al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 10)



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 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 Him.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

¹ B4, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

² Al-Muddaththir, 74: 1-5.

³ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 151.

⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 92.

⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 80.

⁷ Al-Najm, 53: 2-4.

*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 This is because he looked at life as holistic; he never divided individual and social life into various fields. He established all his rules and principles within an existentialist ethics embracing mankind.

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 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 He taught his Companions (ra) personally both the times of the ritual prayers

⁸ Al-Hashr, 59: 7.

⁹ Al-Shura, 42: 15.

¹⁰ HS2/98, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 98.

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

¹² Al-A'raf, 7: 205.

¹³ B6008, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab*, 27.

¹⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 44.

and how to perform them;¹⁵ and they were prescribed five times a day.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 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 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

¹⁵ B631 al-Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

¹⁶ M411 Muslim, Īman, 259.

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

¹⁸ M2263 Muslim, Zakat, 1;

N2475 al-Nasa'i, Zakat, 18.

¹⁹ M3137 Muslim, Hajj, 310.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 275.

²¹ M4048 Muslim, Musakat, 71.

²² Al-A'raf, 7: 157.

²³ M3257 Muslim, Hajj, 412.

²⁴ B5528 al-Bukhari, Sayd, 28.

²⁵ B2991 al-Bukhari, Cihad, 130.

²⁶ D3585 Abu Da'ud, Qada' (Aqdiya), 7.

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

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

²⁷ D3586, Abu Da‘ud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

²⁸ ‘Abasa, 80: 1-10; al-Tawba, 9: 43; al-Tahrim, 66: 1; al-Anfal, 8: 67-68.

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

³⁰ D1069, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 209, 210; IM1082, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 78; BS5703, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, III, 259.

³¹ ST3/602, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqat*, III, 602.

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.

As a requirement of this treaty, the authority of the Prophet (saw) was established as an article of this 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.

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 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

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

³³ BN3/275, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 275.

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

³⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 47.

³⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 105.

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

³⁸ Al-Nisa', 4: 105.

³⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 61.

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 cases he heard in his court, he required concrete proof,⁴³ a witness,⁴⁴ 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

⁴⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4: 65; M6112, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 129.

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

⁴² M4470, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 1.

⁴³ M359, Muslim, al-Iman, 224.

⁴⁴ D3621, Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 25.

⁴⁵ B2515, al-Bukhari, al-Rahn fi ‘l-hadar, 6.

⁴⁶ D3597, Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 14; HM5385, Ibn Hanbal, II, 71.

⁴⁷ B6967, al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 10.

⁴⁸ D3584, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 7.

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 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, "*Have you 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. The incident in which Usama b. Zayd (ra) was sent as a mediator for amnesty for a prominent woman who had stolen something, is a famous example in this regard.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,

⁴⁹ M359, Muslim, al-Iman, 224.

⁵⁰ D3245, Abu Da'ud, al-Nudhur, 1.

⁵¹ D3244, Abu Da'ud, al-Nudhur, 1.

⁵² M4440, Muslim, al-Hudud, 28; M4410, Muslim, al-Hudud, 8; B6777, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 4; al-Nur, 24: 4; al-Ma'ida, 5: 33-34.

⁵³ M4410, Muslim, al-Hudud, 8.

⁵⁴ N4776, al-Nasa'i, al-Qasama, 20-21.

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 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

Allah’s Messenger (saw) spent his whole life upholding the peace and tranquility of individuals and society and for their happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Centuries ago, he strived to establish and leave a clear and accountable model for humanity based on law and justice. All his efforts were to protect rights and ensure the superiority of law.

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

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



THE PROPHET'S MANNER OF SPEAKING ELEGANT, BALANCED and COMPREHENSIBLE

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“...أُعْطِيتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw)
said, “...*I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in
meaning...*”

(M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا : أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ يُحَدِّثُ حَدِيثًا لَوْ عَدَّهُ
الْعَادُّ لَأَخْصَاهُ.



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: كَانَ كَلَامُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَلَامًا فَضْلًا يَفْهَمُهُ
كُلُّ مَنْ سَمِعَهُ.



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ :
أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَعَادَهَا ثَلَاثًا حَتَّى تُفْهَمَ ...



‘A’isha (ra) reported, “the Prophet (saw) used to talk so clearly that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so.”

(B3567, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23)



‘A’isha (ra) reported, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke in such a distinct manner that anyone who listened to him could understand it.”

(D4839, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 18)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), whenever the Prophet (saw) spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him...

(B95, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 30)



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 Khadija (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 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. 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

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

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

³ TS226, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 97.

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 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 *hadiths* 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 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 state-

⁴ M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5; B2977, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 122.

⁵ ST1/113, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 113.

⁶ B3567, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M7509 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 71.

⁷ B3568, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

⁸ D4839, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 18.

⁹ B3568, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M6399, Muslim, Fada'il al-sahaba, 160.

¹⁰ D4838, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 18.

¹¹ T2018, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 71.

¹² B95, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm 30; T3640, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9.

¹³ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

¹⁴ B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; M259, Muslim, al-Iman, 143.

¹⁵ B4402, B4403, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 78.

ments. 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 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 stand 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 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

¹⁶ B67, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 9; WM3/1111, al-Waqidi, Maghazi, III, 1111; B1739, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 132.

¹⁷ B7466, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 31.

¹⁸ M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66; B6011, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27.

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 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 al-Ṭufayl (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 answers, such as "*Believing in Allah and His Messenger,*"²⁸ "*Performing ritual*

¹⁹ B3302, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-khalq, 15.

²⁰ ST1/377, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 377; B5304, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25.

²¹ B6023, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 34; M2350, Muslim, al-Zakat, 68.

²² B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; M529, Muslim, al-Iman, 376.

²³ TS226, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama'il*, 97.

²⁴ B6031, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 38.

²⁵ M6039, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 72; B6210, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 116; AU22/289, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XXII, 289.

²⁶ DF1611, al-Daylami, *Firdaws*, I, 398.

²⁷ BS5020, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, IV, 263.

²⁸ B26, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 18.

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 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, “Allah willing (*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, ‘Allah willing,’ 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

²⁹ B527, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-salat, 5.

³⁰ IM2924, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 16.

³¹ B28, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 20.

³² MU1646, Muwatta’, Husn al-khulq, 3.

³³ B6116, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 76.

³⁴ IF10/520, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, X, 520.

³⁵ T2317, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11.

³⁶ B6475, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23; M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74.

³⁷ B5975, al-Bukhari al-Adab, 6; IM349, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 26.

³⁸ M162, Muslim, al-Iman, 65; B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.

³⁹ IM4171, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 15.

⁴⁰ Al-Kahf, 18: 23-24.

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 hold my life in 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-āmin”* (the trustworthy)⁴³ and he was never heard telling lies.⁴⁴ In fact, his wife Khadija (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 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

⁴¹ HM6510, Ibn Hanbal, II, 162; T2170, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 9.

⁴² B7391, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 11.

⁴³ HS2/20, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 20.

⁴⁴ M508, Muslim, al-Iman, 355; B4971, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Lahab) 1.

⁴⁵ M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252; B6982, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 1.

⁴⁶ D3646, Abu Da’ud, al-’Ilm, 3; HM6510, Ibn Hanbal, II, 162.

⁴⁷ D4998, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab 84; T1991, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 57.

⁴⁸ IM3443, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 3.

⁴⁹ B1015, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa’, 8; M2047, Muslim, al-’Idayn, 3.

advice offered by one of his Companions (ra).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 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.

⁵⁰ B3584, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25; HM5886, Ibn Hanbal, II, 110.

⁵¹ T2121, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wasaya, 5.

⁵² M508, Muslim, al-Iman, 355.

⁵³ B927, al-Bukhari, al-Jum'a, 29; T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11.

⁵⁴ N1419, al-Nasa'i, al-Jum'a, 35; IM1106, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 85.

⁵⁵ B68, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 11; M7127, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 82.



THE PROPHET'S MANNERS OF EATING

HE WOULD NOT EAT UNTIL HE WAS
HUNGRY and WOULD STOP EATING
BEFORE HE WAS FILLED

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ طَعَامًا فَلْيَقُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنْ نَسِيَ فِي أَوَّلِهِ فَلْيَقُلْ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي أَوَّلِهِ وَآخِرِهِ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “When one of you eats food, then let him say, ‘Bismillāh (In the name of Allah).’ If he forgets in the beginning, then let him say: ‘Bismillāh fī awwalihi wa akhirihi (In the Name of Allah at its beginning and its end.)’”

(T1858, al-Tirmidhi, al-At‘ima, 47)



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ عَنْ جَدِّهِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِيَمِينِهِ وَإِذَا شَرِبَ فَلْيَشْرَبْ بِيَمِينِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَأْكُلُ
بِشِمَالِهِ وَيَشْرَبُ بِشِمَالِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: مَا عَابَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ طَعَامًا قَطُّ، إِنْ اشْتَهَاهُ أَكَلَهُ،
وَإِنْ كَرِهَهُ تَرَكَهُ.



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا فَرَغَ مِنْ طَعَامِهِ قَالَ:
”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِينَ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَرْضَى عَنِ الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الْأَكْلَةَ فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ يَشْرَبَ الشَّرْبَةَ
فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا.“



According to Abu Bakr b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, his grandfather Ibn ‘Umar (ra) said that Allah’s Messenger said, *“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.”*

(M5265, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 105)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “the Prophet (saw) never criticized any food (he was invited to) but he used to eat if he liked the food, and leave it if he disliked it.”

(B5409, al-Bukhari, al-At’ima, 21; M5383, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 188)



According to Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra), when Allah’s Messenger (saw) finished his food, he used to pray saying, *“Praise be to Allah Who has given us food and drink and made us Muslims.”*

(D3850, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 52; T3457, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 55)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“Allah is pleased with His servant who praises Him after taking a morsel of food or drinking a beverage.”*

(M6932, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 89)



‘Umar 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 ‘Umar’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 ‘Umar 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.

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,

¹ AU4/169, Ibn al-Athir, *‘Ud al-ghaba*, IV, 169-170.

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

³ T3519, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 86; HM23461, Ibn Hanbal, V, 363.

⁴ D3761, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 11; T1846, al-Tirmidhi, al-At’ima, 39.

⁵ M788, Muslim, al-Hayd, 90.

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 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 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 fi awwalihi 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*

⁶ B207, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 50; T80, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 59.

⁷ M5297, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 131.

⁸ T1859, al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 48; D3852, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 53.

⁹ M5262, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 103.

¹⁰ T1858, al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 47; D3767, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 15.

¹¹ T1885, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ashriba, 13.

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 Sunna 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. Of course, using the left hand in acts such as cleaning oneself after using the lavatory influenced this preference. The Prophet (saw)'s specific command shows the significance of this matter when he said, "Eat by your right hand."¹⁴ However, it is obvious that those who 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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."¹⁷ 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."¹⁸ The Prophet (saw)'s advice was a precaution to make sure people who were not yet full could continue

¹² B154, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 19.

¹³ M5265, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 105; D3776, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 19.

¹⁴ M5268, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 107.

¹⁵ B5415, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 23; T1788, al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 1.

¹⁶ B5398, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 13.

¹⁷ D3773, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 17; IM3263, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 6.

¹⁸ IM3295, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 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.¹⁹ However, he sometimes needed to eat while walking, and drink while standing up during the rush of the day.²⁰ 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.

'Umar, 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.²¹ The Prophet (saw) and his family who mostly ate barley bread²² used to spend many nights in a row hungry.²³ The number of the days that the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) spent hungry was not few.²⁴ Sometimes, they were forced to tie stones on their bellies to ease the pain of their hunger.²⁵ 'A'isha (ra) reported 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.²⁶ 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.*"²⁷

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 (ra).

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

¹⁹ M5275, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 113; T1879, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ashriba, 11.

²⁰ T1880, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ashriba, 11; IM3301, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 25.

²¹ M7461, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 36; IM4146, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 10.

²² T2357, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 38; HM2303, Ibn Hanbal, I; 256.

²³ T2360, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 38; IM3347, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 49.

²⁴ B5432, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 32.

²⁵ T2371, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 39.

²⁶ M7452, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 28; B2567, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 1.

²⁷ M5353, M5352, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 167, 166.

²⁸ B5409, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 21; B3563, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M5383, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 188.

disliked it.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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 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).³⁰ Maymuna, who also was Khalid b. al-Walid's and Ibn 'Abbas' aunt, prepared something for them to eat.³¹ 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.³² 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.*"³³

Upon these words of the Prophet (saw), Khalid (ra) took the mastigure meat and ate it while Allah's Messenger observed him.³⁴ Other people who were present also ate from the meat, but Maymuna (ra) did not by saying, "I do not eat anything but that which Allah's Messenger eats."³⁵

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. In fact, the Prophet's statement in another narration, "*I do not eat mastigure, but I do not prohibit its eating,*" also supports this interpretation.³⁶ 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. In fact, among the Companions (ra) who understood that the

²⁹ M5306, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 136.

³⁰ B5391, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 10; M5034, Muslim, al-Sayd, 43.

³¹ B5391, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 10; M5040, Muslim, al-Sayd, 47.

³² B5391, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 10.

³³ M5034, Muslim, al-Sayd, 43; M5040, Muslim, al-Sayd, 47.

³⁴ B5391, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 10; B5537, al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 33.

³⁵ M5040, Muslim, al-Sayd, 47.

³⁶ B5536, al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 33.

Prophet's refusal to eat the lizard meat was his personal choice, there were both those who ate the lizard meat and those who did 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 lamb³⁷ and gourd³⁸ but did not like eating locusts.³⁹ 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,⁴⁰ and that Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (ra) did not eat food with garlic just because the Prophet (saw) did not⁴¹ 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 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."*⁴² 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,"*⁴³ was revealed about a Companion who prohibited for himself meat in order to prevent his sexual desire and to perform more acts of worship.⁴⁴ 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

³⁷ M481, Muslim, al-Iman, 328.

³⁸ IM3302, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 26.

³⁹ D3813, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 34.

⁴⁰ B2092, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 30; M5326, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 145.

⁴¹ M5356, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 170.

⁴² B855, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 160; D3822, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 40.

⁴³ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 87.

⁴⁴ T3054, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 5.

longer in the house of his wife Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra) because he had drunk at her house 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."⁴⁵

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*,⁴⁶ meat,⁴⁷ dates,⁴⁸ and vinegar.⁴⁹ 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."⁵⁰

Sometimes he also expressed his thankfulness with the following invocation: "Praise be to Allah abundantly and sincerely, of such a nature as is productive of blessing, is not insufficient, abandoned, or ignored, O our lord."⁵¹

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."⁵²

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."⁵³

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."⁵⁴

⁴⁵ B5267, al-Bukhari, al-Talak, 8; N3450, al-Nasa'i, al-Talaq, 17; al-Tahrim, 66: 1.

⁴⁶ D3783, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 22.

⁴⁷ IM3305, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 27.

⁴⁸ B5769, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 52.

⁴⁹ M5353, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 167.

⁵⁰ D3850, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 52; T3457, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 55.

⁵¹ B5458, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 54; D3849, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 52.

⁵² D3854, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 54; IM1747, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 45.

⁵³ D4023, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 1.

⁵⁴ M6932, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 89; T1816, al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 18.



THE CLOTHING OF THE PROPHET (SAW) CLEAN and SIMPLE

عَنْ أَبِي الْأَحْوَصِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فِي ثَوْبٍ دُونَ فَقَالَ:
”أَلَيْكَ مَالٌ؟“ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: ”مِنْ أَيِّ الْمَالِ؟“ قَالَ: قَدْ آتَانِي اللَّهُ
مِنَ الْإِبِلِ وَالْغَنَمِ وَالْخَيْلِ وَالرَّقِيقِ قَالَ: ”فَإِذَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَلْيُرِ اثْرُ نِعْمَةٍ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَكَرَامَتِهِ.“

Abu al-Ahwas quoted his father (ra) saying, “I came to the Prophet (saw) wearing a lowly garment and he said (to me), ‘Have you got any property?’ I replied, ‘Yes.’ He asked, ‘What type (of property) is it?’ I said, ‘Allah has given me camels, sheep, horses, and slaves.’ He then said, ‘When Allah gives you property, let the mark of Allah’s favor and honor upon you be seen.’”

(D4063, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 14; T2006, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 63)



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”كُلُوا وَتَصَدَّقُوا وَالبُسُوا فِي غَيْرِ إِسْرَافٍ وَلَا مَخِيلَةٍ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ“ قَالَ رَجُلٌ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ
يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً. قَالَ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ
الْكِبَرُ بَطَرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمَطُ النَّاسِ.“



عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ جَرَّ ثَوْبَهُ خِيَلَاءَ لَمْ يَنْظُرِ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ أَحَدَ شَقَيِّ إِزَارِي يَسْتَرْخِي، إِلَّا أَنْ أَتَعَاهَدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ
”لَسْتُ مِمَّنْ يَصْنَعُهُ خِيَلَاءَ.“



عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ قَالَ: مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ ذِي لِمَّةٍ فِي حُلَّةٍ حَمَرَاءَ أَحْسَنَ مِنْ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ...



‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb reported through his father from his grandfather (ra) that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“Eat, give charity and clothe yourselves, without being extravagant, and without showing off.”*

(N2560, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 66)



It was reported on the authority of ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise.”* A person (among the listeners) said, *“Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine.”* The Prophet 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.”*

(M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147)



According to the report of Salim b. ‘Abd Allah from his father (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“Allah will not look on the Day of Resurrection at the person who drags his garment (behind him) out of conceit.”* Then Abu Bakr said, *“O Allah’s Messenger! One side of my izār hangs low if I do not take care of it.”* The Prophet (saw) said, *“You are not one of those who do that out of conceit.”*

(B5784, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 2)



Bara’ (b. ‘Azib) (ra) said, *“I have not seen anyone with hair past his shoulders in a red garment more handsome than the Messenger of Allah (saw)...”*

(T1724, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 4)



Allah'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 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

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."*³

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

¹ D4062, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 14.

² MU1739, al-Muwatta', Sha'r, 2.

³ D4063, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 14; T2006, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

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.”*⁴

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 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.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 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 The 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 “gabardine,”²⁰ and shirt.²¹ Among the clothes he liked, was a type of shirt made in Yemen.²² This shirt, which

⁴ MU1654, al-Muwatta’, al-Libas, 1.

⁵ MU1654, al-Muwatta’, al-Libas, 1.

⁶ M273, Muslim, al-Iman, 154.

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

⁸ D4065, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 16; T2812, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 48.

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

¹⁰ D4064, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 15.

¹¹ T2807, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 45.

¹² D4061, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 13; T994, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana’iz, 18.

¹³ D4078, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 21; T1784, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 42.

¹⁴ M2429, Muslim, al-Zakat, 128.

¹⁵ D4036, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 5+; T1733, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 10.

¹⁶ T1762, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 28; D4025, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 3.

¹⁷ D4027, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 3.

¹⁸ IM3577, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 10.

¹⁹ B2918, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 90.

²⁰ M5612, Muslim, al-Adab, 22.

²¹ B5809, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 18.

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

was very suitable to warm climates, usually had stripes and was made from cotton.²³ Moreover, he wore a robe²⁴ and a multi-colored outer garment woven from black goat hair.²⁵ This 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

The Prophet (saw) wore sandals called “*nalın*” 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 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

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

²⁴ B5800, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 12.

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

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

²⁷ D3336, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyū’, 7; IM3579, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 12; NS9670, al-Nasa’i, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, V, 482.

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

²⁹ D4210, Abu Da’ud, al-Tarajjul, 19; N5246, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 66.

³⁰ B5857, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 41; D4134, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 41.

³¹ D155, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 59; T2820, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 55.

³² N2560, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 66; B5783, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 1.

³³ M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

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

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 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 In fact, once Allah’s Messenger wore a fascinatingly beautiful cloak with gold woven into it that was sent to him as a gift.⁴¹

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 hab-

³⁴ B5784, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 2.

³⁵ AV11/50, ‘Azimabadi, *Awn al-ma’būd*, XI, 50.

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

³⁷ IM3606, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 24; HM5664, Ibn Hanbal, II, 92.

³⁸ T1724, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 4; M6065, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 92.

³⁹ T2811, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 47.

⁴⁰ D4037, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 5+.

⁴¹ T1723, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 3; B5836, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 26.

its 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 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."*⁴² When any of the Companions of the Prophet put on a new garment, he would be told, *"May you wear it out and may Allah give you another in its place."*⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

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."⁴⁵ 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"*⁴⁶ and he himself applied this principle throughout his life and became an example for them.

⁴² D4020, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 1.

⁴³ D4020, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 1.

⁴⁴ T3560, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 107; IM3557, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 2.

⁴⁵ MZ8604, al-Haythami, *Majma' al-zawā'id*, V, 135.

⁴⁶ BT1222, al-Bukhari, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabir*, I, 382.



THE PROPHET'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

HOW PLEASANT IS THE GOOD COMMODITY FOR A GOOD PERSON!

عَنْ مُطَرِّفٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَهُوَ يَقْرَأُ ۖ «الْهَاجِمُ التَّكَاثُرُ»
قَالَ: «يَقُولُ ابْنُ آدَمَ: مَالِي، مَالِي قَالَ: وَهَلْ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ مِنْ مَالِكَ
إِلَّا مَا أَكَلْتَ فَأَفْنَيْتَ، أَوْ لَبَسْتَ فَأَبْلَيْتَ، أَوْ تَصَدَّقْتَ فَأَمْضَيْتَ؟»

According to Mutarrif his father (ra) said,
“I came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) as he was reciting, “*Striving for more distracts you*” (102:1). He then said, “*The son of Adam claims, ‘My wealth, my wealth!’ O son of Adam is there anything of your possessions except that which you consumed, which you utilized, or which you wore and then it was worn out, or you gave as charity and sent it forward?*”

(M7420, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”تَعَسَّ عَبْدُ الدِّينَارِ وَالِدَرَّهَمَ وَالْقَطِيفَةَ وَالْخَمِصَةَ، إِنْ أُعْطِيَ رَضِيَ،
وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطَ لَمْ يَرْضَ.“



حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَمْرَو بْنَ الْحَارِثِ قَالَ: مَا تَرَكَ
النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِلَّا سِلَاحَهُ وَبَغْلَتَهُ الْبَيْضَاءَ، وَأَرْضًا تَرَكَهَا صَدَقَةً.



حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ عَلِيٍّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَمْرَو بْنَ الْعَاصِ يَقُولُ: بَعَثَ إِلَيَّ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”خُذْ عَلَيْكَ ثِيَابَكَ وَسِلَاحَكَ ثُمَّ آتِنِي“ فَآتَيْتُهُ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ
فَصَعَدَ فِي النَّظَرِ ثُمَّ طَاطَأَ فَقَالَ: ”إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَبْعَثَكَ عَلَى جَيْشٍ فَيُسَلِّمَكَ اللَّهُ
وَيُغْنِمَكَ وَأَرْغَبُ لَكَ مِنَ الْمَالِ رَغْبَةً صَالِحَةً“ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا
أَسَلَّمْتُ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَالِ وَلَكِنِّي أَسَلَّمْتُ رَغْبَةً فِي الْإِسْلَامِ وَأَنْ أَكُونَ مَعَ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”يَا عَمْرُو نِعَمَ الْمَالِ الصَّالِحُ لِلْمَرْءِ الصَّالِحِ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Let the slave of dinar and dirham of qatīfa and khamīṣa (i.e., money and luxurious clothes) perish. Because he is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased!*”

(B2886, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad 70)



Abu Ishaq heard that ‘Amr b. Harith (saw) said, “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.”

(B3098, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 3)



According to Musa b. ‘Ali, his father ‘Amr b. al-‘As (saw) said, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) sent me a messenger to tell me, ‘*Pack your clothes and arms and come to me.*’ I came to him while he was performing the wudu’. He raised his head and looked at me, and then lowered his head and said, ‘*I would like to put you in charge of an army so that Allah Almighty may bestow on you safety and war booty. I sincerely would like you to become wealthy.*’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! I did not become a Muslim for the sake of wealth. On the contrary, I embraced Islam in my desire for Islam and being with the Messenger of Allah (saw).’ Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, ‘O ‘Amr! *For a righteous person, how nice the good wealth is!*”

(HM17915, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 197)



It was the ninth year after Hijra. 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 *tawhīd*, i.e., the Oneness and Unity of Allah. Allah's Messenger (saw) wanted to erase the traces of 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

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

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

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

³ B5952, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 90; D4151, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 44.

⁴ N5355, al-Nasa'i, al-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 expressed the mortality and worthlessness of this world as follows: *“The son of Adam claims: My wealth, my wealth. O son of Adam! Is there anything of your possessions except that which you consumed, which you utilized, or which you wore and then it was worn out, or you gave as charity and sent it forward?”*⁶ Thus, the Prophet (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. He warned those who attached too much value to the goods of this world with the following words: *“Let the slave of dinar and dirham of qatīfa and khamīṣa (i.e., money and luxurious clothes) perish. Because he is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased!”*⁷ 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.⁸ He left neither dinar or dirham, nor a slave or a concubine, or any other wealth behind.⁹ The objects that Allah’s Messenger (saw) left behind as inheritance were only the minimum things that were necessary for the maintenance of life.

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

⁵ M3649, Muslim, al-Rada’, 64.

⁶ M7420, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3.

⁷ B2886, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad 70.

⁸ B3098, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 3; B2912, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 86.

⁹ B2739, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 1.

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.”*¹⁰

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 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.”¹¹

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.”¹² However, even though Allah’s Messenger

¹⁰ MK10327, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabir*, X, 162; IM4109, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 3.

¹¹ ST1/465, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 465; BSH1468, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-iman*, II, 173.

¹² TSH330, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, 148.

did not want a comfortable bed for himself, he did not make such a requirement for his Companions (ra).

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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ He also prohibited wearing clothes that could be used for boasting and showing off.¹⁵

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,¹⁶ and sometimes on the ground instead of the cushion offered to him.¹⁷

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 had¹⁸ a couple of leather cushions filled with palm fibers, two mattresses filled with straw,¹⁹ a couple of pelts hung on his wall, and a couple of curtains.²⁰ An oil lamp used for the illumination of his house,²¹ a knife,²² a large plate to eat food,²³ two cups one of which was glass²⁴ and one of which was from wood²⁵ 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.²⁶ Moreover, he had a couple of water containers used for both the wudu' and drinking water.²⁷ 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.²⁸

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.²⁹ One of them was made from iron³⁰ and the other was made from ivory.³¹ 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."³² He had black kohl called

¹³ T2341, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 30.

¹⁴ M5452, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 41.

¹⁵ B5650, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 4; M5437, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 29.

¹⁶ AM1177, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 402.

¹⁷ B6277, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhān, 38; M2741, Muslim, al-Siyam, 191.

¹⁸ B5843, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 31.

¹⁹ HM25113, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 91.

²⁰ M5528, Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 92.

²¹ IM3089, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 91; EM1223, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 420.

²² M5091, Muslim, al-Adahi, 19.

²³ B5225, al-Bukhari, al-Nikāh, 108.

²⁴ IM3435, Ibn Maja, al-Ashriba, 27.

²⁵ TSH19, al-Tirmidhi, Shama'il, 84.

²⁶ N241, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 149; IM378, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 35.

²⁷ IM3412, Ibn Maja, al-Ashriba, 16.

²⁸ B5413, B5415, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 23.

²⁹ BS96, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, I, 54.

³⁰ B6241, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhān, 11; M5638, Muslim, al-Adab, 40.

³¹ BS96, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, I, 54; ST1/484, Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, I, 484.

³² NZ913, al-Nawawi, Adhkar, p. 304; HM3823, Ibn Hanbal, I, 403.

ismid which he applied to his eyes thrice before going to bed.³³ He advised his Companions (ra) to use *ismid* for it strengthened eyesight and fed the eyelashes.³⁴ The shine of the oil that the Prophet (saw) applied to his beard and hair when he was about enter *ihram* could easily be seen.³⁵ His toothbrush (*miswāk*) made from the arak tree was among the items that he used first when he came home,³⁶ and kept by him when he woke up at night,³⁷ and he used it frequently.³⁸

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*'.³⁹ The top of the handle of this sword was made from silver and had silver rings over its sheath.⁴⁰ The sword he carried on the day of the conquest when entering Mecca had silver and gold handiwork.⁴¹ He also had other swords: one called *Ma'sur* that he inherited from his father,⁴² 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,⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

Allah's Messenger (saw) used to wear armor in the battles in order to protect himself from the arrows and sword blows of his enemies. He had seven coats of chain mail. The most famous one of them was *Dhat al-Fudul*.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ He also had a helmet that he wore on the conquest of Mecca.⁴⁷ Allah's Messenger had three spears that he acquired from the Banu Qaynuqa. He had a total of six bows called *Rawha*, *Bayda*, *Safra*,⁴⁸ *Zawra*, *Saddad*, and *Katum*, which was broken in the Battle of Uhud.⁴⁹ Allah's Messenger (saw) gained almost all of these instruments of war either as booty or as a gifts.

Allah's Messenger (saw) used these things in his right hand and with the awareness that Allah (swt) bestowed them upon him. He was careful that his belongings did not have features that would distract him from spirituality and would remind him continuously of this world. The Mes-

³³ T2048, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 9; IM3499, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 26.

³⁴ D3878, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 14; T1757, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 23.

³⁵ M2838, Muslim, al-Hajj, 44.

³⁶ M590, Muslim, al-Tahara, 43; D51, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 27.

³⁷ B245, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 73; M595, Muslim, al-Tahara, 47.

³⁸ ST1/484, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 484.

³⁹ T1561, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 12; IM2808, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 18.

⁴⁰ D2583, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 64; N5376, al-Nasa'i, al-Zina, 120.

⁴¹ T1690, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 16.

⁴² ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 485.

⁴³ VM1/103, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, I, 103.

⁴⁴ ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 486.

⁴⁵ MA9662, 'Abd al-razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 295.

⁴⁶ ST1/485, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 487.

⁴⁷ B4286, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 49; N2870, al-Nasa'i, *Manasik al-hajj*, 107.

⁴⁸ ST1/489, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 489.

⁴⁹ ZD1/130, Ibn Qayyim, *Za'd al-ma'ad*, I, 131.

senger of Mercy never became zealous in the pursuit of excessive comfort; on the contrary he always acted humbly.

It is a fact that Allah's Messenger (saw) always encouraged his Companions (ra) to earn a livelihood through lawful means. In fact, in this respect, 'Amr b. al-'As (ra) said, "Allah's Messenger sent me a messenger and said, *"Pack your clothes and arms and come to me."* I came to him while he was performing the wudu'. He raised his head and looked at me, and then lowered his head and said, *"I would like to put you in charge of an army so that Allah Almighty may bestow on you safety and war booty. I sincerely would like you to become rich."* I said, "O Messenger of Allah! I did not become a Muslim for the sake of wealth. On the contrary, I embraced Islam in my desire for Islam and being with the Messenger of Allah (saw)." Thereupon, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"O 'Amr! For a righteous person, how nice the good wealth is!"*⁵⁰

Allah's Messenger (saw), who asked his Companions (ra) to wear their best clothes and fragrances,⁵¹ 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.⁵²

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) 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. When we examine his life style, we can see that worldly possessions should not be the masters of the people, but rather they are a means of worshipping Allah Almighty properly and maintaining a life in accordance with His pleasure.

⁵⁰ HM17915, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 197.

⁵¹ BT1222, al-Bukhari, al-Ta'rikh al-kabir, I, 382.

⁵² B5783, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, I.



THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET (SAW) MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”خَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا مَرْيَمُ، وَخَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا خَدِيجَةُ.“

According to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*The best of the world’s women is Maryam (in her lifetime), and the best of the world’s women is Khadija (in her lifetime).*”

(B3815, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20)



حَدَّثَنَا صَفِيَّةُ بِنْتُ حُيٍّ قَالَتْ: دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي عَنْ
حَفْصَةَ وَعَائِشَةَ كَلَامٌ فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لَهُ فَقَالَ:
”أَلَا قُلْتَ وَكَيْفَ تَكُونَانِ خَيْرًا مِنِّي؟ وَزَوْجِي مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَبِي هَارُونُ وَعَمِّي مُوسَى...”



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: ...فَكَانَتْ زَيْنَبُ تَفْخَرُ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ تَقُولُ:
زَوْجُكُمْ أَهَالِيكُمْ، وَزَوْجَنِي اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْ فَوْقِ سَبْعِ سَمَوَاتٍ.



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”فَضْلُ عَائِشَةَ عَلَى النَّسَاءِ كَفَضْلِ الثَّرِيدِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الطَّعَامِ.“



Safiyya bint Huyayy (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) came to me and some words had reached me from Hafsa and ‘A’isha (ra). So I mentioned this to him. He said, *‘Why did you not say, “And how are you two better than me while my husband is Muhammad, my father is Aaron, and my uncle is Moses?”’*”

(T3892, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “Zaynab (bint Jahsh) used to boast before the other wives of the Prophet (saw) and used to say, ‘You were given in marriage by your families, while I was married (to the Prophet) by Allah from over the seven Heavens.’”

(B7420, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The excellence of ‘A’isha (ra) over other women is like the excellence of tharīd over all other foods.”*

(M6299, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 89)



“We sent messengers before you, and We assigned for them wives and offspring...”¹ According to the above-mentioned verse, the Prophet (saw) was the last of the miraculous messengers of Allah. He guided his people in religious matters as a prophet; he was the commander of the army in battle; the *imām* (prayer leader) of the congregation in the mosque, and the head of his family at home. He was involved in all areas of social life. From the age of twenty-five he started family life as a husband and then as a father.

The family life of the noble Prophet had its own specific conditions and particularities. First and foremost, this family was under the watchful eye of Almighty Allah and received divine interventions and guidance.² In addition, the local culture and social conditions of his period, and his position as prophet had significant influence on his marriages. For this reason, all the marriages of the Prophet (saw) had their own conditions, reasons, purposes and wisdom. His marriages, and why he married multiple women, can only be understood within the context of the circumstances in which he lived and his personal qualities.

Marriage is undoubtedly a human need. The marriages of prophets, who were all human beings, were of course very natural. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who had spent his youth virtuously and chastely, married Khadija (ra), who was forty-years old when he was twenty-five years old. Khadija,³ who had three children before her marriage to the Prophet, became the only wife and life partner of the Prophet (saw) for twenty-five years until her death.⁴ Moreover, two sons, al-Qasim and ‘Abd Allah, and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayya, Fatima and Umm Kulthum (ra) entered this world through this marriage.⁵

The Prophet (saw) received great support during his lifetime from Khadija (ra), whom he extolled by saying, “*The best of the world’s women is*

¹ Al-Ra’d, 13:38

² Al-Ahzab, 33:28

³ BN5/315, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, VI, 315-316.

⁴ M6281, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 77.

⁵ ST1/132, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 132-133.

Maryam (in her lifetime), and the best of the world's women is Khadija (in her lifetime).⁶ He is reported to have said, "Almighty Allah has not given me a better wife than Khadija. She believed me when all the people doubted me. She knew me a truthful when everyone called me a liar. She supported me with her property when others deprived me. Allah has blessed me with children through her, and not others."⁷ Thus, the Prophet (saw) always remembered Khadija (ra) with a sense of gratitude. His love and loyalty to her even caused 'Aisha (ra) jealousy from time to time, but the Messenger of Allah (saw) always remained loyal to Khadija. For instance, whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut some of the meat in pieces and send them to the friends of Khadija out of loyalty to her.⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) remained married to Khadija (ra), who was older than him, until the age of fifty. Moreover, apart from his marriage to 'Aisha (ra), all his marriages after Khadija's death were with widows. Thus, being married to multiple wives should never be regarded as signs of his physical needs. Every marriage of the Prophet (saw) had humanitarian, religious, political and social reasons and wisdom behind it. Thus, each of his marriages should be assessed within its own circumstances, and the humanitarian, religious, domestic, social, and political reasons and consequences of these marriages should not be ignored.

For instance, after the death of Khadija (ra), the Prophet (saw) married a woman named Sawda bint Zam'a (ra) on entirely humanitarian and religious grounds. With the death of his greatest supporter, Khadija, the Messenger of Allah (saw) felt a great deal of sadness and he was all alone with his two young daughters, Fatima and Umm Kulthum (ra). In addition to the duties of prophethood, he now had to make time for childcare and housework. Therefore, after a certain period of loneliness, Khawla bint Hakim, the wife of Uthman b. Maz'un (saw), a Companion of the Prophet, asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) what he thought of a new marriage. She suggested that if he was considering marriage he should marry a widowed woman named Sawda bint Zam'a, who had five children and was over fifty years old.⁹

Sawda together with her husband, Sakran b. 'Amr, were among the first to accept Islam. She emigrated to Abyssinia with her husband because of repression in Mecca, only to return when they heard a rumor that some of the elders of the polytheists had become Muslims. However, the rumor

⁶B3815, al-Bukhari, Mana'ib al-Ansar, 20; M6271, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 69.

⁷HM25376, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118.

⁸B6004, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 23.

⁹HM26288, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 211

turned out to be false, and in the meantime Sawda's husband died. This elderly lady, who endured various difficulties for the sake of Islam, had no husband to protect her and her five children during a period of overwhelming pressure from the Meccan polytheist. With the help of Khawla bint Hakim, Sawda (ra) accepted the marriage proposal of the Messenger of Allah (saw) by obtaining the approval of her father.¹⁰ Sawda, who was a tall, calm-natured woman, with a heavy build, was the only wife of the Prophet for three years until the marriage of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to 'A'isha (ra). He became the adopted father of her five children and she became the adopted mother of the daughters of the Prophet (saw).¹¹

Another woman Umm Salama (ra), who had suffered for the sake of religion, gained some relief from her struggles as a wife of the Prophet (saw). Before marrying him, she was married to Abu Salama b. 'Abdi al-Asad (ra). Both were among the first Muslims of Mecca. They had emigrated to Abyssinia just like Sawda bint Zam'a and her husband, and they returned when they heard that the Meccan polytheists had become Muslims. However, when they arrived in Mecca they saw that the situation was not very different from before. Fortunately, after a while when the Hijra was endorsed, Umm Salama, her husband and her child set off to Medina. However, some polytheist relatives stopped Umm Salama and her family. They separated her from her child and her husband and imprisoned her in their homes. This separation caused Umm Salama to cry for her family day after day. Fortunately, this agonized waiting ended with the initiative of a couple of compassionate people after a year. Umm Salama (ra) was able to get her child and immediately went to Medina back to her husband.¹²

Still, this union would also be short. After a while, Abu Salama (ra) took part in the Battle of Uhud. He was severely injured and died from his wounds. These sad events, which came one after the other, were a great shock for Umm Salama (ra). Now she could not do anything other than recite the following prayer that she had learned from the Messenger of Allah (saw): "*We certainly belong to Allah, and certainly we will return to Him. My Allah! Give me the reward of my calamity; give me better than what I lost.*" She had heard from the Messenger of Allah (saw) that if anyone who came across calamity prayed this way to Allah (swt) sincerely, He would surely accept his prayer. Therefore, on the one hand, she prayed like this and expressed her hopelessness, but on the other hand, "Who could be better than Abu

¹⁰ HM26288, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 211

¹¹ "Sevde," 11 *DīA*, XXXVI, 584.

¹² HS2/315, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 315-316.

Salama?"¹³ At that very moment, the Messenger of Allah (saw) proposed marriage through 'Umar (ra) ¹⁴ to this aged woman who was of a certain jealous nature and had four children. He married her during the month of Shawwal in the fourth year of the Hijra.¹⁵ Presumably the Prophet's proposal to marry Umm Salama (ra) was influenced not only because she was a widow who had suffered for a long time and her children needed protection, but also because she was from the Makhzum tribe, and he desired to warm their hearts to Islam.

Like Umm Salama, one of the women whose husband had died in the Battle of Uhud was Zaynab bint Khuzayma (ra). The Messenger of Allah (saw) extended his helping hand to this widowed and helpless lady, who was known as "*Umm al-Masākin* (The Mother of the Poor) because she helped the poor and always gave them food, and married her. However, this marriage did not last long and after a few months Zaynab, this mother of believers, passed away.¹⁶

It is well known that the Prophet (saw) married Umm Habiba, mother of the believers, for similar reasons. Umm Habiba (ra), who came from a distinguished family, was the daughter of Abu Sufyan, one of the elders of the Quraysh. She was first married to 'Ubayd Allah b. Jahsh. As the pressures from the Quraysh increased, this Muslim couple immigrated to Abyssinia. However, while there, 'Ubayd Allah b. Jahsh converted to Christianity and wanted his wife to become a Christian as well. Umm Habiba denied this request and showed persistence in her religion. Very soon after, her husband died and she was alone in a foreign country, and in need of protection. She could not return to her family in Mecca because her father, Abu Sufyan, was not yet Muslim. At this very moment, information about the patience and endurance of Umm Habiba for the sake of Islam reached the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah asked the Negus, the King of Abyssinia, through a messenger he had sent to invite him to Islam, and to marry him and Umm Habiba (ra) in his absence.¹⁷ The Negus fulfilled the wish of the Messenger of Allah¹⁸ and he also sent Umm Habiba and all the Muslims back to Medina on his own ships. This event, which took place in the sixth or seventh year of the Hijra, was a reward for Umm Habiba's devotion and faithfulness.¹⁹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) married Umar's daughter, Hafsa, to protect a widow whose husband had been martyred in war. Moreover, he

¹³ MU5613, al-Muwatta', al-Jana'iz, 14; M2126, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 3.

¹⁴ N3256, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 28; HM27232, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 318.

¹⁵ ST8/86, Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, VIII, 86-87.

¹⁶ HI7/672, Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, VII, 627.

¹⁷ EU4/181, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, IV, 181.

¹⁸ D2086, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 18-19; N3352, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 66.

¹⁹ EU7/116, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, VII, 116; TL2/37, Ibn Khaldun, *Ta'rikh*, II, 37.

wanted to honor a great Muslim figure like 'Umar. Before marrying the Prophet, Hafsa was married to one of the first Muslims, Khunays b. Hudhafa (ra), but he fell ill while returning from the Battle of Badr and died in Medina.²⁰ After this sad loss, 'Umar (ra) as a father, wanted his daughter to marry a good person and acted on this motivation. It was during this time that the Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke with 'Umar and asked for Hafsa's hand in marriage. They married in the third year of the Hijra.²¹ Thus, the Prophet (saw) became this lonely lady's life partner and by establishing kinship honored a family that had done a great service to Islam.

Most of the marriages of the Messenger of Allah (saw) were marriages with political and social goals of securing the newly established Muslim society within the dominant social structure of the time. The kinship associations created at the time by marriage were among the most important means of establishing ties of alliance among the members of the different religions and tribes. An example of this was when in the sixth year of the Hijra the Prophet (saw) sent a military unit under the command of 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf (ra) to the city of Dumat al-Jandal, an old trade center in Northern Arabia. It is interesting to note that he instructed 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf to marry the daughter of the head of the tribe, should they accept Islam. The Kalb tribe did embrace Islam, and he fulfilled this order.²²

One of the women whom the Prophet (saw) married so Islam could take root and spread in the Arabian peninsula was Juwayriyya bint al-Harith (ra). Juwayriyya, the daughter of al-Harith b. Abi Dirar, who was chief of the Banu Mustaliq, a branch of the Khuza'a tribe, was taken to Medina as one of the hundreds of slaves who were seized²³ by a sudden raid on her tribe, which was preparing for war against the Muslims. Juwayriyya initially was taken among the soldiers who participated in the war, either Thabit b. Qays or his uncle's son, and to get her freedom her ransom was set with Thabit b. Qays (ra). Meanwhile, she came to the Prophet (saw) introduced herself and asked him to help her to pay her ransom. The Messenger of Allah not only paid for her ransom but he also proposed to her. After the positive response to Juwayriyya and her marriage to Messenger of Allah (saw), the Muslims freed all the prisoners belonging to the Banu Mustaliq, whom they now regarded as the relatives of the Prophet, asking nothing in return.²⁴ Thus, many members of the clan, including Abu Dirar, converted to Islam.²⁵ It was understood that the real purpose of the

²⁰ B4005, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 12; BE1:214, al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 214.

²¹ B5122, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 34; EÜ1/143, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 143

²² TB2/126, al-Tabari, *al-Ta'rikh*, II, 126; VM2/560, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 560-561.

²³ HS4/252, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 252

²⁴ D3931, Abu Da'ud, al-Itk, 2; 24 HM26897, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 277.

²⁵ HS4:259, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 259.

Prophet's marriage to Juwayriyya was to bring this tribe closer to Islam.

The Messenger of Allah's marriage to Safiyya bint Huyayy (ra) was also for a similar purpose. Safiyya was the daughter of Huyayy b. Akhtab, the chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu al-Nadir. First, she was married to one of the notables of her tribe, the poet Sallam b. Mishkam, but she divorced him and married to Kinana b. al-Rabi'.²⁶ Although the Banu al-Nadir had promised the Messenger of Allah (saw) to protect Medina, their common homeland, and not cooperate with the Quraysh, or take action against the Prophet (saw), they soon broke their covenants and were therefore exiled to Khaybar. Safiyya had her second marriage a few days before the Muslims' conquest of Khaybar.²⁷ Her husband was killed in the conquest of Khaybar and she was among the captives and fell to the share of a Companion of the Prophet, Dihya b. Khalifa (ra). However, some of the Companions (ra) said that it would be more appropriate for the Prophet to receive Safiyya, and that his position required this since Safiyya was a prominent figure of the leading tribes of the Banu al-Qurayza and Banu al-Nadir. Thus, another female slave was given to Dihya, and Safiyya was handed over to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He went on to emancipate and marry Safiyya (ra).²⁸ The fact that Safiyya, a beautiful lady,²⁹ was of Jewish descent, occasionally caused disdain among the other wives of the Messenger of Allah (saw). One day Hafsa and 'Aisha (ra) voiced these feelings, and when these words reached Safiyya, they upset her. When she told of this situation to the Prophet (saw), the Messenger of Allah comforted her with the following words: "*Why did you not say, 'And how are you two better than me while my husband is Muhammad, my father is Aaron, and my uncle is Moses?'*"³⁰

²⁶ ST8/120, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 120; ZS2/231, al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, II, 231.

²⁷ VM2/674, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 674

²⁸ B371, al-Bukhari, *al-Salat*, 12; M3497, Muslim, *al-Nikah*, 84; ST8/120, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 120.

²⁹ B2235, al-Bukhari, *al-Buyu'*, 111.

³⁰ T3892, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Manaqib*, 63.

³¹ ST8/132, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 132.

³² HS5/20, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, V, 20.

The marriage of the Prophet (saw) with Maymuna bint al-Harith (ra), a member of the Banu Amir b. Sa'sa'a, one of the strongest tribes of Arabia, had certain political consequences. Maymuna was first married to Mas'ud b. 'Amr al-Thaqafi before the arrival of Islam. Then she divorced him and married Abu Rahm b. 'Abd al-'Uzza. However, after a while her husband passed away.³¹ Thereupon Maymuna revealed her aspiration to marry the Prophet to her sister Umm al-Fadl.³² Her sister's husband 'Abbas, or, according to some accounts, Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra) delivered the proposal of Maymuna to the Prophet (saw). In response, while preparing to perform the 'umra in the seventh year of the Hijra, he sent a message to his uncle

‘Abbas in Mecca and asked him to mediate for his marriage to Maymuna. Maymuna, who received the Prophet’s marriage proposal, informed him that she did not want *mahr* (bride price) by saying that she had given herself to him. Thereupon, the verse “... *a believing woman if she gives herself to the Prophet and the Prophet wishes to marry her, this is only (lawful) for you, excluding the other believers*,”³³ was revealed and the marriage was approved.³⁴ After this marriage, delegations of the Banu ‘Amir b. Sa’sa’a tribe came to Medina and met with the Messenger of Allah (saw), and embraced Islam as a tribe. It was reported that Maymuna was the last woman to be married to the Messenger of Allah (saw).³⁵

It is known that Almighty Allah, who limited polygamy to four women,³⁶ gave the Prophet permission to have more than four at once,³⁷ thus ensuring that his wives did not become victims of various social ills.³⁸ In the Holy Qur’an it is also stated that the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s marriage to other wives from that point onwards was not lawful to Him.³⁹ Recalling that the women married to the Messenger of Allah (saw) were recognized as the “Mothers of the Believers,”⁴⁰ it was declared in the Holy Qur’an that believers will not be allowed to marry the Prophet’s wives after his death.⁴¹

Among the marriages of the Prophet (saw), one that stood out in terms of motive was his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh (ra). This marriage was aimed at lifting the pre-Islamic tradition that prohibited marriage to the divorced wife of one’s adopted son. The Prophet (saw)’s marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh was by the order of Almighty Allah. Zaynab bint Jahsh was the daughter of Umayma, the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s paternal aunt.⁴² When the age of marriage came, the Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke to her family and asked for Zaynab’s hand in marriage with Zayd b. Haritha. Zayd was the adopted son of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Khadija had bought Zayd as a slave from the Fair at Ukaz in Mecca before Islam and given him to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He emancipated Zayd and adopted him.⁴³ The Messenger of Allah knew these young people closely and wanted them to marry each other. However, Zaynab did not consent to the marriage with Zayd. Nevertheless, their marriage took place⁴⁴ upon the revelation of the verse, “...*whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error*.”⁴⁵ However, the parties were reluctant to stay with each other. That is why love and familiarity did not flourish between the couple, and a

³³ Al-Ahzab, 33:50.

³⁴ HS6/61, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, VI, 61.

³⁵ “Maymuna,” 35 *DIA*, XXIX, 506.

³⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:3

³⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:50.

³⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33:51.

³⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33:52.

⁴⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:6.

⁴¹ Al-Ahzab, 33:53

⁴² ST8/101, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, VIII, 101.

⁴³ EÜ2/350, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 350-51.

⁴⁴ TT20/271, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XX, 271.

⁴⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:36.

year later Zayd (ra) appealed to the Prophet (saw) to divorce his wife. The Messenger of Allah advised him not to divorce his wife⁴⁶ and to be aware of his responsibility.⁴⁷

Despite the Prophet's advice, Zayd and Zaynab (ra) were unable to get along. Zayd was raised by the Prophet (saw) in his home, and had superior qualities that made him a commander but despite this, the fact that Zayd was a former slave brought about the matter of social equivalence to Zaynab, who was the daughter of the one of the most notable families of the Quraysh. For this reason, Zayd decided to divorce his wife. After Zayd divorced his wife, the Qur'anic verses which directly intervened in these events were revealed: *"Then, when Zaid ended his relationship with her, We gave her to you in marriage, that there may be no restriction for believers regarding the wives of their adopted sons, when their relationship has ended. The command of Allah was fulfilled."*⁴⁸ This revelation informs us that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was to be married to Zaynab and, in doing so a pre-Islamic tradition that had persisted was fully removed. Thus, Almighty Allah commanded the lifting of a pre-Islamic tradition and He put this difficult and sensitive matter in practice through the life of the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was an example for all people in all respects and who was able to persist in this difficult situation so that the removal of this pre-Islamic tradition could be easily accepted by the *umma*. For Zaynab (ra) her marriage with the Prophet (saw) through revelation became a point of privilege and praiseworthy status for her, and from time to time she is reported to have said to the other wives of the Prophet the following: "You were given in marriage by your families, while I was married (to the Prophet) by Allah from over the seven Heavens."⁴⁹

Divine revelation was directly involved in the marriage of the Prophet (saw) with Zaynab and Maymuna, and at times spoke directly to all his wives by guiding and instructing them as mentioned in the following Qur'anic verse: *"O wives of the prophets! You are not like any of the women..."*⁵⁰ The wives of the Messenger of Allah (saw) were reminded in the Holy Qur'an of their responsibilities. They were warned about many things, such as being careful about their tone of voice while talking to others, not going out of their homes unless there was a compelling situation, and being careful about their appearance and worship, and maintaining the balance between this world and the afterlife.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33:37

⁴⁷ B7420, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22; 47 BN4/166, Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, IV, 166.

⁴⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33:37.

⁴⁹ B7420, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22.

⁵⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:32.

⁵¹ Al-Ahzab, 33:28-34.

Certainly, the most exceptional one among the wives of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was 'A'isha (ra). She was the daughter of the Abu Bakr and Umm Ruman (ra), who were among the first to believe in the Messenger of Allah (saw). She was married to the Prophet in Mecca. They began living together in Medina in the first year of the Hijra.⁵² So she passed from the house of a father like Abu Bakr to the house of the Messenger of Allah (saw). She had the opportunity to complete her development, growth, and the maturation of her personality at the house of our Prophet where they spent nine years together (until his death).⁵³ In addition to supporting the Prophet (saw) as much as she could, the training she received at her father's house was further matured and deepened in the house of prophethood, illuminated by divine inspiration.

Due to qualities like wisdom, ability to understand, strong memory, eloquence, and intelligent way of understanding the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (saw), she earned a special position beside him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) described her virtues saying, "*the superiority of 'A'isha (ra) to other women is like the superiority of tharīd to other foods.*"⁵⁴ The dish, *tharīd*, reported in this *ḥadīth* was a traditional Arabian dish of which there were a few varieties, consisting of meat, dried curd, oil, and flour. It was also reported that it was the dish that the Prophet (saw) loved the most.⁵⁵ His equating 'A'isha (ra) with *tharīd* must be because they both had certain superior qualities that were unique to them in society.

Thus, all of the marriages of the Prophet (saw) had their own wisdom and intention behind them. Some wisdom was about helping women whose husbands were martyred in war, and their children; rewarding women who endured difficulties for Islam; honoring respectable families who served Islam by establishing bonds of marriage; guiding people about marriage arrangements related to marrying a widow divorced by one's adopted son as well as *mahr*; applying the commandments of Almighty Allah; softening the attitudes of enemy tribes toward Islam by establishing ties of kinship; and being able to educate other women in the Muslim community through his wives. The noble Prophet benefited very much from all of his wives, especially in the teaching of women's issues.⁵⁶ Thus, all the wives of the Messenger of Allah (saw) had a great role in the teaching and spreading of Islamic knowledge. After the death of the Prophet, all of his wives, notably 'A'isha (ra), guided Muslims as presti-

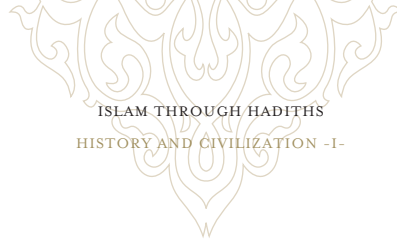
⁵² B3894, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 44; M3479, Muslim, al-Nikah, 69

⁵³ B5133, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 39.

⁵⁴ M6299, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 89.

⁵⁵ D3783, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 22.

⁵⁶ B321, al-Bukhari, al-Hayd, 20; D274, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 107.



gious authorities, who, in their capacity as “mothers of the believers,”⁵⁷ were consulted by virtually everyone regarding religious and family matters. Today, they are the best examples for women who believe in Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw).

⁵⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:6.



THE PROPHET AS A HUSBAND AND FATHER



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي...”

According to ‘A’isha (ra), 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!*”

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



عَنِ الْأَسْوَدِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ: سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: مَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَصْنَعُ فِي الْبَيْتِ؟ قَالَتْ:
كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مِهْنَةٍ أَهْلِهِ، فَإِذَا سَمِعَ الْأَذَانَ خَرَجَ.



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْئًا قَطُّ بِيَدِهِ، وَلَا امْرَأَةً،
وَلَا خَادِمًا، إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا شَبِعَ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ مِنْذُ قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ مِنْ طَعَامِ بُرٍّ ثَلَاثَ
لَيَالٍ تَبَاعًا حَتَّى قُبِضَ.



Al-Aswad b. Yazid (ra) said, “I asked ‘A’isha (ra), ‘What did the Prophet (saw) use to do at home?’ She said, ‘He used to work for his family, and when he heard the *adhān* (call for the prayer), he would go out.’”

(B5363, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 8)



‘A’isha (ra) said, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) never beat anyone with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, but only when he had been fighting in the cause of Allah.”

(M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), “The family of Muhammad (saw) had not eaten their fill of wheat bread for three successive days from the time they emigrated to Medina until the death of the Prophet.”

(B6454, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17; M7443, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 20)



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 well-intentioned 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, Khadija, a prominent business woman of 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 Khadija (ra) 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

¹ MK21457, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXIV, 351.

² HS2/5, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 5.

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 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 Khadija (ra), not understanding what was happening. After saying, “*Oh, what is happening to me Khadija?*” he told her everything that had happened to him and expressed his worry and anxiety. Khadija 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 Khadija’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 Khadija.

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 He said, “*Marriage is part of my Sunna. Whoever does not follow my Sunna 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

³ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252

⁴ T3607, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 1.

⁵ IM1846, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 5 1; B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.

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 ‘Aisha (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 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 Khadija’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 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 Khadija’s death he often remembered her fondly. He did

⁶ T3895, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63

⁷ B950, al-Bukhari, al-Idayn, 2.

⁸ M3682, Muslim, al-Talaq, 23.

⁹ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

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 Khadija (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 Khadija. 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 Khadija, 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 Khadija, he replied: *"Almighty Allah did not grant me a better wife than Khadija. 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

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

¹⁰ B6004, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 23

¹¹ B5229, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 109; 11 M6277, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 74.

¹² B3821, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20; M6282, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 78.

¹³ HM25376, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118.

¹⁴ B5225, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 108

¹⁵ D3568, Abu Da'ud, Buyu' 15 (al-Ijara), 89.

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 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-Hijja, 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, 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 worshiping had indeed turned away from his Sunna.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 be-

¹⁶ B2581, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 8.1

¹⁷ D4602, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 3; HM25516, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 132

¹⁸ T3894, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63; HM12419, Ibn Hanbal, III, 136.

¹⁹ D1369, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 27; DM2200, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 3.

²⁰ B5363, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 8

ing 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 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) married more than once for religious, humanitarian, and socio-political reasons. Still, he 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 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 *i'tikāf* (retreat during Ramadan) Safiyya (ra) came to see him. When she returned, the Messenger of Allah (saw) got

²¹ EM541, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 190.

²² Al-Nisa', 4:19

²³ M3645, Muslim, al-Rada', 61.

²⁴ B5186, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 81.

²⁵ B2593, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 15.

²⁶ D2135, Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 37-38.

²⁷ M3629, Muslim, al-Rada', 47.

²⁸ B2593, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 15.

²⁹ D179, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 68.

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 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. Anas (ra) reported, *“Allah Messenger had a neighbor who was Persian (by descent), and he was expert in the preparation of soup. He prepared the (soup) for Allah’s Messenger and then came to him to invite him (to that feast). He (Allah’s Messenger) said, ‘A’isha is also here (and you should also invite her to the food).’ The man said, ‘No.’ Thereupon Allah’s said, ‘No, (then I cannot join the feast).’ He returned to invite him, and Allah’s Messenger again said, ‘She is also here (A’isha should also be invited).’ The man again said, ‘No.’ Thereupon Allah’s Messenger also said, ‘No’ (and declined his offer). Finally, he returned a third time to invite him again and Allah’s Messenger again said, ‘She is also here.’ He (the host) said, ‘Yes’.* It was then that the Prophet accepted his invitation, and all three of them set out until they came to his house.”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’id 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

³⁰ B6219, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 121

³¹ M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79

³² M5312, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 139.

³³ D2144, Abu Da’ud, al-Nikah, 40-41.

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 ‘Aisha (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, 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 ‘Aisha (ra) of this command of Allah and asked each one to choose. Each of the ladies who understood what they had done wrong 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

³⁴ M7440, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 18; 34 B6460, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17.

³⁵ B6454, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17; M7443, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 20.

³⁶ M7449, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 26

³⁷ B6451, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 16; 37 M7451, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 27.

³⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33:28-29.

³⁹ B4786, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, 39 (al-Ahzab); M3681, Muslim, al-Talaq, 22; TT20/251, al-Tabari, Jami’ al-Bayan, XX, 251.

tenderhearted and compassionate as a father. He loved to make children happy. When a child came to visit him, he got up to welcome him, took him by the hand, kissed him and made him sit where he was sitting; and when he went to visit a child, the child would get up to welcome him, take him by the hand, kiss him, and make him sit where the child 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 eat of the dish what is nearer you.*"⁴² He also gave advice to Anas b. Malik (ra) as follows: "*O my little son! When you enter upon your family then give the Salam. It will be a blessing for you and upon the inhabitants of your house.*"⁴³ 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.*"⁴⁴ 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.*"⁴⁵ 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,

⁴⁰ D5217, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 143, 144; T3872, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 60.

⁴¹ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62

⁴² B5376, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 2.

⁴³ T2698, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 10.

⁴⁴ Ta Ha, 20:131.

⁴⁵ Ta Ha, 20:132.

*'Allah only desires to remove all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you thoroughly.'*⁴⁶ ⁴⁷

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. Once, Umm Fadl, brought his grandsons, Husayn and Hasan (ra), to the Prophet, and placed them in his lap, and one urinated on him, so she struck him on the shoulder. The Prophet (saw) said to her, *"You have hurt my son; may Allah have mercy on you."*⁴⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw), who exemplified Muslims and all human beings in every way, demonstrated how people should 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."*⁴⁹ 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)".⁵⁰ 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,"* 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 Al-Ahzab, 33:33.46

⁴⁷ T3206, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 33; HM14086, Ibn Hanbal, III, 285.

⁴⁸ IM3923, Ibn Maja, Ta'bir al-Ru'ya, 10; HM27416, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 340.

⁴⁹ T3895, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63; IM1977, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

⁵⁰ ST1/136, Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, I, 136.



THE PROPHET (SAW)'S CHILDREN



عَنْ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنْ أَبِيهَا الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ قَالَ لَمَّا تُوفِّيَ الْقَاسِمُ
ابْنُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ دَرَّتْ لُبَيْنَةُ الْقَاسِمِ فَلَوْ
كَانَ اللَّهُ أَبْقَاهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَكْمَلَ رِضَاعَهُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِنْ تَمَامَ
رِضَاعُهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ."

Fatima bint al-Husayn said that her father al-Husayn (saw) said,
“When al-Qasim the son of the Messenger of Allah (saw) died,
Khadija said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, the milk of al-Qasim’s mother is
overflowing, would that Allah had let him live until he had finished
breastfeeding.’ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*He will complete his
breastfeeding in Paradise.*’”

(İM1512, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 27)



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ قَالَ: لَمَّا وَضِعَتْ أُمُّ كُثُومِ ابْنَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي الْقَبْرِ قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :

”مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى.“



عَنْ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَائِشَةَ أَهَّهَا قَالَتْ مَا رَأَيْتُ أَحَدًا كَانَ أَشْبَهَ سَمْتًا وَدَلًّا وَهَدْيًا...
بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنْ فَاطِمَةَ كَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَجْهَهَا كَانَتْ إِذَا دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ قَامَ إِلَيْهَا
فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِهَا وَقَبَّلَهَا وَأَجْلَسَهَا فِي مَجْلِسِهِ وَكَانَ إِذَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا قَامَتْ إِلَيْهِ
فَأَخَذَتْ بِيَدِهِ فَقَبَّلَتْهُ وَأَجْلَسَتْهُ فِي مَجْلِسِهَا.



عَنْ عَدِيِّ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ قَالَ: لَمَّا مَاتَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”إِنَّ لَهُ مُرْضِعًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”وُلِدَ لِي اللَّيْلَةُ غُلَامٌ فَسَمَّيْتُهُ بِاسْمِ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ.“ ... قَالَ أَنَسٌ: لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ يَكِيدُ
بِنَفْسِهِ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَدَمَعَتْ عَيْنَا رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”تَدْمَعُ
الْعَيْنُ وَيَحْزَنُ الْقَلْبُ وَلَا تَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يَرْضَى رَبُّنَا إِنَّا بِكَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَمَحْزُونُونَ.“



Abu Umama (ra) reported that during the funeral of Umm Kulthum, the daughter of the Prophet (saw), the Prophet (saw) recited the following verse: *“We created you from it; We will return you there again, and once again we will bring you out.”*

(HM22540, Ibn Hanbal, V, 254)



‘A’isha (ra), the Mother of the Believers, reported, “I never saw anyone more like the Messenger of Allah (saw) in respect of gravity, calm deportment, and pleasant disposition than Fatima. When she 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 her, she got up to welcome him, took him by the hand, kissed him, and made him sit where she was sitting.”

(D5217, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 143, 144)



‘Adiyy b. Thabit (ra) said, “I heard al-Bara’ say, ‘When Ibrahim (the son of the Prophet) died, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“There is a wet nurse for him in Paradise.”*’”

(B6195, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“A child was born to me at night and I named him Ibrahim after my father.”* Anas said, “I saw him (again) at the point of death in front of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Tears began to fall from the eyes of the Messenger of Allah (saw). He said, *‘The eye weeps and the heart grieves, but we say only what our Lord is pleased with, and we are grieved for you, Ibrahim.’*”

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



The Prophet (saw) married to Khadija bint Khuwaylid, who was known as “*Tahāra*” (pure woman), in Mecca about fifteen years before he became a prophet.¹ Al-Qasim was the first child of the Messenger of Allah (saw) from this marriage.² Since in the Arab world it was the custom to refer to man as the father of his eldest son, the Prophet was given the *kunya* of “Abu al-Qasim” (the father of al-Qasim).³ It is known that al-Qasim died at the age of two when he had not yet completed the age of nursing.⁴ When he died, Khadija (ra), the Mother of the Believers, said, “O Messenger of Allah, the milk of al-Qasim’s mother is overflowing, would that Allah had let him live until he had finished breastfeeding.” The Messenger of Allah told her, “*He will complete his breastfeeding in Paradise.*”⁵ Through these words he comforted his beloved wife. It is known that the only wives of the Prophet who had children were Khadija and Maria (ra). According to the generally accepted view, Khadija had two sons, al-Qasim and ‘Abd Allah (ra), and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayya, Fatima and Umm Kulthum (ra). Ibrahim was born from his Egyptian wife, Maria (ra).⁶ Excluding ‘Abd Allah, who was born in Mecca during the prophethood, and Ibrahim, who was born in Medina, all of the children of Messenger of Allah (saw) were born before he became a prophet.⁷

‘Abd Allah was born after the advent of Islam and died in Mecca.⁸ In some sources the name of the Prophet’s son ‘Abd Allah is mentioned as Tayyib and Tahir,⁹ but it is said that these names were epithets of ‘Abd Allah.¹⁰

Zaynab (ra) was the eldest daughter of the Messenger of Allah (saw).¹¹ When she was born, he was thirty years old.¹² Her marriage was the first among his daughters.¹³ This marriage took place before Islam. Zaynab was married to her maternal cousin, Abu al-‘As b. al-Rabi’, son of the sister of Khadija, Hala bint Khuwaylid (ra). Zaynab, like the other daughters of the

¹ EÜ7/80, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, VII, 80.

² HS2/9, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 9.

³ M5591, Muslim, al-Adab, 5; B2120, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 49.

⁴ BE2/24, al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, II, 24.

⁵ IM1512, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 27.

⁶ HS2/9, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 9.

⁷ ST1/110, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 110-111.

⁸ ST1/110, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 110-111.

⁹ HS1/142, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, I, 142; BS13709, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 107.

¹⁰ BE2/34, al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, II, 34; SU2/154, Suhayl, *al-Rawd al-Unuf*, II, 156.

¹¹ MA14011, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 494.

¹² NM6833, NM6834, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, VII, 2441 (4/42)

¹³ ST8/31, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 31.

Prophet, accepted Islam and became a Muslim as soon as she received the invitation. Her husband, however, preferred to stay with his old religion. In fact, he joined the Battle of Badr with the polytheists and became a captive. Zaynab had sent a ransom for her husband to be free, with some goods and a necklace that had been a wedding gift from her mother. The Messenger of Allah (saw) was touched when he recognized the necklace. He consulted with the Companions (ra) and ensured that his son-in-law was freed without ransom, but for this freedom, he had stipulated that Abu al-'As should allow Zaynab to emigrate to Medina.¹⁴ Abu al-'As kept his word and the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent Zayd b. Haritha with a man from the Ansar to bring Zaynab from Mecca.¹⁵ Later on during the 6th year of the Hijra, Abu al-'As, who was travelling with a trade caravan that was returning from Damascus, was taken prisoner. Abu al-'As escaped from the caravan at night and came to Zaynab's house for protection. Zaynab, who had not yet lost her love for her husband, acknowledged his request and announced that he was under her protection.¹⁶ Abu al-'As, who was praised¹⁷ by Allah's Messenger for his honesty, became a Muslim after this event.¹⁸ For this reason, the noble Prophet let his daughter Zaynab remarry Abu al-'As¹⁹ because he was loyal to Zaynab and she had not married anyone during her long separation from her husband.²⁰

It is known that Zaynab (ra) died at the beginning of eighth year of the Hijra. The cause of her death was based on a painful event that extended from to the emigration to Medina. Zaynab, who was pregnant during the emigration, was going to be accompanied by her brother-in-law Kinana b. al-Rabi' who was to take her to Zayd b. Haritha (ra). However, the polytheists, who learned that she had left Mecca, followed her to prevent her from going to Medina. Those who first reached Zaynab were Habbar b. al-Aswad²¹ and Nafi b. 'Abd al-Qays al-Fihri, both of whom later accepted Islam and emigrated to Medina. Habbar, poked Zaynab's camel with his spear and caused her to fall from her camel. Her fall caused the miscarriage of her baby and she herself was badly hurt. It was reported that her death was caused by this event.²²

The Prophet (saw) approached the female Companions (ra) when his daughter died and said to them, "*Wash her thrice or five times or more, if you see it necessary, with water and sidr (jujube) and then apply camphor or some camphor at the end; and when you finish, notify me.*" So, when they fin-

¹⁴ BE1/397, al-Balazuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 397.

¹⁵ D2692 Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 121; HS2/489, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 489.

¹⁶ HS3/208, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 494.

¹⁷ B3110, al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khums, 5; M6309, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 95.

¹⁸ ST2/83, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, II, 83.

¹⁹ BE1/397, al-Balazuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 397.

²⁰ T1142, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 43; D2240, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 23-24.

²¹ HI6/526, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VI, 526.

²² NM2812, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, III, 1061 (2/201);

NM6835, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, VII, 2441 (4/43); MR5/498, Ali al-Qari, *Mir'at al-Mafatih*, V, 498.

ished their task they informed him and he gave them his waist-sheet and told them to shroud her in it.²³ Zaynab had two children named 'Ali and Umama (ra). Her son 'Ali died at a young age, and her daughter Umama lived after her mother. After the death of Fatima, she was married to 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ra).²⁴ She was the beloved granddaughter of our Prophet. It is reported by the Prophet's Companions (ra) that he carried Umama on his shoulder, even when he was leading a prayer. When he bowed, he put her down and when he got up after prostration, he lifted her again (on his shoulder).²⁵

Ruqayya (ra), the other daughter of the Prophet (saw), was engaged to 'Utba, the son of Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, before he was given the mission of prophethood. When *sūra* of Abu Lahab (*al-Masad*) was revealed, Abu Lahab and his wife were strongly condemned, so they convinced their son to separate from her before the wedding. Later Ruqayya was married to 'Uthman b. 'Affan (ra), and she accompanied him on both of the emigrations to Abyssinia. She had a son named 'Abd Allah from this marriage. It is reported that 'Abd Allah died at the age of six.²⁶ When the Prophet (saw) was preparing for the Battle of Badr, his daughter Ruqayya fell ill. Thereupon, he asked 'Uthman to stay with his wife saying, *"You will acquire merit in Allah's sight as a ghazi (warrior) who joined the Battle of Badr and has a share in the spoils of war."* Thus, 'Uthman (ra) was unable to participate in the Battle of Badr.²⁷ Seventeen months after the Hijra, during the month of Ramadan before the Prophet (saw) returned from the Battle of Badr, his daughter Ruqayya was unable to recover from her illness and passed on.²⁸ By the time Zayd b. Haritha (ra) returned to Medina with news of their victory at the Battle of Badr, the funeral service for Ruqayya had been completed. It was an immense emotional moment when the Prophet (saw) returned to Medina and arrived at her graveside where grieving women had already gathered. Ruqayya, who had emigrated to Abyssinia twice in her short life, and finally to Medina, had now become the passenger on the greatest and final *hijra*. When 'Umar saw the women sobbing loudly next to Ruqayya's grave, he tried to stop them, but the Messenger of Allah (saw) held his hand and said, *"Let them cry 'Umar. Whatever tears shed by the eyes and however much the heart grieves, that is from Allah. It is actions of the hands and words uttered by the tongue that come from Satan."* One of the people crying was Fatima (ra) and when

²³ M2173, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 40; B1253, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 8

²⁴ ST8/31, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 31; BS13709, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 107.

²⁵ B516, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 106; M1213, Muslim, al-Masajid, 42.

²⁶ ST3/54, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, III, 54.

²⁷ B3699, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 7.

²⁸ BS13709, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 107.

the Prophet saw her crying, he gently wiped her tears with his own garment.²⁹

Umm Kulthum (ra), the third daughter of the Prophet (saw) was engaged to Abu Lahab's other son 'Utayba, but just like her sister Ruqayya, her engagement was broken for the same reason. Umm Kulthum emigrated to Medina immediately after the Messenger of Allah (saw), and after the death of Ruqayya she married to 'Uthman b. 'Affan (ra).³⁰ It was reported that the Prophet (saw) said to 'Uthman, "*O 'Uthman! Jibril has told me that Allah will marry you to Umm Kulthum for a dowry (mahr) like that of Ruqayya, provided that you treat her as you treated Ruqayya.*"³¹ Because 'Uthman (ra) was married to two daughters of the Prophet at different times, he earned the title of "*Dhu al-Nūrayn*" (The Possessor of Two Lights).³²

Umm Kulthum died a year after her sister Zaynab (ra) in the 9th year of the Hijra. She did not have any children during her marriage to 'Uthman.³³ The Messenger of Allah asked 'Uthman, who was crying over the death of Umm Kulthum, "*Why are you crying?*" and 'Uthman replied, "*Because, my affinity with you has come to an end.*" The Prophet (saw) said, "*No. Death does not end the affinity, but only divorce ends it. If I had a third daughter I would have married her to you.*" Hearing this from the Prophet (saw) comforted him.³⁴ The women Companions (ra) prepared Umm Kulthum's body for burial, washed her, put camphor on her, combed her hair into three braids, and shrouded her with the five pieces of clothing that the Prophet provided. Then they sent her to the final destination.³⁵ When Umm Kulthum (ra) was laid in the grave, the Prophet (saw) uttered the following divine words: "*We created you from it (from the earth); and We will return you there again, and once again We will bring you out of it.*"³⁶

The youngest daughter of the Messenger of Allah (saw),³⁷ Fatima, was born in Mecca when the Quraysh were repairing the Ka'ba. The Messenger of Allah was thirty-five years old at that time.³⁸ After his emigration, she was brought to Medina during the same year. Five months after the Hijra, 'Ali (ra) asked for Fatima's hand in marriage from her father, and Allah's Messenger married them immediately after the Battle of Badr. At that time, she was about eighteen years old.³⁹ The Messenger (saw) gave his daughter a velvet ground cloth (like carpet), a pillow stuffed with fiber, a water skin and two hand mills⁴⁰ as wedding gifts.⁴¹ Fatima and 'Ali (ra) had four children from this marriage, Hasan, Husayn, Umm Kulthum and Zaynab (ra).⁴²

²⁹ ST8/35, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 37.

³⁰ ST3/56, ST8/35, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, III, 56, VIII, 35.

³¹ IM110, Ibn Maja, *al-Sunna*, 11/3.

³² BS13713, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 73.

³³ ST8/35, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 38; BS13709, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* VII, 107.

³⁴ BE2/29, al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, II, 29.

³⁵ D3157, Abu Da'ud, *al-Jana'iz*, 31, 32; IM1459, Ibn Maja, *al-Jana'iz*, 8.

³⁶ Ta Ha, 20:55; HM22540, Ibn Hanbal, V, 254.

³⁷ MA14011, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 494.

³⁸ ST8/26, Ibn Sa'd, 38 *Tabaqat*, VIII, 26.

³⁹ ST8/22, Ibn Sa'd, 39 *Tabaqat*, VIII, 22.

⁴⁰ HM819, Ibn Hanbal I, 104.

⁴¹ HM715, Ibn Hanbal I, 92;

⁴² N3386, al-Nasa'i, *al-Nikah*, 81.

⁴² ST8/26, Ibn Sa'd, 42 *Tabaqat*, VIII, 26.

Despite being the daughter of the Prophet (saw), Fatima lived a poor and humble life alongside her husband. The burden of the housework was heavy on her, and her hands were calloused from grinding flour with hand mills. When Fatima (ra) and her husband suffered from this situation, they went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked for a servant. He reminded them of the suffering of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* and advised them to be thankful.⁴³ However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was very fond of his daughter and said, “...Fatima is a part of me...”⁴⁴ Fatima resembled her father in her attitude, her features and her gait. As a matter of fact, the Mother of the Believers ‘A’isha (ra) said, “I have not seen anyone more like the Prophet in respect of attitude, features, and behavior than Fatima. When she came to visit him (the Prophet) 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 her, she got up to welcome him, took him by the hand, kissed him, and made him sit where she was sitting.”⁴⁵ According to the commonly accepted view, Fatima (ra) passed away in the eleventh year of the Hijra, six months after the death of the Prophet (saw). It is said that she was about twenty-nine years old when she died.⁴⁶

Allah’s Messenger never forgot the uniqueness of his beloved wife, Khadija (ra), the mother of his children, and he always remembered her fondly for the rest of his life.⁴⁷ In addition to these children from Khadija, a child of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was born of Maria, his Egyptian wife. One night in Medina, in the eighth year of the Hijra, the Mother of the Believers Maria (ra), brought a child into the world with the midwifery of Salma, who was emancipated by the Prophet (saw). Salma immediately reported the situation to her husband Abu Rafi’ (ra). He also conveyed this good news at once to his master, the Prophet.⁴⁸ According to Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “My son was born to me this night and I named him after my forefather Ibrahim.”⁴⁹ On the seventh day after his birth, the Prophet sacrificed a ram (*‘aḳīqa*) for Ibrahim (ra), shaved his hair and distributed its weight in silver as charity to the poor.⁵⁰ It was said that the women of Medina competed to become a wet nurse to him, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave him to Umm Burda, wife of a blacksmith named Abu Sayf al-Bara’ b. Aws. Our Prophet went to the home of Umm Burda to see his son. He used to take him on his lap and kiss him.⁵¹ Ibrahim was fair, and for this reason his father likened him to himself.⁵²

⁴³ HM838, Ibn Hanbal I, 107

⁴⁴ M6310, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 96; B5230, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 110.

⁴⁵ D5217, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 143, 144; B3623, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25.

⁴⁶ ST8/28, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 28.

⁴⁷ B3818, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 20.

⁴⁸ ST1/112, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 112-113.

⁴⁹ D3126, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 23-24; M6025, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 62.

⁵⁰ ST1/112, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 112-113.

⁵¹ M6026, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 63.

⁵² ST1/137, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 137.

Ibrahim (ra), the last child of the Messenger, was sixteen⁵³ or eighteen months old⁵⁴ when he died in the tenth year of the Hijra in the house of Abu Sayf.⁵⁵ The Prophet (saw) said for Ibrahim, who shared the same destiny as his first son, al-Qasim, who also died at the age of breast-feeding, “*Certainly, there is a wet nurse for him in Paradise.*”⁵⁶ Anas, the young servant of the Prophet (saw), described the moment of the death of baby Ibrahim: “I saw him at the point of the death in front of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw)’s eyes started shedding tears and he said, “*The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, but we will not say any words except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation.*”⁵⁷

Ibrahim (ra) was buried in the Baqi cemetery next to ‘Uthman b. Maz’un, who was the first person to be buried there. The Prophet (saw) and his uncle ‘Abbas stood by the grave, and Usama b. Zayd and Fadl b. ‘Abbas (ra) laid him down. The Messenger of Allah saw a gap in the grave and commanded them to repair it, saying, “*When a servant of Allah wants to do something, Allah wants him to do it well.*”⁵⁸ Thus, the Prophet (saw) established an important principle for believers in the memory of that day. After the funeral service for Ibrahim was finished, the Messenger of Allah (saw) put a stone on top of the grave and poured water on it.⁵⁹ The sun eclipsed on the day Ibrahim died. So the people said that the sun had eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim. But the Messenger of Allah (saw) reminded them, “*The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death or life (i.e., birth) of someone. When you see the eclipse, pray and invoke Allah.*”⁶⁰

As seen from the description above, the last Messenger of Allah (saw) was married and had children like any other human being. All of his sons, two from Khadija and one from Maria (ra), died when they were infants. All his daughters except for Fatima (ra) died while the Prophet was still alive. Fatima passed on six months after her father’s death. His son Ibrahim⁶¹ and ‘Ali, his daughter Zaynab’s son,⁶² died in his arms. The Messenger of Mercy, who witnessed the death of all his children except one, endured many trials and tribulations, including the tragedy of losing his children, a test that many people go through. He persevered through these tests with patience. Therefore, the Prophet (saw), like all human beings, lived through many bittersweet experiences.

⁵³ MA14013, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 494.

⁵⁴ D3187, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 48-49.

⁵⁵ B1303, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 43.

⁵⁶ B6195, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109.

⁵⁷ D3126, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 23, 24; M6025, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 62.

⁵⁸ MK21363, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXIV, 306

⁵⁹ ST1/144, Ibn Sa’d, 59 *Tabaqat*, I, 144.

⁶⁰ B1043, al-Bukhari, al-Kusuf, 1; 60 M2102, Muslim, al-Kusuf, 10.

⁶¹ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 62.

⁶² B1284, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 32; M2135, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 11.

The Last Prophet's children died at very young age, and this was exploited by the Meccan polytheists. The death of al-Qasim and 'Abd Allah (ra) during their infancy gave hope to the Meccan idolaters; and they came to the conclusion that, with the death of the Prophet, the cause of Islam would end. In fact, they used to mock him by calling him "*abtar*," which refers to the fact that he would not have any lineage.⁶³ To this, the divine revelation demonstrated that the actual "*abtar*" were those who turned away from the divine truth revealed to the Messenger. The same verses also revealed that the (*kawthar*, unending/abundant) blessings of prophethood represented a much greater reward than heritage and lineage.⁶⁴ Therefore, those who answer the noble Prophet's invitation are part of his community. The line of the Messenger of Allah (saw) continued from his daughter Fatima (ra). It was the will of Allah (swt) that all of his sons died during infancy. However, when seeing things through hindsight and taking the period after the Prophet into consideration, it can be seen that there was indeed much divine wisdom behind their deaths. It has been said, "*Had there been a Prophet after Muhammad then his son (Ibrahim) would have lived, but there is no Prophet after him.*"⁶⁵

⁶³ ST3/7, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, III, 7.

⁶⁴ Al-Kawthar, 108/1-3.

⁶⁵ B6194, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 109; IM1510, IM1511, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 27.



THE PROPHET'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILDREN and YOUTH TO CHILDREN: LOVE, COMPASSION, AND COMPLIMENTS TO YOUTH: HONOR, TRUST AND BRAVERY

عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَأْخُذُنِي فَيَقْعِدُنِي عَلَى
فَخِذِهِ، وَيُقْعِدُ الْحَسَنَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ عَلَى فَخِذِهِ الْآخَرَ، ثُمَّ يَضُمُّهُمَا، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُمَا فَإِنِّي أَرْحُمُهُمَا.“

Usama b. Zayd (ra) said, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) used to put me on
(one of) his thighs and put al-Hasan b. ‘Ali on his other thigh, and then
embrace us and say, ‘O Allah! Please be merciful to them, as I am merciful to
them.’”

(B6003, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 22)



عَنْ أَبِي قَتَادَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يُصَلِّي، وَهُوَ حَامِلٌ أُمَامَةً
بِنْتُ زَيْنَبَ بِنْتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ، وَلِأَبِي الْعَاصِ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ، فَإِذَا قَامَ
حَمَلَهَا وَإِذَا سَجَدَ وَضَعَهَا.



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوَقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.“



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



عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ الْحُوَيْرِثِ قَالَ: قَدِمْنَا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَنَحْنُ شَبَبَةٌ، فَلَبِثْنَا عِنْدَهُ
نَحْوًا مِنْ عَشْرِينَ لَيْلَةً، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ رَحِيمًا فَقَالَ:
”لَوْ رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَى بِلَادِكُمْ فَعَلَّمْتُمُوهُمْ...“



According to Abu Qatada (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to read the ritual prayer while he was carrying Umama, daughter of Zaynab, daughter of the Messenger of Allah (saw), and Ibn al-'As b. al-Rabi'. When he stood up, he picked her up, and when he prostrated he put her down."

(M1212, Muslim, al-Masajid, 41; B516, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 106)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, respect our elders, and command good and forbid evil.*"

(T1921, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15)



Anas b. Malik (ra) 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."

(M6011, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 51)



Malik b. al-Huwayrith (ra) said, "We went to the Prophet (saw) and we were all young men and stayed with him for about twenty nights. The Prophet (saw) was very merciful. (When he realized that we felt homesick) he said, '*(It would be better) if you could return to your hometowns and teach them (what you have learned)...*'"

(B685, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 49)



Al-ʿAqraʿ 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-ʿAqraʿ¹ 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-ʿAqraʿ 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 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. ʿAli on his other thigh, and then embrace them and say, “*O Allah! Please be Merciful to them, as I*

¹ H11/101, Ibn Hajar, *al-ʿIsaba*, I, 101-102.

² M6028, Muslim, *al-Fadaʿil*, 65; B5997, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab*, 18.

³ D4943, Abu Daʿud, *al-Adab*, 58.

⁴ *Al-Anbiyaʿ*, 21:107

⁵ B5998, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab*, 18; 5 M6027, Muslim, *al-Fadaʿil*, 64.

⁶ B5884, al-Bukhari, *al-Libas*, 60; M6256, Muslim, *Fadaʿil al-Sahaba*, 56.

⁷ B2122, al-Bukhari, *al-Buyuʿ*, 49.

⁸ B223, al-Bukhari, *al-Wuduʿ*, 59; 8 M5616, Muslim, *al-Adab*, 25

⁹ B6003, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab*, 22

am merciful to them."⁹ Sometimes he would show his care for children by sitting them on his mount,¹⁰ carrying 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 infants 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 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

¹⁰ B5965, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 99.

¹¹ M6259, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 59; B5996, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18.

¹² M6052, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 80.

¹³ T1992, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 57; 13 D5002, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 84.

¹⁴ "Abd Allah b. Abu Talha," DIA, I, 97; ST8/425, Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat; VIII, 425.

¹⁵ M6322, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 107; B5470, al-Bukhari, al-Aqiqa, 1.

¹⁶ D4181, Abu Da'ud, al-Tarajjul, 8.

¹⁷ M6268, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 66.

¹⁸ B5964, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 98; M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

¹⁹ M3088, Muslim, al-Hajj, 267; B1685, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 101.

²⁰ D2566, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 54; B5965, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 99.

²¹ B4300, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 54.

²² M6052, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 80; SN15/85, al-Nawawi, Sharh al-Sahih al-Muslim, XV, 85.

²³ B6129, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 81.

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 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 carried them on his neck.

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 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

²⁴ B77, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 18; M876, Muslim, al-Salat, 36.

²⁵ M1212, Muslim, al-Masajid, 41; B516, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 106.

²⁶ N1142, al-Nasa‘i, al-Tatbiq, 82; HM28199, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 466.

²⁷ N755, al-Nasa‘i, al-Qibla, 7; HM3167, Ibn Hanbal, I, 341.

²⁸ B709, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 65; M1055, Muslim, al-Salat, 191.

²⁹ M3335, Muslim, al-Hajj, 474.

³⁰ T1921, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15; D4943, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 58.

³¹ IM3923, Ibn Maja, al-Ta‘bir al-Ru‘ya, 10; HM27416, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 340.

³² IM2299, Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 67.

³³ D2622, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jihad, 85.

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 greet³⁵ children who were playing games, sometimes he praised their clothes,³⁶ and sometimes he visited them when they were ill.³⁷

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 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

³⁴ M6011, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 51; D4773, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 1.

³⁵ M6378, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 145; D5202, D5203, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 135, 136.

³⁶ B3071, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 188.

³⁷ B5657, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 11.

³⁸ B1284, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 32; M2135, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 11; AU8/105, al-Ayni, Umdat al-Qari, VIII, 105.

³⁹ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62; B1303, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 43.

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 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

⁴⁰ IM2310, Ibn Maja, al-Ahkam, 1; D3582, Abu Da'ud, al-Qada' (al-Aqdiyya), 6.

⁴¹ B4469, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 88; M6254, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 55.

⁴² B685, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 49; M1535, Muslim, al-Masajid, 292.

⁴³ B5066, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 3; T1081, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 1.

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), who was in charge of the *khums* (the one-fifth of the spoils of war that went to the treasury), by saying, "*Marry your daughter to this young man.*"⁴⁴ Fadl was the person who was seated behind the Prophet on the camel during the Farewell Sermon. It was reported that as the Messenger of Allah (saw) was moving on from there, a group of women were moving along side by side with them. At that point Fadl began to look at them. The Messenger of Allah (saw) placed his hand on the face of Fadl who then turned his face to the other side and continued to watch, so the Messenger of Allah (saw) simply turned his hand to the other side and placed it on the face of Fadl.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 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*

⁴⁴ M2481, Muslim, al-Zakat, 167.

⁴⁵ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147; D1905, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 56.

⁴⁶ HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.

⁴⁷ B660, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 36; M2380, Muslim, al-Zakat, 91.

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 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.

⁴⁸ YM6402, Abu Ya‘la, *al-Musnad*, XI, 287.

⁴⁹ T2516, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 59; HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293.



PEOPLE AT THE SERVICE OF THE PROPHET THE SERVANTS ARE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

عَنْ أَنَسٍ [بْنِ مَالِكٍ] قَالَ: خَدَمْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ وَاللَّهِ مَا
قَالَ لِي: أَفَّا قَطُّ وَلَا قَالَ لِي لَشَيْءٍ: لَمْ فَعَلْتُ كَذَا! وَهَلَّا فَعَلْتُ كَذَا!

Anas b. Malik (ra) 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 a thing as to why I had done this and as to why I had not done that.”

(M6011, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 51)



مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رضي الله عنه عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "إِذَا أَتَى أَحَدُكُمْ خَادِمُهُ بِطَعَامِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يُجْلِسْهُ مَعَهُ، فَلْيَنَاولْهُ لُقْمَةً أَوْ لُقْمَتَيْنِ أَوْ أَكْلَةً أَوْ أَكْلَتَيْنِ، فَإِنَّهُ وَلِيَّ عِلَاجِهِ."



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْئًا قَطُّ بِيَدِهِ، وَلَا امْرَأَةً، وَلَا خَادِمًا، إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...



عَنِ الْمَعْرُورِ قَالَ: لَقِيتُ أَبَا ذَرٍّ بِالرَّبَذَةِ وَعَلَيْهِ حُلَّةٌ وَعَلَى غُلَامِهِ حُلَّةٌ فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ. فَقَالَ: إِنِّي سَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا فَعَيَّرْتُهُ بِأَمِّهِ، فَقَالَ لِي النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: "يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ! أَعَيَّرْتَهُ بِأَمِّهِ؟ إِنَّكَ امْرُؤٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، إِخْوَانُكُمْ خَوْلُكُمْ جَعَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَحْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ، فَمَنْ كَانَ أَخُوهُ تَحْتَ يَدِهِ فَلْيُطْعِمْهُ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ، وَلْيَلْبِسْهُ مِمَّا يَلْبَسُ، وَلَا تُكَلِّفُوهُمْ مَا يَغْلِبُهُمْ، فَإِنْ كَلَّفْتُمُوهُمْ فَاعِینُوهُمْ."



Muhammad b. Ziyad said Abu Hurayra (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) said, *“When your servant brings your meals to you then if you do not let him sit and share the meal, then you should at least give him a mouthful or two mouthfuls of that meal or a meal or two meals, as he has prepared it.”*

(B2557, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itq, 18)



‘A’isha (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not strike a servant or a woman, and he never struck anyone with his hand except during jihad in path of Allah.”

(M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79)



Al-Ma’rur said, “At al-Rabadha I met Abu Dharr (ra) who was wearing a cloak, and his slave was also wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, ‘I abused a person by calling his mother bad names.’ The Prophet (saw) said to me, ‘O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by calling his mother bad names? You still have some characteristics of the Age of Jahiliyya? Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him from what he eats and dress him from what he wears. Do not ask them (servants) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.’”

(B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22)



It was the first year of the Hijra. The Prophet (saw) did not have a servant at that time. Abu Talha (ra) learned about this, and wanted to help the Messenger of Allah (saw). He brought the Prophet his stepson, Anas b. Malik (ra), who was the age of ten,¹ and said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Anas is a wise boy, so let him serve you.”² The Prophet (saw) accepted his offer, and Anas began to serve him. One day, the Prophet sent him to do something, but Anas (ra) said, “I swore by Allah that I would not go.” The Prophet (saw) kept his silence and said nothing. In the meantime, Anas (ra) changed his mind and went out to accomplish the assigned task. On the way, he ran into some boys who were playing on the street. He forgot what he was doing, and began to play with those children. All of a sudden, the Messenger of Allah (saw) who had come up from behind caught him by the back of his neck. When Anas looked at him, he was smiling at him and he said, “Go where I ordered you, little Anas.” Anas replied: “Yes, I am going, Messenger of Allah!”³

Anas (ra), who reported this beautiful childhood memory, and who was called “the Servant of the Prophet,” described the Prophet (saw), who called him “My boy,”⁴ as someone who had the best character among the people.⁵ After serving the Prophet (saw) for ten years, Anas (ra) 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 a thing as to why I had done this and as to why I had not done that.”⁶

Another person who served the Prophet in the Mecca period was Zayd b. Haritha (ra). He was kidnapped while he was with his mother on the way to visit their relatives, and then sold in the ‘Uqaz Market. Hakim b. Hidham bought him for his aunt, Khadija, who in turn, presented him to the Messenger of Allah (saw) as a wedding gift. The Messenger of Mercy manumitted Zayd.⁷ After his freedom, he reunited with his parents but he

¹ Hil/126, Ibn Hajar, *‘Isaba* 1, 126.

² B2768, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 25; M6013, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 52.

³ D4773, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 1; M6015, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 54.

⁴ D4964, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 65; T2831 Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 62.

⁵ B6203, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 112; M5622, Muslim, al-Adab, 30.

⁶ M6011, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 51; B6038, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39.

⁷ ST1/497, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 497.

preferred to stay with the Prophet (saw), by saying, “I’ve seen something in this man that I would not prefer anyone over him.”⁸ He became one of the earliest Muslims once the Prophet publically invited people to Islam.⁹ During their journey to Ta’if, it was Zayd (ra) who shielded the Prophet with his own person in order to protect him from the assaults of the town’s people.¹⁰

Zayd’s love and sacrifice for the Prophet were mutual. Our Prophet loved Zayd very much, and kept a close eye on him. The Prophet (saw) valued him so much that he assigned him to be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, which had many other prominent Meccan and Medinan soldiers.¹¹ The Prophet (saw) married Zayd to his aunt’s daughter, Zaynab (ra). Zayd served the Prophet (saw) for a very long time, and because of that he began to be known as the son of Muhammad (saw).¹² However, this was changed when the following Qur’anic verse was revealed: “Name your adopted sons after their real fathers.”¹³ It should be noted that he was a freed slave of our Prophet, and not a regular servant.

On regular days, after he had grown up, Zayd (ra) was busy with his own family and daily affairs. Therefore he was not with the Prophet (saw) all the time. The two children of Haritha al-Aslami, Hind and ‘Asma (ra), never left the door of the Prophet’s house, and gave their service to him whenever it was necessary.¹⁴ His uncle, ‘Abbas gave his slave, Abu Rafi’i (ra), to the Prophet as a gift. When the Prophet (saw) learned that Abu Rafi’i had embraced Islam, he manumitted him.¹⁵ In fact, the Prophet manumitted all of his slaves but they voluntarily continued to give their service to the Prophet.

‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud (ra) was another privileged man who had the honor to serve the Prophet (saw). This esteemed jurist was one of the few privileged people who could enter the house of the Prophet freely.¹⁶ When Abu Musa al-Ash’ari and his brother (ra) came to visit the Prophet from Yemen, they thought that Ibn Mas’ud and his mother were members of the Prophet’s family because they were with the Prophet all the time.¹⁷ In fact, Ibn Mas’ud (ra) was known to help the Prophet in his daily affairs. For example, he carried the water jar to the Prophet (saw) for the wudu’, safeguarded his shoes until he was done with his wudu’, and helped him put on his shoes afterwards.¹⁸

In addition to the males who served the Prophet (saw) there were also several female Companions (ra) who served him. For example, Umm

⁸ ST3/41, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, III, 41-42.

⁹ MA20393, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 227.

¹⁰ ST1/212, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 212.

¹¹ B4250, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 43; ST2/189, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, II, 189-190.

¹² B4782, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 2; HI2/598, Ibn Hajar, *‘Isaba*, II, 598.

¹³ Al-Ahzab, 33:5.

¹⁴ ST1/497, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 497.

¹⁵ HI7/134, Ibn Hajar, *‘Isaba*, VII, 134.

¹⁶ M6329-M6330, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 112-113.

¹⁷ B4384, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi 75; M632, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 110.

¹⁸ B3742, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 20; ST3/153, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat*, III, 153.

Ayman Baraka (ra), who took care of the Prophet in his childhood, was one of them. She was inherited as a slave from the Prophet's father but the Prophet manumitted her later. Umm Ayman married 'Ubayd al-Khazraji in Mecca.¹⁹ Reflecting his love and respect for that woman, the Prophet said, "*Umm Ayman was my second mother.*"²⁰ These words show the value that the Prophet (saw) gave to this freed slave woman, whose basic rights were denied in the time of the Jahiliyya.

It is worth considering that some of these people did not prefer freedom or starting a new life over leaving the Prophet (saw). One of those who did not want to lose the affectionate proximity to the Prophet, and the contentment that he gave them, was the slave of Umm Salama, Safina (ra). When Umm Salama (ra) stipulated that she was going to manumit her if she continued to serve to the Prophet until the end of her life, she said, "Even if you do not make a stipulation, I shall not leave the Messenger of Allah (saw)." Thereupon Umm Salama emancipated her and made an agreement about this stipulation with her.²¹

It is also known that because of the respect and compassion they received from the Prophet (saw), some non-Muslims served him as well. For example, a Jewish child named 'Abd al-Quds was one of them.²² One day the Prophet paid him a visit while he was ill and he offered him the opportunity to become a Muslim, and 'Abd al-Quds embraced Islam.²³

In the time of the Prophet, servants were either paid helpers or purchased slaves. With the advent of Islam, these servants became almost like family members.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) took care of his own personal affairs as much as possible, and he even helped in household chores.²⁵ Still, at one point it became impossible for him to deal with his daily affairs, as well as with the everyday religious, political, and military affairs of his community. Therefore, the support and help of the Companions (ra) were necessary for him to complete all his tasks. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who did not discriminate against anybody based upon master-slave or male-female relationships, set the moral standards for the people in his time as well as for the employer-employee relationship of today's world. He was so earnest and enthusiastic about being considerate and fair to his servants that he once said, "*When your servant brings your meals to you then if you do not let him sit and share the meal, then you should at least give him a mouthful or*

¹⁹ ST1/497, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, I, 497.

²⁰ IBS876, Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *al-Isti'ab*, s. 876.

²¹ D3932, Abu Da'ud, *al-Itq*, 3.

²² GE2/646, Ibn Bashkuwal, *Gawamid al-Asma al-Mubhama*, II, 646.

²³ B1356, al-Bukhari, *al-Jana'iz*, 79.

²⁴ D2945, Abu Da'ud, *al-Kharaj*, 9-10.

²⁵ B676, al-Bukhari, *al-Adhan*, 44; EM540, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 190.

two mouthfuls of that meal or a meal or two meals, as he has prepared it.”²⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) took very good care of people who supported him and he always asked them whether they were in need of anything. He tried to understand their concerns, and attempted to resolve them for them. One day, one of his servants said, “I need something, O, Messenger of Allah!” When the Prophet (saw) asked, “*What do you need?*” the servant replied, “I need your intercession on the Day of Judgement.” Thereupon the Prophet asked him, “*Who gave you this idea?*” “My Lord,” replied the servant, and the Prophet (saw) said, “*If you really ask for it, then you prostrate to Allah a lot, and keep helping me.*”²⁷

Our Prophet was compassionate toward the young girls who worked as servants in his household and he always tried to meet their requests as much as possible. For example, once a young servant girl who needed to go somewhere took hold of the hands of the Prophet (saw) as a merciful and compassionate father.²⁸ The Messenger of Mercy always asked his Companions (ra) to treat their servants and assistants courteously and compassionately. One day, a Companion came and asked, “How many times do I have to pardon my servant?” The Prophet of Mercy did not like this question, and kept his silence. This was because forgiving is a virtue, and there is no limit to it.²⁹ When the Companion repeated the question, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Seventy times.*”³⁰

The Prophet (saw) strictly prohibited any misconduct toward servants and assistants such as insulting them or tormenting them. He said, “*When one of you beats his servant then you (should) remember Allah and withhold your hands.*”³¹ Our mother ‘A’isha (ra) testified to the Messenger of Allah (saw)’s sensitivity on this issue, and said, “The Messenger of Allah did not strike a servant or a woman, and he never struck anyone with his hand.”³²

Once, Abu Mas‘ud al-Ansari (saw) was beating one of his servants. He heard a noise coming from behind: “*Know, Abu Mas‘ud that Allah has more power over you than you have over him.*” He turned around and saw that it was the Prophet (saw), and straightaway said, “O Messenger of Allah! He is free for the sake of Allah,”³³ and he promised not to beat any of his slaves. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) told him, “*If you had not done it, fire would have burned you.*”³⁴

Furthermore, our Prophet prohibited the Companions (ra) to invoke curses. He said, “*Do not invoke a curse on yourselves, and do not invoke a curse*

²⁶ B2557, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itq, 18.

²⁷ HM16173, Ibn Hanbal, III, 501.

²⁸ B6072, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 61.

²⁹ TA6/69, al-‘Azimabadi, *Tuhfa al-Anwasiz*, VI, 69.

³⁰ T1949, Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 31; D5164, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 123, 124

³¹ T1950, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 32.

³² M6050, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 79; D4786, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 4.

³³ M4306, Muslim, al-Ayman, 34.

³⁴ M4308, Muslim, al-Ayman, 35; D5159, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 123, 124.

on your children, and do not invoke a curse on your servants, and do not invoke a curse on your property, lest you happen to do it at a time when Allah is asked for something and grants your request.”³⁵

A good Muslim is expected to improve the life conditions of his servants and employees, and try to provide them with as comfortable a life as possible. Meeting their needs for food, clothing, lodging and other basic things is the fundamental responsibility of an employer.³⁶

One day, Bilal al-Habashi (ra) had a quarrel with Abu Dharr al-Ghifari who insulted him by saying that his mother was black.³⁷ Bilal related this incident to the Prophet (saw) and complained about Abu Dharr (ra). The Messenger of Allah said to Abu Dharr, “O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by calling his mother bad names? You still have some characteristics of the Age of Ignorance? Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him from what he eats and dress him from what he wears. Do not ask them (servants) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.”³⁸ Bilal was not Abu Dharr’s servant, but, after this warning, Abu Dharr was very careful in treating his servants. Sometimes he even wore the same clothes as his servants.³⁹

A similar incident was reported by Abu al-Yasar. ‘Ubada b. al-Walid (ra), who was a grandson of a prominent Companion, ‘Ubada b. Samit, visited one of tribes of the Ansar with his father in order to gather some information. There, they met Abu al-Yasar who participated in the Covenant of ‘Aqaba and in the Battle of Badr.⁴⁰ A cloth of mantle was prepared by the tribe of Ma‘afiri for him upon his arrival and for his servant as well.⁴¹ ‘Ubada (ra) said to him, “My uncle, if you get the cloak of your servant and you give him your two garments, or take his two garments from the Ma‘afiri and give him your cloak then there could be one garb for you and one for him.” Abu al-Yasar (ra) patted his head affectionately and said, “O Allah, bless the son of my brother. O, son of my brother, these two very eyes of mine saw and these two ears of mine listened to and this heart of mine retained this, and he pointed toward the heart and informed him that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Feed them (the servants) and clothe them (the servants) with what you wear, and if I give him the goods of the world...” Then he said, “It is easy for me that he should take my virtues on the Day of Resurrection.”⁴²

³⁵ D1532, Abu Da‘ud, al-Witr, 27.

³⁶ M4316, Muslim, al-Ayman, 41.

³⁷ AU1/329, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, I, 329.

³⁸ B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22.

³⁹ M4313, Muslim, al-Ayman, 38.

⁴⁰ HI7/468, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, IV, 468

⁴¹ M7512, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 74.

⁴² M7513, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 74.

The Holy Prophet tried his best to provide an pleasant life for people regardless if they were masters or servants. He was known to have said, “*The master of a tribe is the one who serves it.*”⁴³ There used to be a black woman, named Umm Mihjam (ra), who was in charge of cleaning the Mosque of the Prophet.⁴⁴ For a while the Prophet did not see her around and he asked her whereabouts. When he learned that she had died he expressed his sorrow, and said, “*Why did you not inform me?*” The Companions (ra) told him that they did not want to bother him because she had died in the middle of the night.⁴⁵ Straightaway, the Messenger of Mercy asked for the location of her grave, and then went there and performed a funeral prayer for her.⁴⁶

The Companions (ra) who witnessed the Prophet’s exemplary treatment of his servants, adopted the Prophetic tradition, and treated their slaves as their family members. They raised the talented and intelligent ones as their own children. The servants of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas and ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, ‘Ikrima and Nafi’ (ra) are two examples of this. Ibn ‘Abbas raised ‘Ikrima not as a servant but as a scholar. Ibn ‘Abbas’ student, ‘Ikrima, became a famous *tafsir* scholar, and became one of the indispensable sources for *tafsir* scholarship for centuries. Likewise, Ibn ‘Umar’s servant, Nafi’ became a prominent *hadith* and *fiqh* scholar of his generation. The honor and dignity that both ‘Ikrima and Nafi’ gained were great privileges that many free people were unable to attain.

The Prophet (saw) did not see any difference between employer and employee, master and slave, or lord and servant. Despite the fact that it was not legally binding, he strongly recommended not discriminating against them with regards to the provision of food, drink, and clothing, and said doing so was a virtuous act. He asked us to meet the needs of servants and assistants, and not to oppress them under any condition, as this did not comply with the spirit of our religion. The holy Prophet was dedicated first and foremost to protecting the honor, dignity, integrity, and personality of workers. Moreover, he taught us that real virtue was not to be the boss, master, or servant, but to have faith, morality, piety, and to worship.

⁴³ BS8407, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, VI, 33.

⁴⁴ AU4/339, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, IV, 339.

⁴⁵ IM1533, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 32.

⁴⁶ B458, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 72; D3203, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 55, 57.



THE PROPHET (SAW)'S COMMUNICATION WITH HIS COMPANIONS SINCERE AND GENUINE FRIENDSHIP

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: كَانَ كَلَامُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَلَامًا فَصْلًا يَفْهَمُهُ
كُلُّ مَنْ سَمِعَهُ.

According to 'A'isha (ra), "The Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke in a distinct manner so that anyone who listened to him could understand it."

(D4839, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 18)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ:
كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُعِيدُ الْكَلِمَةَ ثَلَاثًا لِيُتَعَقَلَ عَنْهُ.



عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَتَخَوَّلُنَا بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ فِي الْأَيَّامِ،
كَرَاهَةَ السَّامَةِ عَلَيْنَا.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“...أُعْطِيتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ...”



عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ السُّلَمِيِّ قَالَ: ... مَا رَأَيْتُ مُعَلِّمًا قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ أَحْسَنَ
تَعْلِيمًا مِنْهُ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَهَرَنِي وَلَا ضَرَبَنِي وَلَا شَتَمَنِي قَالَ ”إِنَّ هَذِهِ الصَّلَاةَ لَا
يَصْلُحُ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّاسِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ التَّسْبِيحُ وَالتَّكْبِيرُ وَقِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra),
“The Messenger of Allah (saw) would repeat a statement three times so
that it could be understood.”
(T3640, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9)



According to Ibn Mas‘ud (ra), “the Prophet (saw) used to take us into
consideration while preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we
might not get bored.”
(B68, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 11; M7127, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 82)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw)
said, “*I was granted I was granted the comprehensiveness of the word.*”
(M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5: B2977, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 122)



Mu‘awiya b. Hakam al-Sulami (ra) reported what happened during a
ritual prayer when he spoke and the Companions (ra) reacted to it: “...
Neither before him nor after him have I seen a teacher who gave better
instruction than he. I swear that he did not scold, beat, or revile me
but said, ‘*Speaking to people is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of
glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness, and the recitation of the Qur’an or
words to that effect.*’”
(M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33)



It was few years after the Hijra. The bedouin and many other people were asking many questions to the Prophet (saw), some of which were very trivial. This became an issue after a while. In the sixth year of the Hijra, Allah (swt) revealed the verse, “*You who believe, do not ask about matters which, if made known to you, might make things difficult for you,*”¹ and through this verse prohibited people from asking the Prophet (saw) trivial questions. After this verse, the Companions (ra) began to hesitate to ask questions based on their own curiosity, and instead waited for someone else who did not know about this prohibition to come and ask similar questions. Anas b. Malik (ra), who witnessed such a dialogue, reported the following tradition: “We enjoyed the fact that a bedouin came and asked the Prophet questions. During one of his sermons, a bedouin showed up and asked a question that had been eating him up for days: “O Messenger of Allah! When will the Hour be established?” The Prophet (saw) had a long face after hearing the question. We told him, “Sit down! You asked a question that displeased the Prophet.” But he asked the same question again. The Prophet (saw) became even more displeased with this question. We made the Bedouin sit down, but he could not help asking the question again for the third time.”²

Meanwhile, the time for ritual prayer had begun. So the Prophet (saw) stood to perform the ritual prayer and when he was finished he said, “*Where is the one who asked when the Hour will be established?*” The man said, “It was I, O Messenger of Allah!” He said, “*What have you prepared for it?*” He said, “O Messenger of Allah! I have not prepared very much with respect to ritual prayer or fasting, but I love Allah and His Messenger.” So the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A man shall be with whomever he loves, and you shall be with whomever you love.*”³

The above mentioned story is a good example showing the relationship between the Prophet and his Companions (ra). The one who asked

¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:101

² HM12733, Ibn Hanbal, III, 167.

³ M6715, Muslim, al-Birr, 164; T2385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 50; HM12036, HM13099, HM12722, Ibn Hanbal, III, 105, 200, 166.

the question was a bedouin, his interlocutor was the Prophet (saw), and the question was something that was beyond the understanding of the inquirer. The Prophet (saw) always took into consideration the level of his audience, their interest, and their needs. He was aware of the fact that the person behind this inquiry was a bedouin. As a matter of fact, the answer to this question was unknown to everyone but Allah (swt).⁴ The Prophet (saw) had a long face possibly because of this truth. Instead of replying to the inquiry immediately, he took his time until he finished his ritual prayer. Perhaps, in doing so he was able to give some time to himself and also to his Companions (ra) to think about this difficult question, and at the same time make them prepared for the response. Or he might have waited for a new revelation about this important issue. After the ritual prayer, he turned his attention to that man. Instead of answering his question directly, he asked the man another question. Based on the answer of that man, he explored what that man wanted to know. This is because the man truly did not want to know the time of the Day of Judgement but more likely what would happen to him on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (saw), who was very wise, gave him an answer that would not only satisfy the curiosity of that man but also the curiosity of all of his Companions (ra). His message, “*A man shall be with whomever he loves,*” gave hope not only to the Companions (ra) but also to all who loved him. For instance, Anas b. Malik (ra) who reported this *ḥadīth*, expressed his happiness after this incident with the following words: “Nothing pleased us more after accepting Islam than the words of Allah’s Messenger: ‘*You would be with the one whom you love.*’” And he continued, “I love Allah and His Messenger and Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and I hope that I would be with them although I have not acted like them.”⁵

When the Prophet (saw) was asked, “O Allah’s Messenger, what do you say about a man who loves some people but cannot catch up with their good deeds?” he replied, “*Everyone will be with those whom he loves.*”⁶ Likewise, Abu Dharr (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), “Messenger of Allah! What do you say about a man who loves some people, but he cannot do work like their work?” The Messenger of Allah replied, “*Yes, Abu Dharr, you will be with those whom you love.*” Abu Dharr then said, “I love the Messenger of Allah (saw).” The Messenger of Allah (saw) honored him by saying, “*Yes, you are with the one whom you love.*”⁷

⁴ Al-‘Araf, 7:187.

⁵ M6713, Muslim, al-Birr, 163; M6715, Muslim, al-Birr, 164.

⁶ B6169, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 96, B6168, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 96.

⁷ D5126, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 112-113; DM2815, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 71.

This short statement of our Master reminds us that whosoever loves someone in this world will be with that person in the world to come. In other words, whoever loves someone for the sake of Allah will be together with him in Paradise, and whoever loves the enemy of Allah will be together with him in Hell. This short statement is a very good demonstration of the genuine way the Prophet (saw) communicated with his Companions (ra).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was the first interlocutor of the revealed verses. In other words, he was the first student of the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, his language, style, words, and expressions were the products of the Qur'anic revelation. He did not speak for long hours, but rather he delivered short and wise statements. Overall, he used a simple language for people to understand him better. He made a powerful discourse that could easily be followed and he had a very clear, succinct, and fluent style in his speech. As indicated by 'A'isha (ra), "The rhetoric of the Prophet was very clear and could be understood by everyone."⁸ As attested by Anas. B. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) repeated himself three times in order to make sure that his interlocutors understood him well.⁹ When he was speaking, it was almost possible to count his words because of the pace of his speech.¹⁰

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not speak all the time, or deliver long discourses even if it was for educating people around him. However, when he was asked, he answered questions and explained things to the Companions (ra). According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, the Messenger of Allah (saw) delivered his sermons and talks on specific days so that the Companions (ra) would not get bored.¹¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not hesitate to use metaphors, similes, allegories, symbols, parables, and stories in order to make his messages understood correctly by his listeners. He used interesting phrases, questions, and repetitions in order to attract the attention of his audience. His talks were simple, and yet impressive and fluent. Depending on the content, his talks could sometimes be intense, but never tedious. According to one account, the Prophet (saw) said, "*I was granted the Comprehensiveness of the Word.*"¹² Imam al-Bukhari explained this as follows: "*Jawāmi' al-Kalim* means that Allah expresses in one or two statements or thereabouts the numerous matters that were written in the books revealed before (the com-

⁸ D4839, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 18.

⁹ T3640, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9.

¹⁰ D3654, Abu Da'ud, al-'Ilm, 7.

¹¹ B68, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 11; M7127, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 82.

¹² M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5; B2977, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 122.

ing of) the Prophet.”¹³ Many other scholars explain the expression “*Jawāmi’ al-Kalim*” as an ability to speak succinctly and clearly.¹⁴ Thanks to this ability, the Prophet (saw) was able to penetrate into the deeper meanings of conversations and texts, and exposed the meaning of the long stories and parables in the previous divine books in simple terms. Furthermore, being from the Quraysh tribe, and being raised among the Banu Sa’d tribe, the Messenger of Allah (saw) took pride in the fact he was the most eloquent Arabic speaker.¹⁵

Al-Jahiz, who was one of the greatest linguists, described the Prophetic language as follows: “The words of the Prophet had multiple meanings with few letters, and they were genuine and natural. In using the language, he made his sentences long or short depending on the conditions. His talks were informed with traditional wisdom, and adorned with innocence. What he said was confirmed by Allah, and made understandable to others by Allah. Allah injected love into his words, and made them easily acceptable. He combined grandeur and simplicity and succinctness and powerful narrative in his discourse...”¹⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) knew very well what to articulate and how to articulate it. Moreover, he was very well aware of what needed to be said to whom and whom to converse with at the appropriate time and place.

Mu’awiya b. Hakam al-Sulami (ra) from the tribe of the Banu Sulaym related one of his memories in Medina as follows: “While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah, a man in the congregation sneezed. And I said, ‘Allah have mercy on you.’ The people stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said, ‘Woe be upon me, why is it that you stare at me?’ They began to strike their hands on their thighs, and when I realized that they were urging me to observe silence, I said nothing. Finally, the Prophet finished the ritual prayer. I swear that neither before him nor after him have I seen a teacher who gave better instruction than he. I swear that he did not scold, beat, or revile me but said, ‘*Speaking to people is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness, and recitation of the Holy Qur’an.*’”¹⁷

The Noble Prophet always took the knowledge and psychology of his interlocutors into account, and replied to their questions in accordance with their cultural levels. Sometimes he even gave different answers to

¹³ B7013, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 22.

¹⁴ AU25/37, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XXV, 37.

¹⁵ ST1/113, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 113-114; MK5437, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VI, 35.

¹⁶ CBS221, al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin*, p. 221.

¹⁷ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

the same questions. For example, in replying to the question, “What is the most virtuous act?” The Prophet (saw) said to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud, “*Performing prayers on time*”¹⁸ and said to Abu Dharr (ra), “*Belief in Allah and making jihād in His path.*”¹⁹ Likewise, when someone came to get some advice from the Prophet, he said, “*Say you believe in Allah, and then follow the straight path.*”²⁰ On another occasion, knowing the short-temperedness of the person, the Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Manage your anger!*”²¹

Sometimes, because of the importance and seriousness of an issue, the Prophet (saw) became enthusiastic and this was reflected in his body language. Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) reported one of those incidents as follows: “Whenever he mentioned the Hour, his cheeks would turn red, and he would raise his voice and become angry, as if he were warning of an approaching army...On another occasion, by closing his middle and point fingers, he said, ‘I and the Day of Judgement were sent so close in time.’”²²

In one of his other talks, he spoke about Hell fire. During the talk he took refuge with Allah (swt) several times, and then proceeded to turn as if he was avoiding his face from the fire itself, and said, “(O people!) *Save yourselves from the (Hell) Fire even if with one half of a date fruit (given in charity), and if this is not available, then (save yourselves) by saying a good pleasant friendly word.*”²³

Moreover, in his communications with people the Prophet (saw) was very successful at using his body language. His Companions (ra) carefully listened to and watched not only his speeches but also the way he conversed. It even seems that the Prophet (saw) communicated with his Companions (ra) sometimes without words. He sometimes kept his silence, sometimes smiled, and sometimes the color of his face changed in his daily interactions with people. All of these body languages were signs for the Companions (ra) who closely monitored the Prophet (saw) in his daily affairs. These signs might have meant approval, disapproval, or dissatisfaction. The Companions (ra) would have understood these messages that were carried out through body language and acted accordingly.

One day, ‘Umar (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah. Today, I stopped by a brother from the Qurayza tribe. He wrote me some proverbs from the Torah. May I present them to you?” Thereupon, the face color of the Prophet changed. ‘Abd Allah b. Thabit (ra) realized this, and said to ‘Umar, “Don’t you see the face of the Prophet?” When ‘Umar said,

¹⁸ M252, Muslim, al-Iman, 137.

¹⁹ M250, Muslim, al-Iman, 136.

²⁰ M159, Muslim, al-Iman, 62.

²¹ T2020, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 73; HM10012 Ibn Hanbal, II, 466.

²² N1579, al-Nasa’i, Salat al-Idayn, 22.

²³ B6023, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 34.

“We are content with Allah as the Lord, Islam as the religion, and Muhammad as the Messenger.” Upon hearing this the Noble Prophet smiled.²⁴

The Prophet (saw) especially used his hands and fingers in his daily language and sermons as signs of his body language. For example, when he said, “*Believers support each other like bricks in a building*,” he locked his fingers into each other.²⁵ When he was saying that Muslims were like brothers, and that they had rights and responsibilities regarding each other, he tied his conversation to the issue of piety. When he said that piety was related to the heart, he said three times, “*Piety is here*,” and pointed at his chest with his hand.²⁶

Joining his middle finger with his pointing finger, the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed how a person who guarded an orphan could be closer to him in Paradise.²⁷ During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Companions (ra) testified to what the Prophet (saw) had taught them. Thereupon he said, “*O Allah, You testify to this!*” and raised his pointing finger three times in the air, and pointed at the people.²⁸

The Messenger of Mercy used his hands and arms very effectively in his communications with people. Patting the shoulder of Ibn ‘Umar (ra), he said to him, “*Be a stranger or sojourner in the world*.”²⁹ This body language reveals genuineness and intimacy as well the importance given to the interlocutor and the topic being discussed. What is more, it attracts the attention of the listener and makes him focus on the message.

It was reported that it was possible to read on the Prophet’s face whether he was happy or anxious. For example, his distress during the days when ‘A’isha (ra) was slandered with some terrible rumors could be seen in his face. Likewise, when Allah (swt) revealed His verses, proving ‘A’isha’s innocence, his happiness could also be seen in his face.³⁰

A similar instance took place when a verse was revealed, pardoning Ka’b b. Malik (ra) who refrained from joining in the Battle of Tabuk, and was shunned by the Companions (ra) for days. In his own story, Ka’b tells us that no one, including the Prophet, talked to him for days. In order to know whether the Prophet (saw) heard his greetings he watched the Prophet’s lips closely, he prayed standing close to him, and watched if the Prophet looked at him from the corner of his eyes, but when he looked at him the Prophet (saw) shunned him. When the verse was revealed, as attested by Ka’b, “the Prophet’s face was bright with joy. Whenever Allah’s

²⁴ HM15958, Ibn Hanbal, III, 471; MA10164, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VI, 113.
²⁵ B481, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 88.

²⁶ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32; HM8707 Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

²⁷ B5304, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25; M7469, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 42.

²⁸ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

²⁹ B6416, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 3.

³⁰ B4141, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35.

Messenger became happy, his face would shine as if it were a piece of the moon.”³¹

Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) was more modest and shy than a veiled young girl. He also said, “We could understand whether he was pleased or displeased by looking at his face.”³²

A young Companion, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), used to write everything he heard from the Prophet (saw) in order to memorize it. Some of the people of the Quraysh warned him about this endeavor reminding him that the Prophet was a human being and that he spoke sometimes while tranquil and sometimes in anger. After this warning, ‘Abd Allah (ra) discontinued writing, but also could not help to relate this incident to the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Write, by Him in Whose hand my soul lies, only right comes out from these lips.*”³³

It seems that the Holy Prophet used his head as well in his body language. It is reported³⁴ that he shook his head when he disapproved of something,³⁵ or turned his head to the sky when he expected something.³⁶

He had a very pretty face,³⁷ and his face was brightened with a smile. If he liked something, he would laugh so hard that his grinders could be seen.³⁸

The Messenger of Allah (ra) was very polite and respectful to everyone in society regardless of their position and status. For example, once a young slave girl who needed to go somewhere took hold of the hands of the Prophet as a merciful and compassionate father³⁹ and he did not hesitate to hold her hands.⁴⁰ His humbleness deeply affected ‘Adi b. Hatim when he visited the Prophet for the first time. He saw that the Prophet sat together with children and women. He understood that the Prophet (saw) was not a king. Impressed deeply with what he had seen he immediately embraced Islam.⁴¹

The Prophet (saw) loved his Companions very much,⁴² and always treated them genuinely. A commander of the Prophet, Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) said, “Since the day I embraced Islam, the Messenger of Allah (saw) never turned me down from his gate. He smiled at me each time he saw me.”⁴³ According to one of the close Companions of the Prophet, Hudhayfa b. Yaman (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) always shook hands with his Companions (ra) and made a pleasant prayer for them when he met them.⁴⁴

Consequently, greetings are part and parcel of good communications and, being keen on this issue, the Prophet (saw) greeted even the chil-

³¹ M7016, Muslim, al-Tawba, 53; B4678, B3556, B4418, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al Tawba) 18, al-Manaqib, 23, al-Maghazi, 80.

³² M6032, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 67; B3562, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

³³ D3646, Abu Da’ud, al-‘Ilm 3; DM493, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 43.

³⁴ EM954, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 330.

³⁵ EM954, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 330.

³⁶ N4688, al-Nasa’i, al-Buyu’, 98; D4837, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 18.

³⁷ B5907, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 68.

³⁸ T3642, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 10; D2269, Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 31, 32.

³⁹ B6072, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 61.

⁴⁰ IM4177, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 16; HM12811, Ibn Hanbal, III, 174.

⁴¹ HM19600, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 379.

⁴² Al-Tawba, 9:128.

⁴³ M6363, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 134; T3820, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 41.

⁴⁴ N268, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 172.

dren when they were playing.⁴⁵ He played with children once in a while,⁴⁶ showing interest in their games and toys, and treated the girls even more tenderly and compassionately than the boys. The fact that our Prophet patted and carried children on his back,⁴⁷ gave them a big hug,⁴⁸ and made jokes with them⁴⁹ show his affinity for children. He spoke to them in their own child language, and entered into their imaginative world with love. It is reported that Anas b. Malik's brother, Abu 'Umayr (ra), had a baby sparrow. Whenever that child was brought to the Prophet, the Prophet (saw) used to say, "O Abu 'Umayr! What did al-Nughayr (sparrow) do?"⁵⁰ In another instance, one of the other fortunate children, Mahmud b. Rabi (ra), acquired a sweet memory of the Prophet. He remembered that the Prophet (saw) drank some water from the bucket and then sprayed it on his face.⁵¹

According to Anas (ra), who was raised by the Messenger of Allah (saw) at his house, the Prophet called him, "My boy!"⁵² Showing the Prophet's compassion for him, Anas (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 such a thing or why did you not do such a thing?"⁵³

When he was addressing the young Companions (ra), our beloved Prophet called them, "O community of young people!"⁵⁴ and when he was addressing the women Companions (ra), he called them, "O community of women!"⁵⁵ When he wanted to warn some of the Companions (ra), he never did this publicly, rather he chose to use anonymous phrases like, "What happens to some people..."⁵⁶ As reported by 'A'isha (ra), when the Prophet was informed of anything about a certain person he would not say, "What is the matter with so and so that he says?" But instead he would say: "What is the matter with the people that they say such and such?"⁵⁷

Communication was the main task of the prophets who were responsible for delivering the divine message to people. They were in charge of passing these messages to people in the most effective way possible. The task of prophethood was not limited to delivering the divine message. This task included its explanation, training, and practice and because of that, the Prophet (saw) needed to have good communication with the people around him.

Our beloved Prophet was very polite and chivalrous in his relations with his wives and other women. He was also on good terms with children

⁴⁵ D5202, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 135, 136.

⁴⁶ T3784, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib 30.

⁴⁷ N712, al-Nasa'i, al-Masajid, 19.

⁴⁸ B6003, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 22.

⁴⁹ B6354, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 31.

⁵⁰ B6203, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 112.

⁵¹ B1185, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 36.

⁵² D4964, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 65.

⁵³ B6038, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39; B2768, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 25.

⁵⁴ T1081, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 1; IM1845, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 1.

⁵⁵ M241, Muslim, al-Iman, 132; M987, Muslim, al-Salat, 133.

⁵⁶ M6109, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 127.

⁵⁷ D4788, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 5.

in such a manner that he made jokes with them, greeted them, played with them, and asked about their wishes. As a paragon of humbleness, he had very good and warm relations with slaves, concubines, and helpers and was able to gain their hearts. Moreover, because of his deep knowledge of the bedouin, he did not have any difficulty communicating with them, and he conversed with them in the way they understood and liked.

The life of the Prophet (saw), who was sent as a guide to the whole of mankind, was in the Qur'anic term a "*perfect example*," i.e. "*uswa ḥasana*."⁵⁸ He set the examples for Muslims and all mankind not only in performing worship such as the wudu', supplication, ritual prayers, fasting, and the Hajj, but also in his relations and communications with people.

⁵⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33:21.



THE COMPANIONS and THE PROPHET (SAW) LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE

عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ شَرِيكٍ قَالَ:
أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَأَصْحَابُهُ كَانُوا عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمُ الطَّيْرَ...

Usama b. Sharik (ra) said, “When I came into the presence of the Prophet (saw) I saw his Companions (ra) were sitting as if they had birds (sitting) on their heads (since they were listening to him with full attention).”

(D3855, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 1)



حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسٌ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: خَدَمْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، فَمَا قَالَ لِي:
أُفٍّ. وَلَا لِمَ صَنَعْتَ؟ وَلَا أَلَّا صَنَعْتَ.



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: لَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ سَبَّابًا وَلَا لَعَانًا وَلَا فَحَاشًا...



عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: مَا حَجَبَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مُنْذُ أَسْلَمْتُ
وَلَا رَأَى إِلَّا ضَحْكَ.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: مَا رَأَيْتُ أَحَدًا أَكْثَرَ مَشُورَةً لِأَصْحَابِهِ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ.



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

(B6038, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39; B2768, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 25)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), “the Prophet (saw) was someone who never cursed, condemned someone, or used bad words.”

(HM12299, Ibn Hanbal, III, 127)



Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) said, “The Messenger of Allah (saw) never avoided me after I embraced Islam, nor did he look at me without beaming with laughter.”

(T3820, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 41)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said,
“None was more apt to seek the council of his Companions than the Messenger of Allah (saw).”

(T1714, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 35; HM19136, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 329)



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.

¹ HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.

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 Sunna. When Jabir b. Samura (ra) was asked whether the Prophet (saw) interacted with other people like a regular human being, he responded, "Yes, very 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

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 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 neighbor-

² M1525, Muslim, al-Masajid, 286.

³ D3855, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 1.

⁴ EÜ2/525, Ibn al-Athir, *Uṣd al-Ghaba*, II, 525.

⁵ B1935, B1937, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 29-31; M2595-M2603, Muslim, al-Siyam 81-87.

⁶ T1199, al-Tirmidhi, al-Talaq, 19; D2213, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 16, 17.

⁷ HM16535, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 37.

⁸ M2595, Muslim, al-Siyam, 81.

hood, 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 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 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

⁹ T3299, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 58.

¹⁰ T5345, al-Tirmidhi, *Shama’il*, p. 156.

¹¹ M6022, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 59; T666, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 30.

¹² IM4177, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 16.

¹³ IM3312, Ibn Maja, al-At’ima, 30; NM3733, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, IV, 1400 (2/466).

¹⁴ MK21679, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XXV, 7-11.

¹⁵ B3906, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 45.

¹⁶ ST1/235, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 235; T2485, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 42.

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 'Id al-Adhā. The Messenger of Allah was dressed up for the occasion of 'Id al-Adhā 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 'id (i.e., festival) and this day is our 'id.*"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 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), some women from the Quraysh were with the Prophet (saw), and they were talking loudly with him. When 'Umar (ra) asked permission to enter, all of them hurried to screen themselves. The Prophet (saw) admitted 'Umar and he entered while the Prophet was smiling. 'Umar said, "May Allah always keep you smiling, O Allah's Messenger! Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you!" The Prophet (saw) 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, "You have more right than I that they should be afraid of you, O Allah's Messenger!" Then he ('Umar) turned toward them and said, "O enemies of your souls! You are afraid of me and not of Allah's Messenger?" The women replied, "Yes, for you are sterner and harsher than Allah's Messenger."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

¹⁷ B3931, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 46

¹⁸ B988, al-Bukhari, al-*'Idayn*, 25.

¹⁹ B6085, al-Bukhari, al-*Adab*, 68; M6202, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 22.

²⁰ D4659, Abu Da'ud, al-*Sunna*, 10.

²¹ HM6702, Ibn Hanbal, II, 182.

²² N732, al-Nasa'i, al-*Masajid*, 38.

²³ HM2127, Ibn Hanbal, I, 238.

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 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 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

²⁴ HM17657, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 166; B91 al-Bukhari, al-Ilm, 28.

²⁵ HM22857, Ibn Hanbal, V, 289.

²⁶ M4411, Muslim, al-Hudud, 9.

²⁷ M6627, Muslim, al-Birr, 95.

²⁸ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

²⁹ Al-An'am, 6/35; al-Ghashiya, 88/22; al-Qaaf, 50/45.

³⁰ B6038, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39; B2768, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 25.

³¹ HM12299, Ibn Hanbal, III, 127.

³² T3820, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 41.

‘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 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. ‘Ubada (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 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

³³ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15; MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 330.

³⁴ MA9739, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 374.

³⁵ VM1/52, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, I, 53; HS3/167, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 167-168.

³⁶ VM2/476, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 478.

³⁷ VM2/478, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 478; MA9737, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 367.

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 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 the Messenger of Allah (saw)! While our swords are still dribbling with the blood of the Quraysh, he

³⁸ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

³⁹ T1714, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 35; HM19136, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 329.

⁴⁰ HS3/168, Ibn Hisham, Sira, III, 168.

⁴¹ VM2/444, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, II, 445.

⁴² D1081, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 214, 215; B3584, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25.

⁴³ B65, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 7; T2718, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti’dhan, 25; M5480, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 56.

⁴⁴ B5283, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 16; D2231 Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 18, 19.

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 Hijra, the Prophet and his Companion were going to visit the Ka’ba for the first time. On the way, they were stopped by the polytheists in the Hudaybiyya 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 sūra 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

⁴⁵ B3778, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, I; M2436, Muslim, al-Zakat, 132-134.

⁴⁶ M4622, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 84; HM10961, Ibn Hanbal, II, 538; BS18782, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, IX, 193.

⁴⁷ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15; MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 330.

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 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, intensions, 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’ada.” 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.

⁴⁸ M147, Muslim, al-Iman, 52.

⁴⁹ B1366, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 84; B4671, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Tawba) 12.



THE COMPANIONS' LOVE FOR THE PROPHET (SAW) MANIFESTATIONS

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ
أَجْمَعِينَ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “None of you will have full faith until he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind.”

(B15, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 8)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: لَمْ يَكُنْ شَخْصٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ [قَالَ]: وَكَانُوا إِذَا رَأَوْهُ لَمْ يَقُومُوا لِمَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِنْ كَرَاهِيَّتِهِ لِذَلِكَ.



عَنْ أَبِي قُرَادٍ السَّلَمِيِّ قَالَ: كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَدَعَا بِطَهُورٍ، فَغَمَسَ يَدَهُ فِيهِ، ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ، فَتَتَبَعْنَاهُ، فَحَسَوْنَاهُ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مَا حَمَلَكُمُ عَلَى مَا صَنَعْتُمْ؟“ قُلْنَا، حُبُّ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ قَالَ: ”فَإِنْ أَحْبَبْتُمْ أَنْ يُحِبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَأَدُّوا إِذَا ائْتَمَنْتُمْ، وَاصْدُقُوا إِذَا حَدَّثْتُمْ، وَأَحْسِنُوا جَوَارَ مَنْ جَاوَرَكُمْ.“



عَنْ عَوْنِ بْنِ أَبِي جُحَيْفَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَهُوَ فِي قُبَّةٍ حَمْرَاءَ مِنْ أَدَمَ، وَرَأَيْتُ بِلَالًا أَخَذَ وَضُوءَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَالنَّاسُ يَتَنَدَّرُونَ الْوَضُوءَ، فَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا تَمَسَّحَ بِهِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يُصِبْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَخَذَ مِنْ بَلَلِ يَدِ صَاحِبِهِ.



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “There was no person more beloved to them than the Messenger of Allah (saw). And they would not stand when they saw him because they knew that he disliked that.”

(T2754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 13)



Abu Qurad al-Salami (ra) said, “We were with the Prophet (saw). He asked for some water for the wudu’. And he put his hands into the water, and performed his wudu’. We vied for the leftover water, and sipped it. Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, ‘*What motivated you to do this?*’ We said, ‘The love of Allah and his Messenger.’ The Messenger of Allah said, ‘*If you want Allah and his Messenger to love you, be trustworthy when something was entrusted to you, tell the truth when you speak, and get along well with your neighbors.*”

(ME6517, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, VI, 320)



‘Awn b. Abi Juhayfa said that his father (ra) said, “I went to the Prophet (saw) while he was inside a red leather tent, and I saw Bilal taking the remaining water of the wudu’ of the Prophet (saw), and the people were taking that water and rubbing it on their faces; and whoever could not get anything of it would share the moisture of the hand of his Companion (and then rub it on his face).”

(B5859, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 42)



Before the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, polytheists from the Quraysh sent emissaries to the Prophet to negotiate. They returned to Mecca and reported the results to their leaders in Mecca. 'Urwa b. Mas'ud al-Thaqafi of Ta'if, who would embrace Islam in the ninth year of the Hijra, was one of those emissaries. He was martyred during the siege of Ta'if when he invited his people to Islam. Because of that the Messenger of Allah (saw) likened him¹ to the person who had the same fate in the story that was reported in the *sūra* of Ya Sin.² This same 'Urwa returned from the Hdaybiyya negotiations and advised the Meccan polytheists to make a treaty with Muhammad. In describing the Companion's loyalty to the Prophet, 'Urwa said,

"O people! By Allah, I have been to the kings and to Caesar, Khosrau and al-Najashi, yet I have never seen any of them respected by his courtiers as much as Muhammad is respected by his Companions. By Allah, if he spat, the spittle would fall in the hand of one of them (i.e., the Prophet's Companions) who would rub it on his face and skin; if he ordered them, they would carry out his order immediately; if he performed the wudu', they would struggle to take the remaining water; and when they spoke, they would lower their voices and would never look at his face out of respect."³

Seeing similar behavior, Abu Sufyan could also not help expressing his admiration for the Companions' love and respect for the Prophet. In the third year of the Hijra, after the Battle of Uhud, some Arab tribes asked the Prophet (saw) to send them Muslims to teach them Islam. In reality they set a set up a treacherous ruse for them, killing eight out of ten Muslims and enslaving two, in a place by the "Raji" well,⁴ located somewhere close to Mecca. They sold those two Companions (ra), Hubayb b. 'Adi, and Zayd b. Dasinna to the Meccans. Sawfan b. Umayya, who would embrace Islam years later, bought Zayd in order to retaliate for the death of his father, Umayya b. Khalaf, in the Battle of Badr. The polytheists, including Abu Su-

¹ MS36889, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Maghazi, 34; NM6579, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, VI, 2354 (3/616).

² Ya Sin, 36:20-27; IT6/572 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, VI, 571.

³ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

⁴ HS4/123, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 123.

fyan, took him outside of the city in order to kill him. Abu Sufyan said to Zayd, “For Allah’s sake, Zayd! Would you prefer to have Muhammad to be here instead of you, and we behead him instead of you. And you would be with your family.” Upon Abu Sufyan’s words, Zayd (ra) took a firm stand: “By Allah, even if I were be with my family, I could not stand seeing that even a splinter hurts Muhammad.” In return, Abu Sufyan admitted, “I have never seen anyone who was loved that much except Muhammad who was loved by his Companions.”⁵

The respect and love that the Prophet (saw) received from his Companions (ra) was a source of admiration for everyone. However this love and respect were mutual and reciprocal. The Messenger of Allah, who said that he was closer to the believers⁶ more than they were to themselves,⁷ and guarded them with his wings of mercy and compassion,⁸ was a extremely fond of his Companions (ra).⁹ In the name of this love, the Companions did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives and property. In addressing him, they often repeated the phrase, “May my parents be sacrificed for you.”¹⁰ This was a clear sign of love and loyalty in Arabic culture. In fact, their blood testified to this when it was necessary.

As indicated in the story of Zayd b. Dassina, the Companions’ love for the Prophet (saw) was related to their faith. Pointing out that love was connected to faith,¹¹ the Prophet said, “*None of you will have full faith until he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind.*”¹² Because of this, a believer was supposed to prioritize the Prophet before himself.¹³ One day, the Prophet (saw) was holding the hand of ‘Umar who said to him, “O Allah’s Messenger! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*No, by Him who holds my soul in His hand, (you will not have complete faith) until I am dearer to you than your own self.*” Then ‘Umar said to him, “However, now, by Allah, you are dearer to me than my own self.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Now, O ‘Umar (now you are a believer).*”¹⁴

This deep love and loyalty made ‘Umar (ra) very sad and broken when he lost the Prophet.¹⁵ After embracing Islam, he spent nearly all of his life with our Master the Prophet. Life without the Prophet (saw) was unbearable for ‘Umar. That’s why his last will was to be buried next to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his dear friend, Abu Bakr (ra).¹⁶

Loving the holy Prophet was a worldly as well as other worldly affair for believers. The believer’s love for the Prophet in this world was a kind of

⁵ HS3/117, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 117-118.

⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33:6

⁷ B4781, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 1; M4159, Muslim, al-Fara'id, 15.

⁸ Al-Shu'ara', 26:215.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

¹⁰ B3811, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 18; M1354, Muslim, al-Masajid, 147.

¹¹ M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93; D5193 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 130, 131.

¹² B15, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 8.

¹³ Al-Tawba, 9:120.

¹⁴ B6632, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa 'l-Nudhur, 3.

¹⁵ B3667, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Ashab, 5.

¹⁶ B1392, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 96.

investment for him in the next world. One day the Prophet (saw) was giving some advices to people. Someone asked him, “O Messenger of Allah! When will the Hour be established?” The Prophet (saw) had a long face after hearing the question. The Companions (ra) told the man, “Sit down! You asked a question that displeased the Prophet.” But he asked the same question again. The Prophet (saw) displeased with this question even more. Thereupon the Prophet said to him, “*Woe upon you! What have you prepared for it?*”¹⁷ The man became afraid and ashamed and then said, “O Allah’s Messenger! I haven’t prepared for it with much fasting, prayer, or giving to charity, but I love Allah and His Messenger.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*You will be with the one whom you love.*”¹⁸ The Companions (ra) who heard the conversations asked the Prophet (saw), “And will we too be so?” He said, “Yes.” So they became very glad on that day.¹⁹ Observing what happened on that day, Malik (ra) said, “I love the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abu Bakr, and ‘Umar. And I hope to be with them on the Day of Judgement.”²⁰

‘Umar was not the only Companion who could not bear living without the Prophet. His death deeply shook Bilal (ra) as well. He could not stay in Medina any longer. This was because he had been with the Messenger of Allah (saw) since the early days of Islam, and he had endured all kinds of trials and tribulations with him.²¹ After the Prophet (saw) died, everything in Medina reminded Bilal of him. Medina without the loved one did not mean anything to him. So, he intended to leave Medina and go on *jihād* somewhere around Damascus. But the Caliph Abu Bakr did not let him go and asked him to continue his service as a muazzin. Bilal said to Abu Bakr, “If you have bought me for yourself then keep me (for yourself), but if you have bought me for Allah’s sake to set me free, then leave me for Allah’s sake so that I go.” But he could not convince Abu Bakr (ra). After his death, Bilal received permission from the next caliph, ‘Umar (ra), and went to Damascus to go on *jihād* and died there.²²

Without doubt, Muhammad (saw) had a special place in the heart of believers. Nevertheless, he reminded them that he was a servant and Messenger of Allah, and that they needed not to praise him more than necessary.²³ Besides he urged them not to commit the mistake that the Christians committed in deifying Jesus Christ.²⁴

Once he saw that the Companions (ra) stood up when they saw them. He warned them, saying, “*Do not stand up as Iranians do to show respect to one*

¹⁷ HM12733, Ibn Hanbal, III, 167.

¹⁸ B7153, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 10; M6711, Muslim, al-Birr, 162

¹⁹ B6167, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95

²⁰ M6713, Muslim, al-Birr, 163.

²¹ B604, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 1; D498, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 27.

²² B3755, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Ashab, 23; AU16/336, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XVI, 336.

²³ HM12579, HM13631, Ibn Hanbal, III, 154, 248.

²⁴ B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 48.

another.”²⁵ Anas b. Malik (ra) reported that the Companions (ra) loved no one more than the Prophet, but they did not stand up when they saw him, because they knew that he would not have liked it.²⁶ Although Companions (ra) had an unprecedented love for the Prophet, they never deified him.

Sometimes, love of the Prophet manifested itself in preserving a relic of his, such as his hair or his possessions. The actions of Anas b. Malik’s mother, Umm Sulaym, who had been collecting the hair and perspiration of the Prophet, were good examples of this. The Messenger of Mercy went to visit his nurse aunt, Umm Sulaym very often.²⁷ About her, he said, “I take pity on her as her brother was killed in my company.”²⁸ When he entered her house, Umm Sulaym used to fix a bed, covered with leather for his day nap. When the Prophet perspired during his nap, she collected his hair and perspiration and preserved them in a bottle. Before he died, Anas drew up a will according to which the Prophet’s scent be put on his shroud and grave. The grandson of Anas, Sumama, said that they honored his grandfather’s wish.²⁹ One of the Successor scholars, Muhammad b. Sirin told ‘Abida b. ‘Amr al-Salmani that they inherited some hair of the Prophet from the family of Anas. Upon hearing that, ‘Abida, who had embraced Islam two years after the death of the Prophet,³⁰ said the following: “No doubt if I had a single hair from him it would have been dearer to me than the whole world and whatever is in it.”³¹

There were also other Companions (ra) who collected and preserved the hair of the Prophet. Anas b. Malik (ra) related the following story from the Farewell Pilgrimage:³² “A barber was giving a haircut to the Prophet. His Companions (ra) were all around him, and they did not want any of his hair to fall to the ground.”³³ When Allah’s Messenger got his head shaved, Abu Talha was the first to take some of his hair.³⁴ Khalid b. al-Walid too fetched some hair, and by saying, “May my mother and father be sacrificed for you!” he applied them to his eyes and lips.³⁵ According to another account, the Prophet gave some of his hair to ‘Abd Allah b. Zayd, who was also known as “*ṣāhib al-adhān*”³⁶ because he dreamt the words of *adhān*. He kept some hair for himself and distributed the rest among his friends. ‘Abd Allah related that he preserved hair, which was dyed with henna and indigo plant.³⁷ In addition, it was reported that Ummu Salama, the mother of the believers, preserved the Prophet’s hair, dyed with henna and indigo plant, in a silver cup at her house.³⁸

²⁵ D5230, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 151-152; HM22554, Ibn Hanbal, V, 255.

²⁶ T2754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 13; HM12370, Ibn Hanbal, III, 132.

²⁷ SN16/10, al-Nawawi, *Sharh ‘ala Muslim*, XVI, 10.

²⁸ B2844, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38; M6319, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 104; AU11/140, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XI, 140.

²⁹ B6281, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 41.

³⁰ EÜ3/546, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, III, 546.

³¹ B170, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 33.

³² D1981, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasik, 78.

³³ M6043, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 75.

³⁴ B171, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 33.

³⁵ VM3/1108, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, III, 1108-1109.

³⁶ HM16588, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 43.

³⁷ HM16588-HM16589, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 43; BS90, al-Bayhaki, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, I, 52.

³⁸ B5896, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 66; HM27070, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 296.

These people preserved some relics belonging to the Prophet (saw) as a souvenir, not out of simple sentimentality but out of deep respect and love. These objects were sources of tranquility for them. For example, a Companion asked the Prophet to give his vest to him. When he was scolded by other Companions (ra) because of this improper behavior, he said that he asked for it not for wearing but for wrapping around his shroud when he died. It was reported that his wish was honored when he died.³⁹ The same feeling must be behind the attitude of Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), who said that he kept the extra gold that the Prophet (saw) gave to him in return of the purchase of his camel until the time when his property was ransacked by Damascus robbers in the Harra Incident.⁴⁰

There were other lovers of the Prophet (saw) who were motivated by these sentiments. For example, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) drank water from a water cup, Umm Sulaym (ra) cut the part of the cup touched by the lips of the Prophet and preserved it.⁴¹ According to another account, Kabsha al-Ansariyya (ra) did the same thing.⁴² Abu Mahdhura, whom the Prophet patted on the head and was later assigned to be a muazzin at the Ka'ba, did not shave his forelock.⁴³ A great *hadith* scholar from Basra, Thabit b. Aslam al-Bunani wanted to kiss the hands of his teacher, Anas b. Malik (ra), on the assumption that the Prophet (saw) touched those hands.⁴⁴ These are just few of the many examples demonstrating how the memories of the Prophet were kept alive in the hearts of the lovers of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

In so doing, the Companion did not sanctify the personality or objects of the Prophet whom they loved more than their own souls. Neither did they expect any magic from the objects that they preserved. It would be unthinkable for the Prophet (saw) to approve such sanctification, because he did not like to see his Companions (ra) even stand up out of respect when they saw him. Such a sanctification would have harmed the principle of the tawhid. For example, one day, the Prophet (saw) dipped his hands into water and performed his wudu'. The Companions (ra) followed the suit. And then they drank the water. Thereupon, the Prophet said, "*What motivated you to do this?*" They said, "The love of Allah and his Messenger." The Messenger of Allah said, "*If you want Allah and his Messenger to love you, be trustworthy when something was entrusted to you, tell the truth when you speak, and get along well with your neighbors.*"⁴⁵

With this warning, the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught them the real

³⁹ B2093, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 31; B5810, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 18.

⁴⁰ B2604, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 23; M4101, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 111.

⁴¹ HM27656, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 376.

⁴² IM3423, Ibn Maja, al-Ashriba, 21.

⁴³ D501, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 28; HM15450, Ibn Hanbal, III, 408.

⁴⁴ DM51, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 8; HM12118, Ibn Hanbal, III, 112

⁴⁵ ME6517, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, VI, 320; B51533, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, II, 201.

ways to earn the afore-mentioned love. Our Supreme Lord says in the Holy Qur'an, "Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; Allah is most forgiving, most merciful.'"⁴⁶ With this, He emphasized that the path to the love of Allah (swt) was via the obedience to the Prophet (saw), who was the embodiment of Qur'anic morality.⁴⁷

In the *ḥadīth* books, it was mostly reported by the Companions (ra) who were with the Prophet since their childhood that the Companions strived to collect his wudu' water, perspiration, blood, hair, and clothing.⁴⁸ For example, Abu Juhayfa (ra) related, "I went to the Prophet while he was inside a red leather tent, and I saw Bilal taking the remaining water of the wudu' of the Prophet, and the people were taking that water and rubbing it on their faces; and whoever could not get anything of it would share the moisture of the hand of his Companion (and then rub it on his face)."⁴⁹

The Companions (ra) wished to preserve some of the relics of the Prophet (saw), whom they loved so dearly. The wish to preserve them was transmitted to the subsequent generations who yearned for and missed the Prophet. This innocent and simple wish went beyond preserving some relics, and those objects became a source from which people began to expect certain healing properties. In this process, the warning of the Prophet (saw) who asked people not to go to excess in showing love and respect was not heeded.

Although it was possible to see some elements of sanctification (*tabarruk*) in their love of the Prophet (saw), the Companion's love, respect, and loyalty for him was much deeper than that. Because, by tightly holding onto the Holy Qur'an and its practical form, to the Sunna under every circumstance, they showed their deep loyalty to the Prophet (saw) with their actions, wealth, and, if necessary, with their lives.

It is obvious that the flood of love that began with the Companions (ra) has continue to gush forth until now. Thus it is source of happiness for us to have some relics of the Prophet (saw), including his "holy hair," preserved in some places today. When these holy relics are on display, believers rush to visit them. This keen interest should be understood as another manifestation of Muslims' love for the Prophet. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the best way to show our respect and love for him is to lead a life in conformity with his Sunna and his perfect morality.

⁴⁶ Al 'Imran, 3:31

⁴⁷ M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139; D1342 Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 26.

⁴⁸ B6036, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39; B5896, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 66; NM6343, al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, 2274 (3/554); BS1246, al-Bayhaki, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, I, 348.

⁴⁹ B5859, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 42.



THE PROPHET (SAW) AS A FRIEND LOYAL, SINCERE AND FAITHFUL

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“لَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا خَلِيلًا لَاتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ، وَلَكِنْ أَخِي وَصَاحِبِي.”

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “If I were to adopt a confidant (*khalil*), I would have adopted Abu Bakr, for he is my brother and my companion.”

(B3656, al-Bukhari, al-Fada’il al-Ashab, 5)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ؛ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَبْلِي، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ حَوَارِيُّونَ
وَأَصْحَابٌ يَأْخُذُونَ بِسُنَّتِهِ وَيَقْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِهِ...”



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”لَا تَسُبُّوا أَصْحَابِي، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ! لَوْ أَنْفَقَ أَحَدُكُمْ مِثْلَ أَحَدٍ ذَهَبًا
مَا بَلَغَ مُدَّ أَحَدِهِمْ وَلَا نَصِيفَهُ.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ.”



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Never was a prophet sent by Allah to his umma before me who had not among his people (his) disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his commands.”*

(M179, Muslim, al-Iman, 80)



According to Abu Sa‘id (al-Khudri) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Do not revile my Companions; by Him in whose hand is my soul, if one of you contributed an amount of gold equivalent to Uhud, it would not amount to as much as the mudd of one of them, or half of it.”*

(D4658, Abu Da‘ud, al-Sunna, 10)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.”*

(D4833, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 16; T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45)



Medina as a city was going through the last days of its long uninterrupted bliss. The Messenger of Allah (saw) knew that the time was near to meet the most Supreme Friend (al-Rafiq al-'Ala). As his pain and ailment increased he had hardly been able to join his Companions (ra). Still, during one of those days he climbed up the three-stepped pulpit of the Medina Mosque, and delivered a touching sermon to his Companions (ra). By referring to himself, he said, *"Allah has given one of His servants the choice of receiving the splendor and luxury of the worldly life of whatever he likes or to accept the good (of the Hereafter) which is with Allah. So he has chosen that good which is with Allah."* On hearing this Abu Bakr (ra) began to weep. He understood that the time had arrived which would separate him from his most beloved. The Messenger of Allah (saw) continued with these words which soothed Abu Bakr, *"No doubt, I am indebted to Abu Bakr more than to anybody else regarding both his Companionship and his wealth. And if I had to adopt a khalil (confidant) from my followers, I would certainly have adopted Abu Bakr, but the fraternity of Islam is sufficient."*¹

As reported by 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) never neglected his friend Abu Bakr and visited him twice a day; in the morning and in the evening.² The two close friends, throughout their half-century of lives, experienced the swiftness of emigration together. On that day, Mecca witnessed one of its greatest historical days. The Noble Messenger went to visit his old friend's house while everyone else was having their siesta at noon. The people of the house immediately understood that this was not an ordinary visit. As soon as the owner of the house, Abu Bakr (ra), saw him he said, "May my parents be sacrificed for him. By Allah, he has not come at this hour except for a great necessity." The Messenger of Allah (saw) was anxious. He said he wanted to be alone with his friend and then he said, "Yes". *"I have been given permission to emigrate from Mecca*

¹ B3904, al-Bukhari, Mana'ib al-Ansar, 45; B3656, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 5.
² B476, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 86.

to Medina.” Abu Bakr embraced this offer with astonishment and pleasure. They immediately began preparations for the journey.³

Abu Bakr was there with the Messenger of Allah (saw) when he was needed, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw him as a friend, a confidant, and a faithful friend. With the permission of Allah, they took up the responsibility of the Hijra together. To avoid the merciless pursuit of the Meccans, they hid in a cave outside of Mecca. The three days of hardship⁴ and anxious waiting⁵ of these two close friends in the cave was described by Allah Almighty in the Holy Qur’an as follows: *“Even if you do not help the Prophet, Allah helped him when the disbelievers drove him out: when the two of them were in the cave, he [Muhammad] said to his Companion, ‘Do not worry, Allah is with us,’ and Allah sent His calm down to him, aided him with forces invisible to you, and brought down the disbelievers’ plan. Allah’s plan is higher: Allah is Almighty and Wise.”*⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) cared about this brotherly relationship with Abu Bakr and spoke about him highly on every occasion. One day he praised his “Friend of the Cave”⁷ Abu Bakr (ra) with the following words: *“There is no favor due upon us from anyone, except that we have repaid him, with the exception of Abu Bakr. Verily upon us, there is a favor because of him, which Allah will repay him on the Day of Judgement.”*⁸ The bond that began during the hardship of the Hijra became a manifestation of a unique friendship, which was a strong and a sincere companionship which set an example for everyone.

The Noble Prophet regarded Allah Almighty as his supreme and eminent friend and made Him his “the most special friend (al-Khalil)” and he set aside this special friendship only for Him.⁹ He did not associate even Abu Bakr in this special friendship. He saw him and other close friends as confidants, loyal friends, and brothers. The Qur’anic verses and *ḥadīths* use the words “*khalīl*,” “*ṣāhib*,” “*walī*,” and “*rafīq*” for friendship. In fact they refer to different levels of friendship. In this regard, in the Holy Qur’an the words used the most are “*walī*” and “*mawlā*.” In various verses, the believers and the Prophet (saw) are informed that it is Almighty Allah who will help, protect, and have mercy on them; and that He will carry them from the darkness to the light.¹⁰

The Qur’anic term “*khalīl*” refers to a more close and special friendship. It is an extensive friendship which takes root in, and penetrates, the heart.

³ B3905, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45.

⁴ B3905, al-Bukhari Manaqib al-Ansar, 45.

⁵ B3922, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45.

⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:40.

⁷ T3670, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 16.

⁸ T3661, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 15.

⁹ M6176, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 7.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:257; Al-Imran, 3:150; al-Anfal, 8:40.

¹¹ “Dostluk,” *DIA*, IX, 511.

The Holy Qur'an defines it as a strong, sincere, and distinguished level of friendship¹¹ and uses the term in the following verses: "...Allah makes Abraham khalil to himself"¹² and "I wish I did not make khalil of such and such."¹³ Some Companions (ra) used the word "*khalil*" to show their eternal love and respect for the Messenger of Allah (saw); however, they did not mean this special type of friendship with this terminology. The statements of Abu Hurayra (ra), "I heard my friend saying..."¹⁴ and of Abu al-Darda' and Abu Dharr, "My friend advised me that..."¹⁵ should be evaluated in this respect.

Our Prophet had made some good friends before his prophethood but all his friends from the Jahiliyya period were people with good morals. One such friend was Sa'id b. 'Abd Allah. On the day of the conquest of Mecca, he went to the Messenger of Allah (saw), probably to embrace Islam. He was introduced by 'Uthman b. 'Affan and Zuhayr b. Abi 'Umayya (ra) to the Messenger of Allah (saw) with commendations.¹⁶ When the Messenger of Allah (saw) heard these praises he said, "*Do not praise him to me. He was a friend of mine in the Jahiliyya period,*" revealing that he already knew him. Sa'id heard the words of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and responded, "Yes, Messenger of Allah, you were a very beautiful friend." Later our beloved Prophet, who was the epitome of the best morality, pointed out the good qualities of Sa'id by saying, "*Look at the good morals that you had in Jahiliyya and preserve the same morals after you become a Muslim. Serve the visitors, be generous to orphans, and behave well to your neighbor.*"¹⁷

It was every Companion's wish to win the heart of the Messenger of Mercy and be his friend. The efforts of the new converts were quite interesting in this regard. 'Amr b. al-'As (ra), who converted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca, was gifted with a political and an administrative genius.¹⁸ It is reported that after winning the Battle of Dhat al-Salasil, with the resolution of having fulfilling his duty successfully, he went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked a question which had occupied his mind, "Which people do you love the most?" He replied, "*A'isha (ra).*" I said, "from among the men?" He replied, "*Her father (Abu Bakr).*" I said, "Whom (do you love) next?" He replied, "*Umar.*" Then he counted the names of many men and 'Amr became silent for fear that he might regard him as the last of them.¹⁹

There were people whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) honored with his friendship. He said, "*Each prophet that Allah sent before me had compan-*

¹² Al-Nisa', 4:125.

¹³ Al-Furqan, 25:28.

¹⁴ M586, Muslim, al-Tahara, 40.

¹⁵ IM4034, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 23; M4755, Muslim, al-Imara, 36.

¹⁶ EU2/322, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, II, 322.

¹⁷ HM15585, Ibn Hanbal, III, 425.

¹⁸ EU4/232, Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, IV, 232.

¹⁹ B4358, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 64.

ions and friends that follow their Sunna and orders.”²⁰ Hence, as stated in the Holy Qur’an, Jesus had his apostles. When he invited the Israelites to Allah’s religion, he realized that they were inclined to deny his message. Then he asked his apostles with whom they would prefer to be and they replied, “They will be the helpers in the path of Allah (*fi sabilillah*),”²¹ and would not leave him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) used the term “apostle,” meaning “very special friend and helper” for the ones among his Companions (ra) who made great sacrifices.²² Hence, when the Muslims came face to face with death during the Battle of the Khandaq, because of the betrayal of the Jews of tribe of Qurayza, there was a need for someone who would be able to learn about the situation of the enemy and bring the information back from them.²³ The Prophet (saw) was looking for someone among his Companions (ra) who would be able to undertake this duty. Although he asked twice, “Who would bring me the information about the enemy?” nobody except Zubayr b. al-’Awwam (ra) volunteered. Each time it was Zubayr who asked for it. Because of this courageous behavior, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Every prophet has one messenger. My messenger is Zubayr.”²⁴

There were people among the Companions of known as “the owner of the secret.” Hudhayfa b. Yaman (ra), who was born and raised in Medina and who was the honorary brother of ‘Ammar b. Yasir (ra), was one of them.²⁵ Since the Companions (ra) heard some undisclosed reports only from Hudhayfa, they called him “the Prophet’s confidant.”²⁶ Concerning this epithet Hudhayfa said, “By Allah, I have the best knowledge among people about all turmoil which will appear in the period between me and the Last Hour; and it is not because Allah’s Messenger told me something confidentially pertaining to it and he did not tell anybody else about it, but it is because I was present in the assembly in which he had been describing turmoil and seditions. All who were present except me have passed on now.”²⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) used to inform people publicly about necessary matters but he related some private family issues and certain classified information only to concerned and appropriate people.²⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was always with his Companions (ra). Although he was in constant contact with the metaphysical world, he was always genuine and modest. He always acted as one of them in his relations with surrounding people and friends. Sometimes his genuine behav-

²⁰ M179, Muslim, al-Iman, 80.

²¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:49-52.

²² IE1/457, Ibn Athir, *Nihaya*, I, 457.

²³ B3720, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 13.

²⁴ B2846, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 40; M6243 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 48.

²⁵ ST3/248, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 250.

²⁶ B3743, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 20.

²⁷ M7262, Muslim, al-Fitan, 22.

²⁸ M6313, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 98; B6289, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 46; M6270 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 68

ior was regarded as peculiar. On a day of 'Īd al-Aḏḥā, the people gathered together for a meal after the ritual prayer. When people began to overcrowd the area the Messenger of Allah (saw) decided to sit by the floor table by kneeling. When a bedouin asked, "Why are you sitting like this?" the Noble Prophet replied, "*Allah has made me a respectable servant, and He did not make me an obstinate tyrant.*"²⁹ Yet, he made sure to not show himself as being different from the others and continuously reiterated that he was the servant of Allah on every occasion.³⁰ During the Farewell Pilgrimage, he did not want to leave his Companions (ra) and instead stayed in a house that belonged to one of his loved ones and was close to the Ka'ba. The invitation came from his aunt, Abu Talib's daughter, Umm Hani (ra). Still, the Messenger of Allah (saw) preferred to stay in the open field in al-Abtah with his Companions (ra).³¹

Although he was the leader of the Muslims and the head of the state, our beloved Prophet never emphasized these qualifications with regard to his relationship with his Companions (ra). In fact once he calmed a person who was trembling when talking to him by saying, "*Don't be afraid! I am not a king. I am the son a woman who ate dried meat!*"³² The Messenger of Allah (saw) always acted as if he was one of the regular people. He stopped people who stood up to show their respect.³³ Like everyone else, he sat on the floor, he wore clothes of coarse fabric, he rode a donkey and let other people ride with him.³⁴

The Prophet (saw), who was very generous, always made sacrifices for his friends. When he was with them, he valued every single one of them individually. If needed, he even served water to them. During one campaign at night the community was worn out because of thirst. They spent the night there but everyone began to complain in the morning because of thirst. Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra) were there and tried to calm everyone. They said, "O People! The Messenger of Allah is not such a person who would drink the water first and leave the rest to you!" As the sun rose their thirst intensified. It was discovered that Abu Qatada (ra) had a jar of water. So, the Messenger of Allah (saw) took the jar and distributed the water among his people. On the one hand he distributed the water, and, on the other, he comforted the people, saying that there was enough water. On that day, three hundred people drank from that jar, except for the Messenger of Allah (saw) and Abu Qatada. The holy Prophet said, "*Abu Qatada,*

²⁹ D3773, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 17; AV10/178, al-'Azimabadi, 'Ayn al-Ma'bud, X, 178.

³⁰ MA19543, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 415

³¹ VM3/1099, Waqidī, *Maghazi*, III, 1099.

³² IM3312, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 30.

³³ IM3836, Ibn Maja, al-Du'a', 2; T2754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 13.

³⁴ MA19555, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 418.

you drink it too!” Later he said, *“The one that serves water to the congregation should be the last to drink from it.”*³⁵

The affinity and modesty that the Messenger of Allah (saw) displayed to his friends and Companions (ra) were not unreciprocated. The Companions (ra) showed their love and loyalty to the Messenger of Allah (saw) on every possible occasion. According to them, there was no other person who was more pleasant than the Messenger of Allah (saw).³⁶ For example, one day in a gathering that included people from all walks of life, the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to serve drinks. He drank first and then he turned to his right and said to his young cousin ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas,³⁷ *“Young man! Would you let me to give this to the older people?”* Ibn ‘Abbas answered, *“I will not prefer anybody to have my share from you, O Allah’s Messenger!”*³⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) experienced the same loyalty when he manumitted his slave Zayd b. Haritha. His brother Jabal b. Haritha came to take his brother Zayd, but Zayd (ra) said, *“O Messenger of Allah, I will never prefer anybody else to you.”*³⁹ This act shows his friend’s loyalty and braveness in return for his unique friendship.

The Companions (ra), who were with the Prophet in the most difficult times, never lost their faith in him. As also indicated in the Holy Qur’an, they loved him more than they loved themselves.⁴⁰ In return, the Messenger of Allah (saw) trusted them because real friendship needs mutual trust and self-sacrifice. On the day of the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Allah (saw) allocated a great amount of war spoils to the newly converted Muslims in order to keep their hearts close to Islam. Some Companions from the Ansar (ra) did not understand the reason for this decision, and began to question it. When this inquiry reached our Master, the Prophet (saw), he invited the Ansar Companions (ra) over and explained to them the situation with the following words: *“If there were no Hijra, I would have been one of the Companions, and if the people took their way through a valley or mountain pass, I would select the valley or mountain pass of the Companions.”*⁴¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) sometimes witnessed small conflicts among the Companions (ra) and, with his wisdom, he prevented further conflicts. Once, after the ‘Umra, his close Companions, ‘Ali, Ja‘far and Zayd, wanted to take guardianship of Hamza’s daughter, Umama (ra). They disputed who would be the guardian and brought the matter to the Prophet

³⁵ HM22913, Ibn Hanbal, V, 298.

³⁶ TS336, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Sham‘ail*, 151.

³⁷ IF1/282, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, I, 282.

³⁸ B2366, al-Bukhari, *al-Musaqat*, 10.

³⁹ T3815, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Manaqib*, 39.

⁴⁰ Al Ahzab, 33:6.

⁴¹ B4330, al-Bukhari, *al-Maghazi*, 57.

(saw). After listening to each of them, the Prophet said to Zayd, “*You are my friend. You are a friend of this girl too.*” Then he turned toward ‘Ali and said, “*You are my brother and friend.*” And to Ja‘far he said, “*You look like me physically and morally.*” He appeased all of them by flattering each one of them.⁴² Ultimately, he gave Umama’s guardianship to her aunt Asma’ bint ‘Umayy who was also Ja‘far’s wife by saying, “*An aunt is like a mother.*”⁴³

Once there was an incident between ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra), who was one of the first Muslims and who was given the good news of Paradise, and Khalid b. al-Walid (ra). In a military campaign, there was a dispute between the two Companions (ra) and Khalid b. Walid exaggerated it. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) learned about it, he said, “*Do not revile my Companions (ra); by him in whose hand is my soul, if one of you contributed the amount of gold equivalent to Uhud, it would not amount to as much as the mudd of one of them, or half of it.*”⁴⁴ These words showed how much the holy Prophet cared about his Companions (ra) and would not let anything or anyone harm them. When he said, “*Do not insult my friends,*” he was holding his Companions (ra) equal to him and assumed that any negative behavior done to them was done to him and that he would do anything to protect them.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was always concerned for his Companions (ra), and if anything happened to them it was as if it had happened to him. The Holy Qur’an depicts his attitude 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.*”⁴⁵ Our Noble Prophet embraced his friends with a fatherly compassion and informed them about worldly and other worldly matters in detail.⁴⁶ He did not neglect to visit ill people,⁴⁷ and shed tears for his friends who were on their death beds.⁴⁸ He sacrificed himself for them in an altruistic manner.⁴⁹ He educated them with a gentle and understanding tone at every possible occasion,⁵⁰ he closely monitored their deliverance and taught them the right path,⁵¹ and he did not refrain to share even the most private matters with them.⁵² He gave advice to those who consulted with him,⁵³ took care of people in his community and flattered them,⁵⁴ presented gifts to them,⁵⁵ and created a sincere environment, and enjoyed appropriate humor with them.⁵⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke to his close friends and Companions (ra) and shared his problems with them. Once, after the famous *ifk* incident, when ‘A’isha (ra) was falsely accused and revelation was delayed,

⁴² HM2040, Ibn Hanbal, I, 231; ST8/158, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, VIII, 158-159.

⁴³ B4251, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 44; HM770, Ibn Hanbal, I, 98.

⁴⁴ M6488, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 222; D4658, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 10.

⁴⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

⁴⁶ D8, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 4; N40, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 36.

⁴⁷ B194, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 44; M4209, Muslim, al-Wasaya, 5.

⁴⁸ B1304, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 44; M2137, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 12.

⁴⁹ HM4009, Ibn Hanbal, I, 423; B2097, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 34.

⁵⁰ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

⁵¹ HM19204, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 340.

⁵² M707, Muslim, al-Hayd, 27.

⁵³ D3542, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 83.

⁵⁴ TS337, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 151; T1919, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15.

⁵⁵ B2657, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 11.

⁵⁶ D5000, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 84; HM7115, Ibn Hanbal, II, 227.

he was distressed and consulted with his close Companions (ra) 'Ali and 'Usama to find a resolution.⁵⁷ Thus, he shared his problem with them and showed how much he cared about his Companions (ra).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) showed compassion to his friends' loved ones as well, and said, "*The most virtuous good is the son visiting his father's friends.*"⁵⁸ Even after the death of his first wife Khadija, to whom the Messenger of Allah said, "*Her love was granted to me,*" the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not forget the friends of his wife. Whenever the Messenger of Allah (saw) sacrificed an animal, he sent some of its meat to Khadija's friends.⁵⁹ We know that his loyalty to Khadija was a source of jealousy for 'A'isha (ra) but still from time to time our beloved Prophet found Khadija's friends one by one and offered them something.⁶⁰

The Prophet (saw) advised his Companions (ra) in the matter of choosing friends with the following statement: "*A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.*"⁶¹ His friends were moral, loyal, and faithful people like him. Only a friend who helps to fulfill one's responsibilities toward his Creator would contribute to one's happiness in this world and the afterlife. For this reason the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Know that my friends among you are the ones who has taqwā.*"⁶²

Today people are feeling more and more alone and need friends who would share their problems and stretch out their hand when they are in distress, ill, or alone. People are in need of friends who would be able to share with them their worldly problems and their happiness but also friends that will be able to support them to achieve salvation in the Hereafter. Loving without expectations, being loyal to friends, and protecting them with fidelity are among the virtues that we are unfortunately losing. Still, it is possible to transfer these virtuous to the new generation so that they can learn how they should love just for the sake of Allah (swt) and make friends just for the sake of Allah. All of this can be done through learning about the Messenger of Allah's friendships. It is true that when mutual interests disappear, friendships may come to an end. To love for the sake of Allah is just to expect rewards from Allah (swt), and one should hold on to his friends and know them like himself. No interest can terminate such a friendship. For believers the best example of a genuine friendship is the one that the Messenger of Allah (saw) firmly established with his Companions (ra), who always said to him, "May my parents be sacrificed to you."

⁵⁷ B4141, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35; M7020, Muslim, al-Tawba, 56.

⁵⁸ M6513, Muslim, al-Birr, 11.

⁵⁹ M6278, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 75.

⁶⁰ T3875, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 61.

⁶¹ D4833, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 16; T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45.

⁶² MA19897, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, XI, 55.



THE PROPHET (SAW)'S LOVE FOR HIS UMMA MY UMMA! MY UMMA!

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ أُمَّتِي كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا، فَجَعَلَتِ الدَّوَابُّ
وَالْفَرَاشُ يَقَعْنَ فِيهِ، فَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِحُجَزِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَقَحَّمُونَ فِيهِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “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.”

(M5955, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 17)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَأَنَا أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، اقْرَءُوا إِنْ شِئْتُمْ: ﷺ النَّبِيُّ
أَوْلَى بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ﷺ فَأَيُّمَا مُؤْمِنٍ تَرَكَ مَالًا فَلْيَرِثْهُ عَصْبَتُهُ مَنْ كَانُوا، فَإِنْ
تَرَكَ دِينًا أَوْ ضِيَاعًا فَلْيَأْتِنِي، وَأَنَا مَوْلَاهُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَبِي قَتَادَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنِّي لَأَقُومُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُطَوِّلَ فِيهَا، فَأَسْمَعُ بُكَاءَ الصَّبِيِّ فَاتَجَوَّزُ فِي
صَلَاتِي، كَرَاهِيَةً أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَى أُمِّهِ.“



حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ دَعْوَةٌ دَعَاها لِأُمَّتِهِ. وَإِنِّي اخْتَبَأْتُ دَعْوَتِي شَفَاعَةً لِأُمَّتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“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.”*

(B4781, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 1)



According to the father of ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Qatada (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“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 to trouble the child’s mother.”*

(B707, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 65)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“There is for every messenger a prayer which is granted. I have, however, reserved my prayer for the intercession of my umma on the Day of Resurrection.”*

(M494, Muslim, al-Iman, 341)



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 *umma* (community). 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 *umma* 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*

¹ D2775, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 162.

² Al-Nisa', 4:116.

³ M2005, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 43.

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 his *umma* 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 *umma*.

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 *umma*.

The love of the Prophet (saw), who was known as the Generous, for his *umma* 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 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 *umma* by saying “*O Lord, my umma! My umma!*”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*

⁴ M5955, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 17

⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:128

⁶ Al-i Imran, 3:159.

⁷ Al-Shuara, 26:215.

⁸ Al-Hijr, 15:88.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:113.

¹⁰ Muhammad, 47:19.

¹¹ B7510, Al-Bukhari, Al-Tawhid, 36; M479 Muslim, al-Iman, 326.

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, *“Messenger of Allah, how would you recognize those persons of your umma who have not yet been born?”* As an answer, the holy Prophet said, *“Supposing a man had horses with white blazes on foreheads and legs among horses which were all black, tell me, would he 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. Some people will be driven away from my cistern as the stray camel is driven away.”*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 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*

¹² M584, Muslim, al-Tahara, 39.

¹³ Al-Ahzab, 33:6

¹⁴ Al-Tawba, 9:103

¹⁵ Al-Anbiya’, 21:107.

¹⁶ B1006, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa, 2; M4675, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 129; D2606, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 78.

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 *umma*, 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 *umma* while sacrificing an animal. Once, after sacrificing a horned ram, he said, “*This is from me and from my umma 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 owners. Once he witnessed a disagreement between Ka’b b. Malik and ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Hadrād (ra) over a payment. He signaled Ka’b b. Malik with his hand, asking him to

¹⁷ N2024, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 94; IM1528, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 32.

¹⁸ M6366, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 137; B3020, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 154.

¹⁹ HM11066, Ibn Hanbal, III, 8

²⁰ M4160, Muslim, al-Faraid, 16.

²¹ M2351, Muslim, al-Zakat, 69.

²² B4781, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab), 1.

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 *umma* directly. Therefore, the ill shared their troubles 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 *umma*, 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

²³ B2706, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 10; M398, Muslim, al-Musaqat.

²⁴ M5316, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 142.

²⁵ HM838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 107.

²⁶ M2215, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 71; B458, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 72.

²⁷ M4479, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 8.

²⁸ B5684, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 4; T2080, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 29.

²⁹ M5709, Muslim, al-Salam, 47.

³⁰ B1304, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 44; M2137, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 12.

³¹ B3064, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 184.

³² M1545, Muslim, al-Masajid, 297; B4095, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 29.

³³ M1550, Muslim, al-Masajid, 302; B6394, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 58.

³⁴ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

heart. He reported, “We came to the Prophet (saw). We were all young and about the same age. We stayed with 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 *umma* 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 *umma* to perform the night ritual 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 *tarāwih* 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 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 *umma*. 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 *umma*’s salvation. This is the prayer for the salvation of his *umma* 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 gladdening of the forgiveness of his *umma*, the heat of the hot sand that burned his forehead turned to the coolness of the waters of Paradise in his heart.

³⁵ M1535, Muslim, al-Masajid, 292; B631, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 18.

³⁶ B707, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 65.

³⁷ B7239, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 9; M1445, Muslim, al-Masajid, 219.

³⁸ B1128, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 5; M1662, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 77.

³⁹ M1783, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 177; B7290, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 3.

⁴⁰ M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29.

⁴¹ B7068, al-Bukhari, al-Fitan, 6; B3792, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 8.

⁴² M494, Muslim, al-Iman, 341.

⁴³ B438, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 56; M1163, Muslim, al-Masajid, 3.



THE MUSLIM UMMA YOU ARE THE MOST RIGHTEOUS UMMA

عَنْ بَهْزِ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ:
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّكُمْ وَفَيْتُمْ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً. أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُهَا، وَأَكْرَمُهَا عَلَى اللَّهِ.“

It was reported from Bahz b. Hakim from
his father that his grandfather (ra) said,
“I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘You complete seventy nations, of
which you are the best and dearest to Allah.’”

(IM4288, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 34)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ وَنَحْنُ السَّابِقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ، إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى“، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ يَأْبَى؟ قَالَ:
”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَثَلُ أُمَّتِي مَثَلُ الْمَطَرِ لَا يُدْرَى أَوَّلُهُ خَيْرٌ أَمْ آخِرُهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ يَعْنِي الْأَشْعَرِيَّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَجَارَكُمْ مِنْ ثَلَاثِ خِلَالٍ: أَنْ لَا يَدْعُو عَلَيْكُمْ نَبِيُّكُمْ فَتَهْلِكُوا جَمِيعًا،
وَأَنْ لَا يَظْهَرَ أَهْلُ الْبَاطِلِ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ، وَأَنْ لَا تَجْتَمِعُوا عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“We are the last to come to this world and we will be the first on the Day of Judgement.”*

(M1979, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 19)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse.”* They said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Who will refuse?” He said, *“Whosoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whosoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it).”*

(B7280, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 2)



According to Anas (b. Malik) (ra) the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The parable of my umma is that of rain; it is not known if its beginning is better or its end.”*

(T2869, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 81)



According to Abu Malik al-Ash’ari (ra) the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah has protected you from three things: That your Prophet should not invoke a curse on you and you should all perish, that those who follow what is false should not prevail over those who follow the truth, and that you should not all agree on an error.”*

(D4253, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 1)



Sent as a blessing to the universe, our cherished Prophet¹ always treated his Companions (ra) kindly and compassionately. He taught them about this world and he also gave them a depiction of the afterlife and prepared them for it. One day yet again the Messenger of Allah (saw) was with his Companions (ra) and giving them a detailed description of the Day of Judgement. He told them, *“The situation of all the ummas on the Day of Judgement were shown to me. I saw one prophet passing by with one person, the other with a large group of his followers and another prophet passed by alone. And then I looked and saw a large multitude of people, I hoped that they were my umma. I was instead told that they were the umma of Prophet Moses, but then I was told to look toward the horizon. I looked and saw a very large multitude of people. Then, I was told to look the other way. When I turned my head, I saw a larger group of people. I was told that those were my followers, and those are the seventy thousand (persons) in front of them who will neither have any reckoning of their accounts nor will they receive any punishment.”*

The Companions (ra) were as always patiently listening to him and eagerly awaited the rest of the discourse. However, the Messenger of Allah (saw) seemed to need to leave for a short time. Everyone was attentive but with the enthusiasm concerning the Prophet’s good news nobody had asked who the people would be who would be allowed to go to Paradise without any reckoning. The Messenger of Allah did not give any further clarification. Thus, the Companions (ra) started to talk among themselves. Some of them said, “We were born as polytheists but then embraced Islam and believed in Allah and his Messenger. For this reason, we will go to Paradise. However, the people that the Messenger of Allah (saw) spoke about are our children.” Others said, “It was because of us that our children were born in a Muslim *umma*.” There were various opinions given. When the Prophet (saw) heard them speaking in this manner he announced, “People

¹ Al-Anbiya’, 21:107.

who will go to Paradise without reckoning are the people who do not believe in ill luck, who do not cast a spell and who do not cauterize their bodies. They are the people who trust only their Allah.”

After this, the Companion ‘Ukkasha (ra), also known as Abu Muhsin, stood up and approached the Messenger of Allah (saw). He was wearing clothing with a black and white pattern just like a tiger pelt.² With the confidence that he was one of the Muhajirun, and had fought at the battles of Uhud and the Khandaq,³ he made the following candid request, “O Allah’s Messenger! Invoke Allah that He may make me one of them.” The Prophet (saw) said, “O Allah, make him one of them.” Another man from the Ansar got up and made the same request. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Ukkasha has preceded you.*”⁴

At one point they were few in number but later, they would become a blessed community and multiply as the waves a stone makes when thrown into the water. They will be honored in the afterlife by Allah (swt) and his Messenger in terms of their quality and their quantity. How can they not be? They were the ones that were able to clean the rust out of a distorted and altered religion and they were the ones who revived Allah’s invitation. Their source of superiority was not because of race, tribe, wealth, or power but because of their loyalty to Allah and His Messenger. Thus, they assumed the burden that other *ummas* were unable to carry. The Messenger of Allah (saw) depicted the distinctness of his *umma* in the following words: *“The example of the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians is like the example of a man who employed laborers to work for him from morning until night for specific wages. They worked until midday and then said, ‘We do not need your money, which you have set for us, and let whatever we have done be annulled.’ The man said to them, ‘Don’t quit the work, but complete the rest of it and take your full wages.’ But they refused and went away. The man employed another batch after them and said to them, ‘Complete the rest of the day and yours will be the wages that I had set for the first batch.’ So, they worked until the time of the ‘Asr prayer. Then they said, ‘Let what we have done be annulled and keep the wages you have promised us for yourself.’ The man said to them, ‘Complete the rest of the work, as only a little of the day remains,’ but they refused. Thereafter he employed another batch to work for the rest of the day and they worked for the rest of the day until the sunset, and they received the wages of the two former batches. So, that was the example of those people (Muslims) and the example of this light (guidance) which they have accepted willingly.”*⁵

² B6542, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 50.

³ IBS584, Ibn ‘Abd al-Bar, *Isti‘ab*, p. 584.

⁴ B5752, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 42; M524, Muslim, Al ‘Imran, 371; T2446, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 16.

⁵ B2271, al-Bukhari, al-Ijara, 11.

Another portrayal by our Prophet of his *umma* was as follows: “Allah asked, ‘Who will work for me until midday for one qirat each?’ The Jews worked for half a day for one qirat each. Then Allah asked, ‘Who will do the work for me from midday to the time of the ‘Asr (prayer) for one qirat each?’ The Christians worked from midday until the ‘Asr prayer for one qirat. Then Allah asked, ‘Who will do the work for me from ‘Asr until sunset for two qirats each?’ The Prophet (saw) added, ‘It is you (i.e., Muslims) who are doing the work from ‘Asr until sunset, so you will have a double reward. The Jews and the Christians got angry and said, ‘We have done more work but got fewer wages.’ Allah said, ‘Have I been unjust to you as regards your rights?’ They said, ‘No.’ So Allah said, ‘Then it is My Blessing which I bestow on whomever I like.’”⁶

Our Almighty Allah sent many prophets to previous *ummas*. However, the Jews opposed their prophets and refuted them;⁷ likewise, the Christians were not loyal to the Prophet Jesus and distorted the religion by considering their Prophet as Allah.⁸ After Judaism and Christianity, the flag of prophethood was given to the Prophet of Islam and his *umma*. The duty to believe in the *tawhīd* and live accordingly was given to Muhammad’s *umma*. The Muslim *umma*, which has faith based on revealed religion, contrary to the other *ummas*, preserved the essence of this religion. In this way, they were honored by Allah’s favor and grace. In fact, although sent at different times to different nations, the source of all divine religions has always been the same. All of them were nourished from the same revelation, were the objects of the same divine assertions. The essence of these faiths goes back to the Prophet Abraham. All three religions embraced Abraham; however, “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was upright and devoted to Allah, never an idolater.”⁹ Therefore, it was said in the Holy Qur’an, “The people who are closest to Abraham are those who truly follow his ways, this Prophet, and [true] believers—Allah is close to the [true] believers.”¹⁰

In the Holy Qur’an it was declared that this *umma* was chosen to be given the trust.¹¹ It was the *umma* which performed good deeds and refrained from evil,¹² was invited to benevolence,¹³ behaved justly,¹⁴ and was an example¹⁵ to others. Allah Almighty said, “Believers, you are the best community singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah.”¹⁶ He described this *umma* as a “balanced *umma*.”¹⁷ In other words, it was an *umma* that avoided exaggeration and understatement; it followed the middle road in behavior and belief; and it was an example of

⁶ B3459, al-Bukhari al-Anbiya’, 50; T2871, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 82.

⁷ Al-Ma’ide, 5:70.

⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4:171.

⁹ Al-‘Imran, 3:67.

¹⁰ Al-‘Imran, 3:68.

¹¹ Al-Hajj, 22:78.

¹² Al-‘Imran, 3:110.

¹³ Al-‘Imran, 3:104.

¹⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:181.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

¹⁶ Al-‘Imran, 3:110.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

justice, common sense, moderation, and righteousness. The people of this *umma* have set an example for other people as they stay away from extremism, and adopt the characteristics of moderation and integrity. On the day when the Noble Prophet will be a witness for all of mankind,¹⁸ his *umma* will be an example for good people.¹⁹

Muhammad's *umma*, which he qualified as "*The most precious and righteous in the eyes of Allah*,"²⁰ will lead humanity in the afterlife as a model. Our Prophet informed us that his *umma* was superior to previous *ummas*, he praised his *umma* as the group of people who received the last divine scripture. He gave them these glad tidings, "*We are the last (but) we will be the first on the Day of Resurrection, and we will be the first to enter Paradise, even though they were given the Book before us and we were given it after them.*"²¹ The people of his *umma* will benefit from the water of the afterlife that is sweeter than honey²² and whiter than snow,²³ and their cups of water will be as many as the number of stars.²⁴ His *umma* will also be allowed access to his blessed pond in the afterlife. The Prophet (saw) said, "*Indeed there is a pool for every prophet, and indeed they compete to see which of them has the most people arriving at it. Indeed I hope that mine will be the one with the greatest influx.*"²⁵

How can the high number of people from the *umma* who will be allowed entrance to Paradise not be a source of happiness for a prophet? In fact, at the beginning of his mission their number was so few that when our Prophet saw one thousand infidel soldiers in the Battle of Badr, he turned toward the Qibla and prayed, "*O Allah! Accomplish for me what You have promised to me. O Allah, bring about what You have promised to me. O Allah! If you destroy this band of adherents to Islam, you will not be worshiped upon the earth.*"²⁶

The seeds that the esteemed Companions (ra) sowed with their loyalty and sincerity sprouted, and began to bear their fruit in the following centuries. The *umma's* acceptance of the divine message was crowned with the blessings of the Hereafter. The Prophet (saw) gave guidance to his *umma*, and gave them glad tidings by saying, "*Whoever obeys me will gain Paradise.*"²⁷ Once the Messenger of Allah (saw) was with forty Companions²⁸ and he said to them, "*Are you not pleased that you should constitute one-fourth of the inhabitants of Paradise?*" They said, "*Allāhu Akbar.*" Then he again said, "*Are you not pleased that you should constitute one-third of the inhabitants of Paradise?*" They once more said, "*Allāhu Akbar.*" The Noble Prophet finally said, "*I hope that*

¹⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:41.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:143; B3339, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 3; IM4284, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 34.

²⁰ T3001, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 3; IM4288, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 34.

²¹ HM23640, Ibn Hanbal, V, 383.

²² M1979-M1980, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 19-20; B896, al-Bukhari, al-Jum'a, 12.

²³ T3361, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 108.

²⁴ T2444, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 15.

²⁵ T2443, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 14.

²⁶ T3081, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 8; HM208, Ibn Hanbal, I, 31.

²⁷ B7280, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 2.

²⁸ M530, Muslim, al-Iman, 377.

*you will constitute half of the inhabitants of Paradise and I shall explain to you its (reason). The believers among the unbelievers will not number more than a white hair on (the body of a) black ox or a black hair on (the body of a) white ox.”*²⁹

It will not be difficult for the Prophet (saw) to recognize his *umma* among other *ummas* on that fateful day. When he was asked how he would recognize his *umma* while waiting by the pool in the hereafter, he replied, “Do you not think that if a man has a horse with a white blaze and white feet among horses that are solid black, he will recognize his horse?” They replied, “Of course, he would.” The Prophet (saw) said, “They will come on the Day of Resurrection with glittering white faces and glittering white hands and feet because of wudu’ and I will reach the pool before them.”³⁰

The Messenger of Mercy called the first generation of Muslims as “My Companions,” and called the *umma* who came after him as “My brothers.”³¹ The Prophet (saw) said many good things for those Muslims who were unable to see him in person but still loved him immensely, “There are people from my *umma* who will come after me, and love me so much that they would sacrifice their family and property and wish to see me instead.”³² Despite the fact that his *umma* later lived in different times and places, they still all carried the same spirit. Although the noble Companions (ra) had the honor of living with the Messenger of Allah (saw), the fact that the entire *umma* believed in the same values is truly virtuous. The Messenger of Allah depicted the entire *umma*’s virtues in the following statement: “The parable of my *umma* is that of rain; it is not known if its beginning is better or its end.”³³

Since our beloved Prophet was the last Prophet, he had some special qualifications that were not given to other prophets. In like manner his *umma* also had additional privileges because the Prophet (saw) informed us that Almighty Allah had not only made him exceptional compared to other prophets but had also made his *umma* exceptional compared to previous *ummas*.³⁴ While previous *ummas* needed to pray in specific places, all of the earth was made ritually pure for our Prophet and his *umma*, and the whole world was dedicated as a place for prostration (*masjid*). The spoils of war were forbidden to other *ummas*, but were made permissible to Muhammad’s *umma*.³⁵

For congregational prayers, the Jews chose Saturday; the Christians chose Sunday, and later the Muslim chose Friday. The Muslim *umma*, which was sent the final religion, will precede the members of the oth-

²⁹ M529, Muslim, al-Iman, 376.

³⁰ N150, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 110; M584, Muslim, al-Tahara, 39.

³¹ M584, Muslim, al-Tahara, 39.

³² M7145, Muslim, al-Janna, 12.

³³ T2869, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 81.

³⁴ T1553, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 5.

³⁵ B438, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 56; M1163, Muslim, al-Masajid, 3.

ers in the afterlife and the Muslims will be judged before everyone else.³⁶ Moreover, our Prophet gave glad tidings of Paradise even for those who committed grave sins but died believing in Allah's existence and unity.³⁷

According to the Prophet (saw), the Muslim *umma*, which has the honor of being the most righteous community, will fulfill its given duty and continue its existence until the end of the world. The Messenger of Allah said, "A group of my followers will keep on following Allah's laws strictly and they will not be harmed by those who will have no faith in in them or stand against them until Allah's order (The Hour) will come while they will be in that state."³⁸

The Prophet (saw), who held his *umma* dear and had so much grace and compassion for it, continuously prayed for it on every occasion.³⁹ Once he asked Allah (swt) not to destroy them through famine.⁴⁰ Muhammad's *umma* was protected from the calamities which had affected previous *Umma*'s through Allah's mercy and favor. Hence, as our Master the Prophet, indicated, this *umma* will not be destroyed by a prophet's curse, evil ones will not prevail over the righteous, and believers will not be overwhelmed by evil behavior or mindset.⁴¹ Nor will they be destroyed altogether by drowning.⁴² However, the most serious test that the Muslim *umma* will experience is the possibility of having their unity and solidarity undermined and descending into *fitna*.⁴³ The best way to avoid failing this test is to cling to the Muslim brotherhood that was encouraged by Allah (swt) and His Messenger.

The torch that the Messenger of Allah (saw) lit in the early years of Islam grew so bright that it illuminated all subsequent centuries. Souls that were adorned with faith developed affinities for each other. They transcended earthly boundaries such as race, color, language, and status. Muslims became brothers and sisters, and formed one body. They took pleasure in belonging to the one and the same essence and to the one faith. When they stand for their prayers facing the Ka'ba, or when they circumambulate the Ka'ba, they demonstrate the finest ideals of being one and unified. The exemplary Prophet shouldered the exemplary *umma* as a divine burden and received praise for this. His *umma* also received the following glad tiding:

"Every prophet has a (special) supplication which is answered. Verily, I have reserved mine as intercession for my *umma*, and it will reach, if Allah wills, those of them who die while not associating anything with Allah."⁴⁴

³⁶ M1982, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 22; N1369, al-Nasa'i, al-Jum'a, 1.

³⁷ M272, Muslim, al-Iman, 153; B5827, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 24.

³⁸ B7460, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid 29.

³⁹ IM395, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 9; HM22433, Ibn Hanbal, V, 241.

⁴⁰ T2175, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 14.

⁴¹ D4253, Abu Da'ud, al-Malahim, 1.

⁴² IM3951, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 9; HM22433, Ibn Hanbal, V, 241.

⁴³ T2175, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 14.

⁴⁴ M491, Muslim, al-Iman, 338; T3602, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 130.



THE PROPHET (SAW) MAN OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ فَأَتَاهُ
رَجُلٌ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ جَاءَ لِيُعَلِّمَ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ.“

Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, “One day when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was with his *umma*, a man approached him... The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘This is Jibril, He came in order to instruct people in matters of religion.’”

(M97, Muslim, al-Iman, 5)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ رَافِعٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ:
يَخْتَصِمَانِ فِي مَوَارِيثَ وَأَشْيَاءَ قَدْ دَرَسَتْ فَقَالَ:
”إِنِّي إِنَّمَا أَقْضِي بَيْنَكُمْ بِرَأْيِي فِيمَا لَمْ يُنْزَلْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ.“



عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ، وَإِنَّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ إِلَيَّ فَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْحَنَ بِحُجَّتِهِ مِنْ
بَعْضٍ فَأَقْضِي لَهُ عَلَى نَحْوِ مَا أَسْمَعُ مِنْهُ فَمَنْ قَضَيْتُ لَهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ حَقِّ أَخِيهِ فَلَا
يَأْخُذَنَّ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا أَقْطَعُ لَهُ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ.“



‘Abd Allah b. Rafi‘ reported, “As I heard from Umm Salama (ra), when two people disputed over inheritance and sought advice from the Holy Prophet (saw), he said, *‘I decide between you on the basis of my opinion in cases about which no revelation has been sent down to me.’*”

(D3585, Abu Da‘ud, al-Qada‘ (al-Aqdiyya), 7)



According to Umm Salama (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“I am only a human being, and you people (litigants) 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.”*

(MU1402, Muwatta‘, al-Aqdiyya, 1; B7169, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 20)



It was one of the days in which he secluded himself on mount Hira. There Muhammad the Trustworthy had a completely new experience. He never expected the creature that confronted him all of a sudden. He did not know the source of the words he heard. He returned home in fear and excitement. After getting some rest and calming down, he said, “*I had feared for myself*,” and then told everything to his wife in detail.

The faithful Khadija (ra) said, “No, I swear to Allah that Allah would never embarrass you. Because you take care of your relatives, undertake responsibilities of the needy, provide income for the poor, entertain guests, help others in problems.” And then she took the Prophet to Waraqa b. Nawfal. This old and blind man had converted to Christianity in the Jahiliyya period. He could read and write Hebrew and wrote verses from the Bible in Hebrew whenever he could.

Khadija said to Waraqa, “My uncle’s son! Listen what your brother’s son says.” When Waraqa asked, “My brother’s son! What did you see?” the Messenger of Allah (saw) told him what he had seen. Then Waraqa said, “What you had seen must be Jibril whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would drive you out of this city.” Then our Master the Prophet said, “*Will they drive me out?*” Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, “Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive until the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly.” But Waraqa died a short while after this conversation.¹

Waraqa was a wise man with whom the Last Messenger and his wife had sought counsel after the excitement of first revelation. However, as some Westerners argue, he was not the source of knowledge for the Prophet. He was a monotheist Christian and he confessed that Holy Muhammad

¹ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1.

was the last prophet. Our Master the Prophet was relieved after he heard from Waraqa that the creature was an angel and what he said was revelation.

Like every other Meccan who was born and raised in the city, and engaged in trade, the generous Prophet had some experience in the world and, as an intelligent man, he had a great erudition. However, as the Supreme Allah attested in the Holy Qur'an; he had never read from a book or written down anything.² Contrary to what was claimed, he was not taught by another person.³ He neither dictate to anyone, nor read historical stories day and night.⁴ In fact, he did not know what was the Book and what was the faith.⁵ Furthermore, he never expected that a Book like this would be given to him. However, with His mercy, Allah Almighty revealed a book, the Holy Qur'an, to him.⁶

The ultimate source of knowledge for this "illiterate"⁷ Prophet, who did not follow any other prophet and book, was revelation from Allah (swt). He was the first person who believed in this revelation.⁸ He learned about faith and its pillars, types and conditions of prayers, and moral virtues from the revelation. When asked about the Messenger of Allah's behavior, 'A'isha (ra) said, "His morality is the morality of the Holy Qur'an."⁹ Through verses and *sūras*, the Holy Qur'an transformed Muhammad the Trustworthy, who was raised in the Arab tradition until the age of forty but refrained from every bad habit. The Qur'an taught him and educated the public. In both Mecca and Medina, revelations guided him all the time. It was the Holy Qur'an that ordered him to have patience against all oppression in Mecca,¹⁰ and let him fight against the infidels in Medina.¹¹ As a result, he became the living Qur'an. He ordered his *umma* to embrace the Holy Qur'an, and said, "*I have left among you the Book of Allah, and if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray.*"¹²

It was the Holy Qur'an that determined not just the holy Prophet's morality but also his Sunna and life style. The Holy Qur'an was the source of most of his decisions. His decisions could be extrapolated from the interpretation of one verse or the entire Qur'an.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was ordered to obey what was revealed to him¹³ and govern people with the Book sent by Allah (sw).¹⁴ As a result of these commends, the the Prophet (saw) disseminated his message when he received revelations and governed accordingly.¹⁵ If there were no revela-

² Al-'Ankabut, 29:48.

³ Al-Nahl, 16:103.

⁴ Al-Furqan, 25:5.

⁵ Al-Shura, 42:52.

⁶ Al-Qassas, 28:86.

⁷ Al-A'raf, 7:157-8.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:285.

⁹ M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

¹⁰ Al-Hud, 11:115; al-Nahl, 16:127.

¹¹ Al-Hajj, 22:39; al-Tahrim, 66:9.

¹² M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

¹³ Al-An'am, 6:106; al-Ahzab, 33:2.

¹⁴ Al-Ma'ida, 5:48.

¹⁵ B125, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 47; M694, Muslim, al-Hayd, 16; al-Baqara, 2:189, 215, 217, 220, 222.

tions, he would wait, and then answer questions with the help of a new revelation.¹⁶ If no revelation came, then he would decide based on the previously revealed verses.¹⁷ Sometimes, after deciding on a matter by using present verses, then he would act based on new verses about that matter.¹⁸ In some other instances, he made rulings not based on one verse but on the entire Qur'an. His *ḥadīths* in which he said that Allah (swt) asked us to treat everything nicely, to treat an enemy honorably even while fighting him in the battlefield, or to treat an animal nicely during the sacrifice were examples of this.¹⁹ The Noble Prophet must have reached these conclusions based on several Qur'anic verses about goodness, beauty, and *iḥsān*.

There were also other methods of communication besides the revelation from Allah (swt) to His Messenger. One took place when Jibril came to the Prophet (saw) and gave him information. Being responsible for establishing communication between Allah and His Messenger, Jibril visited the Prophet in various occasions. Once Jibril came disguised as a stranger, and asked the Prophet (saw) questions about Islam, imān (faith) and *iḥsān* and received very concise and good answers from the Prophet. After Jibril left, the Prophet said, "*That was Jibril who came to teach the people their religion.*"²⁰ Jibril also taught the Prophet how to do the wudu' in the early days of Islam;²¹ led the five-fold prayers in Mecca for two days, and showed him how to perform the ritual prayer,²² and recommended treating neighbors so well that the Prophet said, "*As if the neighbors will be assigned as our heirs.*"²³

Communication between Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) took place sometimes in the form of an inspiration, or an *ilqā'* (a feeling that was born in the heart of the Prophet). The divine *ḥadīths* (*Ḥadīth al-Qudsi*) were born as results of such communications. His dreams, which took place in the vocabulary of 'A'isha "as bright as the daylight,"²⁴ and his daydreams were also other kinds of divine communication. For example, after giving answers to the questions asked by Jewish scholars, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*I did not have any knowledge on these issues until that man asked about them. But Allah let me knew it.*"²⁵ He also said that the good and bad deeds of his *umma* were shown to him.²⁶

The Prophet (saw) took his dreams very seriously, interpreted them, and acted accordingly. Allah Almighty made some of his dreams come true.²⁷ In one for example, he saw that he was going to emigrate to a place

¹⁶ B7309, al-Bukhari, al-Ṭisām, 8; M4145, Muslim, al-Fara'id, 5.

¹⁷ B2860, al-Bukhari, al-Jihād, 48; M2290, Muslim, al-Zakat, 24.

¹⁸ B4747, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 3; al-Nur, 24:6-10; D2214, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 16, 17; al-Mujadala, 58:1-4.

¹⁹ M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57; D2814, Abu Da'ud, al-Dahaya, 10-11

²⁰ M93, M97, M99, Muslim, al-Imān, 1, 5, 7; B50, al-Bukhari, al-Imān, 37.

²¹ HM17619, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

²² D393, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 2; T149, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 1.

²³ B6014, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 28; M6685, Muslim, al-Birr, 140.

²⁴ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, al-Imān, 252.

²⁵ M716, Muslim, al-Hayd, 34.

²⁶ M1233, Muslim, al-Masajid, 57.

²⁷ Al-Fath, 48:27.

full of palm-date trees. He first thought that the place was Yamama or Hajar. After that, it was understood that it was Medina.²⁸

In the absence of Qur'anic verses, the Prophet (saw) could make decisions based on his opinion. On this matter, he said, *"I decide between you on the basis of my opinion in cases about which no revelation has been sent down to me."*²⁹ In making his decisions, he reminded listeners that he was a human being, and said, *"I am but a man to whom you bring your disputes. Perhaps one of you is more eloquent in his proof than the other, so I give judgement according to what I have heard from him. Whatever I decide for him which is part of the right of his brother, he must not take any of it, for I am granting him a portion of the Fire."*³⁰ Thus the Companions (ra) could have questioned his decisions by asking him whether they were based on his own opinion or revelation. During the heated time of the Battle of the Khandaq, the Prophet (saw) decided to withdraw from fighting and offer 1/3 of the date harvest of Medina to the enemy for a truce. He consulted with Sa'd b. Mu'adh and Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) on the issue. They said, "If this is a decision sent from the above, then go ahead and implement it! If this is your own decision and wish, still go ahead and implement it. We will obey to your decision! If it is your personal decision, then we do not have anything but our sword to give to them."³¹ Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, *"Had I been commanded to do anything, I would not seek your council. This is just my personal opinion,"* and accepted their suggestion.³²

On a few occasions, Allah Almighty found the Prophet's words, deeds, and practices incorrect and sent revelations to change them. For example, Allah (swt) corrected him when he was thinking about freeing the prisoners of war in the Battle of Badr in return for ransom, rather than killing them;³³ giving permission to those hypocrites who invented excuses in order not to join the Tabuk Expedition;³⁴ attempting to lead the funeral prayer of the leader of the hypocrites, 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy b. Salul;³⁵ avoiding to talk to a blind person, 'Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum (ra), while he was talking to the Meccan notables.³⁶

Some decisions of the Prophet (saw) could be revised by the warning of Jibril as well. For example, when a man asked whether his sins would be expiated if he had been killed in battle fighting against the enemy heroically, the Prophet (saw) said, "Yes." Then the Jibril revised his opinion by saying, "Except his debts."³⁷

²⁸ B7035, al-Bukhari, al-Ta'bir, 39; M5934, Muslim, al-Ru'ya, 20.

²⁹ D3585, Abu Da'ud, al-Qada' (al-Aqdiyya), 7.

³⁰ MU1402, al-Muwatta', al-Aqdiyya, 1; B7169, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 20.

³¹ VM2/476, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, II, 478.

³² MA9737, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 367.

³³ Al-Anfal, 8:67-68; M4588, Muslim, al-Jihad, 58.

³⁴ Al-Tawba, 9:43.

³⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:80-85; al-Munafiqun, 63:6; B5796, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 8.

³⁶ Al-'Abasa, 80:1-10; T3331, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 80.

³⁷ M4880, Muslim, al-Imara, 117.

In other instances, the Messenger of Allah (saw) changed his decisions after after thinking them over. For example, he prohibited having a sexual relationship with nursing mothers, but then gave permission for it after learning that Byzantines and Persians practiced this and that it did not harm the baby.³⁸

Some of the Prophet's decisions were based on analogical reasoning. For example, some Companions (ra) came to ask him what do to with a father who could not perform the Hajj because of his old age,³⁹ and with a mother who died before she fulfilled her sacrificial act during the Hajj. The Prophet (saw) told them that they needed to fulfill those rituals on behalf of the father and mother. Had they been in debt to someone, their heirs had to pay the debt. Therefore, they had to pay their debts to Allah (swt), since Allah deserved to be paid the most.⁴⁰

Some of the Prophet's decisions were based on his personal opinions. When he came to Medina, he saw people grafting their date-palm trees. When he asked about it, they said that they had been doing this all the time. Thereupon, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*I do not find it to be of any use.*" The people were informed about it and they abandoned this practice. Allah's Messenger (was later) on informed (that the yield had dwindled), whereupon he said, "*If there is any use of it, then they should do it, for it was just a personal opinion of mine, and do not go after my personal opinion.*"⁴¹ In other accounts, the Prophet (saw) was reported to have also said, "*You know the worldly affairs better than me.*"⁴² The phrase "worldly affairs" should be understood in such a way that the Prophet meant jobs requiring skills, not matters that would refer to a division between religious and worldly affairs.

Most of the Prophet's statements on medicine, illnesses, prognostications, and herbs were based on his own experience,⁴³ as well as on Arabic medical tradition.⁴⁴ In some of his statements on similar issues, however, he was inspired by the Holy Qur'an.⁴⁵ For example, to a person who had a stomachache, he suggested drinking water with honey.⁴⁶

The Messenger of Allah (saw) followed the tradition of the previous prophets in some instances. For example, he fasted on the day of 'Ashura'.⁴⁷ When he came to Medina, he saw the Jews fasting on the Day of 'Ashura' (Passover) in order to commemorate the day when Moses escaped from the hands of Pharaoh via the Red Sea. Whereupon he said, "*We are more loyal to Moses than you.*" And then he fasted on that day, and suggested that the

³⁸ M3564, Muslim, al-Nikah, 140; D3882, Abu Da'ud, al-Tibb, 16.

³⁹ N2640, al-Nasa'i, Manasik al-Hajj, 11.

⁴⁰ B7315, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 12.

⁴¹ M6127, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 140.

⁴² M6128, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 141.

⁴³ B3406, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 29; M5349, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 163.

⁴⁴ HM24884, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 66

⁴⁵ Al-Nahl, 16:69.

⁴⁶ B5684, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 4; M5770, Muslim, al-Salam, 91.

⁴⁷ M2637, Muslim, al-Siyam, 113.

Companions (ra) to do the same.⁴⁸ Once the fasting was established in the month of Ramadan, some people gave up fasting on that day, and others continued to fast.⁴⁹ In like manner, male circumcision had been the practice of the Arabs since the time of Abraham.⁵⁰ The Prophet (saw) adopted this practice because it was part of human nature,⁵¹ and established it as a “*sunna*” for Muslim males.⁵²

The Prophet (saw) also made use of some historical experience in his decision making processes. By saying, “*O Allah! I make the area which is in between Medina’s two mountains a sanctuary, as Abraham made Mecca a sanctuary,*”⁵³ he put Medina under his protection. This decision was made in relation to Abraham’s decision on prohibiting it. In so doing, the Prophet (saw) had a political strategy to attract Jews to Islam. But the Jews misunderstood this policy.⁵⁴ Their attitude resulted in changing the direction of the *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca.⁵⁵

In the long run, the Prophet (saw) changed this policy, and emphasized creating a unique Islamic identity. By saying, “*Whoever emulates the behavior of another nation, he is from them,*”⁵⁶ he warned his Companions (ra) who resembled polytheists and the People of the Book. Toward that end, the Prophet (saw) asked his Companions (ra) to be different from the polytheists⁵⁷ and Zoroastrians⁵⁸ by growing a beard and trimming the moustache, and from the Jews and Christians by dyeing their hair and beards.⁵⁹ Before institutionalizing the *adhān*, he did not accept the suggestions of using fire,⁶⁰ horn-blowing and bell-ringing⁶¹ for the call to prayer. Because these were the practices of other religions.

Many of the practices of the Messenger of Allah (saw) were the result of his consultations with the Companions (ra). In the absence of verses on various issues, he followed the divine order “*Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah,*”⁶² and sought council with his Companions (ra) all the time. Attesting this behavior, Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “None was more apt to seek the council of his Companions than the Messenger of Allah (saw).”⁶³

During consultation, the Prophet (saw) rejected some suggestions, and accepted others, and acted accordingly. He sought council with the Companions (ra) on so many matters, such as that of ‘A’isha’s *ifq*,⁶⁴ war strategies,⁶⁵ and treatment of prisoners of war.⁶⁶ During the Battle of Badr, he accepted the idea of Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra) who suggested building an ar-

⁴⁸ B3943, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 52; M2656, Muslim, al-Siyam, 127.

⁴⁹ B1893, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 1; M2640, Muslim, al-Siyam, 115.

⁵⁰ B3356, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 8; M6141, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 151.

⁵¹ B5889, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 63; M597, Muslim, al-Tahara, 49.

⁵² HM20994, Ibn Hanbal, V, 76.

⁵³ B2889, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 71; M3315, Muslim, al-Hajj, 456.

⁵⁴ TT3/173, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, III, 173.

⁵⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:142-150.

⁵⁶ D4031, Abu Da’ud, Ibn Libas, 4; HM5114, Ibn Hanbal, II, 50.

⁵⁷ B5892, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 64.

⁵⁸ M603, Muslim, al-Tahara, 55.

⁵⁹ B5899, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 67; M5510, Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 80.

⁶⁰ B606, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 2; M839, Muslim, al-Salat, 3.

⁶¹ B604, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 1; M83, Muslim, al-Salat, 1.

⁶² Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

⁶³ T1714, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jihad, 35; HM19136, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 329.

⁶⁴ B2661, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 15; M7020, Muslim, al-Tawba, 56.

⁶⁵ VM2/444, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 444-445.

⁶⁶ T3084, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 8.

bor to protect the Prophet;⁶⁷ before the Battle of the Khandaq, he adopted the idea of Salman who suggested digging ditches;⁶⁸ he accepted the idea of Tamim al-Dari who suggested building a pulpit to address the increasing size of the Muslim congregation;⁶⁹ and when he wanted to send letters of invitation to the neighboring Persian king, he made a stamp for himself because the Companions (ra) told him the Persian did not accept letters without stamp.⁷⁰

While he accepted several suggestions with regard to war strategy and politics, he rejected 'Umar's idea to wear silk clothes on Fridays and on the day the he meet with foreign delegations.⁷¹

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Mercy spared the life of 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh⁷² on the intercession of 'Uthman.⁷³ But he rejected the offer of his beloved friend, Usama, who asked him to pardon a woman thief from the Makhzum tribe.⁷⁴

In the above-mentioned instances, it is possible to observe that there were human elements in some of the Prophet's decisions. He used of various methods, such as reason, analogy, experience, local customs, historical knowledge, consultation, disagreements with the other religions, suggestions of the Companions (ra), and dreams. These practices eventually turned into the Prophetic Sunna.

Regardless of origin, whether the Holy Qur'an or Sunna, the rulings of the Prophet were binding for all the Muslims. According to a Qur'anic verse, when Allah (swt) and His Messenger made a ruling on a specific issue, it was incumbent upon the believing males and females to obey it.⁷⁵ Allah Almighty swore that no one could be a perfect believer unless he accepted the rulings of the Prophet (saw) when he made decisions in contested matters among the Muslims.⁷⁶

⁶⁷ HS3/168, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 168.

⁶⁸ HS4/182, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 182.

⁶⁹ D1081, Abu Da'ud, *al-Salat*, 214-215.

⁷⁰ M5481, Muslim, *al-Libas wa 'l-Zina*, 57; T2718, *al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Isti'dhan*, 25.

⁷¹ B886, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Jum'a*, 7; M5401, Muslim, *al-Libas wa 'l-Zina*, 6.

⁷² N4072, *al-Nasa'i*, *al-Muharaba*, 14.

⁷³ HS5/69, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, V, 69.

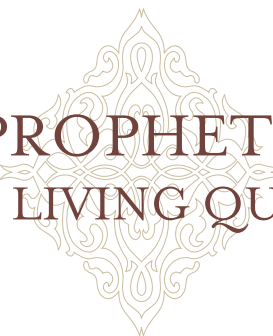
⁷⁴ B6788, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Hudud*, 12; M4411, Muslim, *al-Hudud*, 9.

⁷⁵ *Al-Ahzab*, 33:36.

⁷⁶ *Al-Nisa'*, 4:65.



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE LIVING QUR'AN



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ أَوْ مِنْ -أَوْ آمَنَ- عَلَيْهِ
الْبَشَرُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَحْيًا أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ، فَأَرْجُو أَنِّي أَكْثَرُهُمْ
تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“There was no prophet among the prophets but that he was given miracles
through which people had security or belief, but what I was given was the
Divine revelation which Allah revealed to me (the Holy Qur'an). So I hope
that my followers will be more than those of any other prophet on the Day of
Resurrection.”

(B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1; M385, Muslim, al-Iman, 239)



عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَدْ شَبَّتَ. قَالَ: "شَبَّيْتَنِي هُوْدُ وَالْوَاقِعَةُ وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ وَ عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ وَ إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ".



قَالَ عُمَرُ أَمَّا إِنَّ نَبِيَّكُمْ ﷺ قَدْ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْفَعُ بِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ أَقْوَامًا وَيَضَعُ بِهِ الْآخَرِينَ."



عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ هِشَامٍ... قَالَ قُلْتُ: يَا أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَدِّثِي عَن خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ. قَالَتْ: أَلَسْتُ تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّ خُلُقَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ الْقُرْآنَ...



According to Ibn ‘Abbas, Abu Bakr (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah, your hair has turned grey.” Upon hearing this, the Prophet said, “*The sūras of Hud, al-Waqi‘a, al-Mursalat, al-Naba’ and al-Takwir aged me.*”

(T3297, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 56)



‘Umar (ra) reported, “Your Prophet (saw) said the following about the Holy Qur’an: *‘Verily, with this book, Allah may elevate some communities and denigrate others.’*”

(M1897, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 269)



Sa’d b. Hisham (ra) said, “I asked the Mother of the Faithful, ‘A’isha (ra), ‘Tell me about the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw).’ She said, “Do you not recite the Holy Qur’an? Verily, the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the Holy Qur’an.””

(D1342, Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu‘, 26)



Until 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.¹ Although he knew the 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.²

‘A’isha (ra), who most probably heard this from the Prophet (saw), described his psychology 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) Khadija 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*

¹ Al-Duha, 93:7.

² “Muhammed,” *DĪA*, XXX, 410.

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."³ Then Allah's Messenger returned with the revelation and with his heart beating severely he went to Khadija b. Khuwaylid.⁴

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.⁵ 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 "*ḥanīf*."⁶

As pointed out by Almighty Allah, the Noble Messenger was an illiterate person, who could neither read nor write anything, especially a book.⁷ He did not know anything about scripture or faith⁸ nor did he ever expect to receive any divine revelation. Allah Almighty, with His abundant mercy, granted him the revelation, the Holy Qur'an.⁹ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following about the Holy Book: "*There was no prophet among the prophets but that he was given miracles through which people had security or belief, but what I was given was the divine revelation which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other prophet on the Day of Resurrection.*"¹⁰

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 *sūra* of 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 of the verses it is possible to see how the people around the Prophet (saw) were transformed from the Jahiliyya 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*

³ Al-'Alaq, 96:1-5.

⁴ M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252; B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

⁵ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

⁶ HS2/68, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 68.

⁷ Al-'Ankabut, 29:48.

⁸ Al-Shura, 42:52.

⁹ Al-Qasas, 28:86.

¹⁰ B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1; M385, Muslim, al-Iman, 239.

*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.*¹¹

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.”¹² The Messenger of Allah (saw) brought about this transformation because of the Holy Qur’an, and he entrusted it to his *umma*. In his Farewell sermon he said, “*I left something for you that if you hold on to it tightly, you will not go astray.*”¹³

One of the most important missions of the Prophet (saw) was to recite and proclaim the verses and *sūras* that were revealed to him.¹⁴ Allah (swt) cautioned the Prophet, “*Messenger, proclaim everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord.*”¹⁵ According to ‘A’isha (ra), based upon the above revelation, the Prophet said that those who accused him of hiding some revelations were fabricating lies¹⁶ and slandering Allah.¹⁷ Therefore, in no way can the act of hiding or changing revelations¹⁸ and making any addition to them¹⁹ be assumed for the Prophet.²⁰ 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.²¹

The Prophet (saw) was commended to obey the revelation, which was sent to him.²² It was not his responsibility to convert everyone to Islam, and make them obey Allah (swt). His only duty was to disseminate the message.²³ Having this awareness he is reported to have said, “*I am only a Messenger. It is Allah, He who shows the true path,*”²⁴ and “*Allah sent me as a Messenger, not as a compeller.*”²⁵ He was neither the people’s guardian²⁶ nor

¹¹ Al ‘Imran, 3:164.

¹² FH4/305, al-Qarafi, *Furuq*, IV, 305.

¹³ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

¹⁴ Al-Isra’, 17:106; al-Kahf, 18:27; al-Ankabut, 29:45.

¹⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5:67.

¹⁶ M439, Muslim, al-Iman, 287.

¹⁷ B4612, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma’ida) 7.

¹⁸ Yunus, 10:15.

¹⁹ Al-Haqq, 69:44-47.

²⁰ Al-Ankabut, 29:48; al-Qiyama, 75:16-9.

²¹ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

²² Al-An’am, 6:50, 106; Yunus, 10:109; al-A’raf, 7:203.

²³ Al ‘Imran, 3:20; al-Ma’ida, 5/92, 99; al-Nahl, 16:35, 82.

²⁴ HM17060, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 100.

²⁵ M3696, Muslim, al-Talaq, 35; T3318, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 66.

²⁶ Al-Ghashiya, 88:21-22.

their representative.²⁷ Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) devoted himself to guiding people to the true path so much that Allah (swt) counseled him several times²⁸ by saying, “[Prophet], are you going to worry yourself to death because they will not believe?”²⁹ 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 Islam³⁰ and was willing to lead the funeral prayer of the leader of the hypocrites.³¹

The Prophet (saw), besides reciting and explaining the revelation, had also the important responsibility of teaching people wisdom³² and many other object lessons that they did not know.³³ 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.³⁴

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.”³⁵ 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 the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black.”³⁶ 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.”³⁷

When the Qur’anic verse, “It is those who have faith and do not mix their faith with idolatry,”³⁸ 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,³⁹ ‘Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed.’” Then he explained that the verse refers to polytheism.⁴⁰

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

²⁷ Al-An’am, 6:66, 104-107.

²⁸ Al-‘Abasa, 80:1-2; al-Kahf, 18:6; al-Fatır, 35:8.

²⁹ Al-Shu‘ara’, 26:3-4.

³⁰ Al-Qasas, 28:56; al-Tawba, 9:113.

³¹ Al-Tawba, 9:84.

³² Al-Baqara, 2:129, 151.

³³ Al-‘Imran, 3:164; al-Jum‘a, 62:2.

³⁴ M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29; IM229, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 17.

³⁵ Al-Nahl, 16:44.

³⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:187

³⁷ B4510, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 28; M2533, Muslim, al-Siyam, 33.

³⁸ Al-An’am, 6:82.

³⁹ Luqman, 31:13.

⁴⁰ B4776, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Luqman) 1.

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 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 *tafsīr* (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 Sunna, 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 Sunna. In a way, the Holy Qur'an is the representation of the divine will, and the Prophetic Sunna 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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² Because he was the last prophet he had grave concerns not only for his *umma*, 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 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?*"⁴³ the Seal of the prophets spoke with tears running down his cheeks, "*It is enough already.*"⁴⁴ 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'a, al-Mursalat, al-Naba' and al-Takwir have aged me.*"⁴⁵

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was aware that the divine words were

⁴¹ M7124-M7126, Muslim, *Sifat al-Munafiqin*, 79-81; B1130, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 6.

⁴² M1814, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 203.

⁴³ Al-Nisa', 4:41.

⁴⁴ B5050, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 33; M1867, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 247.

⁴⁵ T3297, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 56.

the ones that gave life to mankind,⁴⁶ and granted them their spirit.⁴⁷ 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.*”⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ The Holy Qur’an was the foundation of his worldview, and it gave him guidance how to fight the infidels.⁵⁰

The Holy Qur’an was the most important source and support for our Master the 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.⁵¹ 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 the *sūra* of al-Qaf by listening to it from the Prophet. He recited it during every Friday Prayer.”⁵² 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 various verses and invoked the name of Allah (swt).⁵³ The Messenger of Allah recited the *sūras* of al-Sajda and al-Insan during the Friday fajr prayers,⁵⁴ and recited the *sūras* of al-Jum’a, and al-Munafiqin,⁵⁵ and at other times, al-A’la and al-Ghashiya.⁵⁶ On another occasion, he divided the *sūra* of al-A’raf into two and recited it during the maghrib prayer.⁵⁷ On another occasion, he recited the *sūras* of al-Qaaf, and Ya Sin during the Fajr prayer.⁵⁸

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 *sūra* of al-Tur. Although he was not a Muslim, Jabir was very impressed and

⁴⁶ Al-Anfal, 8:24

⁴⁷ Al-Shura, 42:52.

⁴⁸ M1897, Muslim, al-Musafrin, 269.

⁴⁹ Al-Nahl, 16:125-7.

⁵⁰ Al-Furqan, 25:52.

⁵¹ D1101, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 221, 223.

⁵² M2014, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 51.

⁵³ IM1106, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 85.

⁵⁴ B1068, al-Bukhari, Sujud al-Qur’an, 2.

⁵⁵ M2031, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 64; N1422, al-Nasa’i, al-Jum’a, 38.

⁵⁶ N1423, al-Nasa’i, al-Jum’a, 39.

⁵⁷ N992, al-Nasa’i, al-Ifitah, 67.

⁵⁸ HM16510, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 35.

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."⁵⁹

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."⁶⁰ On another occasion,⁶¹ 'A'isha (ra) reminded the Muslims of the Qur'anic verse, "*Truly you have a strong morality*,"⁶² and read the first nine verses of the *sūra* of al-Mu'minin.⁶³ When she was asked how the Prophet spent his nights, she replied with the *sūra* of al-Muzzammil.⁶⁴ 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 Sunna 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 *sūras* of al-Nas and al-Falaq,⁶⁵ and when he woke up for the midnight prayer, he recited the last ten verses of the *sūra* of Al 'Imran.⁶⁶ 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.

⁵⁹ HM16907, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 85.

⁶⁰ D1342, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 26.

⁶¹ IM2333, Ibn Maja, al-Ahkam, 14; HM25108, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 91.

⁶² Al-Qalam, 68:4.

⁶³ NK11350, al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Kubra*, VI, 412.

⁶⁴ M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

⁶⁵ B6319, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 12.

⁶⁶ B4572, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 20; M1789, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 182.



THE PROPHET (SAW) A SENSITIVE AND TENDER MAN



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”وُلِدَ لِي اللَّيْلَةَ غُلَامٌ فَسَمَّيْتُهُ بِاسْمِ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ -عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ-“ ... فَقَالَ
أَنَسٌ: لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ وَهُوَ يَكِيدُ بِنَفْسِهِ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَدَمَعَتْ عَيْنَا
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”تَدْمَعُ الْعَيْنُ وَيَحْزَنُ الْقَلْبُ وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يَرْضَى
رَبُّنَا وَاللَّهِ! يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ! إِنَّا بِكَ لَمَحْزُونُونَ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“This evening a son was born to me. I have named him after my forefather
Ibrahim (Abraham).”...Then Anas said, “I saw him when he was on the
verge of death in the hands of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The eyes of
the Messenger of Allah (saw) teared up and he said, ‘The eyes weep and
the heart is saddened, but we can only say what pleases our Lord. By Allah O
Ibrahim, we grieve for you.’”

(M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَشَدَّ حَيَاءً مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ فِي خِذْرِهَا،
فَإِذَا رَأَى شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ عَرَفَنَاهُ فِي وَجْهِهِ.



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: ... مَا انْتَقَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِنَفْسِهِ، إِلَّا أَنْ
تُنْتَهَكَ حُرْمَةُ اللَّهِ فَيَنْتَقِمَ لِلَّهِ بِهَا.



أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ كَعْبٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ كَعْبَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يُحَدِّثُ حِينَ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْ
تَبُوكَ قَالَ... وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا سُرَّ اسْتَنَارَ وَجْهُهُ، حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ قِطْعَةُ قَمَرٍ،
وَكُنَّا نَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ.



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَتْ:
مَا رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ ضَاحِكًا حَتَّى أَرَى مِنْهُ لَهَوَاتِهِ، إِنَّمَا كَانَ يَتَبَسَّمُ.



Ibn Sa'īd al-Khudri (ra) said,
“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.”

(B6102, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 72)



‘A’isha (ra) said, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) never took revenge for himself.
Only when Allah’s proscriptions were violated would he take revenge for
Allah.”

(B3560, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23)



‘Abd Allah b. Ka’b said, “I heard Ka’b b. Malik (ra) say, after he had
remained behind before the Battle of Tabuk, ‘... whenever the Messenger
of Allah (saw) was happy, his face used to shine, as if it were a piece of
the moon, and we used to recognize this (i.e., his happiness) from his
face.”

(B3556, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23)



‘A’isha (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), said, “I never saw the Messenger
of Allah (saw) laugh so much that one could see his uvula. He would only
smile.”

(B4828, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahqaf) 2; M2086, Muslim, al-Istisqa’, 16)



The Noble Messenger bade farewell his sons by Khadija, 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

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 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 Master, 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 and *"This is a mercy. No mercy will be shown who one who is not merciful. After someone dies, I forbid anyone to mourn by screaming and wailing."* 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

¹ TB2/214, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, II, 214.

² M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62.

³ ST1/136, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 13; B1303, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 43; M6026, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 63.

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

⁵ B1303, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 43.

⁶ M6025, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 62.

⁷ MA6672, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, III, 552; M6026, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 63.

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 Master bent over him and wept.⁸

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 Master 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 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

⁸ IM1475, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 13

⁹ HM22122, Ibn Hanbal, V, 204

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

¹¹ D3163, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 35-36; T989, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana’iz, 14.

¹² B1304, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 44; M2137, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 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 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 that he hastily put on a woman's robe. When those around him realized what had happened, they produced his own clothing for him.¹⁵

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

¹³ N1483, al-Nasa'i, al-Kusuf, 14; D1194, Abu Da'ud, al-Istisqa', 9.

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

¹⁵ M2108, Muslim, al-Kusuf, 16.

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

¹⁶ M2086, Muslim, al-Istisqa’, 16.

¹⁷ M6006, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 48.

¹⁸ HM19847, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 405.

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

²⁰ TSh226, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 97.

²¹ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

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 [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them—had you been harsh, or heard-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

²² Al-Anbiya', 21:107.

²³ M6613, Muslim, al-Birr, 87.

²⁴ B6102, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 72; IM4180, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17.

²⁵ B6336, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 19.

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

²⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

²⁸ M1041, Muslim, al-Salat, 179.

(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, 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 ‘Aisha (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 Khadija even after her death and throughout his life remembered her with goodness. This was so much so that ‘Aisha (ra), his youngest wife, could not help but feel jealous of Khadija many years later.³²

In the incident in which his beloved wife ‘Aisha (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 ‘Aisha (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 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 confuse jokes with untruths.³⁹ He often indulged in word play and while some people could not understand the humor of this,

²⁹ M7016, Muslim, al-Tawba, 53; N732, al-Nasa’i, al-Masajid, 38.

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

³¹ B3560, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M6045, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 77.

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

³³ Al-Nur, 24:11-21.

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

³⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:28-34.

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

³⁷ B3556, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 22.

³⁸ T1992, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 57.

³⁹ HM8462, Ibn Hanbal, II, 341.

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

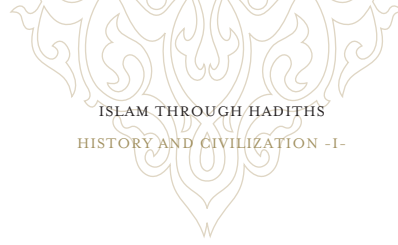
According to Jabir b. Samura (ra), who described the discussions, conversations, and close relations between the Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra), after the Messenger of Allah (saw) completed the fajr prayer, he remained in the place where he had prayed until sunrise. He only left after the sun 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 molar could be seen.”⁴⁴ ‘A’isha (ra), who knew our Master best, described the way he laughed as follows: “I never saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) laugh so hard that one could see his uvula. He would only smile.”⁴⁵

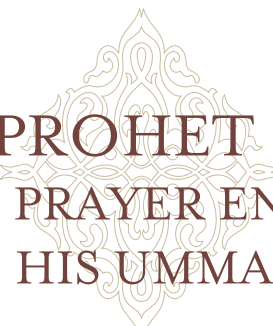
These characterizations, which have been passed down from the Prophet (saw), clearly show that Allah’s Messenger, who was an ordinary man, had feelings and behaved like other people and exhibited various emotional reactions depending on the circumstances. It was important for the Messenger of Allah (saw) 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 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

⁴⁰ D4998, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 84; TSh241, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Shama’il*, 105.
⁴¹ IM3443, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 3.
⁴² T1990, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 57 HM8462, Ibn Hanbal, II, 341.
⁴³ M1525, Muslim, al-Masajid, 286; ST2/372, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, II, 372.
⁴⁴ M461, M462, Muslim, al-Iman, 308, 309.
⁴⁵ B4828, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahqaf) 2; M2086, Muslim, al-Istisqa’, 16.



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 Master, 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.



THE PROHET (SAW) ONE WHOSE PRAYER ENCOMPASSED HIS UMMA

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَسْتَحِبُّ الْجَوَامِعَ
مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ وَيَدْعُ مَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ.

According to 'A'isha (ra), "The Messenger of Allah (saw) preferred universal prayers and forwent others (that were narrow and individualistic)."

(D1482, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23)



عَنْ أَبِي بَنْ كَعْبٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا ذَكَرَ أَحَدًا فَدَعَا لَهُ
بَدَأَ بِنَفْسِهِ.



عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَدْعُو بِهَذَا الدُّعَاءِ:
”رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي كُلِّهِ، وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي.
اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطَايَايَ وَعَمْدِي وَجَهْلِي وَجِدِّي، وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي. اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ
لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ، أَنْتَ الْمُقَدِّمُ، وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ،
وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يُعْجِبُهُ أَنْ يَدْعُو ثَلَاثًا
وَيَسْتَغْفِرَ ثَلَاثًا.



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ قَالَ دَعَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِدُعَاءٍ كَثِيرٍ لَمْ نَحْفَظْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا قُلْنَا
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! دَعَوْتَ بِدُعَاءٍ كَثِيرٍ لَمْ نَحْفَظْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا. قَالَ: ”أَلَا أَذْلُكُمْ
عَلَى مَا يَجْمَعُ ذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ؟ تَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا سَأَلَكَ مِنْهُ
نَبِيُّكَ مُحَمَّدٌ ﷺ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا اسْتَعَاذَ مِنْهُ نَبِيُّكَ مُحَمَّدٌ ﷺ
وَأَنْتَ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَعَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.“



According to Ubayy b. Ka'b (ra), whenever the Messenger of Allah (saw) would mention someone and pray for him, he would begin with himself.

(T3385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 10)



According to Ibn Abi Musa, his father (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) used to beseech Allah with the following prayer: *"My Lord! Forgive my errors, my ignorance, my going to extremes in any of my affairs, and any other forbidden things that I have done which you know better than me. My Allah! Also forgive the errors that I have committed knowingly or unknowingly, in jest or in earnest. This is because I have done all of these things. My Allah! Forgive the sins that I have committed and will commit and which I have done secretly and openly. You are the one who precedes and who comes after. You are omnipotent."*

(B6398, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 60)



According to 'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to like to pray three times and then ask Allah's pardon three times.

(D1524, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 26)



According to Abu Umama (ra), "The Messenger of Allah used to pray so much that we could not memorize a thing. So we said, 'O Messenger of Allah! You pray so much that we cannot memorize a thing.' Thereupon he said, *'Should I not teach you a prayer which would include everything? You should say, "O Allah! We ask you for the good which your Prophet Muhamad (saw) asked you and we seek refuge in You from the evil from which your Prophet (saw) sought refuge in You. You are the One from whom aid is sought. It is up to You to provide it. There is no power or strength except in Allah."*'"

(T3521, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 88)



One day our mother ‘A’isha (ra) asked Allah’s Messenger, “Have you ever experienced a more distressing day than the day of the Battle of Uhud?” Our Master answered, “*I certainly encountered many difficulties with regard to my people (the Quraysh), but the most bitter day that I ever encountered was the day of ‘Aqaba.*” And he described to his beloved wife some of the things that had happened to him there. When Allah’s Messenger (saw) was not able to get a positive answer to his invitation to the Meccan polytheists, he went to Ta’if to invite people to Islam and explained his situation to Ibn ‘Abd Yalil the son of ‘Abd Kulal. However, he did not give the answer that Allah’s Messenger expected to his call.¹

The person that the Prophet went to for protection was one of three brothers from the lineage of the Banu Sayf. When he went to Ibn ‘Abd Yalil, the other two brothers and a woman from the Quraysh were together with them. The Prophet (saw) sat next to them and invited them to Islam, but they began to belittle and insult our Master. The Prophet (saw), who realized that he would receive no favor from these people whose hearts were not yet open to the truth, did not press his invitation. He left after asking them to keep this conversation among themselves. This group, which showed no respect to the Prophet, did nothing to him personally but they encouraged the rabble to insult and attack him.² Thus a group of them who saw him on the road that he was following threw stones at him. Allah’s Messenger tried to get away from them, but his blessed feet were covered with blood.³ Eventually they followed him to the wall of the orchard of ‘Utba b. Rabi’a and Shayba b. Rabi’a. When he took refuge in the shade of a hanging arbor and sat there, the brothers ‘Utba and Shayba and a woman who was from the tribe of the Banu Jumah of the Quraysh came by and stared at him. In order to explain his helplessness to the woman from the Quraysh, Allah’s Messenger was not able to say anything except “*What did*

¹ B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 7.

² HS2/267, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 267-268.

³ IK2/151, Ibn Kathir, *Sira*, II, 151-52.

I take from these relatives of yours?” But no matter what he said, those who were there had no intention to respond to his hands which he extended asking for compassion.

Instead of seeking compassion from the group who had attacked him furiously, our Master preferred to take refuge in his Lord, who was “the most merciful of the merciful.” This was because He was the one who accepted his prayers. He was all alone. There was only one entity from which help could be asked. Allah’s Messenger (saw) opened his hands and, alone and in despair in the face of this brutal group, he prayed to his Lord as follows: *“My Allah! I submit to You that I am weak, in despair, and despised in the public eye and I implore You. O most merciful of the merciful! You are the Lord of the weak. You are my Lord. In whose hands are you leaving me? Those who are far from You and frown when they see me? Or have You left me in the hands of the enemy? If this is not because of Your anger toward me, I will not take heed. But Your forgiveness and compassion are greater for me (than Your wrath). Rather than incur Your wrath, I seek refuge in the light of Your face which illuminates the darkness and redresses all matters in this world and the next! Everything happens with Your approval. There is no power and strength except in You!”*⁴

Allah’s Messenger (saw) left Ta’if for Mecca in a sad and thoughtful manner. He took the road in this state as far as the region of Qarn al-Tha’alib. There he had a famous experience which demonstrated that the prayer which he had made in despair had been answered by Allah. Allah informed him by means of his envoy Jibril that, if he wished, this people who had oppressed him would be destroyed. Despite everything, the Prophet of Mercy did not curse them. Instead, he prayed to his Lord that a generation would appear from the descendants of these polytheists who would worship only Allah (swt) and who would not associate anything with Him.⁵

Yes, the last prophet who was sent as a mercy to the worlds was Allah’s beloved Messenger. Nevertheless, above all he was a human being. This fact is strongly emphasized in both the Holy Qur’an and by our Prophet himself.⁶ As an ordinary human he rejoiced, worried, was sometimes ill, and was subjected to various difficulties. Job, Zachariah, Jonah, and the other prophets, who had all been given the same mission before him, did they not also face many tribulations? And did not the Almighty Creator assist His prophets whom He had tasked with spreading His word when they fell into dire straits, opened their hands to Him, and beseeched Him in their despair?

⁴ HS2/267, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 267-268.

⁵ B3231, al-Bukhari, *Bad’ al-khalq*, 7.

⁶ Al-Kahf, 18:110.

Thus it was that our beloved Prophet also beseeched Allah (swt) when calamities befell him and turned only to Him for his requests and demands. When happy he expressed his gratitude by prostrating himself.⁷ When calamities occurred he took refuge in his Lord. In this way he did what pleased his Lord under all circumstances. At the same time he hoped that by means of prayer he would be saved from calamities that might occur to him.

The most frequent form of worship for the Messenger of Allah (saw) was prayer, which was the means of establishing contact with the Creator and the easiest way to transmit one's voice to Him. This was because prayer is the essence of worship⁸ and worship itself.⁹ In the course of every prayer, Allah's Messenger first of all remembered Allah (swt) and glorified Him. Recalling Allah was part of his prayer. However, when the Prophet (saw) remembered Allah his words did not consist of simply repeating certain words. Recalling Allah was a means of praising and thanking Allah for all the blessings that He had given. Therefore, prayers knitted with remembrance of Allah in beautiful fashion covered the entire life of our beloved Prophet. This was because every moment of life was provided with the blessings that Allah has given us. The Prophet (saw) told his community that the most wonderful word that he and the previous prophets had spoken was the word of "tawhid" (of Allah)¹⁰ and he told them that they should repeat it frequently, saying, "*The best remembrance of Allah is to say, 'Lā ilāha illā-llāh / There is no god but Allah...'*"¹¹ And he encouraged believers to say this phrase.¹² He adorned his language with prayer every moment of the day and was continuously entreating his Lord.

When the Prophet (saw) woke up in the morning, he would begin his day by saying, "*al-ḥamdu 'li-llāhi 'lladhī aḥyānā ba'd mā amātanā wa ilayhi 'l-nushūr*"¹³ (Praise be to Allah who will resurrect us after we die. To Him is the Day of Resurrection). And when he went to bed at night he would offer his thanks to his Lord with the prayer, "*al-ḥamdu 'li-llāhi 'lladhī aṭ'amanā wa saqānā wa kafānā wa āwānā fakam mimman lā kāfiya lahu wa lā mu'wiya*"¹⁴ (Praise be to Allah who has fed us, given us drink, satisfied us and given us refuge. Many there are who have no one to provide sufficiency for them, or give them refuge).

When Allah's Messenger ate or drank something, he would say, "*al-ḥamdu 'li-llāhi 'lladhī aṭ'amanā wa saqānā wa ja'alanā muslimīn*"¹⁵ (Praise be to Allah who has fed us, given us drink, and made us Muslims).

⁷ T1578, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 25.

⁸ T3371, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 1.

⁹ D1479, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23; T3372, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 1.

¹⁰ MU951, al-Muwatta', al-Hajj, 81.

¹¹ T3383, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 9.

¹² D1501, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 24.

¹³ B6314, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 8; M6887, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 59.

¹⁴ M6894, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 64; D5053, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 97-98.

¹⁵ T3457, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 55.

When he would get up at night to pray and stand for the ‘isha’ prayer, he would also beseech Allah (swt). Sometimes he would glorify Allah in the most eloquent fashion,¹⁶ and sometimes he would ask Allah for goodness and purity of heart.¹⁷ One night our mother ‘A’isha (ra) was surprised to find that the Messenger of Allah (saw) our Prophet was not in his bed and she started to search for him while groping in the dark. Finally, when her hand brushed against his legs while he was prostrating himself, she noticed that he was entreating his Lord. In his prayer, our beloved Prophet was both seeking refuge in Allah and glorifying Him, saying, “*a’ūdhu bi-riḍāka min sakhatika wa bi-mu’āfātika min ‘uqūbatika wa a’ūdhu bika minka, la uḥṣī thanā’alayka anta kamā athnayta ‘alā nafsika*”¹⁸ (I seek refuge in Your good pleasure from Your anger, and in Your mercy from Your punishment, and I seek refuge from You in You; I am not able to praise You [the way that You deserve], for You are as You have praised Yourself).

Our Master the Prophet completed everything he did, large or small, during his daily life with a prayer. Even when putting on his clothes he would say, “*allāhumma laka al-ḥamdu anta kasawtanihi as’aluka min khayrihi wa khayri mā ṣuni’a lahu wa a’ūdhu bika min sharrihi wa min sharri mā ṣuni’a lahu*”¹⁹ (O Allah! Praise be to You! As you have clothed me with this, I ask you for its good and the good of that for which it was made, and I seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil of that for which it was made).

When he went to take care of his toilet needs, he would say, “*allāhumma inni a’ūdhu bika min al-khubuthi wa ‘l-khabā’ith*”²⁰ (I seek refuge in You from all offensive and wicked things). When he left the toilet, he would thank Allah (swt) by saying, “*al-ḥamdu ‘l-llāhi ‘lladhī adhhaba ‘anni ‘l-adhā wa ‘āfāni*”²¹ (Praise be to Allah Who has relieved me of impurity and given me good health).

When our beloved Prophet would leave home, the following prayer would flow from his lips: “*bi-‘smi allāhi tawakkaltu ‘alā ‘llāhi, allāhumma innā a’ūdhu bika min an nazilla aw naḍilla aw nazlima aw nuzlama aw najhala aw yujhala ‘alaynā*”²² (In the name of Allah, I place my trust in Allah. O Allah! We seek refuge in You from slipping unintentionally or becoming misguided, or committing oppression or being oppressed, or acting ignorantly or being treated ignorantly).

When setting out on a journey, Allah’s Messenger would begin a prayer by saying, “*allāhumma anta al-ṣāhibu fī ‘l-safari, wa ‘l-khalīfatu fī ‘l-*

¹⁶ T3418, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 29; HM3368, Ibn Hanbal, I, 358.

¹⁷ HM26276, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 210.

¹⁸ M1090, Muslim, al-Salat, 222; D879, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 147-148.

¹⁹ D4020, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, I; HM11268, Ibn Hanbal, III, 29.

²⁰ B142, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 9; M831, Muslim, al-Hayd, 122.

²¹ IM301, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 10.

²² T3427, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 35.

ahli” (O Allah! You are the Companion in the journey, and the One Who looks after the family) and then seek refuge in Allah (swt) from the difficulties of the journey, from turning back regretfully, and from any evil that might befall his family and property.²³ During the journey he would praise Allah and ask Him to increase his blessings and protect him from Hell.²⁴

This sultan of the prophets, would seek refuge in Allah (swt) from bad things as much as he would ask for good. He advised his Companions (ra) to say, “*allāhumma inni a’ūdhu bika min al-bukhli wa a’ūdhu bika min al-jubni wa a’ūdhu bika an uradda ilā ardhalī ‘l-‘umuri wa a’ūdhu bika min fithat al-dunyā ya’nī fitnat al-dajjāl wa a’ūdhu bika min ‘adhāb al-qabr*”²⁵ (O Allah! I seek refuge in You from miserliness; and seek refuge in You from cowardice; and seek refuge in You from being sent back to the contemptible state [old age]; and I seek refuge with You from the affliction of this world, that is, the affliction of the imposter [satan]; and seek refuge with You from the torments of the grave). He also sought refuge in his Lord from useless knowledge, a heart which was not humble, selfishness, unaccepted prayers,²⁶ hunger, treachery,²⁷ from illness,²⁸ from hostility, from discord, and immorality.²⁹

When faced with illness from time to time, the Prophet (saw) took refuge in Allah as a means of asking him to be cured. In the days of illness as his death approached, Allah’s Messenger recited to himself the *sūras* of al-Falaq and al-Nas and breathed deeply. When his illness intensified, ‘A’isha (ra) read these *sūras* to him.³⁰ Sometimes the noble Companions (ra) wanted his help in order to be protected from illness and they regained their health with his prayer.³¹ Sometimes the Companions (ra) asked Allah for a cure using the prayers that Allah’s Messenger had used for the ill.³²

When the Prophet (saw) would visit a sick person, he would put his hand on his forehead and beseech the cure from Allah (swt).³³ He would pray for the ill in the following manner: “*Adhhibi ‘l-bās rabba ‘l-nās wa ‘ashfi anta al-shāfi lā shifā’a illā shifā’uka shifā’an yughādiru shaqaman*”³⁴ (O Lord of the people! Grant him health, heal him, for You are the Healer. There is no healing except with Your healing Power. Through it one is healed and illness is removed). By asking for Allah’s healing power in this way, he did not neglect to glorify Him and praise Him.

Whenever the Prophet (saw) experienced hardship, trouble, or calamity, he would pray to his Lord with praise and gratitude while asking

²³ D2598, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 72; T3439, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 41.
²⁴ M6900, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 68.
²⁵ B6365, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 37.
²⁶ D1548, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5469, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 18.
²⁷ D1547, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5470, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 19.
²⁸ D1554, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32.
²⁹ D1546, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5473, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 21.
³⁰ B5016, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 14; M5715, Muslim, al-Salam, 51.
³¹ DM19, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 4; M6835, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 23.
³² B5742, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 38; D3890, Abu Da’ud, al-Tibb, 19.
³³ D3104, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 7.
³⁴ M5709, Muslim, al-Salam, 47.

Him to relieve it; and in like manner when he experienced good times and abundance, he would pray for them to continue. And in this way his prayer would be a blessing for his Companions (ra). When he wanted to congratulate those who were newly married, he would pray for them as follows: “May Allah bless you and bestow blessings upon you, and bring you together in harmony.”³⁵ When the first fruit of the season was brought to him, he would ask for Allah’s blessing and give the fruit to the youngest child who was with him.³⁶ And he would often say, “*rabbānā ātinā fī ‘l-dunyā ḥasanatan wa fī ‘l-ākhirati ḥasanatan wa qinā ‘adhāba al-nār*”³⁷ (O Lord! Give us good in this world and in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the Fire), thus wishing for the best.³⁸

The Companions of our Master the Messenger of Allah (saw) also shared in the many benefits from his prayers. In particular, they would bring their children to him and he would pray for them;³⁹ and when their children were born, he would give them wonderful names.⁴⁰ This is because they knew that his prayer would not be limited to the one who received his prayer. Its effect was such that it would overflow and be passed on to other generations. According to Hudhayfa (ra), when our Master the Messenger of Allah (saw) prayed for someone, not only that person but also his children and his children’s children would share in the blessing of that prayer.⁴¹ When the Companions (ra) found themselves in difficulties, they found relief in his prayer. In fact Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), who had not been able to pay the debts of his father after he died, was later able to pay them thanks to the dates which were blessed by the prayer of the Prophet (saw). He even had some dates left over.⁴²

Everyone benefited from the blessing of the prayer of the Prophet (saw). When drought was so severe that virtually all was lost, he would beseech Allah (swt) for rain; and as a result of the blessing of his prayer the parched land would be deluged.⁴³ Sometimes souls seeking the Almighty Creator would find guidance with the blessing of his prayer and faith would be established in their hearts. The mother of Abu Hurayra (ra) received guidance through the prayer of Allah’s Messenger. He sincerely wanted his mother, who was a polytheist, to become a Muslim like him. Thus he invited her to Islam at every opportunity. One day when he was again explaining the faith to her, he heard her say some things against the Prophet (saw) which did not please him. Her words were so distressful that

³⁵ IM1905, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 23.

³⁶ M3335, Muslim, al-Hajj, 474; DM2104, al-Darimi, al-At‘ima, 32.

³⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:201.

³⁸ B6389, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 55; M6841, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 27.

³⁹ B6355, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 31.

⁴⁰ M5612, Muslim, al-Adab, 22.

⁴¹ HM23666, Ibn Hanbal, V, 386.

⁴² B2601, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 21.

⁴³ B1014, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa’, 7 M2078, Muslim, Salat al-istisqa’, 8.

they made him cry. With tears in his eyes, he went to the true Messenger of Allah and made the following request: “O Messenger of Allah! I summoned my mother to Islam, but she rejected it. Today I summoned her again, but she said things about you which did not please me. Would that you ask Allah to help Abu Hurayra’s mother to Islam.” When our Master the Prophet saw Abu Hurayra’s distress, he immediately prayed, saying, “O my Allah! Guide Abu Hurayra’s mother!” Abu Hurayra (ra), who was pleased with this prayer from the sultan of the prophets, then departed. He went to his house, but when he reached the door it was locked. But his mother heard his footsteps and said from within, “Abu Hurayra stay where you are!” Abu Hurayra (ra) heard the sound of water from within. His mother was bathing. Afterwards she dressed and quickly covered her head. She opened the door from behind and said the following words which this time made Abu Hurayra (ra) weep for joy: “Abu Hurayra. I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.”⁴⁴

Could a prophet whose prayers were a guide to mankind and who was sent as a mercy to the worlds pray for someone to be tormented? No! He was the messenger of mercy. He was not sent as one who damned.⁴⁵ To curse was unworthy of him. In fact, in matters in which Allah’s ruling was final⁴⁶ and for damning someone⁴⁷ the prayer of Allah’s Messenger (saw) would be useless. However, if something was done which provoked Allah’s wrath and was in fact hated by Allah,⁴⁸ then those whom He cursed and who were subjected to His curse would be destroyed. The Arab tribes who betrayed Muhammad (saw) and massacred the seven Qur’an readers at Bi’r Ma’una,⁴⁹ the polytheists who prevented the performance of the ritual prayer at the right time at the Battle of the Khandaq,⁵⁰ women who tried to resemble men, men who tried to resemble women,⁵¹ Jews who built places of worship at the tombs of the prophets,⁵² and others were mentioned by the Prophet as being cursed. Nevertheless, he did not wish evil upon those who abandoned him at Ta’if⁵³ nor upon the tribe of Daws, which had rejected his summons to Islam and had rebelled.⁵⁴ This was because he was the Messenger of Mercy.

Our Master the Prophet, who prayed for Allah’s forgiveness of everyone, above all himself, preferred prayers which encompassed everyone.⁵⁵ Whenever he beseeched his Lord, he mentioned many people. When someone asked him to pray to Allah (swt) to forgive him, he prayed for

⁴⁴ M6396, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 158.

⁴⁵ M6613, Muslim, al-Birr, 87.

⁴⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:80.

⁴⁷ Al ‘Imrân, 3:128; HM5674, Ibn Hanbal, II, 93.

⁴⁸ D4599, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 2.

⁴⁹ HM12087, Ibn Hanbal, III, 110.

⁵⁰ M1426, Muslim, al-Masajid, 206

⁵¹ D4930, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 53; HM5649, Ibn Hanbal, II, 92.

⁵² B437, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 55.

⁵³ B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 7; M4653, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 111.

⁵⁴ B4392, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 76; M6450, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 197.

⁵⁵ D1482, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 23.

the forgiveness of all those who were present.⁵⁶ Indeed, he cautioned those who wanted the Prophet's prayer only for themselves or for certain people by reminding them that they were restricting Allah's extensive mercy.⁵⁷ Thus our Prophet's appeals to his Lord were a means of opening the gates of forgiveness for all of those who were with him.

When he prayed for someone who wanted to take advantage of Allah's grace for himself, the Prophet (saw) began by mentioning himself.⁵⁸ He would beseech his Lord as follows: "*Rabbi ighfir li khaṭīnātī wa jahli wa isrāfi fī amrī kullīhi wa mā anta a'lamu bihi minnī. Allāhumma ighfir li khaṭāyāya wa 'amdī wa jahli wa hazli wa kullu dhālika 'indī. Allāhumma ighfir li mā qaddamtu wa mā akhkhartu wa mā asrartu wa mā a'lantu anta 'l-muqaddim wa anta 'l-mu'akhkhir wa anta 'alā kulli shay' qadīr*"⁵⁹ (My Lord! Forgive my errors, my ignorance, my going to extremes in any of my affairs, and any other forbidden things that I have done which you know better than me. My Allah! Also forgive the errors that I have committed knowingly or unknowingly, in jest or in earnest. This is because I have done all of these things. My Allah! Forgive the sins that I have committed and will commit and which I have done secretly and openly. You are the one who precedes and who comes after. You are omnipotent.)

Our beloved Prophet also asked forgiveness for his family members. When the verse, "*Allah wishes to keep uncleanness away from you, people of the [Prophet's] house, and to purify you thoroughly,*"⁶⁰ was revealed in the home of Umm Salama (ra), the Prophet summoned his daughter Fatima, his grandsons Hasan and Husayn (ra) and covered them, and 'Ali (ra) who was standing behind them, with a cloth and prayed, saying, "*O Allah! These are the people of my house, so remove the impurity from them, and cleanse them.*"⁶¹

Allah's Messenger, who, every day asked for forgiveness of his sins dozens of times in his prayers—although his sins of the past and future had been forgiven⁶²—was always repentant.⁶³ Furthermore, he liked to ask Allah's pardon and to say his prayer three times.⁶⁴ He would also ask for Allah's pardon for his Companions (ra) in accordance with the divine command, "*So pardon them and ask for forgiveness...*"⁶⁵ And he would pray, saying, "*My Allah! True life is only in the next world. Honor the Ansar and Muhajirun!*"⁶⁶ And this prayer would comfort them like water sprinkled on their hearts.⁶⁷

⁵⁶ N4231, al-Nasa'i, al-Fara' wa 'l-'atira, 1.

⁵⁷ B6010, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27.

⁵⁸ T3385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 10.

⁵⁹ B6398, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 60.

⁶⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33:33.

⁶¹ T3205, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 33.

⁶² B4837, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Fath) 2.

⁶³ B6307, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 3.

⁶⁴ D1524, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 26.

⁶⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:159

⁶⁶ M4674, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 128.

⁶⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:103.

Knowing that the Prophet's prayers would not be rejected, the noble Companions (ra) competed at every opportunity to receive his prayers. One day while the Messenger of Allah (saw) was discussing the group of 70,000 people from his community who would enter Paradise without a reckoning of their accounts and without punishment,⁶⁸ 'Ukkasha b. Mihsan al-Asadi (ra) removed the wool robe striped with many colors that he was wearing⁶⁹ and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Pray for me to be among those people!" So, the Prophet said, "O Allah! *Make him one of them.*" Next, one of the Ansar stood up and repeated 'Ukkasha's words. But the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Ukkasha has preceded you.*"⁷⁰ In addition to the prayers that he made for the other Companions (ra), who, like 'Ukkasha, benefitted from the competition for the Prophet's prayers, there was one special prayer which he knew would always be accepted and which he saved for his whole community and wanted to use it to intercede for them on the Day of Judgement.⁷¹

Our Prophet, who said, "*Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him,*"⁷² recommended to his Companions (ra) that they ask Allah (swt) for everything even a broken shoe lace.⁷³ His prayers served as an example to them in this regard. The Messenger of Allah (saw) would pray concerning virtually every matter and his prayer served as a guide. He prayed for those like the mother of Abu Hurayra (ra); he would pray for forgiveness first for himself and then for those in his company; he would pray for tranquility for his Companions (ra); he would pray every hour of the day in praise of, and in gratitude to, Allah; he would pray for victory against the enemy; he would pray for good health for those who were waiting for treatment; he would pray for blessings for his Companions (ra) who needed them; and he would pray for Allah's intercession for his community on the Day of Judgement.

According to Abu Umama (ra), commenting on the Prophet's sterling prayers and how endearing they were, the Prophet's prayers were so wonderful and frequent that the people tried to memorize them all. When they described this situation to Allah's Messenger, he taught them the following prayer, which included all the prayers that he had done for his Companions (ra) and his community: "*O Allah! We ask from You the good that Your Prophet asked from You, and we seek refuge in You from the evil from which Your Prophet sought refuge in You, and You are the one from Whom aid is sought, and it is for You to provide, and there is no might or power except in Allah.*"⁷⁴

⁶⁸ B6541, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 50.

⁶⁹ B6542, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 50.

⁷⁰ B5752, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 42; M524, Muslim, al-Iman, 371; T2446, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 16.

⁷¹ B7474, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 31.

⁷² D1488, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23; T3556, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 104.

⁷³ T3604, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 132.

⁷⁴ T3521, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 88.



THE PROPHET (SAW) A GRATEFUL SERVANT



حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكٌ قَالَ: أَتَيْنَا إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَنَحْنُ شَبَابَةٌ مُتَفَارِقُونَ...
”وَصَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي، فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلْيُؤَذِّنْ لَكُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ
وَلْيُؤَمِّمْكُمْ أَكْبَرُكُمْ.“

Malik (b. al-Huwayrith) said, “When we were young men of about the same age, we came to the Prophet (saw)... He said to us, ‘Pray as you have seen me praying, and when it is the time for the prayer one of you should pronounce the call to prayer (adhan) and the oldest of you should lead the prayer.’”

(B631, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 18)



عَنْ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ: أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو الزُّبَيْرِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ جَابِرًا يَقُولُ: رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَرْمِي عَلَى رَاحِلَتِهِ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ وَيَقُولُ: ”لِتَأْخُذُوا مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَإِنِّي لَا أَدْرِي لَعَلِّي لَا أَحُجُّ بَعْدَ حَجَّتِي هَذِهِ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: لَا أَعْلَمُ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ كُلَّهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ وَلَا قَامَ لَيْلَةً حَتَّى الصَّبَاحِ وَلَا صَامَ شَهْرًا قَطُّ كَامِلًا غَيْرَ رَمَضَانَ.



عَنْ مُطَرِّفٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُصَلِّي وَفِي صَدْرِهِ أَزِيْرٌ كَأَزِيْرِ الرَّحَى مِنَ الْبُكَاءِ ﷺ .



عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَخَذَ بِيَدِهِ... فَقَالَ: ”أَوْصِيكَ يَا مُعَاذُ! لَا تَدْعَنَّ فِي دُبُرِ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ تَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ! أَعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ.“



According to Ibn Jurayj, Abu 'l-Zubayr told him that he heard Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) say, "I saw the Prophet (saw) riding on his mount on the Festival of Sacrifice (Eid al-Adha) and stoning Satan; and he said the following: *'Learn the requirements of the Hajj (by following my example), for, I don't know, this may be my last Hajj.'*"

(M3137, Muslim, al-Hajj, 310)



'A'isha (ra) said, "I do not know that the Messenger of Allah (saw) recited the whole Qur'an in one night, or performed the ritual prayer for an entire night, or ever fasted an entire month, except for Ramadan."

(N2350, al-Nasa'i, al-Siyam, 70; M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139)



According to Mutarrif his father ('Abd Allah b. Shihhir) (ra) said, "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."

(D904, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 156, 157; N1215, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 18)



According to Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) took him by the hand and said, "*O Mu'adh! I advise you never to forget to say the following prayer after every ritual prayer: 'O Allah! Help me to remember You, to give thanks to You, and to worship You well.'*"

(D1522, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 26; N1304, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 60)



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 awoke.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 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 Master the 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, “*If you see me perform the ritual prayer, do as I do,*”⁷ and “*Learn the requirements of the Hajj (by watching me),*”⁸ could not remain indifferent to his life of worship.

¹ B7452, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 27.

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

³ TSh281, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 123.

⁴ TSh300 al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il, 133.

⁵ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147.

⁶ HM26983, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 286.

⁷ B631, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 18.

⁸ M3137, Muslim, al-Hajj, 310.

The young Companion Zayd b. Khalid (ra) was also curious about how our Prophet performed the 'isha' 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 Hijra, 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 Master's behavior in his life. For this reason the descriptions in many *hadiths* 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, "*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 young,¹⁵ 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

⁹ MU266, al-Muwatta', Salat al-layl, 2; D1366, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 26.

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

¹¹ IM872, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 16.

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

¹³ B917, al-Bukhari, al-Juma', 26.

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

¹⁵ B685, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 49.

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

¹⁷ B628, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 17.

¹⁸ B824, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 143.

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.²¹ 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 ritual prayer.

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 Allah’s Messenger, who selected this house, which was in Mecca at the skirt of the hill of al-Safa, as a place for teaching and instruction, taught, on the one hand, the religious sciences to the Noble Companions (ra) here and, on the other, summoned here those who were searching for the divine truths. As the polytheists continued their pressure, they saw that our Master the Prophet was praying near the Ka’ba 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 The Muslims were only able to pray as a group at the Ka’ba after ‘Umar (ra) converted to Islam.²⁸

It was during this time when the Muslims were experiencing difficulties that the ‘isha’ prayer (*tahajjud*) was made obligatory via the first verses of the *sūra* of al-Muzammil.²⁹ Thereupon, our Prophet and his Companions (ra) awoke for the ‘isha’ prayer for a year. After twelve months, the difficulty of performing the ‘isha’ prayer was mitigated by a verse that was revealed at the end of this *sūra*.³⁰ Henceforth the ‘isha’ prayer was voluntary rather than obligatory. Allah Almighty made the *tahajjud* prayer obligatory only for the Noble Messenger, that is, it was specific to him.³¹

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 after the Hijra.³² The way of performing these prayers was also taught to our Master by Jibril.³³ Thus, whereas previously each prayer was done with two *rak’as*, henceforth four were required.³⁴ As for the prayers

¹⁹ N3391, al-Nasa’i, *Ishrat al-Nisa’*, 1.

²⁰ Al-Anbiya’, 21:73.

²¹ HM17619, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

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

²³ Al-‘Alaq, 96:9-10.

²⁴ M1001, Muslim, al-Salat, 145.

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

²⁶ B240, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 69.

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

²⁸ HS2/186, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 186.

²⁹ Al-Muzammil, 73:1-4.

³⁰ Al-Muzammil, 73:20; M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

³¹ Al-Isra’, 17:79.

³² M431, Muslim, al-Iman, 279.

³³ B3221, al-Bukhari, *Bad’ al-khalq*, 6.

³⁴ B3935, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 48.

according to the Sunna and voluntary prayers, which were in addition to the obligatory ritual prayers, our mother 'Aisha (ra) said the following when she was asked about this: "The Messenger of Allah did four (voluntary) *rak'as* in my house before zuhr. Then he went to the mosque and led the congregation in zuhr 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."³⁵

Allah's Messenger considered the night prayers to be extremely important. 'Aisha (ra) described them saying, "Do not even ask how beautiful he would perform the ritual prayers and their length."³⁶ 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 of night, clean his teeth, do the wudu', and then pray doing 13, 11,³⁷ or five³⁸ *rak'as* 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.³⁹ 'Aisha (ra) said of our Master the 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."⁴⁰

During the tahajjud prayer, the Prophet would stand until his feet would swell⁴¹ and he would recite the Holy Qur'an at length, verse by verse.⁴² Sometimes he would pray throughout the night by reciting the same verse repeatedly.⁴³ According to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra),⁴⁴ one night our Prophet prayed until morning by repeatedly reciting the following verse, "... *and if you punish them, they are your servants; if You forgive them, You are the Almighty, the Wise.*"⁴⁵

The Noble Messenger used to prostrate himself long enough for someone to recite 50 verses.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ However, as he approached the end of his life, he began to do the voluntary prayers while sitting.⁴⁸ Indeed, at the place

³⁵ M1699, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 105.

³⁶ B3569, al-Bukhari, al-Manqib, 24.

³⁷ B4570, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 18; M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

³⁸ D1357, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 26.

³⁹ N1790, al-Nasa'i, Qiyam al-layl, 64.

⁴⁰ N2350, al-Nasa'i, al-Siyam, 70; M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

⁴¹ B6471, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 20.

⁴² M1712, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 118; T373, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 158.

⁴³ T448, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 212; TSh277, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama'il, 122.

⁴⁴ IM1350, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-Salawat, 179.

⁴⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5:118.

⁴⁶ B994, al-Bukhari, al-Witr, 1.

⁴⁷ M1699, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 105.

⁴⁸ M1712, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 118; T373, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat 158.

where he would pray in the mosque he would rest against a column, using it like a cane to support himself.⁴⁹ Once he fell from a horse and injured his right side. Because of this he had to pray for some time while sitting.⁵⁰

In addition to the voluntary prayers that the Prophet (saw) was eager to do regularly every day, he did prayers on special days and at special times. 'A'isha (ra) described what he did in this regard, "The Messenger of Allah would worship and when the people imitated this it became the Sunna, but sometimes he stopped his way of worship for fear that it would become obligatory (and burdensome) for them and he wanted to make his method of worship easy for them."⁵¹ For example, in Ramadan after the prayer done two hours after sunset, he would do a prayer of 11 *rak'as* including a long *witr*.⁵² During Ramadan he would also do the 'isha' prayer with the congregation.⁵³ However, in an environment in which revelations continued to come from Allah (swt), he was worried that the voluntary prayers that the people were desirous of doing would open the way for these voluntary prayers to become obligatory and thus become an irremovable burden on his community and this prevented him from continuously performing this prayer with the congregation in the mosque.⁵⁴

One of the voluntary prayers that our Master the Prophet sometimes deliberately avoided in order not to give the perception that it was obligatory was the mid-fajr prayer (*ḍuḥā*).⁵⁵ Our Prophet, who did not leave the mosque between the fajr prayer and sunrise, considered this time disagreeable for praying⁵⁶ and spent it talking with his friends.⁵⁷ After the sun rose, they would do the *ḍuḥā* prayer. For this prayer they would sometimes do two *rak'as*,⁵⁸ sometimes four, and if they wished even more.⁵⁹ It was reported that even while on a journey he would not forgo the *ḍuḥā* prayer.⁶⁰ In fact, on the day of the conquest of Mecca, he did a prayer of eight *rak'as*.⁶¹ After every two *rak'as* he would give a salutation.⁶²

In addition to these prayers, Allah's Messenger (saw) used to do voluntary prayers on many occasions. For instance, when he entered the mosque he would do the *taḥiyyat al-masjid* of two *rak'as* as a form of salutation to the mosque and he recommended this prayer to his Companions (ra).⁶³ And when he returned from a journey, the first thing he would do would be to go to the mosque and do a prayer of two *rak'as*.⁶⁴ Whenever our Master the Prophet received good news or received a blessing, he would do a prayer of two *rak'as* to thank his Lord,⁶⁵ or he would do a prostration of gratitude.⁶⁶

⁴⁹ D948, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 172-173.

⁵⁰ M921, Muslim, al-Salat, 77.

⁵¹ MA4867, 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, III, 78.

⁵² B2013, al-Bukhari, Salat al-tarawih, 1.

⁵³ N1607, al-Nasa'i, Qiyam al-layl, 4; HM18592, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 273.

⁵⁴ B7290, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 3; M1825 Muslim, al-Musafirin, 213.

⁵⁵ MU361, al-Muwatta', Qasr al-salat, 8; T477, al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 15.

⁵⁶ B586, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-salat, 31.

⁵⁷ M1525, M1526, Muslim, al-Masajid, 286-287.

⁵⁸ T550, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jum'a, 41.

⁵⁹ M1663, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 78.

⁶⁰ D1222, Abu Da'ud, al-Safar, 7.

⁶¹ B1103, al-Bukhari, Taqdir al-salat, 12.

⁶² D1290, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 12.

⁶³ B444, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 60; M1654, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 69.

⁶⁴ B3088, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 198.

⁶⁵ IM1391, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-salawat, 192.

⁶⁶ IM1392, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-salawat, 192.

During difficult times, such as drought, he would go to the place of worship and pray for rain. He would invert his robe, pray, and then do two *rak'as*.⁶⁷ During an eclipse of the sun or moon, he would seek refuge in Allah (swt) by praying.⁶⁸

After doing the wudu', the Messenger of Mercy recommended doing a voluntary prayer of two *rak'as*.⁶⁹ He also recommended that when someone who was in need prayed to his Lord he should do a thorough wudu' and then a ritual prayer of two *rak'as* and then pray for help,⁷⁰ and that if someone was undecided in a certain matter he should do a ritual prayer of two *rak'as* and then pray to Allah asking for a decision (which would be beneficial).⁷¹ He also encouraged those who wanted to repent their sins to do a ritual prayer of two *rak'as* and then ask for forgiveness from Allah (swt).⁷²

Fasting as a form of worship had an important place in the life of the Prophet (saw). 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 Jahliliyya, the Quraysh tribe also used to hold this fast. After the Messenger of Allah (saw) emigrated to Medina, he continued the fast of 'Ashura',⁷³ but 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 not to fast on the day of 'Ashura'.⁷⁴ However, in the second year of the Hijra, after the fast of Ramadan became a religious obligation, observing the fast of 'Ashura' was left to the desire of the people.⁷⁵

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 him.⁷⁶ Our tradition of reading the Holy Qur'an during Ramadan is based on this event. Subsequently, Allah's Messenger enlivened the nights of Ramadan with the voluntary prayers called *tarāwīḥ*.⁷⁷ He was especially preoccupied with worship on the nights which likely included the Night of Power (Layla al-Qadr) and encouraged his family to do the same.⁷⁸

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

⁶⁷ M2073, Muslim, al-Istisqa', 4; B1012, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa', 4.

⁶⁸ B1042, al-Bukhari, al-Kusuf, 1; B184, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 37.

⁶⁹ M538, Muslim, al-Tahara, 3.

⁷⁰ T479, al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 17; IM1384, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-salawat, 189.

⁷¹ B1162, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 25.

⁷² HM47, Ibn Hanbal, I, 9.

⁷³ B3831, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 26.

⁷⁴ B2004, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 69.

⁷⁵ M2641, Muslim, al-Siyam, 116.

⁷⁶ B1902, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 7.

⁷⁷ D1371, Abu Da'ud, Shahr Ramadan, 1; B1129, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 5.

⁷⁸ M2787, Muslim, al-I'tikaf, 7; D1376, Abu Da'ud, Shahr Ramadan, 1.

he saw some of his Companions (ra) doing what he had done, he declared that this was simply something of his own volition.⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹

The Noble Messenger said that the *ṣadaqa* given in Ramadan was better than that given at other times,⁸² and that he would be at the peak of generosity during this month.⁸³

In addition to the fast of Ramadan, which was obligatory, Allah’s Messenger was careful to fast, voluntarily, in the months of Muharram (‘Ashura’),⁸⁴ Sha‘ban,⁸⁵ and Rajab.⁸⁶ However, except for Ramadan, he did not fast for an entire month.⁸⁷ The traditions which state that Allah’s Messenger (saw) fasted for a “complete” month⁸⁸ should be more accurately understood to mean “most of” a month.⁸⁹

In addition, our Prophet fasted for six days of the month of Shawwal,⁹⁰ for the 13th, 14th, and 15th days, called the *ayyām al-bīd*, of the lunar months,⁹¹ and on the ninth of Dhu ‘l-Hijja.⁹² However, it is probable that he did not fast at ‘Arafat on the ninth of Dhu ‘l-Hijja if he could have been in difficulty or infirm.⁹³ When the Noble Messenger fasted he usually gave priority to Mondays and Thursdays.⁹⁴ Sometimes he would fast on the Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays of a month and on the Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays of another month.⁹⁵ 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.*”⁹⁶

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*.⁹⁷ Although our Lord Himself had put in place the basic rules concerning the *zakāt*,⁹⁸ Allah’s Messenger (saw) arranged the payment of the *zakāt* by taking into 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*,⁹⁹ the property subject to *zakāt*,¹⁰⁰ the stipulations concerning *zakāt*,¹⁰¹ the amount,¹⁰² and the etiquette of giving *zakāt*.¹⁰³ He encouraged believers to pay *zakāt*¹⁰⁴ and at various opportuni-

⁷⁹ B7241, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 9; M2570 Muslim, al-Siyam, 59.

⁸⁰ M2781, Muslim, al-‘Itikaf, 2; B2041, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itikaf, 14.

⁸¹ IM1769, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 58.

⁸² T663, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 28.

⁸³ B1902, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 7.

⁸⁴ T754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sawm, 50; D2429, Abu Da‘ud, al-Siyam, 55.

⁸⁵ T736, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sawm, 37; N2354, al-Nasa‘i, al-Siyam, 70.

⁸⁶ M2726, Muslim, al-Siyam, 179.

⁸⁷ M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

⁸⁸ IM1649, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 4.

⁸⁹ T737, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sawm, 37.

⁹⁰ M2758, Muslim, al-Siyam, 204.

⁹¹ N2347, al-Nasa‘i, al-Siyam, 70.

⁹² D2437, Abu Da‘ud, al-Siyam, 61.

⁹³ M2632, Muslim, al-Siyam, 110.

⁹⁴ D2451, Abu Da‘ud, al-Siyam, 69.

⁹⁵ T746, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sawm, 44.

⁹⁶ M2750, Muslim, al-Siyam, 198.

⁹⁷ Al-Anbiya’, 21:72-73.

⁹⁸ D1630, Abu Da‘ud, al-Zakat, 24.

⁹⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:60; D1630, Abu Da‘ud, al-Zakat, 24.

¹⁰⁰ M2263, Muslim, al-Zakat, 1; N2475, al-Nasa‘i, al-Zakat, 18.

¹⁰¹ T631, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 10.

¹⁰² T620, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 3; DM1662, al-Darimi, al-Zakat, 7.

¹⁰³ B1426, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 18.

¹⁰⁴ B1429, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 18; IM1842, Ibn Maja, al-Zakat, 28.

ties he warned those who did not pay it.¹⁰⁵ Now, one-fifth of war booty was set aside by Allah Almighty for His Messenger and relatives.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, for moral, social, and religious reasons, neither the Noble Messenger nor his family ever took *zakāt* or *ṣadaqa* or consumed it.¹⁰⁷

In the ninth year after the emigration to Medina, Allah on High 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.*”¹⁰⁸ 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,¹⁰⁹ for three month after this Farewell Pilgrimage he joined his Lord, whom he called “*My most sublime Friend.*”¹¹⁰

Allah’s Messenger (saw) did the minor pilgrimage (*‘Umra*) 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.¹¹¹

The sacrifice of an animal, which was a form of worship and which was a tradition surviving from the time of Abraham,¹¹² 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.¹¹³ He warned people that the slaughter of the animal must be properly done so that it did not suffer.¹¹⁴ He himself even sharpened the knife so the animal would be killed properly.¹¹⁵

Our Master the Prophet used to perform the holiday prayers in a vast open area called the *muṣallā*. He would first do the holiday prayer,¹¹⁶ and then do the holiday sermon.¹¹⁷

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

¹⁰⁵ M2300, Muslim, al-Zakat, 30; T3012, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 3.
¹⁰⁶ Al-Anfal, 8:41.

¹⁰⁷ B1491, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 60; M2476, Muslim, al-Zakat, 162.

¹⁰⁸ Al ‘Imran, 3:97.

¹⁰⁹ T815, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 6.

¹¹⁰ B6348, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 29.

¹¹¹ B1780, al-Bukhari, al-‘Umra, 3.

¹¹² IM3127, Ibn Maja, al-Adahi, 3; HM19498, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 368.

¹¹³ IM3122, Ibn Maja, al-Adahi, 1.

¹¹⁴ M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57.

¹¹⁵ M5091, Muslim, al-Adahi, 19.

¹¹⁶ M2045, Muslim, al-Idayn, 2.

¹¹⁷ M2052, Muslim, al-Idayn, 8.

Messenger.¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ 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 ritual uncleanness.¹²⁰ While reciting it, he would extend the recitation by beautifully lengthening the sound of the letters.¹²¹ He would pause at the end of every verse,¹²² and he would recite them clearly one by one.¹²³ Those who heard him recite the Holy Qur'an, admired his voice and the way he recited.¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵

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) and could not get up for the fajr prayer.¹²⁶ And once he confused the verses that he was reciting during prayer.¹²⁷ Another time he made a mistake in the number of *rak'as* during prayer.¹²⁸ 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*.¹²⁹ 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.¹³⁰ In this respect the words of the Companion 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), who was a jurist, are very significant: “Acting according to the Sunna and being moderate in all things are much better than exerting oneself in matters which are not part of the Sunna (*bid'a*).”¹³¹

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.¹³² 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,”¹³³ 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.”¹³⁴

¹¹⁸ B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1.

¹¹⁹ IM1345, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-salawat, 178; HM16266, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 9.

¹²⁰ D229, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 90; N266, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 171.

¹²¹ D1465, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 20; B5045, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 29.

¹²² D4001, Abu Da'ud, al-Huruf wa 'l-qira'at, 1.

¹²³ N1023, al-Nasa'i, al-Iftitah, 83; D1466, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 20.

¹²⁴ B7546, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 52.

¹²⁵ B5050, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 33.

¹²⁶ B344, al-Bukhari, al-Tayammum, 6.

¹²⁷ HM15967, Ibn Hanbal, III, 471.

¹²⁸ B714, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 69.

¹²⁹ HM15468, Ibn Hanbal, III, 411.

¹³⁰ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.

¹³¹ DM223, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 23.

¹³² Al-Fatiha, 1:5.

¹³³ B50, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 37.

¹³⁴ IM70, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 9.

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 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."¹³⁵ 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."¹³⁶ 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.¹³⁷ When his heart ached, he would ask for Allah's forgiveness one hundred times in a day.¹³⁸

One act of worship that Allah's Messenger (saw) practiced most often in his daily life was the *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) as a form of prayer. As his wife 'A'isha (ra) stated, "He would always recall Allah."¹³⁹ In his daily life he would seize every opportunity to perform the *dhikr*: while getting dressed,¹⁴⁰ while riding his camel,¹⁴¹ while going up or down a hill or going outside,¹⁴² while going to bed and getting up from sleep,¹⁴³ before seeing to his toilet needs,¹⁴⁴ and after seeing to his toilet needs,¹⁴⁵ while taking a step outside the house,¹⁴⁶ in short, he recalled Allah (swt) and prayed to him in every situation. Throughout the day, the *dhikr* was on his tongue, in his heart, and in his mind. When he began to eat, he would mention Allah's name,¹⁴⁷ and at the end of the meal he would praise Allah and thank Him.¹⁴⁸ At night he would go to bed mentioning Allah,¹⁴⁹ and he would also rise from bed mentioning Allah (swt).¹⁵⁰

Our Master the 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.*"¹⁵¹ When he prayed, he would begin with himself.¹⁵² However, the scope of his prayer was wide.¹⁵³ 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.*"¹⁵⁴ He would also pray after doing the ritual prayer. After the salutation, 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 faults) and from You comes peace. Blessed are You, O Possessor of Majesty and Honor.*"¹⁵⁵

¹³⁵ D904, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 156, 157; N1215, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 18

¹³⁶ TSh323, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama'il, 144.

¹³⁷ D1319, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 22.

¹³⁸ M6858, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 41.

¹³⁹ M826, Muslim, al-Hayd, 117.

¹⁴⁰ T1767, al-Tirmidhi, al-Libas, 29.

¹⁴¹ M3275, Muslim, al-Hajj, 425.

¹⁴² D2599, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 72.

¹⁴³ B6312, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 7.

¹⁴⁴ B142, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 9.

¹⁴⁵ D30, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 17.

¹⁴⁶ T3427, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 35.

¹⁴⁷ B5376, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 2.

¹⁴⁸ B5458, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 54.

¹⁴⁹ B6319, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 1.

¹⁵⁰ B4570, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 18.

¹⁵¹ T3604-8, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 132.

¹⁵² T3385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 10.

¹⁵³ D1482, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23.

¹⁵⁴ M6840, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 26.

¹⁵⁵ M1334, Muslim, al-Masajid, 135; N1338, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 81.

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.¹⁵⁶ In addition, when he was going to choose between two things, he would chose the easier, unless it were sinful.¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸

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*,"¹⁵⁹ 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.¹⁶⁰

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.¹⁶¹ 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.¹⁶² In short, all good and proper behavior which was done with an awareness of worship and to please Allah (swt) was charity.¹⁶³

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)*"¹⁶⁴ 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.*"¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁶ B1970, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 52.

¹⁵⁷ B3560, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

¹⁵⁸ M2610, Muslim, al-Siyam, 90; N2262, al-Nasa'i, al-Siyam, 48.

¹⁵⁹ B1130, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 6.

¹⁶⁰ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.

¹⁶¹ M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 56.

¹⁶² T1956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 36.

¹⁶³ M2328, Muslim, al-Zakat, 52.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Nur, 24:37.

¹⁶⁵ D1522, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 26; N1304, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 60.



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE WISE SUMMONER



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ أُمَّتِي كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَجَعَلَتِ الدَّوَابُّ وَالْفَرَاشُ يَقَعْنَ
فِيهِ فَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِحُجَزِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَقَحُّمُونَ فِيهِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “My relationship to my umma is like that of someone who lighted a fire (at night) and insects and moths began to fall into it. I am here to hold on to your waistbands as you approach the fire and try to prevent you from entering it.”

(M5955, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 17)



حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُنْكَدِرِ؛ سَمِعَ رِبِيعَةَ بْنَ عَبَّادٍ الدَّيْلِيَّ يَقُولُ: رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَطُوفُ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِمَنْى فِي مَنْازِلِهِمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُهَاجِرَ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ. يَقُولُ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا...”



عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ أَخْبَرَنِي سَهْلُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ يَوْمَ خَيْبَرَ: ... ”انْفُذْ عَلَى رِسْلِكَ حَتَّى تَنْزِلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَأَخْبِرْهُمْ بِمَا يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ حَقِّ اللَّهِ فِيهِ. فَوَاللَّهِ لَأَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ بِكَ رَجُلًا وَاحِدًا خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ حُمْرُ النَّعَمِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ، إِذَا بَعَثَ أَحَدًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فِي بَعْضِ أَمْرِهِ قَالَ: ”بَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفَرُوا، وَيَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا.“



Muhammad b. al-Munkadir said that he heard Rabi'a b. 'Abbad al-Dili (ra) say, "I saw the Messenger of Allah (saw) while he was visiting some people at the places of lodging at Mina before he emigrated to Medina. He said, *'O people! Allah Almighty commands you to be a servant to Him alone and to associate no one with him...'*"

(HM16120, Ibn Hanbal, III, 492)



Abu Hazim said that Sahl b. Sa'd (ra) told him that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said on the day of (the battle of) Khaybar, *"When you enter their territory, go slowly and then summon them to embrace Islam and inform them of Allah's rights which they must observe. By Allah, even if a single man is led to the right path of Allah through you, then that would be better for you than red camels."*

(M6223, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 34; B4210, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39)



According to Abu Musa (al-Ash'ari) (ra), when the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent one of his Companions to carry out one of his commands, he would say, *"Spread the good news! Avoid hatred! Make things easy! Do not make things difficult!"*

(M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 6)



ur beloved Prophet experienced many difficult days while summoning people to Islam. The hardships that he faced were described in a saying attributed to his daughter Fatima (ra) as follows: “If these hardships had come at the beginning of each day, the days would have turned to night.”¹ The Prophet (saw) used to go from tent to tent at the ‘Ukaz fair explaining Islam.² Introducing himself to people at the pausing place at ‘Arafat, he would say, “*Is there no one here who would take me to his people? The Quraysh (polytheists) have prevented me from communicating the word of my Lord.*”³

Allah’s Messenger (saw), who emigrated to Medina after spending many difficult years in Mecca, expanded the boundaries of his preaching in his capacity as head of state and sent emissaries to summon the tribes in the region to Islam. In this connection, he sent an emissary carrying a letter from him to the chief of al-Yamama, Thumama b. Uthal.⁴ Thumama wanted to put the emissary to death, but his uncle ‘Amir b. Salama prevented him from doing so. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) ordered that Thumama be captured and he prayed for this.⁵ Thumama was captured by a military unit belonging to our Prophet and brought to Medina. He was bound to a column in the Prophet’s Mosque (al-Masjid al-Nabawi). Then the Prophet approached him and asked, “*O Thumama! What do you think?*” Thumama answered, “Muhammad, I have a good opinion of you. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you do me a favor, you will do a favor to a grateful person. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand.” The Prophet (saw) left him and then returned the next day and asked, “*O Thumama! What do you think?*” He replied, “What I have already told you. If you do a favor, you will do a favor to a grateful person. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand.” The Prophet

¹ ZS2/134, al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, II, 134.

² HM14708, Ibn Hanbal, III, 340.

³ D4734, Abu Da’ud, *al-Sunna*, 20; T2925, al-Tirmidhi, *Fada’il al-Qur’an*, 25.

⁴ ST5/550, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, V, 550; IBS319, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti’ab*, s. 319.

⁵ ZE2/351, al-Dhahabi, *Ta’rikh al-Islam*, II, 351; ST5/550, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, V, 550; NR3/392, Jamal al-Din al-Zayla’i, *Nasb al-riya*, III, 392.

(saw) left him for another day and then returned and asked the same question, “O Thumama! What do you think?” And once more Thumama said, “What I have already told you. If you do a favor, you will do a favor to a grateful person. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Let Thumama go free!*” Thumama went to a palm grove near the mosque and bathed. Then he went to the mosque and became a Muslim, saying, “I testify that there is not god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.” Afterwards, he said, “O Muhammad! By Allah, there was no face on the earth more hateful to me than your face, but (now) your face has become to me the dearest of all faces. By Allah, there was no religion more hateful to me than your religion, but (now) your religion has become the dearest of all religions to me. By Allah, there was no city more hateful to me than your city, but (now) your city has become the dearest of all cities to me.”

Thumama was so sincere about what he said to the Prophet (saw) that he declared that he was a Muslim in Mecca which he visited in order to perform the *Umra* before returning to his country. And he did not hesitate to worship publicly. The polytheists seized him and intended to kill him. However, one of them said that the grain of al-Yamama was of vital importance to them, and so they let him go. Nevertheless, Thumama told the polytheists that he would not give them a single grain of wheat, even for food, without the permission of the Messenger of Allah (saw).⁶

The method that the Prophet (saw) used to make Thumama such a sincere believer was no doubt effective in summoning others to Islam. The three days that the Prophet spent in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi were one of the wonders of Islam that the Companions (ra) witnessed in their lifetime. When the delegation from Ta’if came to Medina, the Prophet hosted them in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi so it might soften their hearts and told them that Muslims recited the Holy Qur’an, performed ritual prayer, worshipped with awe, and lived Islam (submitting to Allah).⁷ Clearly, the mosque had a central place in summoning people to Islam and communicating it to them.

The first revelation came to the Prophet (saw) after he had spent forty years in Mecca in preparation for his mission as a prophet. When it occurred, he rushed home in great fear. He went to bed and said to his wife

⁶ M4589, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 59; B4372, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 71.

⁷ D3026, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 25, 26.

Khadija (ra), *“Put a cover over me! Put a cover over me!”* And she did so. When he awoke, he described to her what had happened to him and said, *“I feared for my life.”* He had received the first revelation which launched his prophethood. However, he was still ignorant of the true nature of what had happened. This was because he did not know what prophethood was. Indeed, at that time, he not only did not know either scripture or faith⁸ but he also had no idea that “scripture” (a book) would be given to him or that he would be chosen to be a prophet.⁹ Consequently, he found himself in a very difficult situation. Khadija (ra) comforted and supported her beloved husband, who was in such distress, by saying, “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 those in need of sustenance. You give to those who are destitute, are hospitable to guests, and support those who have been treated unjustly.” Not content with this, Khadija took her beloved husband to her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal. Waraqa told Muhammad (saw) that he would be a prophet and that even his own people would expel him from his country.¹⁰ Thus the Prophet was momentarily relieved.

He hoped to repeat what he had experienced. Afterwards a long time passed but this experience was not repeated. This troubled him. Indeed, he thought that he had been abandoned by his Lord. Finally, one day in the cave of Hira, he saw Jibril, who was very imposing. Once again he fled to his home frightened and excited, and went to bed. Allah Almighty then revealed the verses,¹¹ *“You, wrapped in your cloak, arise and give warning! Proclaim the greatness of your Lord; cleanse yourself, keep away from all filth.”*¹² These verses state that the summoner should begin with himself in those matters to which he was summoning people and live accordingly. Allah’s Messenger (saw) would behave, in fact, in just this way.

Thus the Prophet (saw), as the first Muslim to open the banner of the unity of Allah in the society in which he lived,¹³ began his mission in Meca and its environs¹⁴ by first summoning his relatives¹⁵ and then others to Islam with wisdom and good advice.¹⁶ He first gave the good news of Paradise to those who accepted his summons and warned those who did not of Hell.¹⁷ Then he struggled to rid the world of disorder and corruption, to make all religion devoted to Allah,¹⁸ and to make Islam supreme over all religions.¹⁹ This was because the Arabs were a society whose ancestors

⁸ Al-Shura, 42:52.

⁹ Al-Qasas, 28:86.

¹⁰ M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252; B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

¹¹ M406, Muslim, al-Iman, 255; B4925, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Muddaththir) 4.

¹² Al-Muddaththir, 74:1-5.

¹³ Al-An’am, 6:14.

¹⁴ Al-Shura, 42:7.

¹⁵ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:214.

¹⁶ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

¹⁷ Saba’, 34:28.

¹⁸ Al-Anfal, 8:39.

¹⁹ Al-Fath, 48:28.

had not been warned by Allah and who were ignorant of right and wrong. Consequently the Prophet (saw) was sent originally to the Arabs with the revelation that he received from Allah (swt),²⁰ but he was, in fact, sent as a mercy to all times and societies.²¹ Indeed, he was chosen as Allah's last envoy to address all of mankind.²²

The most important reason for prophethood and the greatest task of every prophet was to summon mankind to Allah (swt). The following verse describes in the most comprehensive fashion this mission of the Prophet (saw): *"O 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."*²³ In addition, in many other verses of the Holy Qur'an the Prophet's mission is described in much the same way.²⁴ His sublime duty of summoning people, with which he was burdened, is given as various commands, such as *"Call (to the faith)!"*²⁵ *"Inform!"*²⁶ *"Remind!"*²⁷ *"Warn!"*²⁸ and *"Caution!"*²⁹ Furthermore, in many verses it is stated that the mission of the Prophet is only to communicate Allah's words.³⁰

Summoning people to Islam was to explain to them the basic principles of the faith and to try to get them to adopt these principles and live according to them. It was to alert them to all matters related to Islam in both worldly affairs and those which affected the next world. The summons to Islam was addressed to infidels, hypocrites, and Muslims, in short, to all people.³¹ Indeed, such expressions in the Holy Qur'an as *"Call to Islam!"*³² *"Call to the faith!"*³³ *"Call to the path of Allah!"*³⁴ *"Call to Allah's book!"*³⁵ *"Call to the truth!"*³⁶ *"Call to goodness!"*³⁷ and *"Call to salvation!"*³⁸ show that summoning people was intended to get them to adopt the principles of Islam and put them in practice. Therefore, the people who were summoned included both Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, summoning was a very broad concept which included religious guidance and preaching, counsel and advice, warning and good news, governance and communication, and commanding one to do good and avoid evil.

Speaking of those who had ill thoughts about Islam in their hearts, our Lord said, *"Allah knows well what is in the hearts of these people, so ignore what they say, instruct them,"*³⁹ and He indicated the need to expand the ranks of those tasked with summoning and informing and to communicate with those who were fine and virtuous as well as those who were writhing in the swamp of denial or were in error. Furthermore, He empha-

²⁰ Al-Anbiya', 21:45; Ya Sin, 36:6; Fussilat, 41:44.

²¹ Al-Anbiya', 21:107.

²² Al-A'raf, 7:158; al-Ahzab, 33:40.

²³ Al-Ahzab, 33:45-46.

²⁴ Al-Ahqaf, 46:31; Fatir, 35:23, 24; Saad, 38:65.

²⁵ Al-Qasas, 28:87.

²⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5:67.

²⁷ Al-Dhariyat, 51:55.

²⁸ Al-Muddaththir, 74:2.

²⁹ Al-An'am, 6:51.

³⁰ Al-'Imran, 3:20; al-Ma'ida, 5:92; al-Ra'd, 13:40.

³¹ Al-An'am, 6:19.

³² Al-Saff, 61:7.

³³ Al-Hadid, 57:8.

³⁴ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

³⁵ Al-'Imran, 3:23.

³⁶ Al-Ra'd, 13:14.

³⁷ Al-'Imran, 3:104.

³⁸ Al-Mu'min, 40/4.

³⁹ Al-Nisa', 4:63.

sized that it was necessary to make such people more attentive in the manner and style of their behavior and warned, “*Speak to them about themselves using penetrating words!*”⁴⁰

For a while after he was given the mission of prophethood, the Prophet (saw) summoned people to Islam in secret.⁴¹ During this time he summoned first his family and then his friends and other trusted people. As a result, his wife Khadija (ra) became the first person to have faith in him. Then his daughters Zaynab, Ruqayya, and Umm Kulthum (ra) became believers. Afterwards, ‘Ali and the freed slave Zayd b. Haritha (ra), who were in his home, became believers.⁴² Even before Islam, the Prophet’s friend and Companion Abu Bakr (ra) had become a Muslim. And on Abu Bakr’s invitation ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan, Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, and Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah (ra) entered the faith.⁴³

During the time of the secret summons to Islam, the Prophet avoided the evils of the Quraysh polytheists and held meetings with the first Muslims in the home of al-Arqam b. Abi ‘l-Arqam (Dar al-Arqam), which was known as the Dar al-Islam (Abode of Islam) in Islamic history,⁴⁴ and there he taught them the Holy Qur’an and Islam; and he called many people to Islam in this house. ‘Umar (ra) also became a Muslim there. This house was near the Ka’ba and next to the hill of al-Safa.⁴⁵ He was able to make contact with those coming from abroad for the Hajj and ‘Umra without attracting attention. The first Muslims could easily come and go at this house. In addition, he could follow from there the meetings of the Quraysh in the vicinity of the Ka’ba and at the Dar al-Nadwa (a town hall in Mecca). Because of the strategic importance of this house and because it could accommodate all of the first Muslims, the Prophet (saw) selected it for his use.

The Dar al-Arqam played a very significant role in the summons to Islam in Mecca and its spread. Many summoners who would spread the faith were trained there. In fact Mus‘ab b. ‘Umayr (ra), who was trained there, was later sent by the Prophet to prepare Medina for Islam. The Dar al-Arqam in Mecca facilitated the activities of the Masjid al-Nabi and the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* (scholars of the arcade at that mosque) in Medina. Thus the Prophet (saw), during these three years of secret preaching, called on people to believe in and worship Allah Almighty, to believe that he was the servant or Messenger of Allah, and to abandon idol worship.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:63.

⁴¹ HS2/97, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 97.

⁴² HS2/87, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 87.

⁴³ HS2/90, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 90.

⁴⁴ ST3/242, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 243.

⁴⁵ NM6129, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VI, 2211 (3/503).

⁴⁶ HM16123, Ibn Hanbal, III, 493; NM38-NM39, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 19 (1/14).

After the period of secret preaching, Allah (swt) revealed the verses, “Warn your nearest kinsfolk!”⁴⁷ and “So proclaim openly what you have been commanded [to say] and ignore the idolaters.”⁴⁸ Thereupon, the Prophet hosted a feast and invited to his home his relatives and kin. After the meal, his uncle Abu Lahab said, “I have never seen anyone bring anything as evil to his tribe as what you have brought,”⁴⁹ and did not give our Prophet a chance to speak. The group dispersed before the Prophet (saw) could explain his purpose. The next day he arranged another feast. He began to speak to this group by praising Allah. Then he stated that he would never lie to them or deceive them. Then he mentioned death, resurrection, Judgement, the hereafter, Heaven and Hell and summoned them to believe in Allah (swt). He informed them that they were the first people whom he had warned,⁵⁰ and said, “O sons of ‘Abd al-Muttalib! I have been sent as a prophet to you in particular and to all mankind in general.”⁵¹ Thus he publicly invited his relatives and kin to Islam.

His paternal uncle Abu Talib declared that what he said was wonderful and wanted him to continue his mission. He said that he would protect him during this time but that he would not abandon the religion of his ancestors. As for his other paternal uncle Abu Lahab, saying that what Muhammad was doing was a terrible thing, wanted his relatives to obstruct the Prophet’s activities. He said that if they accepted his call they would be humiliated and if they protected him they would be killed. The Prophet’s paternal aunt, Safiyya, opposed Abu Lahab and said she was not pleased with his behavior. Abu Talib spoke up again and stated that for the time being he was safe and that he would protect him.⁵² These efforts of the Prophet (saw) show that he had to begin his mission with his closest relatives and that he had to try to create a cadre of believers around him.

Much later the Prophet (saw) began to preach Islam to all the Mecans. One day he went up the hill of al-Safa and addressed all the tribes of the Quraysh one by one, saying, “O Banu Fihir, O Banu ‘Adi!” Thereupon everyone assembled. Indeed, even those who heard his summons but could not come sent emissaries to learn what was going to happen at the assembly. Even Abu Lahab came with the Quraysh. To those who were assembled, the Prophet said, “O Quraysh! Come! Tell me your opinion! Suppose I told you that there is an (enemy) cavalry in the valley intending to attack you, would you believe me?” The assembled group answered, saying, “Yes,

⁴⁷ Al-Shu‘ara’, 26:214.

⁴⁸ Al-Hijr, 15:94.

⁴⁹ BE1/119, al-Baladhuri, *al-Ansab*, I, 118.

⁵⁰ BE1/119, al-Baladhuri, *al-Ansab*, I, 118, 119.

⁵¹ HM1371, Ibn Hanbal, I, 159.

⁵² BE1/119, al-Baladhuri, *al-Ansab*, I, 119.

we would believe you, for we have found you to be truthful.” Thereupon he said, *“I am a warner to you in the face of terrific punishment.”* But then Abu Lahab said, *“May evil befall you the rest of the day. Is this the purpose for which you have gathered us?”* Then he got to his feet. Thereupon the *sūra* of the *Tabbat* (al-Masad) was revealed.⁵³

The Prophet (saw)’s speech that he addressed to the groups of his relatives one by one in this assembly is interesting with respect to both its wording and content. He said, *“O people of the Quraysh! Ransom yourselves from the Fire! I have no power to prevent harm or bring benefit to you before Allah! O people of the Banu ‘Abd Manaf! Ransom yourselves from the Fire! I have no power to prevent harm or bring benefit to you before Allah! O people of Banu Qusayy! Ransom yourselves from the Fire! I have no power to prevent harm or bring benefit to you before Allah! O people of Banu ‘Abd al-Muttalib! Ransom yourselves from the Fire! I have no power to prevent harm or bring benefit to you before Allah! O Fatima daughter of Muhammad! Ransom yourself from the Fire! I have no power to prevent harm or bring benefit to you before Allah! All you have is the womb, and the kind relations that shall come of it. I will do what is required of Allah (in this world).”*⁵⁴ By speaking this way, Allah’s Messenger attempted to shake the foundations of the widespread and false beliefs of the society in which he lived and to reestablish their ways of thinking.

In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) compared himself to a “plain warner” who brought news of the danger of “an enemy army.” He said, *“I am like one who said, ‘O people! I have seen an army with my eyes and I am a plain warner that you should immediately try to find an escape.’ A group of them paid heed (to his warning) and fled in time; but a group of them accused him of falsehood, did not leave, and the next morning the army destroyed them. This is comparable to one who obeyed me and followed the message which I had brought and one who disobeyed me and declared that the true message which I had brought was false.”*⁵⁵ In yet another *ḥadīth*, he made a different analogy concerning his mission as a warner, saying, *“My relationship to my umma is like that of someone who lighted a fire (at night) and insects and moths began to fall into it. I am here to hold on to your waistbands as you approach the fire and try to prevent you from entering it.”*⁵⁶

In their reaction to these initial warnings of the Prophet (saw), the citizens of Mecca offered him tribal leadership, kingship, and as much wealth as he wanted as long as he did not interfere with their idols. But

⁵³ B4770, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Shu‘ara’) 2.

⁵⁴ T3185, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 26; EM48, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 31.

⁵⁵ M5954, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 16.

⁵⁶ M5955, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 17; B6483, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 26; T2874, al-Tirmidhi, al-Amthal, 82.

he responded by saying, *"I do not understand what you are saying! I did not bring what I have brought in order to demand money from you, to hold a place of honor among you, or to be a king over you. To the contrary, Allah has sent me as a messenger to you. He has revealed His book to me and He has ordered me to be a bearer of good news to you and to warn you. I am transmitting the message of my Lord to you and am acting sincerely. If you accept the message that I have brought, then here, this is your share of the world and the hereafter. If you reject it, I will be patient in fulfilling Allah's command until He gives a judgement concerning you and me."*⁵⁷

When he realized that his uncle Abu Talib, who had always supported him, was also losing hope, he expressed the following painful words: *"Uncle! Even if you put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I will continue my mission until Allah helps me or I die in pursuit of my goal."*⁵⁸ These reports which are found in the biographies of the Prophet (saw) show how determined he was in calling people to Islam.

In the early days of the preaching of Islam, when the Muslims were subjected to persecution and oppression because of their beliefs, the fact that the Prophet (saw) beseeched Allah (swt) to strengthen and honor Islam through the dearest to Him of either 'Umar b. al-Khattab or 'Amr b. Hisham (Abu Jahl), who were two powerful members of the Quraysh, and that subsequently 'Umar became a Muslim,⁵⁹ indicates the importance of prayer in his mission. In this respect, the Prophet also hoped for his Lord's grace when he prayed for guidance for people during the Medina period. Tufayl b. 'Amr from the Banu Daws became a believer while the Prophet was in Mecca and described Islam to his people. The second time he met with the Prophet (saw), he complained to him of his people and wanted the Prophet to curse them so they would be destroyed. When the Noble Messenger raised his hands, those who were there thought that he was going to pray for Allah's wrath against the Daws, but the Prophet of Mercy prayed, saying, *"O my Lord! Guide the Daws and bring them as Muslims to me!"*⁶⁰

While the Prophet was carrying out his duty of transmitting the divine message, the Meccans decided to boycott him and the Banu Muttalib and Banu Hashim. During these years the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims endured much suffering. Moreover, compounding this was that Abu Talib his uncle and protector could not decide to believe in them until his last breath⁶¹ and that his revered wife Khadija (ra), his greatest supporter, died.

⁵⁷ ISS234, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, 234-235; HS2/133, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, I, 133-134.

⁵⁸ HS2/101, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 101.

⁵⁹ T3681, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 17.

⁶⁰ M6450, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 197; B6397, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 59.

Meanwhile, his greatest enemy, his other uncle Abu Lahab, became head of the Quraysh.

When the opportunities for preaching Islam in Mecca dwindled, the Prophet (saw) began to go around the places of lodging at Mina during the Hajj season and preach Islam to those who came to attend the fairs of 'Ukaz and Dhu 'l-Majaz, which were held there. He would say to them, "O people! Allah Almighty commands you to serve Him alone and to associate no one with Him."⁶² Even here his uncle Abu Lahab would not abandon pursuit of him and, saying, "This man speaks nonsense. He should not lead you astray from the gods of your serene ancestors," and tried to deny our beloved Prophet and keep people away from him.⁶³

During the Jahiliyya period of the Arabs, when cultural life was generally oral and not written, the truths of the faith that the Prophet (saw) brought from Allah (swt), above all the tawhid, that is, the concept of His unity,⁶⁴ and resurrection after death, that is, life in the next world,⁶⁵ were difficult to understand. Because people were left to believe what they wished, Allah (swt) would lead the one who so desired to the right path no matter how much one wanted them to believe.⁶⁶ For this reason the task which fell to the Prophet was only to communicate, warn, and explain.⁶⁷ In the face every type of stubborn attitude and behavior, such rejection, threats, oppression, and persecution, coming from the people, Allah (swt) raised the Prophet's level of patience and tolerance. He declared that it would not be right for him to become overwhelmed with sorrow because they would not accept Islam⁶⁸ and confirmed this in a verse, "So [Prophet] remind them: your only task is to remind, you are not there to control them."⁶⁹ It seems that throughout his life the Noble Messenger did not compel anyone to accept Islam. To the contrary, he respected the freedom of religion and conscience, within certain parameters, of those who receive his message but did not accept Islam.

Despite all the evidence that he presented and the warnings that he gave, the Prophet gave up his efforts to summon people to the faith in Mecca, the city in which he was born and grew up. He then began to search for another place where he could carry out his mission. Thus, in order to create an environment that would be conducive to understanding the divine warning, which was, in fact, a message to all mankind,⁷⁰ he began to present himself to the people who had come to Mecca during the Hajj

⁶¹ N2008, al-Nasa'i, al-Jana'iz, 84; N2037, al-Nasa'i, al-Jana'iz, 102.

⁶² HM16120, Ibn Hanbal, III, 492.

⁶³ HM16116, Ibn Hanbal, III, 492.

⁶⁴ Saad, 38:5.

⁶⁵ Ya Sin, 36:77-83.

⁶⁶ Yusuf, 12:103; al-Qasas, 28/56.

⁶⁷ Al-Ma'ida, 5/67, 92, 99; al-Ra'd, 13/40; al-A'raf, 7:62, 68.

⁶⁸ Al-Shu'ara', 26:3.

⁶⁹ Al-Ghashiya, 88:21, 22.

⁷⁰ Ibrahim, 14:52.

season and ask, “Is there no man among you who will take me to his people? For the Quraysh have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord.”⁷¹

In the midst of his search for a place to go, the Prophet (saw) went to the city of Ta’if and summoned its people to Islam. However, not only did the people of Ta’if not accept his summons but they also threw stones at him and insulted him. Thereupon, Allah (swt) sent Jibril to the Prophet who told him that, if he wished, the angel of death would destroy the people of Ta’if. But the Prophet of Mercy declined. Instead he hoped that the descendants of these pitiless people would shout out the unity of Allah and come to believe in Him. Thus he wished for guidance even for his enemies.⁷²

Confronted with the complaints of the Muslims who had fallen under every kind of oppression and torment in the Meccan period, the Prophet (saw) recommended patience. He stated that believers from previous nations had been cut in two with saws and their flesh had been scraped and stripped to the bone with iron combs, but despite these tortures they did not abandon their religion. And he gave hope to the Muslims saying that their religion would spread and prevail to the extent that a person who traveled from San’a’ in Yemen as far as Hadramawt would fear nothing. In this way he told them that they should not be impatient.⁷³

After returning from Ta’if he headed for Yathrib in a season of Hajj. It later took the name Medina (that is, Madinat al-Nabi or City of the Prophet) in honor of the Prophet (saw) after he emigrated there. In a place called ‘Aqaba he came to an agreement with the Muslims of Medina and received their oath of allegiance.⁷⁴ In the agreement that was concluded on the night of ‘Aqaba in the thirteenth year of his prophethood, he received their promise that they would listen to divine commands under all circumstances, that they would help each other in good and bad times, that they would do good things and avoid evil things, that they would always tell the truth about Allah (swt) without paying attention to the condemnation of the one who condemns, that they would help Allah’s Messenger, and that when he came to Medina they would protect him like they protected their spouses and children.⁷⁵

In his capacity as head of the city state of Medina after the Hijra, the Prophet (saw) was able to influence the entire Arabian Peninsula by taking advantage of all socio-political, military, and economic means to spread his

⁷¹ T2925, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 25; HM15260, Ibn Hanbal, III, 391.

⁷² B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 7.

⁷³ B3612, al-Bukhari, al-Manqib, 25; D2649, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 97.

⁷⁴ B6801, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 14.

⁷⁵ HM14510, Ibn Hanbal, III, 322; HM14708, Ibn Hanbal, III, 340; BS18233, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, IX, 17.

religious message and convert people to Islam. Indeed, two verses of the *sūra* of Al 'Imran, the first 80 verses of which were revealed on the occasion of the delegation of Christians from Najran which arrived from Yemen in the third year of the period in Medina,⁷⁶ were addressed to Christians and Jews as well as to all polytheists who were adherents of religions which had no divine book. This shows that the Holy Qur'an had a universal message. These verses stated, in short, that Islam was the true religion before Allah (swt) and the Prophet's mission was only that of a messenger.⁷⁷ The letters of invitation to Islam which he began to send to all contemporary rulers, such as those of Byzantium, Persia, and Abyssinia, reflect the launching of his universal summons to the faith.⁷⁸ Some of them have survived to the present. These letters are tantamount to official communications to non-Muslims which describe what will be transmitted and the prophetic method of preaching. In fact, when the Prophet (saw) decided to write a letter to the Byzantines, he was told, "They will not read a letter unless it is stamped." So he stamped it with a silver ring seal. On it was inscribed the words "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."⁷⁹

The following was written on the letter that was delivered to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius: *"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. From Muhammad, Allah's servant and messenger to Heraclius the great of Rome! Peace be upon those who follow the guidance! I am now summoning you to Islam. Become a Muslim and be saved! May Allah give you double His reward. If you do not adopt Islam, the sin of your people will be on your neck. Say, 'People of the Book, let us arrive at a statement that is common to us all: we worship Allah alone, we ascribe no partner to Him, and none of us takes others beside Allah as lords.' If they turn away, say, 'Witness our devotion to Him.'"*⁸⁰ The fact that the Prophet (saw) had the sixth-fourth verse of the *sūra* of Al 'Imran written in this letter is significant with respect to showing that he emphasized common beliefs in his preaching. Furthermore, when he sent Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) to Yemen, the society to which he was to preach were People of the Book, and therefore he ordered him first to summon them to make the testimony of the faith and if they did so then to perform the five daily ritual prayers, and if they did that as well, then to give the *zakāt*.⁸¹ In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) began with the most important matters of faith and then gradually presented others in order not to overburden potential converts all at once. Thus, by present-

⁷⁶ SU5/8, al-Suhayli, *Rawd al-unuf*, V, 8.

⁷⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:19-20.

⁷⁸ T2716, al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 23.

⁷⁹ B5875, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 52.

⁸⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:64; M4607, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 74; B7, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

⁸¹ M121, Muslim, al-Iman 29; D1584, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 5.

ing these proposals at the very beginning he had a chance to allay the people's misgivings.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) once summoned 'Adi b. Hatim to Islam. He was a leading member of the tribe of Tayy. When he heard about the Prophet (saw) he was very uncomfortable and said, "How can I not go to this man. If he is a liar, no harm will come to me. But if he tells the truth, I will learn it." However it was clear from the lines on his face that he was seized by hesitation and doubt. The Prophet (saw) said, *"I know why you do not want to become a Muslim. You are now saying to yourself 'Those who join this religion are the weakest with respect to wealth and position. They are the powerless from among the Arabs.' Do you know about al-Hira?"* 'Adi answered, "I have never seen it, but I have heard things about it." Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"I swear to Allah that this religion will indeed reach completion and then a woman will be able to depart from al-Hira alone, travel without protection, and circumambulate the Ka'ba. The treasures of Khusraw (the ruler of Persia) will be captured."* In surprise 'Adi asked, "Khusraw the son of Hurmuz?" "Yes, Khusraw the son of Hurmuz," answered the Prophet and then he continued, *"I swear that wealth will increase so much that there will be no space for it."* 'Adi found these answers persuasive and they overcame his doubt and so he became a Muslim. In later years he said that each of the things that Allah's Messenger (saw) had predicted came to pass.⁸²

When 'Ali (ra), who had been given the task of conquering Khaybar, said, "O Messenger of Allah! I will fight them until they become like us," the response of the Noble Messenger was noteworthy with respect to showing the military tactics and method of proselytization they would follow in dealing with non-Muslims. He said, *"When you enter their territory, go slowly and then summon them to embrace Islam and inform them of Allah's rights which they must observe. By Allah, even if a single man is led to the right path of Allah through you, then that would be better for you than red camels."*⁸³

Muslim b. al-Harith b. Muslim al-Tamimi transmitted a *ḥadīth* on the authority of his father who said, "The Messenger of Allah sent us on a military expedition. When we reached the place of attack, I galloped my horse and outstripped my companions. The people of the tribe (of that location who saw that we were going to attack), received me with a great tumult. I said to them, 'Say there is no god but Allah and save yourselves!' They did so and became Muslims. When my companions learned of this, they be-

⁸² HM18449, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 257.

⁸³ M6223, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 34; B4210, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39.

came angry and said, 'You have deprived us of booty.' When we returned to the Messenger of Allah (saw), they told him what I had done. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) summoned me. He was very pleased with what I had done and said, *'Know that Allah Almighty will reward you with such and such for every person (who became a Muslim through your intervention).'*'⁸⁴

Even during warfare, the Prophet's method of proselytizing was to make people love Islam, to ensure their peace and tranquility, and to gain for them humanity, and freedom of belief and worship, in short, it was based on the principle and concept of his being able to bring people to salvation. This was because, in the view of the Prophet (saw), even the saving of a single person was better than anything under the sun.⁸⁵ Consequently, Islam was not satisfied with a Muslim simply being content with his own place in the faith. It charged Muslims to spread the faith to those who were ignorant of it so that they could benefit from its blessings. In other words, Allah wanted goodness to reign over the world by the hands of Muslims. The Holy Qur'an states, *"Who speaks better than someone who calls people to Allah, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those [that is, a Muslim] devoted to Allah?'"*⁸⁶ This is significant in emphasizing the value of spreading the faith.

In his attempts to communicate and spread the faith, Allah's Messenger (saw) always gave tolerance and compassion priority in dealing with people. The Messenger of Mercy said, in this regard, *"As for (behaving) with kindness, it brings beauty. But the lack of it makes matters worse."*⁸⁷ He would behave in accordance with what he said and would pray for those who behaved this way by saying, *"O my Lord! Whoever takes upon himself a matter of in my umma and treats people with kindness and goodness, treat him too with kindness and goodness."*⁸⁸ The following verse is the clearest evidence of how he behaved: *"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."*⁸⁹ In fact according to one *ḥadīth*, our beloved Prophet is described in the Bible (Old Testament), as follows: *"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."*⁹⁰

In carrying out his proselytizing activities, Allah's Messenger (saw) continued his efforts with patience, belief in his mission, and determination without ever being overcome with hopelessness or pessimism. Allah

⁸⁴ D5080, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 100, 101.

⁸⁵ NM6537, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VI, 2329 (3/598).

⁸⁶ Fussilat, 41:33

⁸⁷ M6602, Muslim, al-Birr, 78.

⁸⁸ M4722, Muslim, al-Imara, 19; HM25129, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 94.

⁸⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

⁹⁰ B2125, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 50.

Almighty wanted him to always be patient and gave him the example of the other prophets who, in enduring all kinds of oppression, difficulties, suffering, and violence, were able to learn from their experiences.⁹¹ Indeed, the Noble Messenger continued to summon people to Islam by showing patience and fortitude in the face of every kind of difficulty and suffering. With respect to bringing people to Islam, no person or member of any profession was unimportant to him. He won people to Islam by visiting them when they were ill,⁹² by being generous to them,⁹³ and by giving them shares of booty.⁹⁴

When the Prophet (saw) finally conquered Mecca in Ramadan of the eighth year of the Hijra, he gave a sermon at the door of the Ka'ba and spoke the following unforgettable words: *"O People! Allah has removed the conceits of the Jahiliyya from you, and its reverence for your forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: one who is righteous, pious, and honorable before Allah, and one who is wicked, miserable and insignificant before Allah. People are children of Adam and Allah created Adam from the dust."*⁹⁵ Afterwards he forgave all the Meccans who had behaved badly toward the Muslims and thus he ensured that they all together adopted Islam. Thus on a day of conquest like this when a man came to him and trembled while he spoke to him, the Prophet of Mercy said, *"Calm down! I am not a king. I am just a man whose mother dried and ate meat."*⁹⁶ This shows that he presented himself in an extremely modest fashion and that, above all, he conquered the hearts of people.

The ninth year of the Hijra is known as the "Year of the Delegations" in Islamic history. In that year many delegations representing tribes within and without the Arabian Peninsula came to Medina and adopted Islam or declared their allegiance to the Muslims. At the same time, the delegations conveyed to the Prophet their goals, such as informing him that their tribes had become Muslim,⁹⁷ learning about Islam and teaching it to their tribes when they returned,⁹⁸ requesting preachers who would communicate and teach Islam,⁹⁹ and adopting Islam under certain conditions.¹⁰⁰ The Prophet (saw) welcomed the delegations most hospitably and met all of their needs. He wanted his Companions (ra) to honor these guests. He asked if the guests were pleased and provided the opportunity for those who had just become Muslims to learn the essential matters of the faith and he took great personal care in what they learned.¹⁰¹ The Prophet (saw) sensed that delegations which had come from the Banu Qays and had been in Me-

⁹¹ Al-Ahqaf, 46:35; Saad, 38:17.

⁹² B1356, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 79; D3095, Abu Da'ud, al-Jana'iz, 2.

⁹³ HM12074, Ibn Hanbal, III 107; M6021, Muslim, Fada'il, 58.

⁹⁴ M6022, Muslim, Fada'il 59; T666, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 30.

⁹⁵ T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49; D5116, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 110, 111.

⁹⁶ IM3312, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 30.

⁹⁷ HM18200, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 232.

⁹⁸ B7418, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22.

⁹⁹ M6254, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 55.

¹⁰⁰ HM18074, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 218.

¹⁰¹ HM15644, Ibn Hanbal, III, 432.

dina for many days missed their families, and so gave them permission to return to their homes and asked them to teach what they had learned in their homelands.¹⁰² The Prophet (saw) gave gifts to the delegations when they left Medina and considered this to be so important that when he was on his deathbed he said that gifts should be given to delegations just as he had done.¹⁰³

At the Battle of Tabuk in the ninth year of the Hijra, the Prophet sent a letter with his envoy calling upon the Byzantine emperor to accept Islam. He left “his subjects” free to select the religion of the Muslims or pay the *jizya*. The Byzantine emperor did not accept his proposal. Nevertheless, he sent a letter to the Prophet in which he officially recognized him and his establishment in Medina.¹⁰⁴

Finally in the ninth year of the Hijra, the Prophet (saw) gave a sermon to hundreds of thousands in Mecca. This sermon, which was generally considered to be “a universal manifesto,” was called the Farewell Sermon. In it, the rights and responsibilities with which all people were born were enumerated. Thus this sermon was a genuine last will and testament. When he asked, with respect to his mission of spreading the word of Allah, “*You will be asked about me and I wonder what you will say?*” his noble Companions (ra) replied, “We would testify that you communicated Allah’s message, that you carried out your duty, and that you were sincere.” Thereupon, the Prophet raised his index finger to the sky and then said to them three times, “*My Allah! Testify!*” And he had everyone who was there testify that he had carried out his mission of spreading Allah’s word for all of humanity.¹⁰⁵ According to another *ḥadīth*, he said, “*Those who are present should communicate it (my message) to those who are not here, for the one who is informed might understand it better than those who communicated it to him.*”¹⁰⁶ In this way he gave all Muslims the task of spreading the word of Allah (swt). The Companions (ra) learned the message of Islam from Allah’s Messenger (saw) and, in order to spread it throughout the world, each one went to a different region and in this way Islam reached many parts of the world. The most prominent evidence of this is that today a very large number of the tombs of the Companions (ra) are located outside Mecca and Medina where Islam was born.

According to some *ḥadīths*, eighty-one or eighty-two days before the Prophet’s death, in the tenth year of the Hijra, on Friday the ninth of Dhu

¹⁰² N636, al-Nasa’i, al-Adhan, 8; al-Bukhari, al-’Ilm, 25 –at the chapter heading–.

¹⁰³ M4232, Muslim, al-Wasaya, 20; B3053, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 176.

¹⁰⁴ HM15740, Ibn Hanbal, III, 442.

¹⁰⁵ M2950, Muslim, al-Hajj, 147; D1905, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasik, 56.

¹⁰⁶ B1741, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 132; M4384, Muslim, al-Qasama, 30; B1739, al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 132.

‘l-Hijja, at ‘Arafat the following verse was revealed:¹⁰⁷ *“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed my blessing upon you, and chosen as your religion Islam.”*¹⁰⁸ But later other verses were revealed, so that the Prophet (saw) continued, until his last breath, his mission of summoning people to Islam and communicating the word of Allah (swt).

In sum, beneath the Prophet’s success was undoubtedly his sincere belief in the religion that he preached, and by applying the principles of this religion in detail to his own life he became a living example of the faith. Muhammad (saw) did not tell people what to believe or do. He believed everything that he said and communicated, and he followed what he preached. For, this was a commandment of the Holy Qur’an.¹⁰⁹ This was also a fundamental valid principle of preaching in all times. The Prophet (saw) used his own words, deeds, and way of life as the most viable methods in his call to Islam. He said to his Companions (ra), whom he sent out to spread the faith, *“Spread the good news! Avoid hatred! Make things easy! Do not make things difficult!”*¹¹⁰ In this way he declared the basic principles that Muslims should follow in communicating his message. Furthermore, summoning people to the Prophet and the way of his Lord with wisdom and good advice and arguing with them in the most courteous way were commanded in the Holy Qur’an.¹¹¹ In fulfilling this command, he preached to people to come to Allah (swt) not blindly but with clear reasoning.¹¹² In his preaching, the Prophet (saw) took into consideration the intellectual and cultural level of his audience, their abilities, their feelings, their desires, and even their individual features. Altogether he paid close attention to them.

In his efforts to spread Allah’s word, which undoubtedly were inspired and directed by revelation, ¹¹³ he seems to have followed a divine and prophetic strategy. The methods that he used in order to reach his goal—the stages through which he passed, the various means that he employed, the principles and conditions that he considered—established the ideal practice of preaching for both the Companions (ra) and the entire Muslim community. This prophetic method of proselytizing, which was very versatile, is the greatest light illuminating the path of today’s preachers.

¹⁰⁷ B45, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 33; M7525, M7527, Muslim, al-Tafsir, 3-5.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Ma’ida, 5:3.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Saff, 61:2.

¹¹⁰ M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 6; B69, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 11.

¹¹¹ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

¹¹² Al-Hajj, 22:67-68; Yusuf, 12:108.

¹¹³ Al-Tur, 52:48.



THE PROPHET (SAW) THE SINCERE and WISE GUIDE

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، إِذَا بَعَثَ أَحَدًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فِي
بَعْضِ أَمْرِهِ قَالَ: ”بَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا، وَيَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا.“

According to Abu Musa (al-Ash'ari) (ra), when the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent one of the Companions (ra) to carry out one of his orders he would say, “*Spread the good news! Avoid hatred! Make things easy! Do not make things difficult!*”

(M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 6)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: ... سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ رَأَى مُنْكَرًا فَاسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يُغَيِّرَهُ بِيَدِهِ فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَلْيَسَانِهِ،
فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.“



عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ بْنِ الْيَمَانِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوُنَّ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ
يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْهُ ثُمَّ تَدْعُوهُ فَلَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ.“



عَنْ تَمِيمِ الدَّارِيِّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الَّذِينَ النَّصِيحَةُ“ قُلْنَا: لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: ”لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأُمَّةٍ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ قَالَ: كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يُذَكِّرُ النَّاسَ فِي كُلِّ خَمِيسٍ، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ: يَا
أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، لَوَدِدْتُ أَنَّكَ ذَكَرْتَنَا كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، قَالَ: أَمَا إِنَّهُ يَمْنَعُنِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَنِّي
أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أُمْلِكُكُمْ، وَإِنِّي أَتَخَوَّلُكُمْ بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ كَمَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يَتَخَوَّلُنَا بِهَا مَخَافَةَ السَّامَةِ عَلَيْنَا.



Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) said, "...I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *'He who observes an evil deed should change it with his hand if he can do so; if he cannot do so, (he should change it) then with his tongue; if he cannot do so, then (he should change it) with his heart, and that is the weakest degree of the faith.'*"

(D1140, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 239-242)



According to Hudhayfa b. al-Yaman (ra), the Prophet said, *"By the One who holds my soul in His hand! Either you command good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, but He will not respond to you."*

(T2169, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 9)



According to Tamim al-Dari (ra), the Prophet said, *"Religion is sincerity."* Then we asked him, "For whom?" He replied, *"For Allah, His book, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims, and for all Muslims."*

(M196, Muslim, al-Iman, 95)



Abu Wa'il said, "Abd Allah used to give a (religious) talk to the people every Thursday. Once a man said, 'O Abu 'Abd al-Rahman! I wish you could speak 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 (saw) used to do in order not to make us weary.'"

(B70, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 12)



Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam al-Sulami (ra), who had recently become a Muslim and did not know that one should not speak during the ritual prayer, once said to someone who sneezed while praying with the congregation, "Allah have mercy on you." Because of this unwarranted speech, everyone stared at him disapprovingly. So, Mu'awiya said, "Woe be upon me! Why are you staring at me? What did I do?" This time in order to make him be quite, those praying began to strike their hands on their thighs. When he realized that they were urging him to be quiet, he said nothing and waited until the end of the service. Later he said, "May my mother and father be ransom for Allah's Messenger! I had never before nor after seen one give better instruction than him. I swear that he did not scold, beat or revile me but after the prayer service simply said, *Talking to persons is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring his greatness, and reciting the Holy Qur'an.*"¹

In his efforts to preach and instruct, the Prophet (saw) established his relationship with people on a basis of ease, tolerance, compassion, kindness, grace, and gentleness. This was because Allah's Messenger knew very well that behaving with gentleness (patience, forbearance) would lead to good results, and in its absence there would be bad results.² The verse, "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,"³ is clear evidence of the Prophet's kindness and grace. According to one *hadith*, our beloved Prophet is described in the Bible (Old Testament), as follows: "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."⁴ Once a rustic who had recently become a Muslim but who had not yet learned the ethics and manners of Islam urinated in a mosque in which carpets and kilims were not laid out as they are today.

¹ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33; D930, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 166, 167.

² HM25451, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 124; EM469, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 166.

³ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

⁴ B2125, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 50.

Those who were there grabbed him and were about to throw him out when the Prophet (saw) intervened and stopped them, saying, *“Leave him! Pour a bucket of water on the place where he urinated!”* Then he said to them, *“You were sent only to make things easy, not to make them difficult.”*⁵

The Messenger of Mercy described the method that he followed in preaching and instructing as follows: *“Allah did not send me to be harsh, or cause harm, but He has sent me to teach and make things easy.”*⁶ When the Messenger of Allah (saw), who recommended this virtuous behavior to those in his company, sent one of his Companions (ra) on a mission to carry out some of his commands, he used to say, *“Spread the good news! Avoid hatred! Make things easy! Do not make things difficult!”*⁷ In addition, when he was going to choose between two things, he would chose the easier, unless it were sinful.⁸

In the Noble Qur'an, Allah Almighty addressed Moses and his brother Aaron and commanded them, *“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds. Speak to him gently so that he may take heed, or show respect.”*⁹ The followers of a religion which commanded speaking gently to even Pharaoh are surely obligated to do so to all people in an even more attentive, careful, and compassionate manner.

Preaching is to say good words to soften one's heart, to make one avoid sin and do what is meritorious in Allah's sight, to remind one of divine reward and punishment, to encourage one to do what is charitable, good, and beneficial and to refrain from what is forbidden and evil, to urge one to obey Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw), and to show one the right way.¹⁰ As for guidance, this means to show people the right way and to call upon believers to fulfill their religious obligations.¹¹ The concepts of *maw'iza*, *dhikr*, *dhikrā*, *tadhkira*, *naṣīḥa*, *tawṣiyya*, *tabligh*, *tadhkir*, *tahdhir*, and *al-āmir bi'l-ma'rūf wa 'l-nāhi 'an al-muḥkar* are the concepts which are closely associated with preaching and guidance. Words derived from the roots of *wa'z*, *maw'iza*,¹² and *rushd*, which have the sense of explaining to people, and advising and reminding them about the right and wonderful things of which Allah and his Messenger informed them, and words meaning guidance, truth, doing the right thing, charity, and beneficial¹³ have taken their place in the divine appeal to mankind.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty uses the verb *wa'aza*/to preach and sometimes attributes this action to Himself as in the phrases, *“He*

⁵ B220, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 58; M661, Muslim, al-Tahara, 100.

⁶ M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29.

⁷ M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 6; B69, al-Bukhari, al-Ilm, 11.

⁸ M6045, Muslim, Fada'il, 77; B6126, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 80.

⁹ Ta Ha, 20:43-44.

¹⁰ RT6, al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, s. 527.

¹¹ RT7, al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, s. 196.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:66, 275; Al-Imran, 3:138; al-Ma'ida, 5:46.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:256, 186; al-Kahf, 18:10, 17; al-Hujurat, 49:7.

teaches [that is, preaches to] you so that you may take heed”¹⁴ and “Allah’s instructions [that is, preaching] to you are excellent.”¹⁵ In the Noble Qur’an, “one who preaches” is either our Lord Himself,¹⁶ or one of the prophets sent by him.¹⁷ This state of affairs shows that the task of preaching and guidance was the “profession of a prophet” acting on the command of Allah (swt) and demonstrates the importance and merit in doing so. Furthermore, the verse, “and go on reminding [that is, preaching to people], it is good for those who believe to be reminded,”¹⁸ states that preaching and guidance are beneficial to believers. Indeed, when the Prophet (saw) wanted advice (guidance) in a matter which concerned the rights of a Muslim over a Muslim, he considered advising him to be one of these rights.¹⁹ In like manner the Noble Messenger said, “... when one of you wants advice (guidance) from a brother, his brother should advise him.”²⁰

Preaching and guidance are meant to assist Muslims in fulfilling their religious requirements. This makes it possible for the Muslim to follow the straight path in the real world. The Noble Qur’an emphasized the ability of people to distinguish between good and evil²¹ and stated that people could fall into error because of insufficient or improper use of discernment and the influence of misleading or distorting factors, and said, “If you believed most of those on earth, they would lead you away from the path of Allah.”²² In another verse, “Allah does not change the condition of a people [for the worse] unless they change what is in themselves,”²³ He pointed out a sociological reality. If preventive measures were not taken, the ensuing deterioration in society and civilization would be qualified as oppression (*zulm*) in the Holy Qur’an, which states that the disorder that would result from this would harm not only the evil doers but also everyone in society.²⁴

Islam reminds us of the features of man’s sound nature, sheds light on his mind with revelation, and contributes to the healthy passage of social experience. For this reason, preaching and guidance take priority in the mutual moral support and assistance among Muslims. In fact, the task of preaching and guidance is a responsibility that Muslims have toward themselves, members of other religions, and all other people.²⁵ The Prophet (saw) describes this responsibility in distinctive style in a *hadith* by comparing the world in which we live to a ship and all the people in the world to passengers travelling on this ship. The passengers are divided into two groups. One group are those who are knowledgeable, wise, reasonable,

¹⁴ Al-Nahl, 16:90.

¹⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:58.

¹⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:58; al-Nahl, 16:90.

¹⁷ Al-A’raf, 7:93; Luqman, 31:13; Saba’, 34:46.

¹⁸ Al-Dhariyat, 51:55.

¹⁹ M5651, Muslim, al-Salam, 5; EM925, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 319.

²⁰ HM15534, Ibn Hanbal, III, 418; al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 68 –at the chapter heading–.

²¹ Al-Shams, 91:8.

²² Al-An’am, 6:116.

²³ Al-Ra’d, 13:11.

²⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:25.

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:143; Al-Imran, 3:104, 110.

and virtuous and adhere to Allah's limitations. The other group violate his limitations and fall prisoner to their whims and desires. Before the ship departs, the two groups draw lots for their seats. The first group took seats in the upper part of the ship and the second in the lower part. When the ship was in the middle of the (fresh water) sea, those below decided, for a seemingly innocent reason, that they did not want to disturb those above when they needed to get water and so began to drill a hole in the ship. Those above did not want them to do this and wanted to intervene because if they did not prevent them from doing this they would drown just like those below. For, if they stopped them from doing this in a wise way, both they and the ones below would be saved from drowning.²⁶

On this same subject the Prophet (saw) said, *"He who observes an evil deed should change it with his hand if he can do so; if he cannot do so, (he should change it) then with his tongue; if he cannot do so, then (he should change it) with his heart, and that is the weakest degree of the faith."*²⁷ He thus indicated how evil should be changed. In addition, he said, *"By the One who holds my soul in His hand! Either you command good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, but He will not respond to you."*²⁸ Clearly these *hadiths*, inform us that the task of guidance is too important to be neglected and that the rejection of preaching will result in sanctions leading to the punishment of the entire society

The Prophet (saw)'s entire life was spent in calling people and guiding them to Allah (swt), this being the essence of the task of prophethood. In a short time, the Noble Messenger raised a golden generation which would serve as an example for all ages. The most important reason underlying his success was undoubtedly that he said nothing to people that he did not believe or had not experienced. Allah's Messenger (saw) believed everything that he preached and advised, and he had experienced what he said. This was because a person had to practice what he preached. This rule was as valid for those who personally preached and guided as it was to every Muslim who explained the beauties of Islam to those in his circle. Surely the warnings of our Lord on High were not in vain, *"How can you tell people to do what is right and forget to do it yourselves?"*²⁹ and, *"You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them?"*³⁰

Advising someone on what to do is an important moral principle and a question of personality and credibility. Abu 'l-Darda' (ra), one of the

²⁶ B2493, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 6; T2173, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 12.

²⁷ D1140, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 239-242.

²⁸ T2169, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 9.

²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:44.

³⁰ Al-Saff, 61:2.

Prophet's Companions, warned, "May those who do not know be shamed once, may those who do know but do not act according to what they know be shamed seven times!"³¹ Malik b. Dinar, a student of Hasan al-Basri, said, "When one who knows does not act according to what he knows, it is as if his preaching and guidance were wiped away from hearts like drops of rain sliding off a steep slope."³² It is understood from both sayings that those who not act according to what they know cannot be successful in the task of preaching and giving guidance. There is no doubt that the words of people who do not practice what they preach will have no effect in the hearts and intellectual lives of others. In this context, the Noble Messenger said, *"A man will be brought on the Day of Judgement and thrown into Hell fire and his intestines will burst out. He will go round with them, as an ass goes round the mill stone. The denizens of Hell would gather round him and say, 'O so and so! What has happened to you? Were you not calling upon us to do good and avoid evil?' He will say, 'Of course, it is so. I used to call upon (people) to do what was good, but I did not practice that myself. I had been forbidding people to do what was evil, but I practiced it myself."*³³

The methods that the Prophet (saw) used to guide people are very interesting. Allah Almighty addressed him saying, *"[Prophet], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Argue with them in the most courteous way."*³⁴ The method described in this verse is to debate with wisdom, excellent counsel, good intentions, and sincerity. In short, the method of guidance used by Allah's Messenger was to take into consideration the intellectual and cultural level of his audience and fulfill his objective in the most appropriate way. In one *ḥadīth* he said, *"Religion is sincerity."* When he was asked, "For whom?" he replied, *"For Allah, His book, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims, and for all Muslims."*³⁵ In addition, with respect to calling people to Allah (swt), the Holy Qur'an uses the words *qawlan layyinan*,³⁶ meaning soft words, *qawlan ma'rūfan*,³⁷ meaning true and helpful words, *qūlū li'l-nās ḥusnan*,³⁸ meaning to speak to people with fine, true, and correct words, and *qawlan sadīdan*,³⁹ meaning true and sound words. The method indicated by all these terms is like the friendly discussion Luqman had with his son and the advice that he gave him.⁴⁰

While guiding people, the Noble Messenger took great care in getting to know his audience. He took into consideration their sentiments, desires, and features as individuals. By paying close attention to them, he would

³¹ KU44243, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, XVI, 221.

³² G11/63, al-Ghazali, *Ihya'*, I, 63.

³³ M7483, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 51; HM22143, Ibn Hanbal, V, 207.

³⁴ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

³⁵ M196, Muslim, al-Iman, 95; T1926, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 17; D4944, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 59; N4202, al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 31.

³⁶ Ta Ha, 20:44.

³⁷ Al-Nisa', 4:5, 8.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2/83.

³⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33:70.

⁴⁰ Luqman, 31:13, 14-19; B3429, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 41.

guide them in the best way. One day a young man came to him and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Give me permission to commit *zinā’* (adultery)!” The Companions (ra) who were there immediately turned to him and said, “Shush, shush,” and tried to prevent him from speaking. But Allah’s Messenger said to the youth, “Come here!” The young man approached the Prophet (saw) and sat next to him. The following conversation took place between them:

“Do you want zinā’ to be committed with your mother?”

“By Allah! No! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No. I do not want this.”

“Other people also do not want zinā’ to be committed with their mothers. Do you want zinā’ to be committed with your daughter?”

“By Allah! No, O Messenger of Allah! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No. I do not want this.”

“Other people also do not want zinā’ to be committed with their daughters. Do you want zinā’ to be committed with your sister?”

“By Allah! No! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No. I do not want this.”

“Other people also do not want zinā’ to be committed with their sisters. Do you want zinā’ to be committed with your paternal aunts?”

“By Allah! No! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No. I do not want this.”

“Other people also do not want zinā’ to be committed with their paternal aunts. Do you want zinā’ to be committed with your maternal aunts?”

“By Allah! No! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No. I do not want this.”

“Other people also do not want zinā’ to be committed with their maternal aunts.”

After this conversation, Allah’s Messenger put his hand on the young man’s head and prayed, saying, “My Allah! Forgive his sins! Cleanse his heart of evil and protect his chastity and virtue!”

The young man was fully convinced by the Prophet’s argument and by the blessing of his prayer was no longer inclined toward such behavior.⁴¹ In this *ḥadīth*, the Messenger of Allah (saw) used the method of persuasion to guide this youth, and he had the youth sit next to him and he touched him. This also seems to be an example of the Prophet’s effective

⁴¹ HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.

use of body language in guiding people.

In his relationship with people, Allah's Messenger (saw) did not look for things to criticize nor did he criticize people to their faces. Whenever he witnessed someone unpleasant or heard his unpleasant words, he would not say, "What is the matter with so and so which causes him to say such and such or do such and such?" Instead he would say, "*What is the matter with these people which causes them to say such and such or do such and such?*"⁴² This behavior on the part of the Prophet shows the method that those who would fulfill his mission of preaching and guidance would follow when correcting the errors of people when addressing society.

Those who preached and guided in the name of Islam were careful about what, where, and when they spoke and the method of presentation that they used. They had to know what to highlight and what to prioritize in order to communicate the truth without causing a disturbance. Once our beloved Prophet said, "*Whoever testifies sincerely that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his Messenger will be saved from Hell fire.*" Thereupon Mu'adh b. Jabal asked him, "Should I not inform the people of this good news, O Messenger of Allah?" And he replied, "*When they trust in this, they will be at ease.*"⁴³ When providing guidance, the Prophet (saw) always considered the needs and interests of those he addressed, and he gave the following advice, "*Treat people according to their status.*"⁴⁴

When providing guidance, the Prophet (saw) described to people their responsibilities in descending order beginning with the most important. Once a delegation from the 'Abd al-Qays came to him and said, "We are a tribe from the Rabi'a and cannot come to you except during the sacred months. So, order us to do something that we can learn from you, and then we will call those who are behind us to it." Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to them, "*I order you to do four things: above all to believe in Allah and testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah (saw), and then to pray (ritual prayer), pay the zakāt, and pay (to me) one fifth of the spoils of war.*"⁴⁵

Once a bedouin with disheveled hair came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Tell me the prayers that Allah has made obligatory for me." The Noble Messenger said, "*Five daily (ritual) prayers, but you can do voluntary prayers as well.*" Then the bedouin said, "Tell me the fast that Allah has made obligatory for me." The Prophet

⁴² D4788, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 5.

⁴³ B128, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 49.

⁴⁴ D4842, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 20.

⁴⁵ T2611, al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 5.

(saw) said, “Keep the fast for the month of Ramadan, but you can fast voluntarily as well.” Then the bedouin said, “Tell me the *zakāt* that Allah has made obligatory for me.” Allah’s Messenger (saw) then told him the basic principles of Islam (which included the *zakāt*). Then the bedouin said, “I swear by Allah who has honored you that I will not do any act of worship voluntarily, but I will not do less than what Allah has made obligatory for me.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “If he is true to his word, he will prosper.”⁴⁶

Encouraging (*targhīb*) the masses to behave in a way that would ensure that they went to Paradise and discouraging (*tarhīb*) them from behavior that would ensure that they went to Hell should be the approaches applied by those who carry out the task of preaching and guidance. This is because instilling in people the desire for Heaven and the fear of Hell makes it much easier for them to live a straight and disciplined life in this world. In this respect the principle is to establish a balance between *indhār* (warning) and *tabshīr* (good news) and to use it in its proper place. The Noble Qur’an always observes this balance. While promising reward for those who believe and do good works, it also declares that those who disbelieve and rebel will be punished.⁴⁷ The Holy Qur’an also states that all the prophets,⁴⁸ especially the last prophet,⁴⁹ and the last divine book the Holy Qur’an were sent to warn and bring good news to all people.⁵⁰

The proper attitude for one who is a preacher or guide is to treat people with compassion, respect, tolerance, and patience. It should not be forgotten that, throughout his mission as messenger, our beloved Prophet endured patiently, for the sake of guidance, the hardships, suffering, and difficulties that he encountered. In fact, in the Holy Qur’an it is recommended that when faced with difficulties in life one should ask Allah for help with steadfastness and prayer.⁵¹ Allah’s Messenger (saw) was persecuted for the sake of Islam. Anas b. Malik (ra) gave an example of this, saying, “I was walking with the Messenger of Allah (saw) and he was wearing a Najrani *burd* (caftan) with a thick hem. A bedouin followed him and pulled his *burd* so violently that I noticed that the hem of the *burd* left a mark on one side of the shoulder of Allah’s Messenger. Then the bedouin demanded that the Messenger of Allah (saw) give him some of the wealth of Allah that he possessed. Thereupon, he turned, looked at him, smiled, and ordered that he be given something.”⁵²

⁴⁶ N2092, al-Nasa’i, al-Siyam, 1.

⁴⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:56-57; al-Tawba, 9:67, 68, 71, 72; al-Hadid, 57:19.

⁴⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4:165; al-An’am, 6:48.

⁴⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33:45; Saba’, 34:28; al-Fath, 48:8.

⁵⁰ Al-Kahf, 18:2-4; al-Ahqaf, 46:12.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2:45, 153; Luqman, 31:17.

⁵² B5809, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 18.

When preaching and providing guidance, the Prophet (saw) and his friends were careful not to bore their listeners. They would take into account the time when they were willing to listen. For instance, ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) used to preach to the people every Thursday. Once a man said, “O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman! I wish you could speak to us every day.” Ibn Mas‘ud 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.”⁵³ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) used to preach at specific times in order to ensure that everyone would be present and in order not to bore them.⁵⁴ When he preached on Friday, he was brief,⁵⁵ wanting to keep the sermon short.⁵⁶

During the time of the Prophet (saw), everyone was charged with explaining to others what they knew about the nature of his mission and the measures introduced by Islam. However, in the manner in which we understand it today, the first person to carry out the task of preaching on Friday was Tamim al-Dari, by permission of ‘Umar (ra).⁵⁷ He continued to preach at the time of ‘Uthman.⁵⁸ ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) also used to preach on Thursdays.⁵⁹ It is also known that many Companions (ra) preached on various occasions.⁶⁰

‘Umar closely monitored Tamim al-Dari (ra) to whom he gave permission to preach.⁶¹ According to one story, ‘Ali (ra), who asked him if he knew about the *nāsikh* and *mansūkh*, that is, the rules which had been abrogated and the new ones which had replaced them, and received the answer, “I don’t know,” said, “You have destroyed both yourself and others!” He thus criticized the preaching of the ignorant.⁶² Mu‘awiya tried to determine if a person who preached to the Meccans during the Hajj had been assigned this task.⁶³ These historical facts show that a person who was going to preach needed to be questioned about the sufficiency of his religious knowledge. On this matter Allah’s Messenger said, “*Those who preach to people are usually ruling authorities or those appointed by them to the task or those who are presumptuous.*”⁶⁴ This shows that he recommended the need to be careful and responsible in determining who should preach.

In accordance with the verse, “*Instruct them and speak to them about themselves using penetrating words,*”⁶⁵ the Prophet (saw) would preach and advise people. When he began his speech he would praise and glorify Allah

⁵³ B70, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 12 M7129, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 83.

⁵⁴ B6411, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 69.

⁵⁵ D1107, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 223, 225.

⁵⁶ D1106, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 223, 225.

⁵⁷ HM15806, Ibn Hanbal, III, 448; MA5400, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, III, 219.

⁵⁸ MA5400, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, III, 219.

⁵⁹ B70, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 12.

⁶⁰ D4611, Abu Da‘ud, al-Sunna, 6; D4049, Abu Da‘ud, al-Libas, 8.

⁶¹ MA5400, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, III, 219.

⁶² MA5407, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, III, 220.

⁶³ RVS84, Ibn Abi ‘Asim, Mudhakkir, s. 84.

⁶⁴ D3665, Abu Da‘ud, al-‘Ilm, 13.

⁶⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:63.

(swt).⁶⁶ He would speak effectively in a way that made their hearts tremble and brought tears to their eyes.⁶⁷ Sometimes he would preach after the ritual prayer.⁶⁸ Sometimes, thinking that his voice would not reach the women, he would go to where they were and preach to, and advise, them there.⁶⁹ He would also set aside one day a week to preach to, and advise, women.⁷⁰

The Prophet of Mercy would speak slowly and very clearly, explaining his words one by one. Indeed, as a result, one who was next to him could memorize what he said.⁷¹ Everyone who heard him easily understood what he said.⁷² This was because the Prophet (saw) was *jawāmi‘ al-kalīm*,⁷³ that is, he could express a lot in a few words. While speaking, he would use language that his audience could understand and give examples and make analogies from the world with which they were familiar.

The need for those who spoke to be understood by those who heard was the first and most fundamental requirement of preaching and guiding. In this respect, the warning that ‘Ali (ra) gave is noteworthy, “Explain to people what they can comprehend. Do you want to make liars out of Allah and the Prophet?”⁷⁴ The prayer that Moses made on the day that he assumed the task of prophethood, “*Lord, lift up my heart and ease my task for me. Untie my tongue so that they may understand my words,*”⁷⁵ is given as an example to Muslims and it is significant that it is recited by preachers at the beginning of their sermon. The approach which Allah’s Messenger preferred to take in this matter was, above all, to change the hearts and minds of the people and by doing so ensure that they would change their behavior. This was also closely related to the task that he had defined for himself, “*I was only sent as a teacher.*”⁷⁶ The Prophet (saw) pursued this mission everywhere. Once while he was delivering a sermon, Abu Rifa’a, one of the Companions (ra), approached him and said, with reference to himself, “A stranger has come. He doesn’t know his religion and wants to learn it.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) stopped midway through his sermon and went over to him. A chair was brought to him. Then he began to teach Abu Rifa’a what Allah (swt) had taught him. After he finished, he returned to his sermon and continued from where he had left off.⁷⁷

The goal of Allah’s Messenger was to shake the mistaken and widespread beliefs in the society in which he lived to their very foundation and to rebuild their minds and patterns of thought. In addition, in his efforts at preaching and guidance, it is worthy of note that the words

⁶⁶ T3087, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 9; M6225, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 36.

⁶⁷ IM42, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 6.

⁶⁸ IM44, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 6.

⁶⁹ IM1273, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama 155; N1587, al-Nasa’i, al-Idayn, 28; B1462, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 44.

⁷⁰ B101, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 35; HM11316, Ibn Hanbal, III, 34.

⁷¹ T3639, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9.

⁷² D4839, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 18.

⁷³ M1168, Muslim, al-Masajid, 6.

⁷⁴ B127, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 49.

⁷⁵ Ta Ha, 20:25-28.

⁷⁶ IM229, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 17; DM357, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 32.

⁷⁷ M2025, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 60; HM24278, Ibn Hanbal, V, 455.

that he spoke, with respect to both where and how he spoke them, had a powerful effect on his audience.⁷⁸ In this regard, he would sometimes repeat three times what he said when he spoke so that he would be perfectly understood.⁷⁹ When he declared to Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), when he was riding behind the Prophet's saddle, that those who believed would not go to Hell, he shouted to him three times and then stated what he had to say in order to draw attention to the subject, ensure that his words could be easily memorized, and emphasize the significance of what he said.⁸⁰

Sometimes our Prophet had to focus carefully on his audience, and when the subject was important and the number of people was too great to count, he had to repeat himself. When he came to the subject of false testimony, while recounting the great sins, he sat up from where he had been reclining and said, "*Ah! Bearing false testimony, bearing false testimony,*" and he repeated this so many times that the noble Companions (ra) wanted him to stop.⁸¹ In a battle Usama b. Zayd (ra) killed an enemy who said, when he raised his sword, "There is no god but Allah." He was troubled by what he had done and told the Prophet (saw) about it. In astonishment, the Prophet reprimanded him by saying, "*He said, 'There is no god but Allah' and you killed him!*" Usama made an excuse saying, "But Messenger of Allah, he said this from fear of the sword." Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, "*Would that you had torn his heart to learn if he had told the truth!*" Regretful and embarrassed, Usama later said, "The Messenger of Allah repeated those words to me so many times that I wished I had newly become a Muslim on that day."⁸²

Sometimes the Prophet (saw) became angry in his preaching.⁸³ From time to time, depending on the situation, he would make harsh warnings. Once, he became angry with Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) because he was reciting the long *sūras* while leading the congregation in ritual prayer, and said, "*Are you a troublemaker?*"⁸⁴ Sometimes, in order to give a lesson to his Companions (ra), he would react rather sharply to their errors. For example, he forbade three Companions who had no excuse for not participating in the raid on Tabuk from speaking with other Companions (ra).⁸⁵

Another practice of the Prophet (saw) was to enrich his preaching with stories. While preaching can certainly benefit from stories, it should take advantage of reliable narratives and should not be done with fictitious stories that have no basis in fact just to attract interest. This was because the Prophet offered stories of hope to those who heard his preaching and

⁷⁸ B5767, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 51; M2009, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 47.

⁷⁹ B95, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 30.

⁸⁰ B128, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 49.

⁸¹ B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; T1901, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 4; HM20656, Ibn Hanbal, V, 37.

⁸² M277, Muslim, al-Iman, 158.

⁸³ IM984, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 48; DM1289, al-Darimi, al-Salat, 46.

⁸⁴ HM14239, Ibn Hanbal, III, 300.

⁸⁵ B4418, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 80.

guidance and wanted his audience to be inspired by the feelings described in the stories and embrace Islam with determination and without falling into despair.⁸⁶ Indeed, hope is something which stirs love, determination, and will in human emotions.

The Prophet (saw) made the mosque the center of preaching and guidance. The mosque was a source of knowledge, an institution of education and instruction. From the time that it was established, circles of instruction were organized there. It became an institution in which all kinds of knowledge were taught.⁸⁷ In addition the Prophet's preaching and guidance were conducted in the marketplace, on journeys, on riding animals, in short, everywhere and in every situation. For example, he said in the market to those engaged in trade, *"He who cheats is not one of us."*⁸⁸

In summary, the task of preaching and providing guidance must be done in order to fulfill the requirement of the verse, *"Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is people and stones."*⁸⁹ This task was not limited to the Prophet (saw). All Muslims are responsible for preaching and guidance in his person. There are verses in the Holy Qur'an in fact which make this clear, *"Be an umma that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: Those who do this are the successful ones,"*⁹⁰ and *"[Believers], you are the best umma singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah."*⁹¹

It is incumbent upon all Muslims to learn Islam in the best way in accordance with its essence, and to explain and communicate it in compliance with the standards and principles described above. Thus all Muslims are responsible for maintaining or neglecting the task of preaching and guidance. From the time of the Prophet's death to the present Muslims have been sincerely engaged in summoning and guiding people to Islam with an awareness of this responsibility. As the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated in a *hadith*, there will never cease to be a group from his community who will continue this activity and who will struggle for the truth until the Day of Judgement.⁹² For a Muslim nothing is more lofty than the task of learning Islam and explaining it in the best manner, and more meritorious than spreading the Prophet's good news. As he said, *"May Allah illuminate the face of a man who hears a saying of mine, memorizes it, and conveys it. Perhaps there are those who will transmit it to one who understands that knowledge better than they do."*⁹³

⁸⁶ M7008, Muslim, al-Tawba, 46; B3470, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 54.

⁸⁷ B472, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 84.

⁸⁸ IM2224, Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 36.

⁸⁹ Al-Tahrim, 66:6.

⁹⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:104.

⁹¹ Al 'Imran, 3:110.

⁹² M4954, Muslim, al-Imara, 173; T2229, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 51.

⁹³ T2658, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 7; IM230, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 18.



THE PROPHET

THE MOST EXCELLENT EDUCATOR

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَأْتِيكُمْ رِجَالٌ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْمَشْرِقِ يَتَعَلَّمُونَ فَإِذَا جَاءُوكُمْ فَاسْتَوْصُوا
بِهِمْ خَيْرًا.“

According to Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri (ra), the Prophet (saw) 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.”

(T2651, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 4; IM249, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 22)



عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ السُّلَمِيِّ قَالَ: ... مَا رَأَيْتُ مُعَلِّمًا قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ أَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمًا مِنْهُ، فَوَاللَّهِ! مَا كَهَرَنِي وَلَا ضَرَبَنِي وَلَا شَتَمَنِي، قَالَ: ”إِنَّ هَذِهِ الصَّلَاةَ لَا يَصْلُحُ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّاسِ، إِنَّمَا هُوَ التَّسْبِيحُ وَالتَّكْبِيرُ، وَقِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَتَخَوَّنَا بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ فِي الْأَيَّامِ
مَخَافَةَ السَّامَةِ عَلَيْنَا.



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَسْرُدُ سَرْدَكُمْ هَذَا وَلَكِنَّهُ كَانَ يَتَكَلَّمُ
بِكَلَامٍ يُبَيِّنُهُ فَضْلٌ يَحْفَظُهُ مَنْ جَلَسَ إِلَيْهِ.



Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam al-Sulami (ra) said (when he spoke during the ritual prayer and the Companions reacted to it), "... 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 *tasbīḥ*, *takbīr*, and reciting the Holy Qur'an.'

(M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33)



According to Anas (b. Malik) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*Make things easy for people, and do not make it hard for them, and give them good tidings and do not make them abhor it.*"

(B69, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 11)



'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra) said, "Allah's Messenger (saw) used to preach to us on (appropriate) days fearing that we may get bored."

(T2855, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 72)



'A'isha (ra) said, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) 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."

(T3639, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9)



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 *hadith*, 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.

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 in-

¹ IM229, Ibn Maja, al-Muqaddima, 17; DM357, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 32.
² M3690, Muslim, al-Talaq, 29.

³ N1164, al-Nasa'i, al-Tatbiq, 100; HM4160, Ibn Hanbal, I, 438.

⁴ IM313, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 16; N40, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 36.

⁵ IM224, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 17.

⁶ M6853, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 38; T2945, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qira'a, 10.

struction 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 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 upsets 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 'llāh"* (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 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

⁷ Al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 49 –at the chapter heading–.

⁸ M1, Muslim, al-Muqaddima, 5.

⁹ T2651, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 4; IM249, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 22.

¹⁰ M1199, Muslim, al-Masajid, 33.

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

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 learned 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, “Allah, there is no god but He 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 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

¹¹ M4738, Muslim, al-Imara, 26; B2597, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 17.

¹² B4999, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 8; M6334, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 116.

¹³ D1460, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 17.

¹⁴ B6570, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 51.

¹⁵ B69, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 11; M4525, Muslim, al-Jihad, 6.

¹⁶ M6045, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 77; D4785, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 4.

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 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 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.

¹⁷ D380, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 136; T147, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112.

¹⁸ M661, Muslim, al-Tahara, 100; HM13015, Ibn Hanbal, III, 191.

¹⁹ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

²⁰ Ta Ha, 20:43-44.

²¹ B3150, al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khums, 19.

One day a young man came to him and said that he wanted to commit *zinā'*. The young man was scolded by the people, but the Prophet (saw) forbade them to scold him. Without offending him or dishonoring him, the Prophet (saw) asked him several questions, such as *"Do you want zinā' to be committed with your mother?" "Do you want zinā' to be committed with your daughter?" "Do you want zinā' to be committed with your sister?" "Do you want zinā' to be committed with your paternal aunts?"* And *"Do you want zinā' to be committed with your maternal aunts?"* Each time the young man answered, *"By Allah! No! May my soul be a sacrifice to you. No! I do not want this."* In this way, Allah's Messenger (saw) convinced him not to commit *zinā'* by demonstrating that no one could want *zinā'* to be committed with his mother, daughter, sister, paternal aunts, or maternal aunts. He then prayed for him and sent him on his way.²²

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 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."*²³ 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)²⁴ and not place them in Hell."²⁵*

After the *sūra* of al-Kawthar was revealed to our Master the Prophet, he began to recite it saying, *"In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful,"* and completed the *sūra*. 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 a river in Paradise that my Lord promised to*

²² HM22564, Ibn Hanbal, V, 257.

²³ D2478, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 1; M6603, Muslim, al-Birr, 79.

²⁴ B6500, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 37.

²⁵ HM22423, Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.

me.”²⁶ 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?*”²⁷ “*Do you know that your Lord has said?*”²⁸ 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.²⁹

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.’”³⁰

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.”

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).*”³¹ In another ḥadīth, the

²⁶ D784, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 121-122; M894, Muslim, al-Salat, 53.

²⁷ M6579, Muslim, al-Birr, 59; T2418, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyaama, 2.

²⁸ B846, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 156.

²⁹ T814, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 5; N2620, al-Nasa’i, Manasik al-hajj, 1.

³⁰ D2622, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 85; HM20609, Ibn Hanbal, V, 31.

³¹ B79, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 20; M5953, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 15.

Noble Messenger said, “*Scholars on earth are like stars in the sky*,”³² comparing the way they used knowledge to illuminate everything around them with stars.

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*,”³³ 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 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 water³⁴ 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.³⁵

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.

³² HM12627, Ibn Hanbal, III, 156.

³³ Al-A'raf, 7:176.

³⁴ M5852I, Muslim, al-Salam, 151; N1483, al-Nasa'i, al-Kusuf, 14.

³⁵ M5859, Muslim, al-Salam, 153; EM378, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 137.

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."³⁶ 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 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."*³⁷

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 Sunna. Whoever follows my Sunna has loved me. And whoever loves me will be with me in Paradise."*³⁸ 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 name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near to you."*³⁹ 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

³⁶ B70, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 12; T2855, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 72.

³⁷ HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I 293; T2516, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 59.

³⁸ T2678, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 16.

³⁹ M5269, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 108.

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 (warning of) the Last Hour like this.*'"⁴⁰

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..."⁴¹ While saying, *"The believer is like a building for another believer, they support each other,"* he clasped his hands by interlacing his fingers.⁴² While mentioning that all Muslims were brothers and the rights and privileges they had over each other, Allah's Messenger (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.⁴³ Again putting together his index finger and middle finger he indicated how close those who raise orphans would be to Paradise.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ When the Prophet's face became red, it was clear that he was angry.⁴⁶ When he was happy, the joy could be read in his face.⁴⁷

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 *hadith* 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."*⁴⁸

Under some circumstances, in order for what he explained to be better understood and comprehended, he would demonstrate it with personal

⁴⁰ M2005, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 43.

⁴¹ TSh226, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Shama'il*, 97.

⁴² B481, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 88.

⁴³ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

⁴⁴ M7469, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 42; IM3680, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 6.

⁴⁵ M6542, Muslim, al-Birr, 33.

⁴⁶ B91, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 28.

⁴⁷ HM18525, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 265.

⁴⁸ DM208, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 23; HM4142, Ibn Hanbal, I, 435.

behavior. One day a bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked 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."*⁴⁹

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)."*⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

The method of speech that our Master the Prophet used while instructing and training people is also very worthy of note. 'A'isha (ra) described it as follows: "The Messenger 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."⁵² Indeed, he used to speak so clearly that one could count his words.⁵³ He used to repeat points which he considered to be important.⁵⁴ 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."*⁵⁵

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 an-

⁴⁹ IM422, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48; N140, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 105.

⁵⁰ B90, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 28.

⁵¹ M7016, Muslim, al-Tawba, 53.

⁵² T3639, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 9.

⁵³ B3567, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

⁵⁴ M2008, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 46; D4608, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 5.

⁵⁵ M6510, Muslim, Birr, 9.

swer. Then, after getting the attention of his interlocutor, he would explain what he was going to say.⁵⁶ When describing important matters, he would address groups as a whole or mention people one by one individually.⁵⁷

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 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.⁵⁸

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 women Ansar! Their shyness does not prevent them from asking about their religion and from having a deep understanding of it.”⁵⁹

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 object of the Prophet’s special interest. He personally met the expenses for their food and lodging.⁶⁰ The Companions who reported the most *ḥadīths*, Abu Hurayra (ra),⁶¹ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar,⁶² and ‘Uqba b. ‘Amir (ra),⁶³ 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 cours-

⁵⁶ B128, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 49.

⁵⁷ M504, Muslim, al-Iman, 351; B2753, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 11.

⁵⁸ M6699, Muslim, Birr, 152; B101, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 35; HM7351, Ibn Hanbal, II, 247.

⁵⁹ Al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 50 –at the section heading–; M750, Muslim, al-Hayd, 61.

⁶⁰ B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17.

⁶¹ T3837, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 46.

⁶² M6370, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 140.

⁶³ M1873, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 251.

es 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 memoire 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.’*”⁶⁴

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.”⁶⁵ 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,”⁶⁶ 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.”⁶⁷

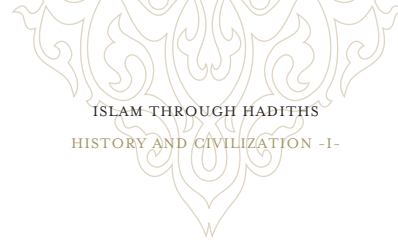
In summary, the Prophet’s sense of morality, with respect to his method of instruction, training, and teaching, and his physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional world, are our most valuable examples for raising a strong, healthy, and well-balanced generation and for preparing for the future. For, a sacred duty like the education of people, requires serious-

⁶⁴ N636, al-Nasa’i, al-Adhan, 8; B628, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 17.

⁶⁵ IM925, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 32; HM27056, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 294.

⁶⁶ N5540, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 65; D1548, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32.

⁶⁷ B100, al-Bukhari, al-’Ilm, 34; M6796, Muslim, al-’Ilm, 13.



ness, 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 Sunna. 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. Briefly speaking, the training and education that the Messenger of Mercy carried out was the education of compassion.



HOMAGE A HEART-FELT COVENANT



عَنْ زُهْرَةَ بْنِ مَعْبَدٍ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ هِشَامٍ وَكَانَ قَدْ أَدْرَكَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ
وَذَهَبَتْ بِهِ أُمُّهُ زَيْنَبُ بِنْتُ حُمَيْدٍ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَتْ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ،
بَايِعْهُ، فَقَالَ: "هُوَ صَغِيرٌ"، فَمَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ وَدَعَا لَهُ.

Zura b. Ma'bad reported from his grandfather 'Abd Allah b. Hisham, who grew up at the time of the Prophet (saw), that (while his grandfather was young) his mother Zaynab bint Humayd (ra) took him to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Take the pledge of allegiance from him!" However, our beloved Prophet said, "*He is too young*," and patted 'Abd Allah on the head and prayed for him.

(B2501, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 13)



عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ قَالَ: كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي مَجْلِسٍ، فَقَالَ: ”تُبَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَلَا تَزْنُوا، وَلَا تَسْرِقُوا، وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ، فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَعَوِقَبَ بِهِ، فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَسَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ، فَأَمَرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَذَّبَهُ.“



قَالَ جَرِيرٌ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: أَبَايَعُكَ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ فِيمَا أَحَبَبْتُ وَفِيمَا كَرِهْتُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: ”أَوْتُسَاطِعُ ذَلِكَ يَا جَرِيرُ؟ أَوْتُسَاطِعُ ذَلِكَ؟“ قَالَ: ”قُلْ فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُ“ فَبَايَعَنِي وَالنُّصْحَ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.



‘Ubada b. al-Samit (ra) said, “We were with the Messenger of Allah (saw) in a meeting and he said, *‘Pledge to me that you will associate nothing with Allah, that you will not commit zinā, that you will not commit theft, and that you will not kill anyone unjustly, which Allah has forbidden. Whoever among you keeps his promise, his reward is with Allah. Whoever does one of these things and as a result is punished, this is his recompense. Furthermore, whoever does one of these things, even if Allah hid it, the consequences of it will remain with Allah. If He wishes, He will forgive it. If He wishes, He will punish it.’*”

(M4461, Muslim, al-Hudud, 41)



Jarir (b. ‘Abd Allah) (ra) said, “I went to the Prophet (saw) and said to him, ‘I pledge to you to hear and obey in what I like and what I dislike.’ The Prophet (saw) said, *‘Can you do that, O Jarir? Are you capable of doing that?’* Then he added, *‘Say what I was able to.’* So he accepted my pledge (for that) and that I be sincere toward every Muslim.”

(N4179, al-Nasa’i, al-Bay’a, 16)



It was a sad year. The Prophet (saw)’s strongest supporters, his uncle Abu Talib and his beloved wife Khadija, had passed away. On the one hand, Allah’s Messenger was trying to find help for the small number of Muslims who were oppressed under increasingly difficult circumstances and, on the other hand, he was trying to show people the correct path to Allah (swt). He presented his plight to the leading tribes of Mecca, such as the Banu Kalb, Banu Hanifa, and Banu ‘Amir, but to no avail.¹

The Prophet (saw) was very downcast. Historical works have recorded the sadness which poured from the depth of his heart to his lips as follows: *“My Allah! I am complaining to You of my lack of ability, the exhaustion of my resources, and that people see me as contemptible. O most merciful of the merciful! You are my Lord and the Lord of the weak. Who are you trusting, me? Or those who show me their unsympathetic faces? Or my enemies into whose hands You have placed my mission? Who? If it please You, do not inflict this suffering on me. Your blessing gives cheer to people. I seek refuge from your anger and from being overwhelmed by your anger in your light, which illuminates the dark reaches of your satisfaction and which harmonizes all matters in this world and the next.”*²

The mournful Prophet, who was not able to find sufficient support and protection from his relatives, mingled with the strangers who had come to Mecca during the season of the fair and introduced himself to them. He explained Islam and said, *“Is there any man who would take me to his people? The Quraysh have prevented me from preaching the word of my Lord.”*³ Rabi’a b. ‘Abbad, who, around that time, was a precocious child, described what he witnessed of the Prophet’s struggle: “I saw the Prophet with my own eyes at the fair of Dhu ‘l-Majaz saying, ‘O people! Say there is no god but Allah and you will be saved.’ Whichever street of the market he entered the crowd pursued him. I did not see anyone say anything. But he was not silent and said, ‘O people! Say there is no god but Allah and you will

¹ HS2/270, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 270-274.

² HS2/267, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 268.

³ D4734, Abu Da’ud, *al-Sunna*, 20; IM201, Ibn Maja, *al-Sunna*, 13.

be saved. From behind him came a squint-eyed man saying, 'This man left his religion and is a stranger.' I asked, 'Who is this?' and was told he was Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah. They said, 'He says that he is a prophet.' I asked, 'Who is accusing him of being a liar?' They said, 'His uncle Abu Lahab.'"⁴

Despite all obstacles, Allah's Messenger (saw) did not give up summoning people to Allah's religion. At every opportunity he called upon them to believe in Allah (swt) and be saved. During a Hajj season, a group of the Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal, which included Ilyas b. Mu'adh (ra), set out from Yathrib and went to Mecca to make an alliance with the Quraysh against the Banu 'l-Khazraj. They went to the Prophet (saw) who asked them, "Would you like to learn something better than the matter for which you came?" Then he told them that he was a messenger to them, not to associate anything with Allah (swt), and many other things. Ilyas b. Mu'adh was impressed with this and said, "O my people! By Allah, this is better than the matter for which you came." However, the group leader Abu 'l-Haythar Anas b. Rafi' picked up a handful of dirt from the ground and threw it at the face of Ilyas and said, "Leave us! I swear by my life that we came here for a different matter." So, Ilyas had to be silent. Frustrated, the Prophet (saw) left the meeting. The Prophet's invitation remained unanswered and the group from Yathrib returned to their country without becoming believers, with one exception, Ilyas b. Mu'adh, who carried his faith in his heart until he died.⁵

In the Hajj season of the eleventh year of his prophethood, negotiations became more promising. A group from Yathrib had shaved and removed their ritual gowns.⁶ Then a stranger approached them and asked, "Whom are you from?" When he received the response, "We are a group from the tribe of al-Khazraj," he said, "Won't you sit down? I have something to tell you," and with their permission he began to speak. As the narrator spoke he concentrated more and more on attracting the attention of the listeners. The beauty of the words of the blessed Messenger sank to the depths of their happy hearts. In the light of the verses which flowed from the tongue of the Prophet, expressions of affirmation and acceptance appeared on the faces of six of the men who had come from Yathrib. They sincerely believed what they heard. Joy appeared in the heart of the downcast Prophet. The believers from Yathrib said, "We left our people and came here. There is no society in which there is as much hostility and evil as there is in ours. Per-

⁴HM16119, Ibn Hanbal, III, 492.

⁵HS2/275, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 275.

⁶ST1/217, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 217.

haps Allah would put an end to the hostility in this society through you. We are going to depart now and we will summon them to your religion. Just as we have responded favorably to you on the matter of this religion, we will propose it favorably to them. If Allah brings them together in your name, then there is no one more honorable than you.” With hearts full of belief, they bade farewell and departed Mecca.⁷ This wish of the believers from Yathrib was in fact an expression of the search for a leader who would bring peace to their country and ensure unity among them. These very positive discussions would prepare the groundwork for the two Pledges of ‘Aqaba where they found the reward for their search and the next year declared their allegiance to the Noble Messenger.

When the group from Yathrib who had favorably received Allah’s Messenger’s invitation to the faith reached their country, they spoke continuously of the Prophet and Islam. Thus, within one or two years, there was not a house in Yathrib in which the Messenger of Allah (saw) was not mentioned.⁸ The believers in Yathrib waited impatiently. A year later, again during the Hajj season, twelve representatives, ten from the tribe of al-Khazraj and two from the tribe of al-Aws met Allah’s Messenger (saw) at the pass called ‘Aqaba near Mecca.⁹ That night at ‘Aqaba a heart-felt covenant was made. That night the believers pledged allegiance to the Prophet (saw) according to which they would not associate anything with Allah, they would not commit theft, they would not commit *zinā*, they would not kill when forbidden to do so by Allah (swt),¹⁰ they would not commit slander, and they would not disobey the Prophet if he ordered them to do something good.¹¹ Allah’s Messenger told them that in return for their allegiance they would be rewarded by Allah (swt).¹² These twelve brave men, who made a pact, on behalf of the Muslims of Yathrib, with the beloved Prophet not to deviate from goodness and truth, left Mecca in the hope of meeting in the next season of Hajj.¹³

This covenant that they made with the last messenger would change the name of Yathrib to Medina, that is, “al-Madina al-Munawwara,” or the city illuminated by the light of Islam. The word *bay‘a* or *bī‘a* (a pledge), which was used to mean a solemn agreement in commercial business affairs, wrapped a moral understanding within such an agreement between the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the believers. Basically every exertion for the sake of Allah and His Messenger was the most profitable business in

⁷ HS2/276, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 276-277.

⁸ HS2/278, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 278.

⁹ ST1/219, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 219-220.

¹⁰ B6873, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 2; M4461, Muslim, al-Hudud, 41.

¹¹ B3892, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 43.

¹² B6801, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 14.

¹³ ST1/219, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 220.

the presence of Allah (swt).¹⁴ It is for this reason that, in the Holy Qur'an, our Lord Almighty uses the expressions of pledging loyalty, fulfilling commands, and obeying prohibitions in the sense of pledging allegiance to the Prophet and making a covenant with him.¹⁵

The Prophet (saw) sent as teachers to the Muslims of Medina, who were sent to learn the religion of Islam and then explain it to people with great excitement and zeal, Mus'ab b. 'Umayr (ra), a young friend in whose knowledge he had confidence, and 'Abd Allah b. Umm Maktum (ra), a muazzin who saw with the eye of the heart.¹⁶ They worked hard, recited the Holy Qur'an, and explained it. Islam changed the face of Medina. In the next Hajj season a group from Medina composed of more than seventy people, men, women, young, and old, went to Mecca in order to offer their allegiance to the Prophet. Among them were also the outstanding leaders of Medina. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr took his son Jabir with him. Also present were al-Bara' b. Ma'rur, Sa'd b. 'Ubada, 'Abd Allah b. Rawaha, Usayd b. Hudayr, and among the women Nasiba bint Ka'b, Asma' bint 'Amr and many others (ra).¹⁷

It was night and the city of Mecca was deep in sleep. The believers from Medina came to the place where the meeting was held at 'Aqaba. They wanted to learn more about the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) and his uncle 'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib were sitting together and waiting for the visitors. There was a bitterness in the heart of his uncle. He knew that a short time after the covenant that would be made there today his nephew would still not be in Mecca. He was still not a Muslim but he trusted and loved his nephew very much. He began to speak, saying, "O people of al-Khazraj! As you know Muhammad is from among us." Then he spoke of the noble personality of our Master the Prophet and described how he was protected by his people. He said, "Up to now he has felt a closeness to you and wanted to join you. If you can fulfill the promise that you gave to him by inviting him to join you and if you can protect him from his enemies, the responsibility for this is yours. However, if you take him from Mecca and then after doing so leave him alone and unaided, then leave him here this instant." Thereupon those from al-Khazraj said, "We have heard your words. O Messenger of Allah! Speak! Take our word for what you desire for yourself and your Lord." The Messenger of Allah (saw) began to speak. He first recited the Holy Qur'an and summoned people

¹⁴ Al-Saff, 61:10-12.

¹⁵ Al-Fath, 48:10; al-Mumtahana, 60:12.

¹⁶ HS2/282, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 282; B3924, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 46.

¹⁷ HS2/303, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 303-313.

to Allah (swt) and encouraged them to adopt Islam. Then he said, *"I want you to pledge to me that you will protect me as you protect your women and children."* Al-Bara' b. Ma'rur (ra) took the hand of the blessed Messenger and said, "Yes. I swear by the One who sent you with the truth that we promise to protect you as we protect our families, O Messenger of Allah! I swear that we are like comrades in arms." Our beloved Prophet smiled and said, *"Your blood is my blood. Your property is my property. I am from you and you are from me. I fight when you fight and am at peace when you are at peace."* He then selected twelve representatives from them to fulfill the pledge with assurance.¹⁸

The location of 'Aqaba, where the covenant was made, was a narrow pass between two mountains near the place where pilgrims cast stones at Satan. The Muslims from Medina promised Allah's Messenger that they would cross a difficult pass in accordance with the significance of the place. 'Ubada b. Samit and the others (ra) said, altogether, to the Prophet (saw), "We pledge to hear and obey in every matter, whether difficult or easy, whether pleasurable or unpleasurable, to not dispute matters with those placed over us, and to tell the truth about Allah without fear of the condemnation of the condemned of Allah, wherever we may be."¹⁹ It was in Mecca, where Islam first found its way into people's hearts, that the Prophet received from the believers a pledge in which they declared their belief, obedience, and adherence to acquiring moral values. This pledge which the Muslims of Medina made to the Prophet (saw) at 'Aqaba laid the foundation of a state that would ensure the unity of the Muslims in Medina and thus proved to have a political dimension as well as one of faith.

Because the people from Medina gave help and support to Allah's Messenger (saw) and the Muslims of Mecca, especially after the Hijra, they were given the name *al-Anṣār*, meaning the "Ansar."²⁰ Thus after the Pledges of 'Aqaba, which created the bases of a social and political organization, the Prophet (saw) became a religious and political leader. The mission of prophethood, which had the appearance of the leader of all the believers in Mecca, was transformed, right after the Pledges of 'Aqaba, into a mission of head of state which continued into the Medina period. In this sense, the pledges were not simply a way of binding people to the Prophet in faith, but also, at the same time, represented recognition of his leadership and authority in religious, political, and social matters.

¹⁸ HS2/290, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 290-292; HM15891, Ibn Hanbal, III, 461.

¹⁹ M4768, Muslim, al-Imara, 41; N4157, al-Nasa'i, al-Bay'a, 3.

²⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:100.

In the following years, a strong Islamic community was created in Medina. Every believer who was ennobled with belief paid homage to Allah's Messenger and declared his loyalty. The Prophet (saw), however, did not accept the allegiance of slaves²¹ and children.²² Once Zaynab bint Humayd took her son 'Abd Allah (ra), who was quite young, to our Prophet so he could pledge allegiance to him, but the Prophet said, "*He is too young,*" and would not accept homage from him. He only patted him on the head and prayed for him.²³ Women also pledge allegiance to the Prophet, both in groups and individually. The Holy Qur'an required the Prophet (saw) to accept their pledges: "*Prophet, when believing women come and pledge to you that they will not ascribe any partner to Allah, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor lie about who has fathered their children, nor disobey you in any righteous thing, then you should accept their pledge of allegiance ...*"²⁴ Sometimes, taking into consideration the various behaviors and attitudes of the women, the Prophet accepted their pledges under certain circumstances. In fact, Umm 'Atiyya, a woman among the Companions (ra), described her pledge as follows: "The Prophet accepted our pledge on condition that we would not wail at funerals."²⁵ According to 'Aisha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) only accepted the allegiance of women by speaking with them and never shook hands with them.²⁶

The Prophet (saw) did not want the believers to pledge allegiance to do things of which they were incapable.²⁷ This was because Allah Almighty did not hold anyone responsible for something that he could not do.²⁸ Indeed, in this respect, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) described his attempt to pledge allegiance as follows: "I went to the Prophet and said to him, 'I pledge to you to hear and obey in what I like and what I dislike.' The Prophet (saw) said, '*Can you do that, O Jarir? Are you capable of doing that?*' Then he added, '*Say what I was able to.*' So he accepted my pledge (for that) and that I be sincere toward every Muslim."²⁹ When Umayma bint Ruqayqa (ra) went with a few women to see Allah's Messenger (saw) and pledge allegiance to him, he told them, as an expression of his mercy, that he would accept their pledge concerning matters that they had the ability to carry out.³⁰

Certain conditions proposed by those who went to the Prophet (saw) to pledge allegiance could also be accepted. According to Jabir (ra), a delegation from the tribe of Thaqif, which came from Ta'if, said that they

²¹ M4113, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 123.

²² N4188, al-Nasa'i, al-Bay'a, 20.

²³ B2501, al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 13.

²⁴ Al-Mumtahana, 60:12.

²⁵ B1306, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 45.

²⁶ B2713, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 1; M4835, Muslim, al-Imara, 89.

²⁷ B7202, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 43; M4836, Muslim, al-Imara, 90.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:286.

²⁹ N4179, al-Nasa'i, al-Bay'a, 16.

³⁰ T1597, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 37; N4186, al-Nasa'i, al-Bay'a, 18.

would pledge allegiance on condition that they not be required to pay *zakāt* or participate in *jihād*. Allah's Messenger, who accepted their pledge, said, "*Later, after they become Muslims, they will pay zakāt and participate in jihād.*"³¹ This was the statement of one who believed that after they fully understood Islam and belief had become embedded in their hearts they would do everything required of their faith. According to another *ḥadīth*, this delegation said that they would pledge allegiance on condition that they not be taken into the army to participate in *jihād* for the Prophet and that they be exempt from taxes and performing the ritual prayer. Allah's Messenger (saw) rejected their demand to be exempt from prayer, saying, "*There is no good in a religion in which there is no bowing.*" As for *jihād* and taxes, he relinquished this to time.³²

It was the sixth year of the Hijra... Upon a dream he had seen, the beloved Prophet set out with about 1,500 Companions (ra) for Mecca in order to visit the Ka'ba.³³ However, after a difficult journey which lasted a full week while being in a state of ritual purity day and night, they were stopped at al-Hudaybiyya, twenty-two kilometers from Mecca, by the polytheists. Because the Muslims had set out for the *ʿUmra*, they had no weapons apart from simple knives because they had not headed for Mecca with the intention of fighting. The Prophet (saw), who lodged at al-Hudaybiyya, sent ʿUthman (ra) as an envoy to Mecca to state that their purpose was not to fight.³⁴ However, ʿUthman's return was delayed, and word spread that he had been martyred, although this came out to be untrue.

In fact the intention of the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims was only to visit the Ka'ba. However, this negative attitude on the part of the polytheists was tantamount to a declaration of war. This was because the Muhajirun who had longed for their country for years wanted to both visit Allah's house and allay a bit of their homesickness. As for the Ansar who had opened their arms to the Muhajirun in Medina, they simply wanted to visit the Ka'ba. The Muslims now could not tolerate being blocked by the polytheists. As a result of this uncalled-for obstructionism, a taught atmosphere was created. So, the Prophet (saw) gathered his friends under a tree and had them swear to him that under no circumstances would they break their unity.³⁵ Jabir b. ʿAbd Allah's statement, "On that day we pledged not to die for the Prophet but not to flee from battle," summed up the situation.³⁶

³¹ D3025, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 25-26.

³² D3026, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 25-26.

³³ ShN13/2, al-Nawawi, *Sharh ʿala Muslim*, XIII, 2.

³⁴ T3702, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 18; HM19117, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 324.

³⁵ HS4/283, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 283.

³⁶ M4808, Muslim, al-Imara, 68.

His friends promised him that they would stand by him in times of difficulty and comfort. The Meccan polytheists, who saw the determination of the Muslims after the pledge, came to an agreement with severe conditions with respect to the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims. Accordingly, the Muslims would return to Medina but the next year they could visit the Ka'ba.³⁷ The verses, "*Allah was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you [Prophet] under the tree,*"³⁸ and "*Those who pledge loyalty to you [Prophet] are actually pledging loyalty to Allah Himself,*"³⁹ clearly state that Allah Almighty was pleased with the believers who participated in this pledge. Because Allah (swt) was pleased with the believers and the believers were pleased with Allah, the pledge at al-Hudaybiyya was known as *Bay'at al-Riḍwān* (Pledge of Good Pleasure).

Thus the believers who desired to live according to the commands and advice of Allah (swt) and His Messenger and to accept his leadership and status as head of state adhered to a covenant by pledging to the Prophet their desire and acceptance. For the rest of their lives they willingly and sincerely adapted their behavior to the requirements of this covenant. At different places and times in the ten-year Meccan period, those who rushed to the door of the Prophet promised from the heart to compete in goodness according to their ability.

For the first believers, the pledge did not reflect only a bond of faith. It also included acceptance of the political, religious, and military authority of our Master the Prophet under all circumstances, in war and peace and in times of difficulty and ease. For, in a society in which there was no state system and no state laws to bind people together, the Prophet (saw) established a city state based on a new reality; and he was the head of this state. In this respect, the pledge that the first believers gave to the Prophet was as important as an act of faith as it was as a political act. The Prophet (saw) brought the good news that those who made this pledge and kept it would be rewarded in Paradise. As for those who did not keep it, he said that judgement would belong to Allah (swt).⁴⁰ Indeed, according to some reports, it was stated that one who died without expressing his attachment to the pledge would die according to the beliefs of the Jahiliyya.⁴¹

After the time of the Prophet (saw), in every Muslim state in history, the pledge continued to exist and function. Because it was an agreement which imposed responsibilities on both the rulers and the ruled, its po-

³⁷ HS4/285, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, IV, 285-286.

³⁸ Al-Fath, 48:18.

³⁹ Al-Fath, 48:10.

⁴⁰ B3893, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 43; M4464, Muslim, al-Hudud, 44.

⁴¹ M4793, Muslim, al-Imara, 58.

litical nature gained great importance. With regard to assigning public administrators and including a declaration of mutual obligation, the pledge can be seen as an element in the participatory state structure of the pre-modern period. The selection of Abu Bakr (ra), who won the honor of being the first leader of the Muslim umma after the Messenger of Allah (saw), came about by a pledge, that is, with popular approval. Speaking after his selection, Abu Bakr (ra) said, "As long as I do what is right, support me. If I make a mistake, correct me."⁴² It is understood from this that the pledge expresses not the need to follow someone blindly until he dies but to fulfill the responsibilities of both the ruler and the ruled.

During the time in which the Prophet (saw) was seeking converts to Islam, believers continued to meet him and pledge their allegiance to him. The pledge continued to function for a while after the time of the first successors (the caliphs) to Allah's Messenger. Over the centuries many states came and went and the system of administration changed from caliphate to sultanate. The pledge which originally had been a voluntary moral responsibility began to be replaced by compulsory pledges which were imposed by the sultans and, if not done, resulted in material sanction.

The pledge, which had a rather important function in the first century of Islam, is today, when conditions and forms of government have completely changed, a symbol of the bond of the first believers with Allah and His Messenger. It was a pact with Allah and His Messenger. Today Muslims, while saluting the Black Stone (the Ka'ba), think symbolically about the promise they made to Allah (swt) and about renewing the pact.

Although today the believers can no longer meet the Prophet and pledge allegiance to him, they offer their allegiance to the Messenger by means of the faith in their hearts and their effort to live as an umma worthy of him. The pact of today's believers with the Prophet (saw) is like the pledge that the Companions (ra) offered to him enthusiastically in the following verse at the Battle of the Khandaq:

نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بَايَعُوا مُحَمَّدًا عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ مَا بَقِينَا أَبَدًا

"We pledged allegiance to Muhammad

We will follow the path of Islam as long as we lived."

The Noble Messenger responded to their pledge with the same en-

⁴² HS6/82, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, VI, 82.

thusiasm and with love of the Companions (ra) in his heart when he said,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّهُ لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا خَيْرُ الْآخِرَةِ، فَبَارِكْ فِي الْأَنْصَارِ وَالْمُهَاجِرَةِ

*“O my Allah! There is no goodness except the goodness of the Hereafter⁴³
So please grant your blessing to the Ansar and the Muhajirun.”*

No matter what the conditions in which the distinguished Companions (ra) had pledged allegiance to Allah’s Messenger, believers today should follow their path and try to comply with the same conditions as if they had been with the Companions (ra). They would not associate anything with Allah (swt). They would not commit theft. They would not commit *zinā*. They would not kill their children. They would not commit slander. They would not oppose their leaders who were acting properly. And they would act honestly with all Muslims. Thus, if they remained true to the pledges that they made to our beloved Prophet until their last breath, they would acquire in the next world, which was the real life, the forgiveness that Allah’s Messenger wished for the Ansar and Muhajirun.

⁴³ B4100, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30.



MUHAJIRUN and ANSAR THE FIRST BLESSED GENERATION OF MUSLIMS

عَنْ حُمَيْدِ الطَّوِيلِ: سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَانَتِ الْأَنْصَارُ
يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ تَقُولُ: نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بَايَعُوا مُحَمَّدًا عَلَى الْجِهَادِ مَا حَيِينَا أَبَدًا
فَأَجَابَهُمُ: اللَّهُمَّ لَا عَيْشَ إِلَّا عَيْشُ الْآخِرَةِ فَأَكْرَمَ الْأَنْصَارَ وَالْمُهَاجِرَةَ.

Humayd al-Tawil said,

“I heard Anas b. Malik (ra) say, ‘the Ansar was saying On the Day of the Khandaq (while digging and carrying the dirt): “We were those who gave the pledge of allegiance to Muhammad; we would perform *jihād* as long as we lived.” The Prophet (saw) replied to them, ‘O Allah! *There is no life except the life of the Hereafter; so treat to the Ansar and the Muhajirun.*”

(B3796, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 9)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”حُبُّ الْأَنْصَارِ آيَةُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَبُغْضُهُمْ آيَةُ النِّفَاقِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَوْلَا الْهَجْرَةُ لَكُنْتُ أَمْرًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ، وَلَوْ سَلَكَ النَّاسُ وَادِيًا أَوْ
شَعْبًا لَسَلَكَتُ وَادِي الْأَنْصَارِ وَشَعْبَهَا.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ
مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“To love the Ansar is the sign of belief. To nourish hostility toward them is the sign of hypocrisy.”*

(M236, Muslim, al-Iman, 128)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Zayd (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If there had not been the Hijra, I would have been one of the Ansar; and if people followed a valley or mountain trail, I would follow the Ansar’s valley or mountain trail.”*

(B7245, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 9)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“A Muslim is one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a Muhajir is one who abandons all that Allah has forbidden.”*

(B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4)



His father served as the governor of Kisra (Khusraw) in Abla. Suhayb b. Sinan (ra), who was of Arab origin, was living on the bank of the Euphrates in Mosul. There he grew up. When the Byzantines invaded, Suhayb was a young child. For this reason, Allah's Messenger used to say the following about him: "*Suhayb was one of the prominents of the Byzantines.*" He became a Muslim on the same day as 'Ammar b. Yasir (ra) and shared the same fate with him. One day 'Ammar encountered Suhayb in the Dar al-Arqam when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was inside and Suhayb asked him what he was looking for there. When Suhayb asked, "What are you looking for?" 'Ammar answered, "I came to Muhammad and I want to hear what he says." Suhayb said he was there for the same purpose, and so they joined the Messenger of Allah (saw) together and became Muslims.

After Suhayb became a Muslim, he was subjected to unbelievable torture and as a result was considered to be among the *mustaḍ'afin* (those who are weak or of little account). Eventually, like the other Muslims he was forced to emigrate. He was one of the last to emigrate to Medina and went with 'Ali (ra).¹

When the Meccan polytheists learned that he was going to emigrate, they reacted by saying, "You came here poor and weak. You increased your wealth among us and accomplished what you wanted to do. Now you want to take your wealth and leave, but, by Allah, this is not possible!" But like all the Companions (ra), Suhayb craved to spend every moment with the Messenger of Allah (saw). Therefore these threats did not bother him. He set out for Medina. During his emigration, Suhayb noticed that a group of Meccans were following him. So he dismounted from his mount and reached for his quiver of arrows. Then he said to them, "O Quraysh! You know very well that I am one of the best shooters among you. I swear by Allah that I will use every arrow in my quiver against you, and when they

¹ ST3/226, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, III, 226-228; NM5698, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, VI, 2086 (3/398).

are exhausted I will take out my sword. When I have nothing left you can do what you want. But if you wish, let me tell you where my wealth is and let me go free.” The polytheists accepted his proposal. Thereupon Suhayb (ra) told them where his wealth was and continued on his way.

Around the middle of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, when Suhayb reached Allah’s Messenger (saw), who was in Quba’, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) were with him. After joking among themselves, Suhayb said to Abu Bakr, “You promised to befriend me, but I no sooner set out on the road than you left me.” Then he turned to our Master the Prophet and said, “O Messenger of Allah! You promised to befriend me, but I no sooner set out on the road than you left me. The Quraysh detained me. I purchased me life and my family with my wealth.” The Messenger of Allah (saw), alluding to the fact that Suhayb had saved himself from the Meccan polytheists in return for his wealth, said, “*You made a profit from the sale!*” Thereupon the following verse was revealed, “*But there is also a kind of man who gives his life away to please Allah, and Allah is most compassionate to his servants.*”²

In fact, it was not only Suhayb whose transaction made a profit. All the Companions (ra) who did not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice their wealth and lives on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah), and who left behind, on this auspicious occasion, their homeland and everything that they owned and emigrated with the Messenger of Allah (saw) were honored with this good news.

The Hijra, which was done for Allah (swt) and His beloved Prophet,³ was the name of the epic in which the Muslims, who did not have a chance to live their religion, abandoned everything that they owned and cast their fate to fortune. The Hijra was the final point of submission to Allah and His Messenger. The Hijra was not a flight from oppression but a search. It was to go into action in order to maintain the truth. Thus, in the Noble Qur’an the Hijra is directly associated with faith.⁴ And certain verses, such as “*As for those who emigrated in Allah’s cause after being wronged, We shall give them a good home in this world, but the reward of the Hereafter will be far greater, if they only knew it,*”⁵ announced what a meritorious act it was.

The journey of the Muhajirun began with the Prophet’s encounter with six people from Medina at ‘Aqaba near Mecca in the tenth year of his prophethood.⁶ Allah’s Messenger (saw) recited the Holy Qur’an to them and called upon them to become Muslims. They accepted his call. The

² Al-Baqara, 2:207; ST3/226, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 226-230.

³ B54, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 41; M4927, Muslim, al-Imara, 155.

⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:72.

⁵ Al-Nahl, 16:41.

⁶ HS2/276, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 276-277.

next year and the year after, he met the Muslims of Medina at the same place. When the people from Medina saw that the Noble Messenger and those in his company were in dire straits, they invited them to their city and promised them that if they emigrated to Medina they would protect them like their own lives against their enemies.⁷

In order to be able to live their religion as required, the Meccan Muslims left behind their homes, businesses, and everything connected with their lives when they emigrated to Medina. The blessed journey that they took when leaving Mecca sufficed to lead the Muhajirun to the doors of Paradise. This was because this journey on which they embarked by abandoning their homeland and all their wealth was the result of an unprecedented sacrifice. In return for this sacrifice of the Hijra,⁸ which was a very difficult act but was successfully accomplished despite all difficulties, Allah announced the good news, *"I will certainly wipe out the bad deeds of those who emigrated and were driven out of their homes, who suffered harm for My cause, who fought and were killed. I will certainly admit them to Gardens graced with flowing streams, as a reward from Allah: the best reward is with Allah."*⁹

Upon the revelation of the verse, *"... but not so the truly helpless men, women, and children who have no means in their power nor any way to leave,"*¹⁰ it was understood that those who were incapable were not held responsible for emigrating. However there were also those who, despite their difficulties, wanted to emigrate. Although some people were ill, it was more important than life itself for them to pursue the Messenger of Allah (saw) and emigrate to Medina. One of those believers was Damra b. al-'Is (or al-'Is b. Damra) (ra) from the Banu Layth. This Companion was rich but in ill health. He was capable of doing everything except emigrate because of his illness. Nevertheless, he said that he wanted to emigrate. Because of his illness, his relatives set out for Medina while carrying him on a bed. However, when they reached Tan'im, Damra's condition worsened and this Companion, whose great desire was to emigrate on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah), died there. The verse, *"... and if anyone leaves home as a migrant toward Allah and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, his reward from Allah is sure. Allah is most forgiving and most merciful,"*¹¹ brought the good news to Damra, who died on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah) in disregard of his own life, of his reward for his sacrifice.¹²

⁷ HS2/290, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 290.

⁸ B6165, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95; M4832, Muslim, al-Imara, 87.

⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:195.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa', 4:98.

¹¹ Al-Nisa', 4:100.

¹² BS18259, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, IX, 27; HI3/491, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, III, 491.

When the Muhajirun reached Medina, the Muslims there welcomed them as guests in their homes and placed everything they had at their disposal. Because of the sacrifices of the Muslims of Medina, Allah Almighty gave them the name *al-Anṣār*, meaning the “Helpers.”¹³

While excavating dirt in preparation for the Battle of the Khandaq, the Ansar used to say, “We were those who gave the pledge of allegiance to Muhammad; we would perform *jihād* as long as we lived.” The Prophet (saw) responded to this by saying, “O Allah! *There is no life except the life of the Hereafter; so treat to the Ansar and the Muhajirun.*”¹⁴

When the Muhajirun came to Medina, they became homesick for their own country and had difficulty getting used to the weather. When ‘A’isha (ra) saw that her father Abu Bakr and Bilal al-Habashi (ra) had high fevers and longed for Mecca, she brought this to the attention of Allah’s Messenger. As a result, he prayed, “My Allah! *Make us love Medina as much as we loved Mecca or even more. My Allah! Bless our weights and measures and make the climate suitable for us!*”¹⁵

In order to sincerely bind the Muslims in Medina together, our Master the Noble Messenger declared that every Muhajir was a brother to one of the Ansar.¹⁶ For example, he made Abu Bakr the brother of Kharija b. Zuhayr, ‘Umar the brother of ‘Itban b. Malik, and ‘Uthman the brother of Aws b. Thabit (ra).¹⁷ The Ansar who owned homes took this brotherhood so seriously that they went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and wanted him to distribute their date palm groves between them and the Muhajirun. Instead of making this sacrifice, Allah’s Messenger thought that it would be better if the Ansar shared the fruit of the date palms with the Muhajirun on condition that they looked after the groves.¹⁸

One of the richest men in Medina, Sa’d b. Rabi’, offered to share half his wealth with his Muhajir brother ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra). Ibn ‘Awf thanked him for this exceptional offer but declined it and set out for the market of Qaynuqa’ to earn his living by commerce.¹⁹ Until the revelation of the verse, “*We have appointed heirs for everything that parents and close relatives leave behind,*”²⁰ the Muhajirun gave precedence to the Ansar in matters of inheritance.²¹ When the lands obtained from the Khaybar Campaign were given to the Muhajirun they became land owners. Consequently the agreement that the Ansar had with them to share everything came to an end.²²

¹³ Al-Tawba, 9:100; B3776, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 1.

¹⁴ B3796, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 9.

¹⁵ B1889, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Madina, 12; B5654, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 8.

¹⁶ B2294, al-Bukhari, al-Kafala, 2; M6464, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 205.

¹⁷ HS3/37, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 37.

¹⁸ B2325, al-Bukhari, al-Muzara’a, 5.

¹⁹ B2048, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 1.

²⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:33.

²¹ B2292, al-Bukhari, al-Kafala, 2; D2922, Abu Da’ud, al-Fara’id, 16.

²² B2630, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 35; M4603, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 70.

One day the Muhajirun, who were extremely grateful for the sacrifices of the Ansar and were very touched by them, brought one of their concerns to our Master the Prophet. They said that because of the unprecedented assistance of the Ansar, they, the Ansar would receive all the divine rewards and they were afraid that none would be left for them, the Muhajirun. The Noble Messenger then stated that they would have done their duty as long as they prayed to Allah (swt) for the Ansar and praised them.²³

The sacrifices that the Muslims of Medina made for their Muhajir brothers could not be counted. One day one of the Ansar took to his home a poor Muhajir, for the Noble Messenger wanted him to treat him as a guest. He had only enough food at home to feed his children. Hand in hand with his wife, he comforted the children and put them to sleep. There was just enough food in the house to give to their guest. Indeed, they put out the lamp so they could pretend in the dark to be eating with the visitor. So, the couple, like their children, went to bed hungry. As a result of this incident, Allah Almighty described the sacrifice of the Ansar as follows: *“Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith show love for those who emigrated to them for refuge and harbor no resentment in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls’ greed are truly successful.”*²⁴

The Noble Messenger never forgot that the Ansar embraced their Muhajir brothers with affection and shared everything with them. Thus, he said, *“Loving the Ansar is a sign of the faith. Nourishing hatred of them is a sign of hypocrisy.”*²⁵ He stated that no one who had faith in Allah and the Hereafter felt hostility toward them,²⁶ that Allah loved the one who loved them, and that Allah (swt) would hate the one who hated them.²⁷

Once our Master the Prophet stood up when he saw women and children of the Ansar coming from a wedding and then said to them twice, *“My Allah! You are among the people whom I love the most.”*²⁸ On another occasion, when a woman from the Ansar went with her children to the Prophet (saw) to describe certain needs, Allah’s Messenger said to them, *“Among all people you are my most beloved,”*²⁹ Sometimes he even expressed his affection for the Ansar by swearing by them.³⁰

Allah’s Messenger (saw) distributed the booty obtained during the Hunayn Campaign to some members of the Quraysh in order to warm

²³ D4812, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 11; T2487, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 44.

²⁴ Al-Hashr, 59:9; B3798, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 10.

²⁵ M236, Muslim, al-Iman, 128; B17, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 10.

²⁶ M238, Muslim, al-Iman, 130.

²⁷ B3783, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 4; M237, Muslim, al-Iman, 129.

²⁸ M6417, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 174; B5180, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 76.

²⁹ B6645, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-nudhur, 3.

³⁰ B3785, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 5; M6418, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 175.

their hearts to Islam. Some of the youth from the Ansar who saw this thought that the Noble Messenger had given nothing to the Ansar because he held the Quraysh above them. When the Prophet heard to of this, he gathered them together in a tent and asked them if they would be pleased to return with the Prophet while others returned to their homes with worldly goods.³¹ Then he said, *"If there had not been the Hijra, I would have been one of the Ansar; and if people followed a valley or mountain trail, I would follow the Ansar's valley or mountain trail."*³²

When the Prophet (saw) conquered Mecca, he did not take revenge on the Quraysh, but forgave them, and he declared that those who sought refuge in the home of Abu Sufyan and those who entered their own homes and closed the doors would be safe. All this aroused concern among the Ansar that he was going to settle in Mecca his native city. Word spread that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was acting with tolerance toward the city of his birth and his relatives. Thereupon Allah's Messenger said to them, *"O group of the Ansar!"* They said, *"Speak O Messenger of Allah!"* Our Prophet said, *"You have said this. A man loves his own country."* They answered, *"Yes. That is right."* The Messenger of Allah then said, *"No. I am the servant and messenger of Allah. I emigrated for Allah and for you. My life and my death will be with you."* When they heard this the Companions (ra) wept and said, *"By Allah! We said this because we are jealous and cannot share Allah and his Messenger."* The Prophet (saw) replied to this excuse, saying, *"Allah and His Messenger affirm you and excuse you."*³³

During his last days, Allah's beloved Messenger was seized by a serious ailment. The Ansar, who realized that he was going to die, gathered around him and began to weep. When our Master the Prophet heard this, he made a speech to his Companions (ra). In this speech, he reminded them that the Ansar had fulfilled their obligations and that, in return, treating them well and forgiving their shortcomings was a duty of Muslims.³⁴ He informed them that the number of the Ansar in Medina would gradually decrease and that others would multiply and he advised those who would govern in the future to treat the Ansar well, to appreciate the good that they did, and to overlook their faults.³⁵

On various occasions, our Master the Messenger of Allah (saw) prayed, at the request of the Ansar, that their children and grandchildren follow in their path and be good Muslims.³⁶

³¹ B3147, al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khumus, 19; M2436, Muslim, al-Zakat, 132.

³² B7245, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 9; M2446, Muslim, al-Zakat, 139.

³³ M4622, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 84.

³⁴ B3799, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 11.

³⁵ B927, al-Bukhari, al-Jum'a, 29.

³⁶ B3787, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 6; M6414, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 172.

Once, while listing the tribes of the Ansar with respect to virtue, the Prophet (saw) said that the most virtuous were, in order, the Banu 'l-Najjar, Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal, Banu 'l-Kharij, and Banu 'l-Sa'ida. Then he stated that in any case there was good in all the families of the Ansar.³⁷

When our Master the Prophet saw the Muhajirun and Ansar working body and soul while building the Mosque of the Prophet and while excavating the ditch for the Battle of the Khandaq, he prayed for them, saying, "O Allah! The real goodness is the goodness of the Hereafter, so please forgive the Ansar and the Muhajirun."³⁸ And he beseeched Allah (swt) to bless the fruit (weights and measures) of the Ansar.³⁹

The service that the Ansar rendered to their Muhajir brothers was enough to bring tears to one's eyes. Indeed, Jarir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), who, although the chief of the tribe of the Banu Bajila in Yemen, left everything behind and went to Medina with 150 people from his city in the tenth year of the Hijra, was excited to join the service of the Ansar for the Messenger of Allah (saw).⁴⁰ Once on a journey, when Jarir began to serve the Ansar Anas b. Malik (ra), who was younger than him, Anas became embarrassed. Jarir (ra) then explained his behavior to him as follows: "I have seen the Ansar doing this with Allah's Messenger. And I swore that if ever I accompanied a member of the Ansar, I would be at his service."⁴¹

The Ansar (ra) consisted not only of men, but also of women, who were courageous and devoted. Our Master the Prophet participated in battle with a number of women from the Ansar, above all Umm Sulaym, the mother of Anas b. Malik (ra).⁴²

In addition, the women of the Ansar earned the appreciation and respect of the Messenger of Allah (saw) because of their piety. Indeed, 'A'isha (ra) stated that their sense of shame did not keep them from learning their religion and they were eager to question the Messenger of Allah (saw) about everything and learn from him.⁴³

Our Master the Prophet also used to consider the legitimate pleasures and customs of the Ansar to be important. Once 'A'isha (ra) was the intermediary in a marriage between a woman and a man who was from the Ansar. During the ceremony the Noble Messenger asked, "A'isha! Are you not amusing yourself? Games and amusements bring pleasure to the Ansar."⁴⁴

Our Master the Prophet highly esteemed the Muhajirun who left everything behind for the sake of Allah (swt) and His Messenger, and then

³⁷ B5300, al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 25; M6421, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 177.

³⁸ B7201, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam 43; IM742, Ibn Maja, al-Masajid, 3.

³⁹ B6363, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat 36; M3321, Muslim, al-Hajj, 462.

⁴⁰ ST1/347, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 347.

⁴¹ M6428, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 181.

⁴² M4682, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 135; D2531, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 32.

⁴³ M750, Muslim, al-Hayd, 61; D316, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 120.

⁴⁴ B5162, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 64.

gathered around Allah's Messenger and awaited his command to serve him. He did not want them to leave him. He always made them feel that he needed them. This state of affairs continued until the conquest of Mecca. Even when they went to Mecca for the Hajj and 'Umra, he said that after they finished their tasks they could only stay there three days and then had to return to him.⁴⁵ 'Umar (ra) recommended that after him the caliphs be chosen from among the first Muhajirun, and he recommended respecting their rights and showing them respect.⁴⁶

The Muhajirun and Ansar, whose names came to symbolize the blessed journey of the Hijra, became examples for all ages. The Prophet (saw) said, *"A Muslim is one who avoids harming other Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a Muhajir is one who abandons all that Allah has forbidden."*⁴⁷ For, those in the vanguard of Islam, whose spirits blossomed with the Hijra, could only be examples for other people to the extent that they could emigrate by setting sail for divine reward and away from their sins and for Allah's pleasure and away from what was unimportant. The fact that they made the places to which they went blossom was possible because they left behind everything in their own heartfelt world and emigrated to Allah (swt) and His Prophet. This in fact is what the Muhajirun and Ansar did. Under the leadership of Allah's Messenger, they abandoned the swamp of polytheism and set out on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). Thus this blessed generation taught today's Muhajirun, who set out on the road to proclaim the name of Allah and His Messenger, to relocate (in a metaphorical sense) after establishing the Hijra for the sake of Allah (swt) in their hearts. Just as the Ansar adopted the Muhajirun, adopting today's Muhajirun can only happen to great hearts which take the Ansar as examples.

⁴⁵ B3933, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 47.

⁴⁶ B1392, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 96.

⁴⁷ B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.



THE PEOPLE OF THE PORTICO (AŞĤĀB AL-ŞUFFA) THOSE DEVOTED TO KNOWLEDGE

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
“لَا أُعْطِيكُمْ وَأَدْعُ أَهْلَ الصُّفَّةِ تَلَوَّى بُطُونُهُمْ مِنَ الْجُوعِ.”

According to ‘Ali, (when Fatima, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, wanted a servant to help her with house work) the Prophet (saw) said, “I will not grant you (assistance) and leave the Aşĥāb al-Şuffa in hunger, very stooped and convulsed.”

(HM596, Ibn Hanbal, I, 80; HM838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 107)



حَدَّثَنَا مُجَاهِدٌ: أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ كَانَ يَقُولُ: ... إِذَا أَتَتْهُ صَدَقَةٌ بَعَثَ بِهَا
إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَمْ يَتَنَاوَلْ مِنْهَا شَيْئًا، وَإِذَا أَتَتْهُ هَدِيَّةٌ أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَأَصَابَ مِنْهَا
وَأَشْرَكَهُمْ فِيهَا...



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ أَهْلُ الصُّفَّةِ أَضْيَافَ أَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ لَا يَأُؤُونَ عَلَى أَهْلِ
وَلَا مَالٍ...



According to Mujahid, Abu Hurayra (ra) used to say, "... when the money for the *zakāt* came to him (Allah's Messenger), he took nothing from it. He sent it to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*. When gifts came to him, he shared them, sending some to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* and keeping some for himself ..."

(B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), "The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were the guests of the people of Islam. They had no families or wealth to rely upon."

(T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 36; B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17)



Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) was a young Companion of Allah's Messenger. He had been with the Prophet since childhood. Having remembered everything that he heard from him, he was among the Companions (ra) who reported the most *ḥadīths*. He always attended the scholarly meetings. One evening in Medina he was sitting in a meeting with some poor Muhajirun. The poverty of those in the group was reflected in their clothing. Because some of them did not have enough clothing to cover themselves completely, they tried to hide behind their friends. There was one other person there and he was reciting the Holy Qur'an to them. Then Allah's Messenger arrived and stood among them. Thereupon the person reciting the Holy Qur'an stopped. The Prophet (saw) greeted them and then asked, "What are you doing?" They replied, "O Messenger of Allah! He is reciting the Holy Qur'an to us and we are listening to Allah's book." Looking at this modest and sincere group, the following words flowed from the blessed lips of Allah's Messenger: "*Praise be to Allah who has created among my people those with whom I have been ordered to stay.*" Then, in order to be close to all of them, he sat in the middle of their circle.¹

This group of scholars, whom Allah's Messenger honored by being so close to them and to whom he addressed such fine words, were the "poor Muhajirun," the distinguished students of the *Ṣuffa* (Portico), which was the first place of instruction in Islam.

The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* resided in al-Masjid al-Nabawi, the Mosque of the Prophet. When al-Masjid al-Nabawi was built after the Hijra to Medina, an enclosed place called a *ṣuffa* was constructed along the north side of the mosque. The ceiling was covered with date palm logs.² The portico of the mosque was used for many purposes and students resided there. In this way the foundation of the original nursery of education and instruction in Islam was laid. The noble Companions (ra) who resided there and who

¹ D3666, Abu Da'ud, al-'Ilm, 13.

² SY6/120, Muhammad b. Yusuf, *Subul al-hady*, VI, 120.

participated in educational activities were called *Ahl al-Ṣuffa* or *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, that is, the People of the Portico.

The Ansar in Medina adopted, materially and morally, and assisted the Muslims who had abandoned their homes, households, and wealth in Mecca and made the Hijra to their city. The Companions (ra) who emigrated later and who did not yet have a place to stay, were treated as guests in the *Ṣuffa* of al-Masjid al-Nabawi. The Ansar, whose material circumstances were assured, saw to the needs of those at the *Ṣuffa*, and the Companions (ra) who had date groves would bring dates for those in the mosque.³ There were not only students in the *Ṣuffa*, but also others who came to see our Master the Prophet, and guests who had no other place to stay. During the day, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were preoccupied with study and worship in the mosque. They used the *Ṣuffa* as a dormitory and as a place for scholarly discussion. This blessed group, which spent most of its time in the presence of the Noble Messenger, always received his favor.⁴

People of every age were at the *Ṣuffa*. Some stayed permanently while others were temporary. Companions like Abu Hurayra (ra), Abu Dharr, Wasila b. Aska', Irbaz b. Sariyya, and 'Uqba b. 'Amir (ra) were habitués of the *Ṣuffa*.⁵ Out of devotion to learning and to be near the Prophet, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar preferred staying in the *Ṣuffa* and being near the Prophet to his father's home.⁶ In this way it was possible to learn the Holy Qur'an, the principles of Islam, and the *ḥadīths* much better. Because the periods of residence of those in the *Ṣuffa* differed, it is not possible to give an exact number of those who were trained there.

The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were materially poor but they were pious, knowledgeable, and talented. All night, until morning, they were busy with study or ritual prayer.⁷ During the day they made every possible effort to see to their own needs and the needs of the mosque. They would fetch water, collect and sell wood, and purchase food for those living in the Portico.⁸

They were the most fortunate students of mankind. This was because the *Ṣuffa* was Islam's first residential school of instruction and teaching. Our Master the Prophet gave the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* instruction in ethics and proper behavior; and he also taught them the necessary information about Islam. When he noticed that they made an error, he would bring this to their attention.⁹ When they acted virtuously, he would praise them. He

³ T2987, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 2.

⁴ ST1/255, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 255.

⁵ M1873, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 251; HM16102, Ibn Hanbal, III, 490; HM17288, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 128; ST1/255, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 256.

⁶ M6370, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 140.

⁷ B3064, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 184; HM12429, Ibn Hanbal, III, 137.

⁸ M4917, Muslim, al-Imara, 147.

⁹ D5040, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab 94; D4014, Abu Da'ud, al-Hammam, 1.

would encourage them to acquire excellent ethics, exhibit fine behavior, and do good works.¹⁰

These students, who were among those closest to Allah's Messenger (saw) and who spent most of their time with him, were trained by the Prophet himself and with his encouragement gave priority to scholarship. 'Uqba b. 'Amir al-Juhani (ra), who was one of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, described this situation as follows: "While we were at the Portico, the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to us and said, 'Which of you would like to go out every morning to Buthan or al-'Aqiq and bring two large-humped and fat she-camels without being guilty of sin and severing ties of kinship?' Those who were there answered, 'All of us O Messenger of Allah.' Then he said, 'If any one of you goes out in the morning to the mosque and learns two verses from the book of Allah Almighty, it would be better for him than two she-camels, and three verses would be better for him than three she-camels, and four verses would be better for him than four she-camels. No matter what the number of verses he learned, they would be better for him than the same number of camels.'"¹¹

The distinguished Companions of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* (ra), who lived a modest yet productive life, essentially constituted an army of men of wisdom. They concentrated on learning the fundamentals of Islam, indeed, everything about it, based above all on the Holy Qur'an and *ḥadīths*. The instructors whom our Master the Prophet appointed taught them to read the Holy Qur'an and to write. Among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, 'Ubada b. al-Samit and 'Abd Allah b. Sa'id b. al-'As (ra) gave lessons in reading, writing, and religious subjects to the students at the Portico.¹² 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Mu'adh b. Jabal and Salim (ra) the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfa were among those from whom Allah's Messenger (saw) recommended that one learn the Holy Qur'an.¹³

In addition to the students of the Holy Qur'an, who were called the *qurrā'* (reciters),¹⁴ there were in the *Ṣuffa* Companions (ra) who were attentive to the words of our Prophet and memorized them. There were Companions (ra) who were trained by, or who lived closely with, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, and who memorized and transmitted many *ḥadīths*. They learned and transmitted a great number of *ḥadīths* because they greatly appreciated the opportunity of being together with the Messenger of Allah (saw). One of the leading students at the Portico was Abu Hurayra (ra) who described this as follows: "You people claim that Abu Hurayra narrates many *ḥadīths*

¹⁰ B631, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 18.

¹¹ M1873, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 251.

¹² D3416, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (al-Ijara), 36; EÜ3/263, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, 3, 263.

¹³ B4999, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 8; B3760, al-Bukhari, Fada'il ashab al-nabi, 27.

¹⁴ B3064, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 184.

of Allah's Messenger. I swear by Allah that I was a poor man (from the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*) and used to stick with the Messenger of Allah contented with what would fill my stomach, while the Muhajirun used to be busy trading in the markets and the Ansar used to be busy looking after their property."¹⁵

Abu Hurayra's profound knowledge of *ḥadīths* attracted the attention of some people. Once they went to Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah (ra) and said, "O Abu Muhammad! Do you see this Yemeni - meaning: Abu Hurayra - is he more knowledgeable of the *ḥadīths* of the Messenger of Allah than you? We hear from him what we do not hear from you, or does he attribute to the Messenger of Allah what he did not say?" He said, "As for his having heard from the Messenger of Allah what we did not hear from him, then that is because he was poor, having nothing, a guest (that is, among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*) of the Messenger of Allah, and his hand was in the hand of the Messenger of Allah (saw). And we used to be people of houses and wealth, and we used to come to the Messenger of Allah at the two ends of the day. I do not doubt that he heard from the Messenger of Allah (saw) what we did not hear, and you will not find anyone in whom there is good attributing to the Messenger of Allah (saw) what he did not say."¹⁶

Our Prophet employed the Companions (ra) who were trained in the *Ṣuffa* in various services according to their knowledge and ability. Teachers and guides whom he selected from the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were entrusted with teaching the tribes, which had recently become Muslim, the Holy Qur'an and other religious knowledge and training them to follow the path of Allah. It was also the case that some of these teachers, whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) trained and sent out, were ambushed and martyred. Indeed, seventy people, composed mostly of young members of the Ansar, who were called the *qurrā'* from among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, were sent to the tribes of the Ri'l, Dhakwan, 'Usayya, and Liḥyan (ra) who had become Muslim and wanted the Prophet to provide them with people to teach them. However they were ambushed and martyred at Bi'r Ma'una. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) learned of this, he was very upset, and he prayed many days for them because of this painful event.¹⁷

The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were extremely interested in knowledge. Because they had no worldly occupations, they spent most of their time in scholarly discussions and in being with our Prophet. Perhaps it was because of these

¹⁵ B7354, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 22.

¹⁶ T3837, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 46.

¹⁷ B3064, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 184.

circumstances that our Prophet showed such care in seeing to their needs. In fact, he saw to the needs of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* just as he saw to those of his own family members. Indeed, once when his daughter Fatima stated that she was exhausted from the many household chores and wanted money from him from the Treasury in order to hire a servant, he refused her request. He explained his reasoning as follows: *“I will not grant you (assistance) and leave the Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa in hunger, very stooped and convulsed.”*¹⁸

Allah’s Messenger (saw) was very interested in, and felt affection toward, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*. He took a personal interest in their livelihood and needs. He distributed to them a large part of the money which came to the Treasury and to him. When the funds from the *zakāt* came to him, he took nothing for himself but instead sent it directly to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*. When gifts arrived, he shared them with the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* after taking some of them for himself.¹⁹ This was because, he did not accept charity (*ṣadaqa*), only gifts.²⁰ With regard to sharing the *zakāt* and *ṣadaqa* with the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, the following verse was revealed: *“[Give] to those needy who are wholly occupied in Allah’s way and cannot travel in the land [for trade]. The unknowing might think them rich because of their self-restraint, but you will recognize them by their characteristic of not begging persistently. Allah is well aware of any good you give.”*²¹

The students of the *Ṣuffa*, who had neither families nor wealth, received their subsistence through the hospitality of the Muslims.²² The luckiest to receive hospitality was undoubtedly one who was a guest of the Messenger of Allah (saw). In fact, most of the time, the Prophet (saw) took some of those staying at the *Ṣuffa* to his own home. And he recommended to his Companions (ra) that they take in as many guests as they could, saying, *“Whoever has food enough for two persons should take a third one (from among them), and whoever has food enough for four persons should take a fifth or a sixth.”*²³ Thus, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, who had neither families nor wealth, were called the “guests of the People of Islam.”²⁴

Abu Hurayra (ra), who was a prominent member of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, reported that most of the time they were very hungry, and that the Messenger of Allah (saw) understood their plight and, when possible, invited them to his blissful abode and offered them whatever he had. Abu Hurayra (ra) stated that once he had not eaten a thing for three days and was about to faint from hunger when finally the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were summoned to

¹⁸ HM596, Ibn Hanbal, I, 80; HM838, Ibn Hanbal, I, 107.

¹⁹ B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17; T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyaama, 36.

²⁰ M2491, Muslim, al-Zakat, 175.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2:273.

²² B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17.

²³ B3581, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25.

²⁴ T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyaama, 36.

the home of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and they ate bread soaked in gravy.²⁵ Again, one day the Messenger of Allah (saw) noticed that Abu Hurayra (ra) was desperate from hunger and took him to his home of bliss. There was only a pot of milk in the house. Abu Hurayra (ra) first thought that this amount of milk was too little to satisfy his hunger alone, but on the Prophet's command he left and summoned his friends at the *Ṣuffa*. The Messenger of Allah (saw) told him to take the pot of milk and offer it in turn to each of his friends. So, he passed it around to them one by one. Each took the cup and drank until he was full. After the last of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* had drunk, Abu Hurayra (ra) offered the little milk that was left in the pot to the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw) looked at it, smiled, and said, "*Abu Hurayra, we are the last two not to have drunk. Sit and drink!*" So, he sat and drank and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him three times, "*Drink a little more!*" Finally, Abu Hurayra (ra) said, "I swear by Allah who sent the true faith to you that I am full and can drink no more." Then the Prophet praised Allah (swt), said the *baslama*, and drank the rest of the milk.²⁶ In this way the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* who were there not only filled their stomachs but also witnessed a blessed miracle brought about at the hands of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* were poor. Not only did they often find nothing to eat but they also had barely enough clothing to cover themselves. Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that many of the people that he knew among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* did not have enough clothing to cover their entire bodies and thus, during ritual prayer, they would fold up their clothing in with their hands so their genitals could not be seen.²⁷ As for the want of food, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* tried to satisfy their hunger by eating dates. Thus one of them complained of the pain in his stomach from eating only dates. The Messenger of Allah (saw) consoled him and the others by saying, "*If I find a piece of bread or meat, I will definitely give it to you. Your days of abundance and blessing are near. Indeed, on those days you will obtain pots of food that will be delivered to you morning and night and you will wear clothing like the covering of the Ka'ba.*"²⁸ Sometimes members of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* fell down in faint from hunger. Once, while performing the ritual prayer, one of them fainted and fell down and the rustic bedouin thought that he was mad. When the prayer was finished, the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* and consoled them, saying, "If you knew what you would

²⁵ SI6533, Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, XIV, 468.

²⁶ B6452, al-Bukhari, *al-Riqaq*, 17.

²⁷ B442, al-Bukhari, *al-Salat*, 58.

²⁸ HM16084, Ibn Hanbal, III, 488.

possess in the presence of Allah, you would want your destitution to increase.”²⁹

The distinguished Companions (ra) among the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* who dedicated themselves to the path of Allah (fi sabilillah) were always in the presence of our Prophet. They memorized his words and deeds and passed them on to subsequent generations. This scholarly and virtuous group of people played a great role in preserving the fundamental principles of Islam and the rules of the faith and in spreading them throughout the world. Despite the various difficulties and barriers that they faced, these students, who did not lag behind in the search for knowledge, served as an excellent example for the people of later periods. In fact, all the schools, colleges, and complexes built adjacent to mosques were inspired by the *Ṣuffa* at the al-Masjid al-Nabawi. Because of their attachment to Allah (swt) and His Messenger and their disdain of worldly goods, the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa*, who received training in the faith and ethics under the supervision of the Prophet (saw), were the pioneers in the study of the religious sciences, and in asceticism, and piety.

²⁹ T2368, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 39.



AI-MU'ALLAFA QULŪBUHUM THOSE WHOSE HEARTS ARE WON OVER

عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "فَإِنِّي أُعْطِيَ
رَجَالًا حَدِيثِي عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ أَتَأَلَّفُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ النَّاسُ بِالْأَمْوَالِ وَتَرْجِعُونَ
إِلَى رِحَالِكُمْ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَوَاللَّهِ! لَمَا تَنْقَلِبُونَ بِهِ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَنْقَلِبُونَ بِهِ."

According to Ibn Shihab, Anas b. Malik (ra) informed him that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said (when discontent arose when the spoils of war were distributed after the Battle of Hunayn), "In order to shed (the) light (of Islam on) the hearts of certain people who had been recently saved from unbelief, I have given (them booty). Are you not more content to return to your homes with the Messenger of Allah than those who return with wealth? I swear by Allah that what you return with (the Prophet) is much better than what they return with."

(M2436, Muslim, al-Zakat, 132)



عَنْ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ أُمَيَّةَ قَالَ: أَعْطَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ وَإِنَّهُ لَأَبْغَضُ الْخَلْقِ إِلَيَّ فَمَا زَالَ يُعْطِينِي حَتَّى إِنَّهُ لَأَحَبُّ الْخَلْقِ إِلَيَّ.



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ الرَّجُلُ يَأْتِي النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَيَسْلُمُ لَشَيْءٍ يُعْطَاهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا فَلَا يُمْسِي حَتَّى يَكُونَ الْإِسْلَامُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ وَأَعَزَّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا.



Safwan b. Umayya (ra) said,
“The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave to me on the day of Hunayn (some of the booty), and he was the most hated person to me. But he did not stop giving to me until he was the most beloved person to me.”

(T666, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zakat, 30)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “A man came to the Prophet (saw) and, on condition that some worldly goods were given to him, he became a Muslim. However, before nightfall Islam had become more beloved to him and dearer to him than the world and its content.”

(HM12073, Ibn Hanbal, III, 107)



It was the eighth year of the Hijra. The Battle of Hunayn against the confederate tribes of the Khawazin went in favor of the Muslims and a great amount of booty was taken.¹ After the siege of Ta'if, the Prophet (saw) had gone to Ji'rana where the booty was collected in order to make the required division.² After one-fifth was set aside for the Treasury, the rest was distributed among the Companions (ra).³ Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah (saw) had given one hundred camels each to certain people whose hearts he wanted to enlighten with Islam. This did not escape the notice of a group of the Ansar and they reproached him, saying, "May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah! He gives to the Quraysh and ignores us. Whereas our swords are still dripping with their blood." A short time later, these words of the Ansar reached the ears of the Prophet (saw). He sent word to them and wanted them to meet in a tent. As soon as the Ansar had gathered, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked them, "What is the meaning of the words that I have heard?" They replied, "O Messenger of Allah! Those of us who are wise said nothing, but those who are young said, 'May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah! He gives to the Quraysh and ignores us. Whereas our swords are still dripping with their blood.'" This situation showed in fact that some of the youth among the Ansar were not able to understand the purpose behind the Prophet's division of the spoils. He went on to dispel the uncertainty of his Companions by saying, "In order to shed (the) light (of Islam on) the hearts of certain people who had been recently saved from unbelief, I have given (them booty). Are you not more content to return to your homes with the Messenger of Allah than those who return with wealth? I swear by Allah that what you return with (the Prophet) is much better than what they return with." Thereupon, the Ansar understood the Prophet's purpose and said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah! We are satisfied."⁴

¹ BS11487, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VI, 87.

² B4328, al-Bukhari, *al-Maghazi*, 57; HS5/129, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, V, 129.

³ N4143, al-Nasa'i, *al-Fay'*, 38.

⁴ M2436, Muslim, *al-Zakat*, 132; B3146, al-Bukhari, *Fard al-khumus*, 19.

Those to whom our beloved Prophet distributed a share of the booty were those described in the Holy Qur'an as *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* (those whose hearts are won over) and they were those whose hearts needed to be illuminated with Islam. This group, who were mentioned among those to whom *zakāt* could be given, are mentioned by Allah in a verse as follows: *"Alms are meant only for the poor, the needy, those who administer them, those whose hearts need winning over, to free slaves and help those in debt, for Allah's cause and for travelers in need. This is ordained by Allah; Allah is all knowing and wise."*⁵

There were different reasons why, according to the conditions of that time, both wealth like booty and *zakāt* were shared with the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum*. This practice could have been used to bring the light of faith to those who were not yet Muslims but who were thought could be useful to Islam, or to accustom to the faith those who had recently become Muslims, or as far as possible, to eliminate the evils of those who could cause harm to Islam. This practice facilitated the adoption of Islam by tribal leaders and influential people in society along with many others. Indeed, most of the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* were composed of the prominent people in Mecca right after it had been conquered.

With the conquest of Mecca, most of the Arab tribes became Muslim. The conquest also ensured that the leaders of the other peoples and their subjects would adopt Islam. Indeed, the cities which had been polytheistic quickly became full of people who converted to Islam without shedding any blood. However, the Prophet (saw) was not yet certain that belief had settled in the hearts of these people in the full sense. This was because, until a short time ago, they had been enemies of Islam and their adoption of the faith had been on a rather different level than that of the Companions (ra). Allah's Messenger, who was well aware of this situation, therefore acted in favor of these people when dividing the booty from the Battle of Hunayn, which occurred right after the conquest of Mecca; and he made this a new tactic of communication.

The Noble Messenger, who understood man's desire for wealth, tried to gratify their hearts and facilitate their following the path of the love of the Creator by taking advantage of this weakness of the Quraysh who had recently been saved from the Jahiliyya. Therefore, he considered it appropriate to distribute a large portion of the booty acquired at Hunayn to

⁵Al-Tawba, 9:60.

these people who had just become Muslims and not to those among the Ansar and Muhajirun who had participated in *jihād*, although they deserved it. In this way he wanted to cement their belief. Giving preference to them over the Ansar and Muhajirun was based on an extremely important interest that the Companions (ra) could not fully perceive. Thanks to the wealth given to those who were influential leaders, the hearts of their peoples were warmed to Islam. Among the many were al-Aqra' b. Habis, Hakim b. Hizam, Suhayl b. 'Amr, Safwan b. Umayya, al-'Abbas b. Mirdas, Labid b. Rabi'a, Malik b. 'Awf, Abu Sufyan and his sons (ra).⁶ Virtually all of these persons, most of whom had accepted Islam during the conquest of Mecca, subsequently became sincere Muslims.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted to warm to Islam the newly converted—who were members of a society which held commercial considerations above everything and, although they had become Muslims for various reasons, had not fully embraced Islam in their hearts—and dispel all of their anxieties. By using this means of winning their hearts, the Prophet (saw) also aimed to protect the Muslims from powerful persons who could cause them harm. Safwan b. Umayya, who was among the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum*, was a good example of how well-founded was this political policy of Allah's Messenger. He had fled Mecca at the time of its conquest and had been a polytheist while participating in the Battle of Hunayn. The Prophet (saw) had asked for a weapon from him which he did not refuse. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave him a rather large amount of booty from Hunayn.⁷ Safwan described his change of heart as a result of this generosity on the part of the Messenger of Allah (saw), saying, "The Messenger of Allah gave to me on the day of Hunayn (some of the booty), and he was the most hated person to me. But he did not stop giving to me until he was the most loved person to me."⁸

Because they could not fully comprehend the purpose of his attempt to warm certain hearts to Islam, and which would prove successful in the case of the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum*, some people who thought the division of the booty was not in their best interest accused the Prophet of injustice. While the booty from Hunayn was being distributed, a person named Dhu 'l-Huwaysira from the Banu Tamim⁹ said, "O Muhammad! Fear Allah!" implying that the Messenger of Allah (saw)'s division of the spoils was unfair. This insinuation disturbed and upset the Prophet (saw). Thereupon Allah's

⁶ HS5/169, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, V, 169-173.

⁷ H13/432, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, III, 432-433.

⁸ T666, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Zakat*, 30, M6022, Muslim, *al-Fada'il*, 59.

⁹ HS5/174, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, V, 174.

Messenger said, “(Shame!) If I disobeyed Allah, who would obey Him? Allah has entrusted the people of the world to me. Do you not trust me?” stressing that there was no injustice in what he had done.¹⁰ Also while the booty was being distributed, a person named Mu‘attib b. Qushayr¹¹ said, “By Allah! Muhammad did not please Allah with this division.” ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) brought these disrespectful words to the attention of the Prophet (saw) and his face turned red from anger and he said, “May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses for he was hurt with more than this, yet he remained patient.”¹²

In any case, such an accusation was completely undeserved. In fact in the Noble Qur’an these people who were angry because of these unjust reproaches and who showed disrespect to Allah’s Messenger are required to be satisfied with his division of wealth. As it says, “Some of them find fault with you [Prophet] regarding the distribution of alms: they are content if they are given a share, but angry if not. If only they would be content with what Allah and His Messenger have given them, and say, ‘Allah is enough for us—He will give us some of His bounty and so will His Messenger—to Allah alone we turn in hope.’”¹³

Our beloved Prophet,¹⁴ who was the most generous of people, made every material and moral sacrifice to win hearts and bring people to Islam. He turned no one from his door in the hope of being able to inscribe Islam in his heart. Once he ordered that most of the sheep which had been collected for the *zakāt*, and were found between two mountains, be given to a man who had come to him and requested a few things. When this man, who was deeply affected by the Prophet’s beneficence, returned to his people, he said in astonishment, “O my people! Become Muslims! By Allah, Muhammad is so beneficent that he distributes what he has without fear of poverty.” Anas b. Malik (ra), who witnessed this event, said, “A man came to the Prophet and, on condition that some worldly goods were given to him, he became a Muslim. However, before nightfall Islam had become more beloved to him and dearer to him than the world and its content.”¹⁵

Hakim b. Hizam, who was among those whose hearts had recently become acquainted with Islam and who had become a Muslim at the conquest of Mecca, demanded that the Messenger of Allah (saw) provide him with wealth. When the camels that were given to him did not satisfy him, he repeated his demand. Then the Prophet (saw) warned him, saying, “O Hakim! This property is like a sweet fruit; whoever takes it with generosity of

¹⁰ M2451, Muslim, al-Zakat, 143; B3344, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 6.

¹¹ VM3/949, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, III/949.

¹² B6059, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 53.

¹³ Al-Tawba, 9:58-59.

¹⁴ M6009, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 50.

¹⁵ HM12073, Ibn Hanbal, III, 107; M6021, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 58.

spirit, he is blessed in it. But whoever takes it with greediness of spirit, he is not blessed in it.”¹⁶ Hakim, who was affected by this warning for the rest of his life, swore, saying, “O Messenger of Allah! I swear by Allah who has sent you with the true religion that henceforth I will not ask anyone for anything until I leave this world.” After the Prophet (saw) died, he would not accept things that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) wanted to give him.¹⁷

Sometimes Allah’s Messenger (saw) deprived certain people—whom he loved and thought deserved more booty than others—of loot for the sake of the guidance of others. After the Battle of Hunayn, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) why so much booty was given to al-Aqra’ b. Habis and ‘Uyayna b. Hisn, who were among the *al-Mu’allafa qulūbuhum*, and not to Ju’ayl b. Suraka (ra) who was well known as a good Muslim. The Messenger explained his action as follows: “O Sa’d! I give to a person, although another is dearer to me, for fear that Allah might throw him on his face in the Fire.”¹⁸ As can be seen, the Messenger of Allah (saw), who distinguished between what people expected and what they needed, understood very well the *al-Mu’allafa qulūbuhum*, whom he treated with sensitivity; and this understanding played an influential role in guiding ordinary or prominent people or groups of people to adopting Islam.

This was an important strategy that was carried out for certain fundamental reasons such as attracting people to Islam, spreading the faith, confirming newly converted Muslims in their faith, and protecting Muslims from the evils of unbelievers. This strategy, which was especially effective with respect to people who were in the process of becoming familiar with the faith, not only stiffened the resolve of converts in a material sense but was also supported the ease of understanding religious matters. It is possible to see examples of this in various practices of Allah’s Messenger (saw). Indeed, when a delegation from the Banu Thaḳīf came to him in order to become Muslim and said that they would convert on condition that they not participate in *jihād*, fasting, and ritual prayer, he agreed to everything except ritual prayer. He stated that he exempted ritual prayer because there would be no good in the religion without it.¹⁹

Moreover, in addition to providing the newly converted with material support and showing them how easy it was to practice acts of worship, he was sincere and tolerant toward them and this was also effective in winning their hearts. It is possible to see the best example of this in the attempt of

¹⁶ B1472, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 50.

¹⁷ B3143, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 19.

¹⁸ B27, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 19; VM3/948, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, III, 948.

¹⁹ D3026, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 25, 26.

our Prophet to introduce Abu Mahdhura (ra), who became his muazzin, to Islam. While returning from the Campaign of Hunayn, Allah's Messenger ordered his Companions (ra) to make the call to prayer. Abu Mahdhura and a group of his young friends from the Quraysh, who were there at that time, began to shout loudly and mock the muazzin. Abu Mahdhura was not yet a Muslim and harbored enmity toward Allah's Messenger. However, his beautiful voice did not escape the notice of the Prophet (saw) and so he summoned him and asked him to recite the adhan for him. He told him that while doing so he had to raise his voice melodically and thus personally taught him to recite the adhan. Then he gave him some silver coins and rubbed his hand over his face and prayed, saying, "May Allah bless you and send blessings upon you." Afterwards, this youth with the beautiful voice, who had originally hated Allah's Messenger (saw) and the adhan, became, with the permission of the Prophet, one of the distinguished muazzins in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. It is not known if this came about because of our beloved Prophet's close interest and prayer, or because of the small gift that he gave him, or as the result of the Prophet's gracious invitation. In any case, Allah (swt) had eliminated the hatred in the heart of this youth and replaced it with belief.²⁰

After the death of the Prophet (saw), allotting a share to the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* became a controversial subject. 'Umar (ra) declared that this practice was justified when the Muslims were a minority but was no longer necessary after Islam and the Muslims had become strong. He did not find it appropriate to continue this policy during the reign of Abu Bakr (ra).²¹ He did not pay *zakāt* to the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* during his own caliphate. There is no information on allotting a share to them during the caliphates of 'Uthman and 'Ali (ra). There is, however, a report in our sources that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz made grants to certain people in order to attract them to Islam and that he even gave 1,000 dinars to a patriarch for this purpose.²² This indicates that the need to warm hearts to Islam changed from period to period.

As stated in a verse in the Holy Qur'an,²³ the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* were one of eight groups to whom the *zakāt* was given. The collection of the *zakāt* and its distribution to those in need were the responsibility of the state at the time of the Prophet (saw). It was collected by authorized officials and distributed by the state to people who were determined to be needy.

²⁰ HM15454, Ibn Hanbal, III, 409; IM708, Ibn Maja, al-Adhan, 2.

²¹ HI4/767, Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, IV, 769.

²² ST5/350, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, V, 350.

²³ Al-Tawba, 9:60.

Setting aside a share for the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum* was a policy carried out during the time of Allah's Messenger (saw) and it proved to be important for ensuring the success of Islam. Basically it was felt to be necessary in order to win back the interest of people, who, in every period, strayed from the faith, and to bring them close to the faith or obstruct harm from enemies. These legitimate purposes made a significant contribution to the religious and social solidarity of Muslims. This policy served not only to satisfy the material needs of people but also, albeit to a lesser degree, to soften hearts which had become hardened and to refresh people's love for Islam. So, we should continue to be inspired by this practice which Allah's Messenger put into force with his love, compassion, and tolerance. Today, as in the past, hearts can be won over by understanding the *al-Mu'allafa qulūbuhum*. This is because Islam is a religion that addresses both the mind and the heart of men.



DISPUTES AMONG THE COMPANIONS THINKING DIFFERENTLY IS A FACT OF HUMAN NATURE

عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: يَا أَبَا الْعَبَّاسِ عَجَبًا
لِاخْتِلَافِ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي إِهْلَالِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ حِينَ
أَوْجَبَ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ النَّاسَ بِذَلِكَ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ
حُجَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَمِنْ هُنَاكَ اخْتَلَفُوا...

Sa'id b. Jubayr (ra) said, "I said to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, 'O Abu 'l-'Abbas! I am surprised that the Companions of the Prophet (saw) had a difference of opinion about when the Messenger of Allah (saw) entered the state of *ihrām* (ritual purity) during the Hajj.' He answered, 'In fact, I am the one who knows this matter best. Because the Messenger of Allah (saw) only made the Hajj once, people differed on this matter...'"

(HM2358, Ibn Hanbal, I, 260; D1770, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 21)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَوْمَ الْأَحْزَابِ: "لَا يُصَلِّيَنَّ أَحَدُ الْعَصْرِ إِلَّا فِي بَنِي قُرَيْظَةَ." فَادْرَكَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْعَصْرَ فِي الطَّرِيقِ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: لَا نُصَلِّي حَتَّى نَأْتِيَهَا وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: بَلْ نُصَلِّي، لَمْ يَرِدْ مِنَّا ذَلِكَ، فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَلَمْ يُعَنْفَ وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمْ.



عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ قَالَ: أَرْسَلَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ إِلَى زَيْدِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ أَنْتَجِدْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِلْأُمِّ ثَلَاثُ مَا بَقِيَ؟ فَقَالَ زَيْدٌ: إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ رَجُلٌ تَقُولُ بِرَأْيِكَ وَأَنَا رَجُلٌ أَقُولُ بِرَأْيِي.



عَنْ مَرْوَانَ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ: أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ لَمَّا طَعِنَ اسْتَشَارَهُمْ فِي الْجَدِّ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي كُنْتُ رَأَيْتُ فِي الْجَدِّ رَأْيًا، فَإِنْ رَأَيْتُمْ أَنَّ تَتَّبِعُوهُ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ.



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ. وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ."



Ibn ‘Umar (ra) said, “the Prophet (saw) said on the Day of the Factions (*Yawm al-Aḥzāb*), ‘No one should perform the ‘asr prayer anywhere but in the land of the Banu Qurayza.’ When it was time for the ‘asr prayer, some of those who were on the road said, ‘We will not perform it until we reach it,’ while others said, ‘No, we will pray at this spot, for the Prophet did not mean that for us.’ Later this situation was mentioned to the Prophet (saw) and he did not berate any of the two groups.”

(B4119, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 31)



‘Ikrima (ra) said, “Ibn ‘Abbas sent a message to Zayd b. Thabit, asking, ‘Can you find in the book of Allah the rule that one third of what remains (from an inheritance) belongs to the mother?’ Then Zayd said, ‘You are a man who gives your opinion and I am a man who gives my opinion.’”

(DM2903, al-Darimi, al-Fara’id, 3)



According to Marwan b. al-Hakam, when ‘Umar b. al-Khattab was wounded, he consulted those knowledgeable about the amount of inheritance that fell to the grandfather and said, “I have given an opinion about the inheritance of the grandfather. If you see fit, follow it.”

(DM2943, al-Darimi, al-Fara’id, 12)



According to ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “*When a judge gives a ruling, he exercises his own judgement (according to his own ability). Subsequently, if he has made a sound decision, he will double his reward (in the next world). If, after exercising his own judgement, it subsequently appears that he made a mistake, he will gain one reward.*”

(M4487, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 15)



Two men were among those most closely associated with the Messenger of Allah (saw). One was Abu Bakr, the closest friend of Allah's Messenger, and the other was 'Umar (ra), who was renowned for his justice.

One day a dispute arose between Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra). Abu Bakr made 'Umar angry. 'Umar left Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr went after him to ask for forgiveness but 'Umar would not accept his apology and closed his door in his face. Abu Bakr then went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and explained the situation to him.

Abu Bakr's behavior did not please the Messenger of Allah (saw), so he prayed three times for Abu Bakr, whom 'Umar (ra) had not forgiven, saying, "*May Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr.*"

Meanwhile, 'Umar (ra) also regretted his mistaken behavior toward his brother. He first went to his house, but when he learned that he was not there, he went to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He walked in and greeted him. He sat next to the Prophet and explained to him what had transpired between Abu Bakr and himself. Abu Bakr (ra) could tell that Allah's Messenger was angry and began to appeal to him concerning his friend, saying, "By Allah, O Messenger of Allah! I went much further (in error) than 'Umar in this affair," and with great grace made the Prophet (saw) forget the behavior of his brother and began to bring his own fault to the forefront.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) then address all of those who were present, saying, "*Now, will you (people) leave my friend (Abu Bakr) to me? Will you (people) leave my friend to me? (Because) when I said, 'O people! Verily, I have been sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah,' you said, 'You tell a lie,' while Abu Bakr said, 'You have spoken the truth.'*"¹

This event which took place between these two Companions (ra), who were among the closest to Allah's Messenger, illustrates the kind of human

¹ B4640, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-A'raf) 3; B3661, al-Bukhari, Fada'il ashab al-Nabi, 5.

dynamics which took place among the Companions (ra). The discussion which occurred between the two shows how the Companions (ra), like anyone, could sometimes become angry or take offense with each other. Nevertheless, this incident which took place between two worthy Companions (ra) distinguished them from other people and reflected communications between them based on friendship and mutual courtesy. The leading personalities of the Companions (ra), who behaved according to the ethics of the Prophet (saw), could agree on the graceful act of forgiving one's brother even when he did not accept his brother's apology. Abu Bakr wanted to please his brother, whom he had angered, and did not want to harm their friendship. As for 'Umar, who was known for his temper, his anger did not diminish, so he could not accept his brother's previous apology. But subsequently he went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) himself and expressed his regret. What is more interesting is the ultimate attitude of Abu Bakr (ra). Because of his offensive behavior, which had angered 'Umar (ra), he told the Messenger of Allah (saw) that he was to blame and tried to minimize the incident.

This incident between Abu Bakr and 'Umar also indicates that the communications among the Companions (ra) had very different dimensions. Within their relations, which were on a completely human plane, love, respect, and friendship were bound to each other as much as anger, hurtfulness, resentment, and disagreement. It appears that even when they experienced ruptures in their relationships, they did not end their friendships, nor abandon love and devotion. It is possible to trace excellent examples of apologizing and forgiving in the behavior of these distinguished people.

Another of these pleasant disputes occurred between 'Umar and Asma' bint 'Umayy (ra), who had emigrated to Abyssinia,² the sister of Maymunah, one of the wives of the Messenger of Allah. Once when Asma' was with Hafsa (ra), another wife of the Prophet, 'Umar entered and asked, "Who is this?" When he received the answer, "Asma' bint 'Umayy," he said, "Is she from Abyssinia? Is she a woman of the sea (that is, who came by boat)?" Asma' replied, "Yes." Thereupon 'Umar (ra) said, "We preceded you in the Hijra. Therefore, in the presence of Allah we are more distinguished than you." He upset Asma' (ra) and she said with anger in her voice, "You are wrong 'Umar. No! By Allah! You had the privilege of being in the com-

² EU7/13, Ibn al-Athir, *Uddat al-ghaba*, VII, 13.

pany of the Messenger of Allah (saw) who fed the hungry among you and instructed the ignorant among you. Whereas we had been far (from here) in Abyssinia in enemy territory and that was all for Allah and Allah's Messenger. I swear by Allah that I will never take food nor water until I mention what you have said to Allah's Messenger. We remained in that country in constant torment and dread and I will talk about it to Allah's Messenger and ask him (about it). By Allah! I will not tell a lie and deviate (from the truth) and add anything to it."

While she was speaking, the Prophet (saw) arrived. Then Asma' (ra) said, "O Prophet of Allah! 'Umar said such and such," and she explained the situation to him. Allah's Messenger then resolved this quarrel between Asma' and 'Umar (ra) with the following words: *"His right is not more than yours, for him and his Companions there was one Hijra, but for you, that is, for the people of the boat, there were two Hijras."*³

This loyalty can be seen in fact among all the Companions (ra). Moreover, in the Noble Qur'an, Allah (swt) clearly states how the hostility which had existed between the tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj had been transformed into brotherhood, *"... you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace."*⁴

The best examples of the climate of affection and brotherhood among the Companions (ra) can be seen in the atmosphere of brotherhood which was created in Medina after the Hijra. In order to sincerely bind the Muslims in Medina to each other, our Master the Noble Messenger declared that the Muhajirun and Ansar were brothers.⁵ The Ansar took this sense of brotherhood so seriously that they went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and wanted to share their date groves with their emigrant brothers. Allah's Messenger did not, however, allow this. Instead he recommended that the product of the date groves be shared with them on condition that they look after the groves.⁶ Sa'd b. Rabi' (ra), the richest man in Medina, offered to share half his wealth with his emigrant brother 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf. 'Abd al-Rahman (ra) thanked him for such an exceptional sacrifice but did not accept it. He said that he preferred to earn his living through trade, and he set out for the Qaynuqa' market.⁷ Until the verse, *"We have appointed heirs for everything that parents and close relatives leave behind,"*⁸ was revealed, the Muhajirun had given preference to the Ansar over their relatives as heirs.⁹

³ M6411, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 169.

⁴ Al 'Imran, 3:103.

⁵ B2294, al-Bukhari, al-Kafala, 2.

⁶ B2325, al-Bukhari, al-Muzara'a, 5, B2630, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 35.

⁷ B2048, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 1, B5167, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 69.

⁸ Al-Nisa', 4:33.

⁹ B2292, al-Bukhari, al-Kafala, 2; D2922, Abu Da'ud, al-Fara'id, 16.

Sometimes the noble Companions (ra) joked and laughed among themselves about the need for sincerity among them. A year before the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr (ra) went to Busra to trade. Nu'ayman and Suwaybit b. Harmala, two Companions (ra) who had participated in the Battle of Badr, went with him. On the journey, Nu'ayman was in charge of provisions. Suwaybit b. Harmala was a man who liked to jest. While travelling, he said to Nu'ayman, "Give me something to eat." And Nu'ayman said, "Wait until Abu Bakr comes." Suwaybit said, "Then I will annoy you." Later they reached a settlement. Suwaybit said to those who were there, "Would you like to buy my slave?" They agreed. Suwaybit then tried to make Nu'ayman angry. He said to the people there, "The slave whom I am going to sell is talkative and will say, 'I am a free man.' If you are going to let him go when he says that to you, do not bother buying him."¹⁰ In this way Suwaybit made a joke by saying that he was going to sell Nu'ayman to these people. There are many other incidents like this which reveal the affection among the Companions (ra). Although the Companions (ra) joked with each other in order to strengthen their friendship and closeness, they never neglected to act responsibly when necessary. Whenever they were required to fulfill a duty or perform a service, they succeeded in do so in the best manner.¹¹

Despite the cordial relations among them, sometimes the Companions (ra) differed over various matters. In fact, the words of 'Umar (ra) related to a difference of opinion that arose over a matter that led to ritual uncleanness reveals this quite clearly: "You are the Companions of the Battle of Badr, yet you disagree. Those who come after you will disagree even more!"¹² It is understood from these words that it was natural for people, even the Companions (ra), to express different views. As a result of certain external factors independent of people, not to mention certain differences that they had from birth, it was inevitable that they would have differences over jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and politics. Even the Companions (ra) could not escape this. It is known that such differences were current even while the Messenger of Allah (saw) was alive. However, the Prophet's presence ensured that these differences would be quickly resolved and prevented them from taking root.

There were various reasons why these differences arose among the Companions (ra). For example, disagreements over understanding the

¹⁰ IM3719, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 24.

¹¹ EM266, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 102.

¹² MSh947, Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, al-Tahara, 106.

Sunna of the Messenger of Allah (saw) could come about from different observations. One day Sa'id b. Jubayr, who was a jurist (*faqih*) from the generation of the Tabi'un (those who came after the Companions (ra)), said, "I am surprised that the Companions had a difference of opinion about when the Messenger of Allah entered the state of *ihrām* (ritual purity) during the Hajj." He asked Ibn 'Abbas (ra) about this and he said, "In fact, I am the one who knows this matter best. Because the Messenger of Allah (saw) only made the Hajj once, people differed on this matter. The Messenger of Allah had set out on the Hajj. He performed a prayer of two *rak'as* at his mosque at Dhu al-Hulayfa. When he was finished he intended to continue the Hajj and in a loud voice made the *talbiya* (invocation made upon entering the state of ritual purity). Those who had heard him, remembered what they had heard. Then he mounted his camel and when it stood up he made a second *talbiya*. Some people also heard this. This was the cause of a difference of opinion. People used to come to him in groups and they heard him recite the *talbiya* when his camel stood up with him and so they said, 'The Messenger of Allah recited the *talbiya* when his camel stood up with him.' Later the Prophet continued onwards on his camel and when he reached the peak of al-Bayda' he said the *talbiya*. Some people heard this and said, 'The Messenger of Allah intends to start the Hajj at the peak of al-Bayda'.' I swear by Allah that he entered the state of ritual purity at the place where he had prayed, and he recited the *talbiya* at the place where his camel had stood up, and at the peak of al-Bayda'."¹³

While the Companions (ra) had differences of opinion, they did not accuse each other of lying. Because they all saw the Prophet (saw) recite the *talbiya*, they did not doubt what he had said. However, as Ibn 'Abbas (ra) explained, each group saw only part of what had happened. They were not able to get the full story. Therefore, each group explained what they had seen and held on to their perceptions as far as they had seen. Thus, different views emerged.

The Companions (ra) were ordinary people. Each had a different understanding and comprehension of events. They were aware of this. In particular, when the subject was the words of the blessed Messenger, they could not help correcting each other's mistakes. 'A'isha (ra), the mother of the believers and wife of the Prophet, was interested in religious knowledge and so heard many *ḥadīths* from the Messenger of Allah (saw) himself.

¹³ HM2358, Ibn Hanbal, I, 260; D1770, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasik, 21.

She became the authority on the subject of *ḥadīths*. One day she heard Ibn ‘Umar (ra) report a *ḥadīth* as follows: “The deceased will be punished for the crying of his family.”¹⁴ Without skipping a beat, she said, “May Allah forgive ‘Abd al-Rahman. Ibn ‘Umar did not speak the truth. He either forgot or made a mistake.” Then she explained the incident: “The Messenger of Allah encountered a Jewish funeral procession. The family of the deceased was weeping. Thereupon he said to them, *‘You are weeping here, but he is in his grave and being tormented (because of his sins).*’¹⁵ Hearing this criticism from ‘A’isha, Ibn ‘Umar (ra) admitted his error. He was speechless, not saying a thing.¹⁶ Ibn ‘Umar (ra), establishing a relationship between the weeping and the torment of the deceased, had mistakenly understood the Prophet’s words, *“You are weeping here, but he is in his grave and being tormented (because of his sins),”* to mean that weeping for the deceased would increase his torment.

Sometimes the different interpretations that arose among the Companions (ra) over the same *ḥadīth* resulted from hearing it differently. When Zayd b. Thabit, one of the recorders of the revelations, heard from Rafi‘ b. Khadij that the Messenger of Allah (saw) had forbidden the leasing of agricultural land,¹⁷ he asked Allah to forgive Rafi‘ and said, “By Allah! I have better knowledge of this *ḥadīth* than him.” Then he described the original incident, “Two members of the Ansar who had a dispute went to the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah listened to them and then said, *‘If your situation is such and such, then do not lease agricultural land.’*” Rafi‘ (ra) had only heard the words, *“do not lease agricultural land,”* and so was in error.¹⁸ As is the case with every person, one can be mistaken in what he hears. Thus a different view can arise.

Another reason for different opinions among the Companions (ra) was their different interpretations and evaluations. A word spoken by Allah’s Messenger (saw) could be understood differently according to the knowledge and perception of various Companions (ra). Immediately after the Battle of the Khandaq, the Messenger of Allah (saw) decided to march against the Banu Qurayza on the prompting of Jibril. He left behind the blind Companion Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) as his representative.¹⁹ In order to speed his Companions (ra) on their way, he gave them the following order: *“No one should perform the ‘asr prayer anywhere but in the land of the Banu Qurayza.”*²⁰

¹⁴ M2144, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 17.

¹⁵ MU559, al-Muwatta’, al-Jana’iz, 12; T1006, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jana’iz, 25

¹⁶ B1288, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 32.

¹⁷ M3945, Muslim, al-Buyu’, 113.

¹⁸ D3390, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 30; N3959, al-Nasa’i, al-Muzara’a 45; IM2461, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 10.

¹⁹ MSh36815, Ibn Abi Shayba, al-Musannaf, al-Maghazi, 28 HS4/192, Ibn Hisham, Sira, 4, 192.

²⁰ B4119, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 31.

Some of the Companions (ra) took the words of our Master the Prophet at face value and did not perform the 'asr prayer until they arrived in the land of the Banu Qurayza. Others, however, thought the Messenger of Allah (saw) used these words to speed them on their way, this being the ultimate purpose of what he said, and they performed the prayer anyway. Later when the Messenger of Allah (saw) learned of these two different actions he admonished neither group.²¹ Thus the Companions' understanding of the same words in different ways shows how different their ways of understanding and points of view were from each other. This was a human characteristic embedded in man's creation.

Just as they had different points of view, the Companions (ra) also differed in knowledge and the ability to comprehend. One day the Messenger of Allah (saw) noticed an unpleasant smell in the mosque and said to his Companions (ra), "*Wash before coming to Friday prayer.*"²² Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) concluded from these words of the Noble Messenger that everyone who went to Friday prayer had to wash beforehand.²³ As for the Companion Ibn 'Abbas (ra), who was a jurist, he took note of the purpose of these words and gave the following explanation: "At that time the people were poor and used to wear woolen clothes, and would carry loads on their backs. Their mosque was small and its roof was lowered down. It was a sort of arbor. The people perspired so profusely in their woolen clothes that an unpleasant odor emitted from them and it disturbed everyone. When the Messenger of Allah noticed it, he said, 'O people! When this day (Friday) comes, you should wash and every one should anoint himself with the best oil and perfume that he has.'" ²⁴ Thus Ibn 'Abbas, who took account of these words in their proper context, understood this *hadith* not as a command but as a recommendation encouraging people to come to the mosque when they were clean. Thus a difference of interpretation could also derive from this method of understanding.

In addition to those who, like Ibn 'Abbas (ra), tried to reach conclusions based on the words of the Prophet (saw), there were also Companions (ra) who tried to do only what the blessed Messenger said. The Prophet's dear friend Ibn 'Umar (ra) was a Companion who was careful to do literally what Allah's Messenger said. He heard the Prophet say, "*Don't sell fruit before it is ripe.*"²⁵ And he followed these words. However, Zayd b. Thabit (ra), the Companion who was a jurist, took note of the reason why these

²¹ B4119, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 31; M4602, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 69.

²² HM2419, Ibn Hanbal, I, 269.

²³ M1957, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 5; MA5305, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, III, 198.

²⁴ D353, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 128.

²⁵ M3862, Muslim, al-Buyu', 49.

words were uttered and clarified them. Previously people were selling fruit before it had ripened. However, when it was time to pay for the fruit after it had been collected, the customers argued with the seller saying that the fruit had been damaged, that it was picked raw and had become diseased. When this dispute intensified, the blessed Messenger gave them advice, that is, guidance, saying, “No! Don’t sell fruit before it is ripe.”²⁶ As is clear, therefore, Zayd b. Thabit, who understood the context of this *ḥadīth*, said that the statement that fruit should not be sold before it is ripe was not a ban but a recommendation. As for Ibn ‘Umar (ra), he was careful to obey the *ḥadīth* and not to do anything forbidden, so he made an effort to do what was said. He did not take into account the purpose for which the *ḥadīth* was said nor whether it was binding. Therefore a different opinion arose.

As time passes, the conditions of life differ. Circumstances and society change. The Beloved of Allah died. The Companions (ra) had to resolve the problems that they encountered themselves. The caliphs, who were the leaders of society, and the Companions (ra) who were jurists were the first to address these problems and they produced results appropriate to the changing conditions. Thus ‘Umar (ra), who took note of these conditions, did not share the conquered lands of Iraq as the Prophet (saw) had distributed lands in wartime. He left these lands in the hands of their owners, so that they could be a continuous source of wealth for future generations, and he taxed them.²⁷ This was because the conditions had changed, and the new policy would be more beneficial for the people. The fact that the Companions (ra) changed the breaking of the fast and the amount paid for the *zakāt* in parallel with the drop in prices also shows that they paid attention to these changes.²⁸ In this way, the Companions (ra) changed their opinions in light of different circumstances. This was another reason why different views appeared.

It was a day during the E’id al-Adha during the time of the Prophet (saw). Because of the holiday many poor people of the desert came to the city. The spirited Messenger who looked after the poor gave an order to his Companions (ra), “Set aside (store) enough of the meat of the sacrifice for three days and distribute the rest as charity (*ṣadaqa*).”²⁹ Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra), who knew of this order,³⁰ was once on campaign far from his country. When he returned from the campaign, a meal made from the meat of an

²⁶ D3372, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, 22.

²⁷ B3125, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 9.

²⁸ B1507, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 74; B1508, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 75.

²⁹ N4436, al-Nasa’i, al-Dahaya, 37; M5100, Muslim, al-Adahi, 26.

³⁰ HM11628, Ibn Hanbal, III, 63.

animal sacrificed for the feast was placed before him. Abu Sa'īd recalled the things that the Messenger of Allah (saw) had forbidden and reacted by saying, "Take this back. I won't eat it." Abu Sa'īd (ra) then departed. He went to Qatada, his maternal brother, and explained what had happened. Qatada (ra) told him that while he was on campaign the Prophet abolished this ban and gave permission to store as much meat as one wished.³¹ 'A'isha also said that this ruling was temporary and that the Messenger of Allah (saw) had established such a ban in order to satisfy the poor at that time.³² As can be seen, because of the increase in the number of poor people in Medina that year, the Prophet (saw) wanted to distribute the meat of the sacrifice to them. Later when the standard of living returned to normal, the ban was lifted. Abu Sa'īd (ra) had been unaware that the ban had been raised and thus what he reported was another cause of a difference of opinion.

Because the Companions (ra) were normal people, they differed from each other in character, understanding, experience, knowledge, and world view. Therefore it was normal for them to differ from each other, to a greater or lesser degree, in their views and attitudes concerning matters of jurisprudence, politics, and daily life. Moreover, neither Islam nor Allah's Messenger opposed their differences of opinion. This was because Islam was opposed to differences which were divisive and separated people. As for jurisprudence and Islamic doctrine, they were not a means of division, rather, they were a source of richness. When Ibn 'Abbas (ra) was asked, "Can you find in the book of Allah the rule that one third of what remains (from an inheritance) belongs to the mother?" Zayd b. Thabit (ra) said, "You are a man who gives your opinion and I am a man who gives my opinion."³³ Furthermore, after 'Umar (ra) stated his opinion about the inheritance of the grandfather, he said, "I have given an opinion about the inheritance of the grandfather. If you see fit, follow it,"³⁴ and "Or, you make your own opinion in the future."³⁵ This shows that it was normal for the Companions (ra) to have differences of opinion and not to deny them.

Among the Companions (ra) there were disagreements over jurisprudence and from time to time disputes over theology (*kalām*). 'A'isha (ra) said to Masruq, "If anyone tells you that Muhammad has seen his Lord (on the night of the Mi'raj), he is a liar, for Allah says, 'No vision can grasp Him.' And if anyone tells you that Muhammad has seen the Unseen, he

³¹ B5568, al-Bukhari, al-Adahi, 16; N4432, al-Nasa'i, al-Dahaya, 36.

³² B5570, al-Bukhari, al-Adahi, 16.

³³ DM2903, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 3.

³⁴ DM2943, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 12.

³⁵ DM2927, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 10.

is a liar, for Allah says, *'None has the knowledge of the Unseen but Allah.'*³⁶ Her views about fate could be interpreted within the context of the plague which occurred during the time of 'Umar. 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra), who had a reputation for justice, went to Syria in the seventeenth year of the Hijra to investigate the state of the people. When he came to the village of Sargh in the valley of Tabuk,³⁷ Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah (ra) and his commanders met with 'Umar and informed him that a terrible plague had begun to spread in Syria. The Caliph 'Umar (ra), who was fully aware of the gravity of his responsibility to his army, could not decide what to do and thought that the proper course would be to consult with the Companions (ra).

'Umar (ra) explained to them that plague had broken out in Syria and asked for their opinions about what to do. However, no agreement emerged. While some of the first Muhajirun said, "You set out on a mission. It would not be right to turn back," others said exactly the opposite, "The rest of the people and the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) are with you. It would not be right to knowingly take them where there is plague." Thus they had a difference of opinion. 'Umar (ra) then met with the Ansar, but they also had different opinions. So, hoping to find a resolution, he summoned those who were Muslims at the time of the conquest of Mecca and asked for their views.

Unlike the other groups, they reached an agreement and said, "May Allah protect you from preferring a place of calamity to a place of health,"³⁸ and "The plague is a calamity which destroys everything and we do not knowingly want to go there."³⁹ Afterwards, 'Umar (ra) had a clear idea of what to do and the next day declared that they would return to Medina. Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah (ra) then disapproved of his decision, saying, "Are you fleeing from divine fate?" 'Umar did not expect this disapproval from Abu 'Ubayda and answered him with the following words: "Yes. We are fleeing from divine fate to divine fate. What would you say? If you had camels and you happened to be down in a valley having two sides, one of them verdant and the other barren, would you not (be acting) according to divine fate if you grazed them on the verdant side or barren side?"⁴⁰ Thus 'Umar (ra) did what was necessary. Before making a decision, he listened to the different opinions of the Companions (ra) and, in consultation with them, came to a common mind without alienating them.

³⁶ B7380, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 4.

³⁷ TB2/485, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, II, 485; AU21/383, al-'Ayni, *Umdat al-qari*, XXI, 383.

³⁸ M5784, Muslim, al-Salam, 98.

³⁹ TB2/486, al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, II, 486.

⁴⁰ M5784, Muslim, al-Salam, 98; M5787, Muslim, al-Salam, 100; MA20159, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, XI, 147.

Political differences also appeared among the Companions (ra). It has been agreed that the first political differences began with the disputes related to government among the Banu Sa'ida after the death of Allah's Messenger, but political differences which provoked the tribal spirit also arose from time to time among the Companions (ra). While the Messenger of Allah (saw) was alive he prevented these differences from deepening. Such differences occurred among individuals and tribes. For instance, Abu Dharr once got into an argument with Bilal al-Habashi (ra).⁴¹ Because the latter's mother was black, Abu Dharr reproached him and hurt his feelings. When this incident reached the Messenger of Allah (saw), he said, "O Abu Dharr! Did you reproach him because of his mother? This means that you still have traces of the Jahiliyya period in you," and thus reprimanded Abu Dharr for his action. Subsequently, Abu Dharr (ra) fulfilled the commands of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to the latter and began to dress his slave in the same clothes that he himself wore.⁴²

One of the disputes that took place in early Muslim society was between the Ansar and Muhajirun. The Ansar and Muhajirun formed a single society. They set out with the Prophet on a campaign against the Banu Mustaliq. A youth from the Muhajirun jested continuously. While making a joke, this youth struck a youth from the Ansar on his back. The youth from the Ansar became angry at this. An argument broke out between them and each sought the assistance of his own tribe in a manner reminiscent of the customs in the Jahiliyya period. The Prophet (saw) heard them call for assistance and said, "What is the matter with these two that they are calling for help as if they were people of the Jahiliyya period? What is this?" The situation was explained to our Master and then said, "Stop this behavior! It is deplorable." In this way he made his Companions (ra) calm down.⁴³

While there was a dispute over whether someone from the tribe of al-Aws or al-Khazraj had slandered 'Aisha (ra) in the Incident of the Ifk, the strain that was experienced showed that there could also sometimes be very strong disagreements among the Companions (ra). Indeed, while this event was disputed, al-Aws and al-Khazraj, who claimed that the slanderer was not from among their tribes, rose up with the intention to fight each other. Then the two sides were mollified by the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was in the pulpit, and he calmed the situation.⁴⁴

⁴¹ AU1/329, al-'Ayni, 'Umdat al-qari, I, 329.

⁴² B30, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 22.

⁴³ B3518, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 8; T3315, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 63; M6582, Muslim, al-Birr, 62.

⁴⁴ B2661, al-Bukhari, al-Shahadat, 15; M7020, Muslim, al-Tawba, 56.

The criticisms that Abu Dharr al-Ghifari aimed directly against such persons as 'Uthman and Mu'awiya (ra) in the administration of the state were the clearest examples of their political differences. Abu Dharr thus became known as a dissident Companion. For instance, he argued in Syria with Mu'awiya who said that the verse, "[Prophet], tell those who hoard gold and silver instead of giving in Allah's cause that they will have a grievous punishment,"⁴⁵ was revealed concerning the People of the Book. He asserted that this verse was revealed for both the People of the Book and for the Muslims. Subsequently Mu'awiya complained to 'Uthman (ra) about him and he was summoned to Medina.⁴⁶

Abu Dharr (ra) also aroused people when he spoke against the rich saying that those who hoarded their wealth would be burned with stones heated in the fire of Hell.⁴⁷ He strongly opposed every explanation that was contrary to his opinion. In fact he even went so far as to strike those with whom he differed.⁴⁸ Because he continuously denounced the accumulation of wealth, people fled from him.⁴⁹ Thus, because of a related problem that arose in Medina, the Companions (ra), above all 'Uthman, were not pleased with his stance and finally he took 'Uthman's warning, "If you wish, go away (from the people)," and he settled in al-Rabadha.⁵⁰

Abu Dharr's hard stance came about as a reaction to the gradual enrichment of Muslims with each passing day, their luxury and extravagance, the weakening of relations between the rich and poor, in short, with the negative change in society with respect to social justice and solidarity. When his position received support from both the poor and those who were against the government, and acquired a political context, Mu'awiya and 'Uthman (ra) opposed him and wanted to silence him.

In fact, such political controversies began with the death of the Prophet, before Abu Dharr took his dissident stance. When the Prophet (saw) died, a group of people from Medina met in an arbor of the Banu Sa'ida. They began to discuss the view that Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) should be placed in charge of government. A group of Muhajirun, including Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra), joined them and they argued about who would be the leader. There were those from both groups who suggested that one or the other be chosen head of the community. 'Umar was worried that the disagreement over this would intensify and so he swore allegiance to Abu Bakr and resolved the issue.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:34.

⁴⁶ B1406, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 4.

⁴⁷ B1407, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 4; M2307, Muslim, al-Zakat, 35.

⁴⁸ HM453, Ibn Hanbal, I, 64.

⁴⁹ HM21782, Ibn Hanbal, V, 164.

⁵⁰ ST4/227, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, IV, 227.

⁵¹ B6830, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 31.

The differences which, over the years, resulted in political and military clashes, showed that such divisions, which occurred even among the Companions (ra), were part of human nature. This nature, which results from each person's own characteristics, such as his areas of interest, temperament, personality, assumptions, prejudices, comprehension and intelligence, and various factors derived from the environment in which he grew up, means that each person interprets events differently. All of these differences, be they juristic, theological, or political, reveal, in a way, the intellectual richness of man. In fact, the *ḥadīth* which announces the good news that differences among the community of believers was a blessing⁵² also indicates that the differences in juristic, intellectual, and legal matters were a form of richness and a form of ease for mankind. Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said, *"When a judge gives a ruling, he exercises his own judgement (according to his own ability). Subsequently, if he has made a sound decision, he will double his reward (in the next world). If, after exercising his own judgement, it subsequently appears that he made a mistake, he will gain one reward."*⁵³ This draws attention to the fact that these differences should be regarded as something normal.

The Companions of our Master the Prophet sometimes disagreed, argued over various issues, and expressed different opinions, but they considered their differences to be natural.⁵⁴ This was because Islam was against divisions and as Imam Malik said, "The differences among the scholars (theologians) are a mark of Allah's mercy on this community. Everyone complies with what he thinks is correct. Everyone is on the right path. Everyone is seeking Allah's pleasure."⁵⁵

⁵² CU1/182, Ibn al-Athir, *Jami' al-usul*, I, 182; KH1/64, al-Ajluni, *Kashf al-khafa'*, I, 64-65.

⁵³ M4487, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 15.

⁵⁴ DM2903, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 3; DM2943, al-Darimi, al-Fara'id, 12.

⁵⁵ KH1/66, al-Ajluni, *Kashf al-khafa'*, I, 66.

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