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AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR

(Uswatun Hasanah)

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AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR
(Uswatun Hasanah)

In Servitude – In Morals – In Manners
The Most Perfect Human Being
(Peace be upon Him)

Vol. 2

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“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much.” (al-Ahzab 33; 21)

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Last year when we were presenting the first volume of the book “An Excellent Exemplar” we said that “a sea cannot be crossed by swimming.”

The person who was presented as “*the best paradigm*” by the Lord cannot be finished by reading, either. Read, read, read ...

This is the true conduct ...

The esteemed personality of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) reflected in his entire life ...

The first volume included his exemplary life “in servitude, in morals, and in manners,” now in the second volume the Prophet’s “way of conveying his message, his discipline, and his dealings with others” are being thoroughly examined and analyzed.

Servitude is a matter related to a person’s inner world in particular... An attempt to understand the deep and special relationship between the Creator of the universe and His chosen Messenger to humanity ... Last year three young and distinguished scholars tried to achieve this goal. In addition to servitude, the morals and manners of this honorable Prophet were presented. Three young scholars pointed out the virtues, perfection, and excellence of his distinguished life so that they can be guiding lights in our lives...

This year we will learn about our Prophet (pbuh) through his social life and organize our lives by the standards obtained from his life.

Being the best in conveying the message of Islam ...

In this era of modern communications, place the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on your horizon and study him ... Listen to his incessant call from the time when he (pbuh) asked his wife Khadijah (r. anha) “*who is going to believe me?*” until the time when he asked his Companion in his farewell sermon “*have I conveyed the message? Dear Lord! Be my Witness.*” Pay attention to his most esteemed call, which did not cease even under the most



difficult circumstances and severest deprivation. Listen to and then look at yourself ! Look at your efforts, your attempts, your speech, your love, your heart, your ambitions... You have an excellent paradigm before you who said that *"It is better for you to help someone to convert to Islam than anything in this world."* In how many people have you helped to light the spark of the straight path? How many people's pain of disbelief have you felt in your heart? You have a Prophet who said *"O People! Say there is no god but Allah and save yourselves"* even when his uncle was chasing him and calling to people *"Do not believe him, he lost his mind."* Into how many people's ears have you whispered *"Say there is no god but Allah and save yourself"*? If the Prophet (pbuh) is presented to you as the Excellent Exemplar by your Lord and if he is your paradigm, then you should struggle to meet with him, identify yourself with him, and benefit from him...

That is not all...

There is discipline in the line... You will evaluate your personality according to the measures given by your honorable leader who said *"My Lord has disciplined me and how excellently He has disciplined me."* You will look into his method of training people and mold the future generations in accordance with it.

And interacting with others... The essential principles of social life... Allah's Messenger (pbuh) brought a new society out of a society which is called "ignorant" for they had forgotten merits of being a human. And this new society is called a "Muslim society." A society of peace, trust, security... A society of mercy... Islam has become more than abstract ideals and it moved from individuals to a tangible society. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) realized this in his own life... Then he took the people and molded them in a society. He built a society centered upon love and cooperation. Do contemporary Muslims have any concern about building a new society? Do they see that the stains from the age of ignorance have been smeared upon their time and do they feel the pain of how to get rid of such stains? They will look at the Prophet (pbuh)... Then they will find out how they will change their society and the principles of a healthy society among the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh)... And finally they will hold his hand and walk towards that society...

"An excellent exemplar 2" consists of such richness and vitality.

By presenting the second volume of *"An excellent exemplar"* Altinoluk

magazine takes a step in the completion of a believer's library.

What we would like to say is that we need to read about the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)... We need to read about him constantly, because he (pbuh) is the living Qur'an. Let's read the Qur'an, let's read about him...

Let's attend this year, too, this school where Prophet's esteemed personality is taught. And let's dedicate ourselves to reading the books talking about "the best man."

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the three scholars, i.e. Prof. Ömer Çelik, Assist. Prof. Mustafa Öztürk and Dr. Murat Kaya, who brought fair winds from that sacred climate for the last two years.

When we are leaving you with this wonderful book, we repeat our prayer that we made last year: "May our Lord honor us with the Companionship of the Messenger of Allah."

Amin!

ALTINOLUK



FOREWORD

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ
عَلَى رَسُولِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Endless praises are due to Allah the Almighty for giving Islam to His servants, for disciplining and appointing Muhammad Mustafa as His Messenger.

Peace and blessings be upon Muhammad Mustafa the Messenger and beloved servant of Allah the Almighty, who taught us the distinguished religion of Islam.

The believers' most important duty is to convey the message of Islam to the entire humanity; because the majority of people are in profound spiritual hunger and discontentment. And many others who could not find peace in any false religions and ideologies are either under the effects of negative indoctrination about Islam or totally unaware of its existence. If these people are not introduced to Islam, all believers who do not fulfill their task of conveying the message of Islam will be held responsible.

On the other hand it is not enough to take Islam to people and help them in their conversion. It is also very important to instruct the believers in the best way possible in order for our religion to give life to humanity. It is impossible to reach an advanced and prosperous society and to realize important achievements without a qualified education. In this context, Allah the Almighty presents our beloved Prophet (pbuh) to us as the excellent Exemplar –*Uswatun Hasanah*.

Early Muslim generations, which comprehended the true place of the Messenger of Allah in religion, tried to learn, copy, and live according to Prophet's words and actions. They were so exacting in this regard that they even recorded such information about the Prophet (pbuh) that might be considered very personal, e.g. how he walked, ate, drank, sat, had relations with



his family, etc. For instance when Umar (r.a.) heard the Prophet's saying that *"If anyone of you asks permission to enter thrice, and permission is not given, then he should return."* he stated his regret for not hearing it in person *"I must have been so busy with trade that I was deprived of this saying."* (Bukhari, Buyu', 9)

By this approach, some prophetic sayings, such as *"even if it is a single verse from me convey it to the people"* (Bukhari, Anbiya, 50) and *"May Allah lighten the faces of those who hear something from us and transmit it to the people as it is"* (Tirmidhi, Ilm, 7) played an encouraging role. Consequently, the sources about the life of the Prophet (pbuh) have been based upon safe and sound foundations since the earliest days of Islam.

It is of great joy for Muslims that every aspect of the Prophet's life has been recorded, because the possibility to obtain detailed and reliable information about the rest of the prophets (peace and blessings be upon them) is very small, if at all.

On the other hand believers of all ages have written many books about the life of the Prophet (pbuh). All efforts have aimed to know and understand him and to introduce him to other people, since it would be impossible to take someone as an example, if nothing is known about him.

We, too, began this work with that aim in mind. We thought about how we could tell people our about Prophet and whether we could make a contribution in this regard. Last year we dealt with some aspects of the Prophet's life under the title of *"An Excellent Exemplar (In Servitude, In Morals, and In Manners)"* and presented it to our readers through Altinoluk magazine. However conveying many more aspects of the Prophet's life requires writing many more books. We wrote the present book with the intention of contributing to help fill this gap. In this book we will examine the Prophet's way of conveying his message; his methods of teaching, training, and spiritually purification, his relations with others beginning with his family and his treatment of creation including other subjects which shall enlighten our way today.

We would like to thank everybody who supported and encouraged us in the writing of this book. We also would like to thank the executives of ILAM and academicians who helped to read and edit the present work.

We request from our Lord the Almighty to make this humble work beneficial for humanity and turn the efforts of those who have contributed in the preparation of this book into continuous charity (sadaqa jariyah).

Amin!

Wa min Allah i al-tawfiq

Prof. Ömer Çelik
Assist. Prof. Mustafa Öztürk
Dr. Murat Kaya





CHAPTER ONE

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE AND IN HIS CALLING

- I. THE PROPHET'S SENSITIVITY IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE AND IN HIS CALL
- II. THE PROPHET'S MANNER AND METHOD IN HIS CALL TO ISLAM
- III. THE PROPHET'S MEANS IN HIS CALL AND IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE
- IV. THE PROPHET'S EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES STANDING BEFORE HIS CALL





"Basmaşa mübarek kademîn rûy-i zemîne
Pâk etmez idi kimseyi hâk ile teyemmüm."

"Eğer mübârek ayağın yeryüzüne basmamış olsaydı,
toprak ile teyemmüm etmek kimseyi temiz kılmazdı."

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE AND IN HIS CALLING

“Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteously, and says, I am of those who bow in Islam?”

(Fussilat 41: 33)



Tabligh is the Arabic word for conveying the message of Islam and trying to convince people to live in accordance with the regulations of Islam. This sacred duty is defined by various terms in the Qur’an such as *da’wah* (invitation), *inzar* (warning), *wa’z* (admonition, sermon), and *nasiha* (advice). It is also widely known by the phrase “*amr bi’l ma’ruf nahy ani’l munkar* or commanding right (*ma’ruf*) and forbidding wrong (*munkar*).”

Ma’ruf is the term used for the matters approved and recommended by the Qur’an and the Prophet (pbuh); while *munkar* are the matters objected and prohibited by them. From this perspective, commanding *ma’ruf* means inviting to the faith and to obedience, whereas forbidding *munkar* means trying to get people to stay away from infidelity, disobedience, and all kinds of sins.

The invitation to Islam should be applied to everything Islam deals with. Passing Islamic principles, whether they are about this world or about the afterlife, to humanity is within the context of the call to Islam. Therefore the call to Islam possesses a great range in terms of application and audience.

Conveying the message of Islam, which was the primary duty of the prophets, is also one of the essential duties of the believers. Every Muslim is responsible for fulfilling this duty to the extent of their knowledge and in accordance with their position in society. They need to begin to perform this duty first from themselves and then to reach anybody that they can. This is expressed in the following verse:



“You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong...”¹ (Al-i Imran 3; 110) In another verse Allah the Almighty states this duty more clearly in the imperative voice:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.” (Al-i Imran 3; 104)

Anas (r.a.) speaks about the lofty states that the missionaries of Islam will attain in the Hereafter. One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Should I inform you about some people? They are neither prophets nor martyrs, but on the Day of Judgment prophets and martyrs will admire their state in the presence of Allah. They sit in thrones made from light and everybody knows them.” Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Who are they?” He responded:

“They are those who make the servants of Allah love Allah and make Allah love His servants. They walk around the earth as advisers and missionaries.” And I (Anas) said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We understood the part about what makes the servants of Allah love Allah. But how are we going to make Allah love His servants?” He replied:

يَأْمُرُونَهُمْ بِمَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ، وَيَنْهَوْنَهُمْ عَمَّا يُكْرَهُ اللَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَطَاعُوهُمْ
أَحَبَّهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

1. ¹ For English Translation Of The Verses, I Have Benefited From Shakir, M.H. (Trans.), *The Qur’an = [Al-Qur’An Al-hakīm]*, Elmhurst, N.Y.: Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, 1997; Pickthall, Marmaduke William, *The Meaning Of The Glorious Koran; An Explanatory Translation*, New York: Dorset Press, [1988?]; And Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, *The Glorious Qur’an Text, Translation And Commentary*, Mcgregor & Werner, 1946 (Translator)

“They command people what Allah likes and forbid them from what Allah dislikes. When people obey these (commands and prohibitions), Allah the Most Exalted loves them.” (Ali al-Muttaqi, III, 685-686; Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, I, 367; Haythami, I, 126)

The Qur'an describes conveying the message of Islam and inviting people to it as “the great endeavor.”

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

“So obey not the disbelievers, but strive against them herewith with a great endeavor.” (al-Furqan 25; 52) The phrase “جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا” (a great endeavor)” in the verse means to employ all kinds of means and resources in the path to convey the message of Allah. In fact striving for the sake of Allah by conveying His message is much more important and more rewarding than fighting against an enemy with weapons. Indeed Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) fulfilled his mission just by conveying the message of the Qur’an. Allah’s word was enough to fulfill the greatest endeavor and because of this, the message of Islam, which was planted in Mecca, soon spread all over the world.

In his following saying Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) emphasized that the call to Islam is a matter closely related to faith and explained the extent of everyone’s responsibility in this regard:

“...He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not enough strength to do it by hand, then he should correct it with his tongue, and if he has not enough strength to do it by tongue, (even) then he should abhor it in his heart, and that is the weakest state of faith.” (Muslim, Iman, 78)

Another issue which clearly shows the significance and necessity of conveying the message of Islam is the deplorable end stated in the Qur’an of those who abandon performing this duty. Allah the Almighty says:

“Those who hide the proofs and the guidance which We revealed, after We had made it clear in the Scripture: such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse. Except such of them as repent and amend and make manifest the truth. These it is toward whom I relent. I am the Relenting, the Most Merciful.” (al-Baqara 2; 159-160)



The Prophet (pbuh) explains this verse as follows:

“During the times when oppression had spread among the sons of Israel, people used give warning when they saw a person committing a sin; but the very next day they would not make that person’s evil a reason to prevent them sitting with him and benefitting from him. Thereupon Allah the Almighty likened their hearts to each other’s and said about them:

“Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith, by the tongue of David and of Jesus the son of Mary: because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they (usually) forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.” (al-Maida 5; 78-79)” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 5/7; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 20)

Sayyid Seyfullah addresses those who abstain from Allah’s path for worldly gains as follows:

Nân için medheyleme nâdânı nâdânlık budur

Hayber-i nefsin helâk et şâh-ı merdanlık budur!

“Do not praise the evil and ignorant just for a morsel of bread since this is the real ignorance

Beat your inner self which is as strong as Haibar castle so that you can be as brave as Ali (r.a.)”

Below is one of the cautionary statements of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in this context:

“By Allah in whose hand is my life you will either command the right and forbid the evil or Allah will send a torment upon you and the you pray but your prayer is not accepted.” (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 9)

If no one commands the right and forbids the wrong in a society, evil turns into a habit and people begin to see them as normal actions of their lives. If evil is not prevented in time, it becomes unpreventable. Right and wrong get mixed up and eventually people forget Allah the Most Exalted. And the result is a total destruction of that community. In order to be saved from such a pitiful end, it is necessary to pay attention to conveying the message of Islam.

One should not lose his hope while calling people to Islam and continue to perform his duty with patience and firmness. Because a believer’s

object is not to be anybody left in this world to whom the message of Islam has not reached. Allah the Almighty gives the people of *sabt* (*Sabbath*) as an example in this respect.

The residents of the town Ayka of the sons of Israel were fishing on Sabbath whereas they were required to worship and stop doing everything else. Interestingly the fish were swarming on the hunting closed day. It was like the animals were feeling they were not going to be touched. They were not coming to the ponds. Thus people were defeated by their greed and began to fish on Sabbath day.

A while later people divided into two groups. One group was constituted from violators of the hunting ban and the other one was formed from pious and benevolent people; however the latter was minority and they could not stop the rebellious ones. Eventually pious ones also divided into two groups. One group advised and did everything they could to turn people from the wrong path; but finally they lost their hope and left them alone. The other group which was consisted from very few people did not lose their hope, resisted all kinds of difficulties, and kept advising people. The former group tried to discourage the latter saying:

“Why do you exhaust yourselves in vain? Why do you warn them in vain?” However the latter group did not listen to them and maintained their efforts to show people the right path. This is described in a verse as follows:

“When some of them said: “why do you preach to a people whom Allah will destroy or visit with a terrible punishment?” The preachers said: “to discharge our duty to your Lord, and perchance they may fear him.” (al-Araf 7; 164)

Elmalılı interprets this verse saying: “It is obligatory for everyone to fulfill the duty of inviting people to the right path. Moreover losing hope is allowed under no circumstances. Therefore one should hope and expect that sinners find the right path no matter how great their sins are. The state of humanity constantly changes and destiny cannot be known before it actually takes place. What do you know maybe those who did not listen to your warnings until then will begin to listen and abstain from the sins? Even if they do not completely abstain from sinning maybe they will start staying away from the sins a little, which will ease their punishment in the Hereafter. Advising and conveying the message of Islam no matter what the circumstances are is better than giving it completely up. For giving the invitation to Islam up completely means closing up the gate of hope.



Evil, which does not face any resistance, would spread faster. Even if it would not be possible to clear the evil away completely, it should not be forgotten that slowing it down is also very important. (*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, IV, 2313)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) informs us that all deeds which do not seek the pleasure of Allah are invalid and useless. (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 21) Therefore conveying the message of Islam should also be done for the sake of Allah. Missionary activities done for worldly gains have no value in the presence of Allah the Almighty. Our Lord Almighty points out this matter in the Qur'an in the following verse:

اَتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

“Obey those who ask no reward of you (for themselves), and who have themselves received Guidance.” (Yasin 36; 21)

Prophets' and missionaries' sole duty has been to convey the message of Islam. This is stated in another verse:

“So obey Allah, and obey His Messenger: but if ye turn back, the duty of Our Messenger is but to proclaim (the Message) clearly and openly.” (al-Taghabun 64; 12)

The following advice of Luqman (pbuh) to his son clearly manifests how a missionary should act:

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا
أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

“O my dear son! Establish worship and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity, and persevere whatever may befall thee. Lo! That is of the steadfast heart of things.” (Luqman 31; 17)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) attached his heart only to his Almighty Creator and did everything he could to show people the way to Paradise and to the manifestation of Allah. He did all these just for the sake of our Lord the Almighty. Many exemplary incidents happened in prophet's life. Some of these incidents, which show his sensitivity in fulfilling his missionary task, will be presented in the following pages.

I. THE PROPHET'S SENSITIVITY IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE AND IN HIS CALL

“Yet it may be, if they believe not in this statement, that you (Muhammad) will torment your soul with grief over their footsteps.”

(al-Kahf 18; 6)

Allah the Almighty chose His Messenger (pbuh) amongst the human beings and charged him with conveying the message of Islam to His servants. In this regard our Prophet (pbuh) presented a unique example of patience and determination.

We see that the Prophet (pbuh) fulfilled his call in four stages:

1. His kinsmen
2. His tribe
3. The rest of the Arab tribes
4. The human beings and Jinn until the Judgment Day.

In other words, his prophethood advanced step by step from simple to more difficult tasks. The first Divine command began by the order **“Read.”** (al-Alaq 96; 1), then the task of conveying the message of Islam was given to the Prophet (pbuh):

“Arise and warn!” (al-Muddaththir 74; 2). The next order was

“And admonish your nearest Kinsmen...” (al-Shuara 26; 214). Later this task was extended to the entire city of the Prophet:

“Nor was thy Lord the one to destroy the townships until he had sent to its Centre a messenger, rehearsing to them Our Signs; nor are We go-



ing to destroy a population except when its members practice iniquity.”

(al-Qasas 28; 59)

The next stage was to encompass the neighboring cities into the call to Islam:

“And this is a book which we have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that you may warn the mother of cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this (book), and they are constant in guarding their Prayers.”

(al-An’am 6; 92)

And finally the limits were widened to the extent that embraces the whole of humanity:

“We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for the peoples.” (al-Anbiya 21; 107)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) completed perfectly all the steps of these stages and taught us how to perform our duty in the minutest detail. Allah the Almighty praises the sensitivity and fastidiousness of the prophets in conveying His message in the Qur’an as follows:

“(It is the practice of those) who preach the messages of Allah, and fear Him and fear none but Allah. And enough is Allah to call (men) to account.” (al-Ahzab 33; 39)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked his followers to fulfill this duty as meticulous as he did. Indeed, in his following saying he stated the importance of fulfilling this task no matter what the circumstances were: *“Even if it is a single verse from me convey it to the people”* (Bukhari, Anbiya, 50) Allah the Most Exalted also expresses in the Qur’an that those who believe, do righteous deeds, and invite people to the straight path are the ones who speak the most beautiful speech. (Fussilat 41; 33)

One day the Prophet (pbuh) stopped while he was walking with his Companions. Meaning Ali, (r.a.) he said that *“there are those amongst you who show the same effort and meticulousness in understanding and interpreting the Qur’an as I have done in receiving the revelation and conveying it to humanity.”* (Ibn Hanbal, III, 82) Thus, he also clearly pointed out a very significant service for those who would like to follow his traditions and take him as their most excellent exemplar. From the following prophetic supplication we un-



derstand how much the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) loves those who walk on this path:

نَضَرَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً سَمِعَ مِنَّا شَيْئًا فَبَلَّغَهُ كَمَا سَمِعَ،

“May Allah lighten the faces of those who hear something from us and then deliver it to others as it is.” In the following part of his supplication, he then explains the reason for insisting on conveying the message of Islam:

فَرُبَّ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْعَىٰ مِنْ سَامِعٍ

“There are those who understand the knowledge they receive better than those who brought that knowledge.” (Tirmidhi, Ilm, 7)

Due to his mercy and compassion for his ummah, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) strived to deliver the truth even to people living in farthest places, and endeavored to ensure their salvation. For this reason, he sent his Companions to various places as missionaries. When he (pbuh) was sending Ali (r.a.) on such a mission, he told Ali (r.a.):

“...by Allah, if one man is guided on the right path (i.e. converted to Islam) through you, it would be better for you than (a great number of) red camels.” (Bukhari, Ashab al-Nabi, 9)

Those who guide others to salvation will benefit from their good and spiritually rewarding lives. In this respect, the following prophetic saying conveys glad tidings for those who exert efforts in delivering the message of Islam:

“He who called (people) to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect.” (Muslim, Ilm, 16)

Ibn Abbas (r. anhum) says regarding Allah’s Messenger’s love and enthusiasm in conveying the revelation he received and the truth he learned from Allah the Almighty: “the Prophet (pbuh) wanted the whole of humanity to believe in his message and pledge their allegiance to him. Consequently, Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse:

“It may be that you torment yourself (O Muhammad) because they believe not. If We will, We can send down on them from the sky a portent





so that their necks would remain bowed before it.” (al-Shuara 26; 3-4) (Haythami, VII, 85)

While even a person’s conversion made the Prophet (pbuh) very happy, he was overwhelmed by sorry at the death of an unbeliever. It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira (r.a.) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to his uncle (at the time of his death):

“Make a profession of it that there is no god but Allah so I will bear testimony of your being a Muslim on the Day of Judgment.” His uncle Abu Talib said:

“Were it not the fear of Quraish blaming me and saying that it was the fear of approaching death that induced me to do so, I would have certainly delighted your eyes. It was then that Allah revealed:

“Verily you cannot guide to the right path whom you love. And it is Allah Who guides whom He will and He knows best who are the guided” (al-Qasas 28; 56)” (Muslim, Iman, 41-42)

Aisha (r.anha) narrated another incident about the Prophet’s efforts to deliver Islam’s message to people:

“Surah Abasa (Chapter 80) was revealed about Abdullah b. Umm Maktum. He came to the Prophet, pbuh, and began to say,

“O Messenger of Allah! Show me the straight path,” whilst one of the leading men of the idol worshippers was in audience with the Prophet (pbuh). Thus, he could not answer the Ibn Umm Maktum’s request. When Ibn Umm Maktum insisted, the Prophet (pbuh) began to turn away from him and give his attention to the other man, at which point he said to the man,

“Father of so-and-so, do you see any harm in what I am saying?” and the man replied “No, by the blood of our sacrifices I see no harm in what you are saying.” As a result of this incident the chapter Abasa was revealed. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 80; *Muwatta*, Qur’an, 8)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was so eager to guide a polytheist to the straight path that he received Divine reproach for not showing enough interest in a believer. According to the narration of Abu Huraira Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) described his and his followers’ state as follows:



“My example and the example of the people is that of a man who made a fire, and when it lighted what was around it, moths and other insects started falling into the fire. The man tried his best to prevent them from falling in the fire but they overpowered him and rushed into the fire. The Prophet added: Now, similarly, I take hold of the knots of your belts to prevent you from falling into the Fire, but you insist on falling into it.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 26)²

As stated in this tradition, in order to introduce himself and invite people to Islam the Prophet (pbuh) used to go to the fairs in Mecca during the season of pilgrimage. During these visits he would tell people that he was the Messenger of Allah and invite them to accept the unity of God and worship Him alone. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 492; Ibn Sa’d, I, 216) In the early years of his prophethood, he would walk around with the polytheistic tribes that had come to Mecca for the pilgrimage and tell of Islam to everyone he met without making any discrimination between poor and wealthy, weak and powerful, slave and free.

It was narrated by Jabir b. Abdullah (r.a.):

“The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) presented himself to the people at Arafat, saying:

“Is there any man who takes me to his people? The Quraish have prevented me from preaching the word of my Lord.” (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 19-20) Unfortunately, no one answered his request or offered their protection to the Messenger of Allah. On the contrary, some of them shunned him and treated him badly, while others argued with him saying: “your tribe knows you better. Why didn’t they accept your call?” Nevertheless, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) responded with patience to all their questions and continued to invite them to the right path. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 322; Ibn Sa’d, I, 216) Likewise, neither a polytheist nor an infidel could stop him from his mission. Polytheists sent a message to

2. The similitude of this prophetic statement was manifested in Khalid b. Sa’id’s conversion to Islam. It was a frightening dream that caused him to convert. One night he saw himself in his dream sitting by a fire. His father was trying to push him into the fire, but the Prophet (pbuh) caught him from his waist and saved him from falling. And he was scared very much. He thought that this dream had to be a true dream and he told his dream to Abu Bakr (r.a.). Abu Bakr said to him: “May your dream bring you the best. The Prophet (pbuh) is right over there. Go and submit yourself to him right away. If you submit yourself to him, convert to Islam, and be next to him, he will save you from falling into fire. Your father, on the other hand, will go to Hell.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became very happy for Khalid’s conversion. (Ibn Sa’d, IV, 94; Hakim, III, 277)



him through his uncle Abu Talib and asked him to give up his call and in return they offered him everything he could want, but Allah's Messenger (pbuh) refused this offer with the following magnificent response:

“Dear uncle! I would not have given up my mission even if they had put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand. Allah the Almighty will either spread His religion all over the world or I will die on the way.” He then became so sad that he began to weep. (Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil*, II, 64)

The Prophet would go to every door and invite people to Islam time and time again, while making use of every opportunity and never growing tired. He even invited his worst enemies to Islam several times. Mughira b. Shu'bah narrates one of his experiences related to this matter as follows:

“I and Abu Jahl met the Prophet while walking through the streets of Mecca. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told Abu Jahl:

“O Abu al-Hakam! Come and obey Allah and His Messenger so that I can pray to Allah for you.”

Abu Jahl replied:

“O Muhammad! Again you will talk against our idols and prohibit us from worshipping them, won't you? I swear that if I knew that you were talking the truth I would follow you.”

When the Prophet (pbuh) left, I turned to Abu Jahl and admitted that:

“By Allah I know that what he says is true.”

Later, Abu Jahl told people that his rejection of the Islamic faith was because of tribal pride and jealousy.” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, III, 113)

Below, Imam Busiri, may Allah have mercy upon his soul, explains how diseases of the heart prevent one seeing the truth:

قَدْ تُنْكِرُ الْعَيْنُ ضَوْءَ الشَّمْسِ مِنْ رَمَدٍ وَيُنْكِرُ
 الْفَمُّ طَعْمَ الْمَاءِ مِنْ سَقَمٍ

*“Sometimes the eye denies the Sun light because of conjunctivitis
 And mouth refuses the taste of water because of a malady.”*

One day the polytheists of Quraish, who could not stop the efforts of the Prophet (pbuh) to teach and deliver the Islamic call, asked of him:

“Leave criticizing us and our idols so that we too will leave you and your God alone.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“*Do you see that sun?*” When polytheists replied affirmatively, he told them:

“*Can I prevent you from benefiting from its light?*” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 92; Ibn Ishaq, 136)

Here Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) pointed out a very important aspect of Islam and likened it to the sun, which illuminates everywhere generously with its beams. It is such a light that enters into every house of a heart whose windows are open and nobody can prevent this. The more its windows are open, the more light it will let in.

Allah the Almighty sent Islam to enlighten His servants’ spiritual worlds just like He created the sun to lighten up the universe. Whatever sunlight means to an eye, the verses of the Qur’an have a similar relation to intellect and perception. If it is appropriate to refer to the sun as light, then it is much more suitable to call the Holy Qur’an light. (al-Taghabun 64; 8) The statements of the Prophet (pbuh) have been more powerful than the beams of the sun and his blessed existence was loftier than the sun. In fact Allah the Almighty describes the sun as a lamp, whereas He characterizes our Prophet (pbuh) “...as a **Lamp spreading Light.**” (al-Ahzab 33; 46) What we understand from this verse is that the attribute of illumination like a sun manifested itself most strongly in the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

It was the strength of his faith that motivated the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in his actions. He strove to enlighten people with the sun of Islam. Abdullah b. Jahsh (r.a.) took some captives during the Nahla expedition. One of them was Hakam b. Kaysan. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) invited Hakam to Islam and told him about the religion in detail by explaining continuously in order to dispell any doubts.

Umar (r.a.) got upset because of Hakam’s refusal to accept Islam in spite of all of the Prophet’s (pbuh) efforts and said:





“O Messenger of Allah! Why do you keep talking to this man? By Allah he will never become a Muslim. Let me kill him so he may go to Hell.” But the Prophet (pbuh) kept telling Hakam about Islam. Hakam asked:

“What is Islam?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) replied:

“Islam is to worship Allah alone and bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.” Hakam said:

“I accept Islam.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) turned to his Companions and said:

“If I were to do what you had said, he would now be in Hell.” (Ibn Sa’d, IV, 137-138; Waqidi, I, 15-16)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) would not belittle or despise anybody when inviting them to Islam. For instance, during the conquest of Haibar he taught Islam to a shepherd slave who was herding a Jewish man’s sheep, and guided him to find the straight path. (Ibn Hisham, III, 398)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not close the door of guidance on people like Umar b. Khattab, who had been coming to kill him, Ikrima b. Abu Jahl, who had done all kinds of enmities towards Muslims until the conquests of Mecca, Wahshi who had killed his uncle Hamza (r.a.), and even on Abu Sufyan’s wife Hind, who had mutilated Hamza’s martyred body and eaten his lung.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) sent one of his Companions to invite Wahshi, who had martyred his uncle Hamza, to Islam. Wahshi replied to the Prophet’s call by saying:

“O Muhammad! How can you invite me to Islam when you had stated Allah’s decree saying: **“Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for a just cause, nor commit fornication; and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the Penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled for him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy.”** (al-Furqan 25; 68-69) I have committed all those sins. How can salvation be possible for me?” Then Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse:



“Unless he, repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (al-Furqan 25; 70)

And Wahshi sent the following message:

“O Muhammad! These are very difficult conditions: repentance, belief, and doing good deeds... I may not be able to fulfill all of these conditions.” Then Allah the Exalted revealed another verse:

“Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with him; but he forgives anything else, to whom he pleases; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.” (al-Nisa 4; 48) When the Prophet (pbuh) informed Wahshi about the newly revealed verse, Wahshi sent another message:

“O Muhammad! I see that mercy comes from Allah’s will. I do not know whether He will forgive me or not. Is there anything else?” In conclusion the following verse was revealed:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls. Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (al-Zumar 39; 53)

After several trips of the messengers Wahshi found relief in this last verse and said:

“O Lord! How great Your Mercy is!” He then repented and converted to Islam together with some of his friends.

The Companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Is this mercy and forgiveness just for Wahshi or does it apply to all believers?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

“It is for all Muslims.” (Haythami, X, 214-215)

Imam Busiri describes the greatness of Allah’s mercy as follows:



يَا نَفْسُ لَا تَقْنَطِي مِنْ زَلَّةٍ عَظُمَتْ إِنَّ الْكِبَائِرَ فِي الْعُفْرَانِ كَاللَّمَمِ

“O my inner self! Do not despair since you had committed great sins; because great sins are little in the presence of the Most Benevolent!”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) even endeavored for the guidance of his fiercest enemies. He had no hesitation about going to everybody’s door to invite him to the Islamic faith. Asma (r. anha) narrated:

“One day after the conquest of Mecca Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was sitting in the mosque when Abu Bakr (r.a.) brought his father Abu Kuhafa to him. The Prophet (pbuh) told Abu Bakr:

“O Abu Bakr! Why did you bring your father here and make him tired. I could have gone to him.” Abu Bakr (r.a.) replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! It is more appropriate for him to come to you than for you to go to him.”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had Abu Kuhafa sit in front of him and then placed his hand on Abu Kuhafa’s heart and told him:

“O Abu Kuhafa! Accept Islam and reach salvation.” after which Abu Kuhafa proclaimed the *shahadah* and sincerely converted to Islam. (Ibn Sa’d, V, 451)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also wanted people to declare their faith as early as possible. Bara (r.a.) narrates:

“A man whose face was covered with an iron mask (i.e. clad in armor) came to the Prophet and asked,

“O Allah’s Apostle! Shall I fight or embrace Islam first?” The Prophet said,

“Embrace Islam first and then fight.” So he embraced Islam, and was martyred. Allah’s Apostle said,

“A Little work, but a great reward (He did very little after embracing Islam), but he will be rewarded in abundance).” (Bukhari, Jihad, 13)

One day Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) told a man: *“Embrace Islam.”* The man replied: “I do not feel willing to do that.” The Prophet (pbuh) told him:

“Embrace Islam even if you do not feel willing.” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 109)

This prophetic approach shows the significance of hurrying to submit to Islam. Allah’s Messenger would first invite the visiting delegates to Islam. Byzantium’s ambassador Tanuhi states:

“I came to the Messenger of Allah and sat in front of him. I presented him the Emperor’s letter. He took the letter and left there. Then he asked:

“Which tribe are you from?” I replied:

“I am from the *Tanuhians*.” Then he asked:

“Would not it be better if you embrace Islam or your ancestor Abraham’s religion?” I replied:

“I am an ambassador of my tribe and I also believe in their religion. I am not planning to change my religion until I go back to them.” Upon which Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) smiled and recited the verse:

“Verily you cannot guide to the right path whom you love. And it is Allah Who guides whom He will and He knows best who are the guided” (al-Qasas 28; 56)” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 442; IV, 75)

The Prophet’s sensitivity in this respect was adopted and followed to a profound extent by his Companions too. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) once sent Khatib b. Abi Baltaa to Muqawqis as his messenger. Muqawqis sent back some gifts, Mariya and her sister Sirin, to the Prophet. Khatib (r.a.) told the two sisters about Islam and encouraged them to embrace it. And they proclaimed their faith in Islam. (Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 212) They did not even wait to arrive at Medina to encounter the truth.

Teaching the requirements of Islam to new converts is among the primary responsibilities of believers. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would leave everything that occupied him and would first try to teach Islam to such people. Abu Rifa’a (r.a.) reported:

“I came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) when he was delivering a sermon, and I said:

“O Messenger of Allah, here is a stranger and he wants to learn about this religion. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) looked at me and stopped giving his sermon. Then he came to me, and he was given a chair. I think that its legs





were made of iron. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) sat in it and he began to teach me what Allah had taught him. He then went back to the pulpit for his sermon and completed his speech until the end.” (Muslim, Jumu’a, 60)

All of the battles of the Prophet (pbuh), without any exception, were to convey the message of Islam. This is why opposing parties had always been invited to embrace Islam before the fight began. During the siege of Haibar someone had tried to provoke the Jews to fight and told them many lies. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told his Companions:

“A devil had come to the Jewish people and said: “Muhammad is fighting with you just to seize your possessions from you.” Tell these people: “Proclaim that there is no god but Allah so that (by saying this formula) protect your lives and possessions. And your questioning in the Hereafter is upon Allah the Almighty.” The Jews were thus addressed. They responded: “By the Torah or the book of Moses we would neither do what you ask nor leave our religion.” (Waqidi, II, 653)

Allah’s Apostle did everything he could to clear up the misunderstandings about his message. He was also very sensitive in transmitting the revelation he received exactly as it was. Aisha (r. anha) said:

“If the Messenger of Allah had concealed something from the revelation he received, he would have concealed the following verse and she mentioned the thirty seventh verse from chapter al-Ahzab,³ which is about his marriage with Zainab and is criticizing his behavior.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33/9)

Again Aisha (r. anha) said:

“He who presumes that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) concealed anything from the Book of Allah fabricates the greatest lie against Allah, because Allah the Almighty says: **“O Messenger! Proclaim the (Message) which has been sent to you from your Lord. If you did not, you would not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission. And Allah will defend you from men**

3. ^{*} “Behold you did say to one who had received the Grace of Allah and your favor: Retain you (in wedlock) your wife, and fear Allah. But you did hide in your heart that which Allah was about to make manifest you did fear the people, But it is more fitting that you should fear Allah. Then when Zayd had dissolved (his marriage) with her, with the necessary (formality), We joined her in marriage to you: in order that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality their marriage) with them. And Allah’s command must be fulfilled.” (al-Ahzab 33; 37)

(who mean mischief); for Allah guides not those who reject the Faith.”

(al-Maida, 5; 67) (Muslim, Iman, 287)

When something about Islam was asked to the Messenger of Allah, he would either say *“I do not know,”* if there had been no revelation about the issue in question or he would wait for a revelation in order to solve the problem. He would not respond by giving his personal opinion or by making analogy. (Bukhari, I’tisam, 8)

On the other hand, he warned those who did not respond to people’s questions about which they had knowledge saying:

“If someone does not reply a question to which he knows the answer, he would be made to wear a bridle made from fire on the Day of Judgment.” (Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 3)

In the following lines witness how elegantly Jalal al-Din Rumi (q.s.) describes the sensitivity and patience with which the prophets conveyed their message to people:

“I grant indeed that ye have become stony and have put locks upon your ears and hearts; (But) we have nothing to do whether you accept our word or not: our business is to resign ourselves (to God) and fulfill His command. He has commanded us to perform this service. What we tell is His commands. They are not from us. We do not have this office of proclaimer (prophethood) from ourselves. We possess life only for the purpose of executing the command of God. If He had ordered us to sow in sand, we would have done it.

The prophet’s soul has no friend except God: he has nothing to do with the acceptance or rejection of (his message by) the people. The reward for delivering His messages comes from Him (God): we have become hateful and wear the aspect of enemies (to the people) for the Beloved’s sake. At this (Divine) Portal we are not weary, so that we should halt everywhere because of the distance of the way. Oppressed in heart and weary is that one (alone) who is in prison through being parted from the Friend. The Heart-ravisher and Desired One is present with us: amidst the largesse of His mercy our souls are giving thanks.” (Mathnawi, III, verses: 2926-2934)*⁴

4. * For The English Translation Of Mathnawi, I Have Benefited from *The Mathnawī Of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī, Edited From The Oldest Manuscripts Available, With Critical Notes, Translation & Commentary*, Ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, Konya Metropolitan Municipality, 2004





In conclusion, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) showed the utmost sensitivity and attention in receiving and delivering Allah's message to people. He perfectly fulfilled his mission. In his sermon at the farewell pilgrimage, he asked thrice: "*Have I delivered the message?*" and each time he got the affirmative response from his Companions. In the end, he took Allah as a witness for the people's answers, and so he showed the way how a Muslim should live until the end of his life.



II. THE PROPHET'S MANNER AND METHOD IN HIS CALL TO ISLAM

“*S*ay: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follow me - Glory be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters.”

(Yusuf 12; 108)



In order to be successful in conveying the message of Islam it should be well planned and programmed. Muslim missionaries have to apply the correct methods and approaches in order to reach their goals. If the method is wrong and so repels people, it may not be enough to achieve its goal. This is why the method of inviting a non-believer to Islam is a very important part of the mission. According to the following verse acting wisely and using moderate language in inviting people to Islam is required by Allah the Almighty:

“Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and Most Gracious: for thy Lord knows best, who have strayed from his path, and who receive guidance.” (al-Nahl 16; 125) “Wisdom” and “beautiful language” are very important for those who preach about Islam. Wisdom means being careful and perceptive in preaching, telling the truth, avoiding leading people to the wrong path, making the right decisions, and supporting the sermon with easily understandable arguments. Wisdom requires paying attention to an audience’s intellect, ability, and circumstances as well as delivering the message in an appropriate way.

“Beautiful preaching,” on the other hand, means to try to persuade the audience not only by convincing them through logical methods but also by appealing to their feelings. The command of **arguing with them in best ways** refers to the requirement of being serious in fulfilling the call to Islam. There-



fore, a Muslim preacher should speak beautifully and refrain from harsh and hurtful words and behavior. The mission of a preacher is to tell people what Islam is about and make people trust in his teachings. The rest is up to Allah.

This matter is expressed in the following verses:

“And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better, save with such of them as do wrong; and say: We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender.” (al-Ankabut 29; 46)

“Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follow me - Glory be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters.” (Yusuf 12; 108)

Perception is a characteristic distinguishing what is right and wrong. From the meaning of the above mentioned verses it can be understood that those who call to Islam should always act with perception and sure knowledge. Moreover, inviting people to Islam with sure knowledge is a special sign of following the Prophet (pbuh).

It should also be remembered that as a natural result of the passage of time following the Messenger of Allah’s death, it might be necessary to apply different methods, more suitable for the changed and improved conditions of the time. Applying such methods is not against the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh). On the contrary, it is one of the methods he practiced in his mission. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) never stuck to inflexible, frozen, and weary methods. This is why believers need to know in detail and follow meticulously all of the methods of invitation applied by the Prophet (pbuh). Here we believe that it would be helpful to present some of those methods to the Muslim preachers.

A. Starting From the Closest Relatives

One should start to fulfill the obligation of commanding the right and forbidding the wrong from himself; because it is impossible for the preachers who neglect themselves to become successful. Next comes the close relatives. Those who would like to make their call universally heard should comply with the rule of gradualism. They have to pass the circles around them one by one when preaching their message. For example, someone’s neighbors and relatives would accept his teachings more easily than those who are not close to

him. When the relatives and neighbors of those who accept the invitation are considered, it can be clearly perceived that by this method Islam can spread much more easily in the society. If someone's relatives do not support and help him, other people would find it difficult to trust and believe in his message.

On the other hand, one also needs his relatives' help in order to achieve success in his mission. This fact is emphasized in the Qur'an as follows:

“They said: O Shu'aib much of what you say we do not understand, in fact among us we see that you had no strength were it not for your family, we should certainly have stoned you; for you had among us no great position.” (Hud 11; 91)

When Lot (A.S.) became helpless in the face of the perversion of his people, he perceived the absence of his relatives to help him and said:

“Would that I had the power to resist you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support.” (Hud 11; 80)

After mentioning Lot's (A.S.) words, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) made the following explanation:

“May Allah have mercy upon Lot. He was taking refuge in a very strong support (His Lord)... As a blessing of his supplication Allah bestowed upon all the prophets after him relatives to support them.” (Ibn Hibban, XIV, 86)

On the other hand, Islam attaches special significance to maintaining and strengthening relations with relatives. Keeping in touch with relatives (*Sila-i Rahm*) is considered one of the greatest virtuous deeds. One is primarily responsible for himself and his relatives. Allah the Exalted states in the Qur'an:

“...Blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Decree of Allah. Than (the Brotherhood of) Believers and Muhajirs...” (al-Ahzab 33; 6)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who gave priority to charity and to helping those whom he was responsible for, also began from his relatives to awaken in them religious sentiment, which is more important. Allah the Almighty commands to protect ourselves and our relatives from the Hell fire in the Qur'an:

“O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones...” (al-Tahrim 66; 6)





In order to achieve this goal a Muslim should not cut his relation with his family even if they are against him or they are not very religious people. He should visit them as much as possible and keep his connections with them alive. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

"One who severs the tie of kinship would not enter Paradise." (Muslim, Birr, 19)

Those who preach about Islam should show similar closeness to their neighbors, with whom they are always together. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was even concerned about his non-Muslim neighbors and visited them when they were sick.

A young Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet and when he became sick, the Prophet went to visit him. He sat near his head and asked him to embrace Islam. The boy looked at his father, who was sitting there; the latter told him:

"Obey Abu al-Qasim" and the boy embraced Islam. The Prophet came out saying:

"Praises be to Allah Who saved the boy from the Hell-fire." (Bukhari, Janaiz, 80)

Thus a Muslim preacher should follow the prophetic customs and improve his relations with his close relatives even if they adhere to some false beliefs and incorrect actions. He should consider all means and take advantage of every opportunity in order to achieve his goal. We see this approach in the life of our beloved Prophet (pbuh). Ali (r.a.) said that:

"When the verse **"And admonish thy nearest Kinsmen."** (al-Shuara 26; 214) was revealed, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) called me and said:

"O Ali! Allah the Almighty commanded me to warn my nearest kinsmen. This made me worried. I know that whenever I try to tell them about my mission, I will face some unpleasant treatment. This is why I kept quiet for a while. Upon which Gabriel (A.S.) came to me and said:

"O Muhammad! If you do not fulfill what you are commanded, your Lord will punish you." O Ali! Prepare for us a meal and put some lamb meat in it. Also bring some milk in a cup. Then invite Abdul al-Muttalib's clan so that I can talk to them and convey to them the message that I have been ordered to."



Ali (r.a.) prepared the things that the Prophet (pbuh) had ordered and offered them to the guests. When Abu Lahab saw that such a small amount of food, which could only be enough for one person, satisfied forty people's hunger, he said:

"It is amazing. Your friend enchanted you with a great spell. Indeed we have never seen such a spell in our lives." He did not give the Prophet (pbuh) the opportunity to speak and everybody left.

Abu Lahab's words hurt the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) so much that he stayed quiet and did not speak in that gathering at all. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 159; Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil*, II, 62; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, III, 88-89; Yaqubi, II, 27)

However, he never stopped conducting his mission, ignoring all the obstacles he faced along the way. The very next day, after the above mentioned incident, he gathered his relatives together again and told them:

"All praises are due to Allah. I praise Him and ask help from Him. I believe in Him and trust in Him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is One and Only. He has no partners and there is none like Him. Of course, one who was sent to look for pasture would come back and tell a lie to his relatives. By Allah even if I tell lies to everybody in this world I would not do that to you. Even if I deceive all the people in this world, I could not deceive you. Allah is such a God that there is no god save Him.

By Allah you will die like going into a sleep. You will be resurrected like waking up from a sleep and be questioned for everything that you have done. You will see the reward for your good deeds and be punished for your evil deeds. The result of this is to live forever in Paradise or in Hell. You are the first people whom I warn.

O sons of Abdul al-Muttalib! By Allah I do not know anybody amongst the Arabs who brought something more superior to this world and the Hereafter than the thing that I have brought to you. I invite you to two words which are easy on the tongue but heavy on the balance of the Hereafter: to proclaim that there is no god but Allah and I am His servant and His Messenger. Allah the Almighty has commanded me to invite you to this.

O sons of Abdul al-Muttalib! I am sent as a Prophet to the whole of humanity in general and to you in particular. You have seen some of the miracles you have never seen before. Would you accept to be my helpers and brothers



on my mission and gain Paradise in return? Which one of you would pledge allegiance to me?"

Not only did everybody refuse the Prophet's invitation but they also laughed and scoffed at him. And then they left. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 159; Ibn Sa'd, I, 187; Haythami, VIII, 302; Baladhuri, I, 119)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) continued to warn his relatives. He did not pay attention to their mockery and insults. One day he (pbuh) set off until he climbed Safa hill and called the tribes of Quraish loudly:

"Be on your guard!" They said:

"Who is it calling out load?" They said:

"Muhammad." They gathered round him, and he said:

"If I were to inform you that there were horsemen emerging out of the foot of this mountain, would you believe me?" They said:

"We have not experienced any lie from you." He said:

"Well, I am a warner to you before a severe torment. Allah the Almighty ordered to me to warn my closest kinsmen. I will be able to help you neither in this world nor in the Hereafter unless you say "There is no god but Allah."

Abu Lahab then began to curse and shout, and even picked up a rock to throw at him. (Muslim, Iman, 355; Ibn Sa'd, I, 200; Diyarbekri, I, 288) But the Prophet (pbuh) kept preaching Allah's message and fulfilling his responsibility of prophethood. He called every tribe by its name saying:

"O Bani Abd Munaf! Buy yourselves from Allah; O Bani Abdul-Muttalib! Buy yourselves from Allah; O mother of Az-Zubair bin Al-Awwam, the aunt of Allah's Apostle, and O Fatima bint Muhammad! Buy yourselves from Allah, for I cannot defend you before Allah. You can ask me from my property as much as you like." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 13-14; Muslim, Iman, 348-353)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sometimes similarly admonished his close relatives, especially his daughter Fatimah, in the following years. We also know that Fatima's childhood was spent during the weakest years of Islam when Muslims were oppressed the most. Fatimah (r. anha) had to bear as much hardship as her father and other Muslims were facing. When her father delivered his message to people, she either waited for him out of concern or followed

him in order to protect him. One day the Prophet (pbuh) went to the Ka'bah and was talking to people about Islam. However, people did not listen to him and on the contrary attacked him with all kinds of weapons. Fatimah (r. anha), who was watching this scene from a corner, was left horrified and took her bleeding father back home after people left to tend to his wounds.

On another occasion when Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was prostrated and praying in the mosque, polytheists put camel intestines on his back and made fun of him, Fatimah (r. anha) picked up the intestines and threw them away before taking her father home. When her mother Khadijah (r. anha) passed away, she helped her father together with her sisters, shared in his sufferings and feeling his pain. Fatimah (r. anha) cleaned his wounds while Zainab (r. anha) carried water to her. Despite all these hardships Allah's Messenger (pbuh) began to convey his message to them first and asked them to be prepared for the Hereafter.

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) started his mission under such hard conditions, and there were only a handful of people amongst his relatives that supported him. Furthermore, there were those amongst his relatives who had not embraced Islam until after the conquest of Mecca, and there were even those who were never honored by Islam. Nevertheless, his mission required him to begin with his relatives and he fulfilled this requirement perfectly.

B. Paying Attention to Time and Place

Öğren lisân-ı asr ü rüsûm-i zemâneyi

Bak tab-ı nâsa vakte münâsîp tekellüm et⁵

Şeyhülislam Muhammed Es'ad

One should take circumstances and possibilities into consideration provided that they are not contrary to the basic principles and spirit of Islam. Time and place play a very important role in having a positive effect upon the listener. Watching for people's most appropriate time and choosing the most suitable place have certainly an accelerating effect upon achieving a goal. Otherwise, a preacher would cause boredom, opposition, and antagonism in his listener, and he may even eventually become a shield between his audience and the Divine truth. Conveying a message at an appropriate time and place

5. Learn the manners and styles of your time very well. Speak in accordance with the right time by taking people's natures and tendencies into consideration.



generates positive and effective results while words spoken out of place and time may end up causing the listener to dislike and reject them.

In this context poet Ziyâ Paşa's warning is very meaningful:

Bir yerde ki yok nağmeni takdîr edecek gûş

Tazyî-i nefes eyleme, tebdîl-i mekân et!

"If somewhere there is no ear to value what you say, do not waste your breaths. Change your place (and find those who would appreciate your words.)"

Therefore preachers should primarily determine the conditions of their time and place, and then they should plan accordingly. An ill-timed beginning may end up in failure. This was why when Abu Dhar (r.a.), who had just embraced Islam, asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! What would you command me to do?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told him:

"O Abu Dhar! Keep your conversion to Islam as a secret and go back to your town. And whenever you hear me calling people openly to Islam, come back to us." (Bukhari, Manaqib, 6)

The following incident narrated by Aisha (r. anha) shows how careful the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was about observing the best time and place when performing his mission.

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told me:

"Do you know that when your people (Quraish) rebuilt the Ka'ba, they decreased it from its original foundation laid by Abraham?" I said,

"O Allah's Apostle! Why don't you rebuild it on its original foundation laid by Abraham?" He replied:

"Were it not for the fact that your people are close to the pre-Islamic Age of Ignorance (i.e. they have recently become Muslims) I would have done so" (Bukhari, Hajj, 42)

Time is also very important when taking a stand against the opponents of the mission. Farwa b. Musaik (r.a.) said that:

"One day I asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Should I get together with the believers of my tribe and fight against the non-believers?” He allowed me to do it and appointed me as the leader of my tribe to fulfill this task. When I left Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“What happened to the Gutaifi man?” after he was told that I had left, he sent someone to me and called me back. When I arrived, I saw that he was with some of his Companions. The Prophet (pbuh) told me:

“Invite your people to Islam. Accept the conversion of those who accept Islam, but do not be hasty in fighting against those who refuse. Wait until I send you another order.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 34/1)

During the Meccan period Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) abstained from impulsive behavior and actions which did not bear results in his fight against idolatry. He first invited people to accept the principles of faith thus he primarily strived to establish a strong basis for the Islamic faith.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to take the time and place into consideration when educating and bettering believers. Abu Wail (r.a.) narrates:

“Abdullah b. Mas’ud (r.a.) used to give a religious talk to the people every Thursday. Once a man said:

“O Aba Abdur-Rahman! (By Allah) I wish you could preach to us daily.” He replied,

“The only thing which prevents me from doing so, is that would I hate to bore you, and no doubt I take your interests into account when in preaching by selecting a suitable time just as the Prophet used to do with us, for fear of making us bored.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 11-12)

It is necessary to be brief and terse in speech not to bore the audience and not to upset those who have urgent things to do. A preacher should not be too persistent and cause his listeners animosity.

Again Abu Wa’il (r.a.) reported:

Ammar delivered a sermon to us which was short and eloquent. When he descended (from the pulpit) we said to him:



O Abd al-Yaqzan! You have delivered a short and eloquent sermon. Would it not have been better had you lengthened it? He said: I have heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say:

“The lengthening of prayer by a man and the shortning of the sermon is the sign of his understanding (of faith). So lengthen the prayer and shorten the sermon, for there is charm (in precise) expression.” (Muslim, Jumu’a, 47)

In another narration Ikrima (r.a.) said that:

“Ibn Abbas (r. anhum) said, “Preach to the people once a week on Fridays, and if you won’t, then preach to them twice, but if you want to preach more, then let it be three times a week only, so as not to make the people fed-up with the Qur’an. If you come to some people who are engaged in talk, don’t start interrupting their talk by preaching, lest you should cause them boredom. You should rather keep quiet, and if they ask you, then preach to them at a time when they are eager to hear what you have to say. And avoid the use of rhymed prose in invocation for I noticed that Allah’s Apostle and his Companions always avoided it.” (Bukhari, Daawat, 20)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) paid the utmost attention to time and place in conveying his message. Sometimes he made explanations when he was asked a question; sometimes he prepared his audience by using salient language in his speech when he was going to teach something important. Thus his speeches were not just common words forgotten the very next day but they have become valuable instructions and unforgettable beautiful memories left to his followers.

As can be appreciated, observing the best time and place is of the utmost significance in conveying the message of Islam. This is why a preacher of Islam should always look for the most appropriate time and place in order to fulfill his responsibilities properly.

C. Observing the Circumstances of the Audience

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) neither feared anybody nor gave in to the oppressions of the polytheists of Quraish in his mission. Rather, he invited people to Islam day and night, openly and secretly, and applied all possible methods and treated people according to their status while performing his mission. He

paid attention to people's level of intellect, social status, life styles, tendencies and expectations as much as possible.

In order to achieve the objective in preaching one should know of the audience's circumstances just as much as he should have solid knowledge in how to preach. Knowledge about an audience is necessary and important just like a doctor's knowledge about his patients. Otherwise it would be like writing prescriptions without knowing what was wrong with the patient. This is why in the Qur'an Allah the Almighty emphasizes the significance of acting in accordance with the polytheists' state of mind:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

“Revile not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance...” (al-An'am 6; 108)

This verse attracts our attention to the possible adverse effects of taking an aggressive stance towards the audiences' beliefs and ideologies, and it commands us to avoid such an attitude.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) knew his addressee very well and chose the most appropriate way to approach them. He talked to people in a way they could understand and corresponding to their intellectual level. He advised his Companions to do the same. Muhammad b. Atiyya, who came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) along with the delegates of Sa'd b. Bakr, elucidated the Prophet's practice in this matter saying: "Allah's Messenger (pbuh) talked to us in our dialect." (Hakim, IV, 363) The following saying of Ali (r.a.) also enlightens us in this respect:

“Talk to people according to their level of comprehension.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 49)

Preaching done by someone who is not aware of the common problems of his society will never be successful. This is why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) always gave his examples from matters about which his listeners knew and were interested in. He paid special attention not to confront his audience with a totally unknown world and with an issue which they could not comprehend. He talked to people in a simple and understandable language and convinced them by easily acceptable, yet effective ways. A good example of this can be seen in the conversion of Husain, father of Imran (r.a.):



“People from Quraish came to Husain whom they greatly respected and said:

“Talk to this man for us. He criticizes and talks against our gods.” So they went together to the Prophet (pbuh) to discuss the issue. Polytheists sat close to the door and Husain entered. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Make some space for the old man.” Husain’s Muslim son Imran and his friends were in the gathering. Husain told the Prophet (pbuh):

“What is it that we hear from you? You refuse our gods and talk against them; whereas your father was an intelligent and nice man, who was devoted to his ancestors’ religion.”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked him:

“O Husain! How many gods do you worship?” He replied:

“Seven on the earth and one in the sky, eight in total” Allah’s Apostle asked again:

“When something happens to you, to which one of them do you pray?” He said:

“To the one in the sky.” He (the Prophet) asked:

“When something happens to your property to whom do you pray?” He gave the same response:

“To the one in the sky” Then the Prophet (pbuh) asked him:

“Even though only one of them answers your prayers, why do you attribute partners to Him? Do you think you make them contented by your praises or are you afraid that they can destroy you?” He replied:

“For neither of these two reasons” (In this part of the narration) Husain added:

“Just then I realized that I have never talked to someone like him.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“O Husain! Accept Islam and save yourself.” When Husain asked:

“I have my relatives and people from my tribe with me. What should I tell them?” The Prophet (pbuh) told him:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَهْدِيكَ لِأَرْشِدِ أَمْرِي وَزِدْنِي عِلْمًا يَنْفَعُنِي

“Say: O Allah! I ask for guidance from You to perfect my task. Increase my knowledge which will benefit me.” Husain made this prayer for a while and then converted to Islam. Imran (r.a.) stood up and kissed his father’s head, hands, and feet out of happiness. When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) saw this scene, he was moved so much that he began shedding tears. He said:

“I cry for what Imran just did. He did not stand up when his unbelieving father entered the room. He did not even look at his face. But as soon as he converted to Islam he fulfilled his responsibility/duty towards his father. This is why I was moved so much.” When Husain wanted to leave, the Prophet (pbuh) turned to his Companions and told them:

“Stand up and see him to his house.” When the polytheists from Quraish saw him coming out along with a big crowd they said:

“Husain also abandoned his religion” and they left without talking to him. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, I, 337; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 69)

Another striking example for treating the listeners’ according to their circumstances happened during the conquest of Mecca. Abbas (r.a.) brought Abu Sufyan, who had accepted to convert to Islam, to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh). So he embraced Islam at Marr al-Zahran.

Abbas (r.a.) said to the Prophet (pbuh):

“Apostle of Allah, Abu Sufyan is a man who likes taking pride, if you do something for him.” He replied:

“Yes, you are right. (Announce to people when entering into the city that) he who enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe, and he who closes his door (and does not come out) is safe.” (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 24-35)

Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) treated the leader of Mecca in a manner that was pleasing to him and his heart warmed to Islam.

Similarly the Prophet’s approach to Wail b. Hujr a Yemenite ruler is also an appropriate example for this context. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had informed his Companions that Wail was coming to Medina three days before his arrival and said:





“Obeying Allah and His Messenger, Wail b. Hujr is coming from Hadramawt, from a faraway place. He is from a lineage of kings.” Then Wail b. Hujr approached and greeted the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) responded his greetings.

Wail said:

“I came here longing for Islam and migration.” Allah’s Messenger told him:

“Greetings and welcome” and then took off his cloak and laid it down. They sat together on the cloak. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was very happy with Wail’s visit and asked the Muslims to gather in the mosque. When believers gathered in the mosque, he went to the pulpit and took Wail with him. After saying his praises to Allah and praying for the prophets, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gave a sermon and prayed for Wail and his father Hujr. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 349; Haythami, IX, 374)

The Prophet’s warmth towards and different treatment of Wail was due to his high status amongst his people which might have encouraged the conversion of others.

Likewise, treating people according to their conditions was applied to those who had already embraced Islam so as to improve their spiritual state. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) observed the state of the people whom he was addressing them talking about Islam and he also answered people’s questions according to their circumstances. He followed methods proper to his audience. For instance, the Prophet (pbuh) answered the question of “Which is the best deed?” saying:

“To believe in Allah and His Apostle then to participate in Jihad in Allah’s way and then to perform Hajj-Mabrur” (Bukhari, Hajj, 4)

“Remembrance (dhikr) of Allah the Almighty” (Muwatta, Qur’an, 24)

“...to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah.” (Abu Dawud, Sunna, 2)

“Ritual prayer” (Ibn majah, Tahara, 4)

“Serving one’s parents” (Ibn Athir, Usd al-Ghabah, IV, 330)



“Migration” (Nasai, Bay’a, 14). Thus, he gave different answer to the same question according to the time and the state of the enquirer. He gave them advice that best fit their situations. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) analyzed his audience’s needs, means, and state and then followed the best approach. When Abu Huraira (r.a.), who was a poor Companion, asked:

“What form of sadaqah is best?” He replied:

“For those who are poor, it is to help people by their power and strength.” (Abu Dawud, Zakat, 40) However, when the same question was asked by Sa’d b. Ubada, who was a tribal leader, he said:

“Water (is best). He dug a well.” (Abu Dawud, Zakat, 41)

It is nothing but natural to have a different approach depending on the person since people’s natures and status vary. This is why a preacher should have the knowledge, culture, and emotional sensitivity to be able to analyze people’s spiritual state, ability, and character.

D. Observing Gradualism

Gradual legislation of religious responsibilities is one of the ways in which Allah has facilitated them for His servants. Allah the Almighty says in the Qur’an:

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا

“(It is) a Quran which we have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that you may recite it to men at intervals: we have revealed it by stages.” (al-Isra 17; 106)

Aisha (r. anha) talks about the gradualness in the Qur’anic legislation saying:

“The first revealed chapter of the Qur’an was one of the Mufasssal⁶ chapters. Paradise and Hell was described in that chapter. Regulations about the lawful and the unlawful started to be revealed after people warmed to Islam.

6. According to the preferred interpretation, *mufasssal* chapters are the ones starting with chapter Qaf (50th chapter) until the end of the Qur’an. Because these chapters are short and thus they are frequently separated by *basmalah*, they are called as *mufasssal*.



If the command of “do not consume alcoholic beverages” had been revealed first, people would have said “we will never give it up.” Similarly, if the order of “do not fornicate” had been revealed first, people would have said “we will never give it up.” When I was a little girl playing in Mecca, Muhammad (pbuh) received verses (about faith and the Day of Judgment) such as:

“Nay, the Hour (of Judgment) is the time promised them (for their full recompense): and that Hour will be most grievous and most bitter.” (al-Qamar 54; 46) Chapters like Baqara and Nisa (which contain verses related to daily transactions) were revealed when I was with him (the Prophet) in Medina.” (Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 6)

As it is known the earliest revelations were about matters related to faith such as belief in the Oneness and Unity of Allah, giving believers the good news of Paradise and warning unbelievers and the disobedient about the Hell. After people learned such issues and strengthened their faith, verses related to daily matters began to be revealed. Since people are so accustomed to their habits, they cannot easily give them up, and trying to save people from their bad habits without paying attention to gradualism may cause negative reactions and alienation.

Even the earliest revelations about faith possessed stages. The first verses to be revealed were about the Islamic faith, then verses criticizing polytheist beliefs came later. Ibn Sa’d points out this issue as follows:

“Until Allah the Almighty told the people of Quraish that their idols were false and that their unbelieving ancestors had gone to Hell, they were just mocking. At that time, they listened to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and many weak members of their society converted to Islam and their numbers, decreased. Moreover, when the verses criticizing their beliefs their opposition to the Prophet toughened and they began to show enmity.” (*Tabaqat*, I, 99)

Gradualness was also observed in the Medinan revelations addressing the believers. Especially since this was the method applied in almost all issues like correcting old habits and establishing new rules and regulations. For instance, this was the method applied in declaring ritual prayer, fasting and almsgiving that were obligatory upon believers or this was the method applied in prohibiting alcohol, fornication and usury. Let’s elucidate some of these regulations below by giving examples:

Two sets of ritual prayer, one in the morning and one in the evening, had been declared obligatory in chapter al-Muddaththir (74) in the early years of the revelation. Afterwards, the night prayer was ordered in the beginning verses of chapter Muzzammil (73) and Muslims performed the night prayer for about a year as an obligatory act of worship. This obligation was reduced to supererogatory status by the last verse of the same surah. Five daily prayers were declared obligatory in the eleventh year of the Prophet's mission. Until the Migration these prayers consisted of only two cycles for both travelers and residents, but after migration they were increased to four cycles for residents and continued to be two cycles for travelers. During migration Friday prayer was made obligatory and later holiday prayers were ordered. (Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî, p. 58-65)

When various verses and prophetic traditions are examined, we can see that this important act of worship was declared obligatory in three stages. First with the verse “**...Fasting is prescribed for you...**” (al-Baqarah 2; 183) fasting three days a month were ordered. In the 184th verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2) feeding a person in need was allowed for those who wished not to fast and finally with the 185th verse of the same chapter all of the above were abrogated and fasting in the month of Ramadan was announced obligatory for everyone. (Jassas, I, 226-227)

The prohibition of alcohol took place according to the following stages:

1. In Mecca the following verse had been revealed “**And of the fruits of the date-palm, and grapes, whence you derive strong drink and (also) good nourishment. Lo! Therein is indeed a portent for people who have sense.**” (al-Nahl 16; 67) In this verse it was stated that people extract alcoholic drinks and good nourishment from dates and grapes. Thus, people were made feel that alcoholic drinks were different than good nourishment and they are not considered good and acceptable. Here there was an implication that they were going to be banned. There was no other revelation about alcoholic drinks during the Meccan period.

2. After Allah's Messenger (pbuh) migrated to Medina, Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse in answer to people's questions: “**They question you about strong drink and games of chance. Say: in both is great sin, and (some) utility for men; but the sin of them is greater than**



their usefulness...” (al-Baqarah 2; 219) After this verse’s revelation many Muslims gave up alcohol, while some others continued to drink.

3. While a Companion was leading the *maghrib* (evening) prayer, he made a mistake in his recitation and changed the meaning of the verse. As a result of which, the following verse was revealed:

“O you who believe! Draw not near unto prayer when you are drunken, till you know that which you utter...” (al-Nisa 4; 43) .

After this the number of believers who were consuming alcohol decreased significantly. A caller of the Prophet (pbuh) used to announce when they were about to pray: “those who are drunk must not come close to the prayer.” With this verse believers realized that alcohol was soon to be prohibited and so they were prepared for such a prohibition.

4. Finally, most of the believers gave up alcoholic drinks. Some of them were suffering from the unpleasant side effects of consuming alcohol. Umar (r.a.) prayed to Allah by saying “O Allah! Send us a clear and certain ruling about alcohol,” upon which Allah the Almighty revealed the last verses relating to this matter:

“O you who believe intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, of Satan’s handywork: eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper. Satan’s plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will you not then abstain?” (al-Maidah 5; 90-91)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) called Umar (r.a.) and recited those verses. When the Prophet (pbuh) came to the part **“will you not then abstain?”** Umar (r.a.) said:

“Yes, O Lord, we abstain, we abstain.” Not just him, but rest of the believers was also repeating the same words. After the revelation of those verses, a town crier walked around Medina announcing by the order of the Prophet (pbuh):

“Beware! Alcohol is prohibited.” Alcohol flowing from pierced water-skins and broken jars flooded the streets.

Then the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“God’s curse falls on a group of people who deal with alcohol. The one who distils it, the one for whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to whom it has been brought, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who utilizes money from it, the one who buys it and the one who buys it for someone else.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 53; II, 351; Nasai, Ashriba, 1-2; Hakim, II, 305)

The Qur’an approaches the issue of chronic social diseases tolerantly, not forcefully and tried to heal them through gradual stages which continued until achieving the goal.

Similar stages apply to the case of the prohibition of usury. The same method was applied and the prohibition of usury had been prohibited in four steps. Thus, the prohibition of usury demonstrates an exact similarity to the prohibition of alcohol.⁷ This might be considered a Divine sign, for there are common points between them. Indeed, both of them have harmful sides and people with weak characters get fooled by the supposed benefits. This is why there are similarities between the methods and the features of the each of the stages of their prohibition.

The first verse in relation to usury was Meccan and no other verse was revealed during the Meccan period regarding this matter:

“That which you give in usury in order that it may increase on (other) people’s property has no increase with Allah; but that which you give in charity, seeking Allah’s countenance, (will increase); it is these who will get a recompense multiplied.” (al-Rum 30; 39)

In this verse, the unworthiness of usury and its lack of reward are stated, but nothing is mentioned about its unlawfulness.

The second stage began with a verse revealed in the Medinan period:

“And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people’s wealth by false pretences. We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve (amongst the Jews) a painful doom.” (al-Nisa 4; 161)

Here it is stated that some of the Jews, who continued to engage in usurious transactions even though it had been prohibited for them, were punished

7. Draz, M. Abdullah, *Islâm’in İnsana Verdiği Değer*, p. 218-221.





by Allah the Almighty. Those who have a moderate level of understanding and perception understood that usury was soon going to be banned.

Even though usury was prohibited in the third stage, this prohibition was not an absolute prohibition, rather, it was a limited one. Excessive types of usury or doubling and multiplying type was prohibited.

“O ye who believe devour not usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that ye may (really) prosper.” (Al-i Imran 3; 130)

Later the last and comprehensive prohibition of usury was revealed:

“Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the evil one by his touch has driven to madness. That is because they say: trade is like usury, but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past...O you who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if you are indeed Believers.” (al-Baqara 2; 275, 278)

With this verse, not only the ruling about usury was announced, but also the period of Qur’anic legislation came to an end. In this matter Umar (r.a.) said that:

“The last revelation is the one about the prohibition of usury. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had passed away before he had a chance to interpret this verse. Therefore you should abstain from both usury and transactions that carry doubts about usury.” (Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 58)

Regulations about acts of worship and daily transaction were usually made during the Medinan period. There is also a gradual approach to these regulations and their application. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) trained his Companions gradually in every aspect of life and religion until they reached perfection. For instance when Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) sent Muadh to Yemen, he advised (him):

“You are going to people of a (Divine) Book. First of all invite them to worship Allah (alone) and when they come to know Allah, inform them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers every day and night; and if they start offering these prayers, inform them that Allah has enjoined upon them, Zakat (charitable tax). And it is to be taken from the rich amongst them and



given to the poor amongst them; and if they obey you in that, take Zakat from them and avoid (don't take) the best property of the people as Zakat." (Bukhari, Zakat, 41, 63; Muslim, Iman 29-31)

The first thing that we need to expect from people, be they Muslims or non Muslims, is a valid faith and strong Islamic understanding. After achieving this, we can ask them to live according to their faith. The easiest way and most effective remedy to realize this goal is the method of facilitating things for people and giving them good news. If there is the danger of warding people away and encouraging them to leave the religion, then one should not interfere with other people's un-Islamic and immoral deeds temporarily. However, after they learn the requirements of the religion, their old habits and life styles cannot be tolerated.

One of the reasons why Jalal al-Din Rumi and other Sufi masters have become successful in making contemporary society love Islam in the East and in the West was due to their successful application of the principle of gradualism. They have always paid attention to people's natural traits.

Of course, gradualism is essential to missionary activities. However, this should not, in a way, be considered concession and laxity; because laziness and idleness are the distinguishing characteristics of human beings. The important thing is to purify body and soul of these negative attributes. One should consciously avoid preaching everything that may support such negative attributes and behavior.

E. Seizing every Opportunity

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) knew that he had to employ the best methods and most appropriate instruments and that he had to give his entire time in order to achieve success in his mission. He had to find ways and seek opportunities to convey the message of Allah to humanity. This is why he seized every opportunity he got and searched for other means to reach people, because the message of Islam or the only way to attain eternal salvation in the Hereafter, had to be transmitted to humanity without losing any time.

Anas b. Rafi', a resident of Medina, came to Mecca together with a group of young people. They wanted to sign an agreement with the tribe of Quraish



against the Medinan tribe of Hazraj. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) heard of their visit to Mecca, he came to them. He sat next to them and asked:

“Would you like me to tell you something better than the reason why you are here?”

When they asked what it was, the Prophet (pbuh) talked to them about Islam saying:

“I am the Messenger of Allah. Allah has sent me to His servants. I invite them to Allah. I tell them to worship Him, not to attribute partners to Him. Regarding such, Allah has sent a book to me.” Then he recited some verses from the Qur’an.

The Prophet (pbuh) wanted to show these young people, who had gone to the city for worldly reasons, the path to eternal salvation. He spoke of Islam to everyone in Mecca, but a few people accepted his invitation. Thus, he would run to those new faces visiting Mecca hoping that some of them might open their heart to the Truth, and what he had hoped became a reality. A young man named Iyas b. Muadh said:

“Dear friends! By Allah this is better than what we are here for.” However, he was silenced by his friends’ insults and oppressive words. When they returned to Medina, the battle of Buas arose. Soon Iyas b. Muadh passed away. Those who were waiting at his death bed witnessed that he was incessantly busy with the recitation and remembrance of Allah. Nobody had doubts that he passed away as believer; because Iyas (r.a.) accepted Islam when he had heard about it from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). (Hakim, III, 199; Ibn Hanbal, V, 427)

The Prophet’s hope had not been in vain and one person had attained eternal salvation. “Ibn Abbas reported:

“Once a man named Dimad b. Sa’laba from the tribe of Azd Shanu’a came to Mecca to perform minor pilgrimage. He was man who aspired to be a doctor and tried to improve his knowledge. He used to cure people who were under the influence of a charm or spell. When he heard the Meccan polytheists say that Muhammad (pbuh) was under a spell, he thought:

“If I were to come across this man, Allah might cure him at my hand.” He left the polytheists and began to look for the Messenger of Allah (pbuh),

but he was unable to find him on the first day. On the following day he met him and said:

“O Muhammad, I can protect (one) who is under the influence of a charm, and Allah cures the one whom He so desires at my hand. Do you desire (this)?” Upon this the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, and seek His help and forgiveness. We take refuge in Him from the evil of our selves. He whom Allah guides aright there is none who can lead him astray, and he whom He has led astray there is none who can guide him, and I bear testimony to the fact that there is no god but Allah, He is One, having no partner with Him, and I bear testimony to the fact that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.” After this he (Dimad) like what he heard and said:

“I have never heard such nice words. Repeat them to me.” After the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) repeated his words thrice, Dimad said:

“By Allah, I have heard the words of soothsayers and the words of magicians, and the words of poets, but I have never heard such words as yours, and they reach the depth of the ocean (of eloquence); bring forth your hand so that I should take oath of fealty to you and Islam.” So he took an oath of allegiance to him and converted to Islam. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Is it (this allegiance of yours) on behalf of your people too.” He said:

“Yes, it is on behalf of my people too.”

Allah’s Messenger asked again:

“Is it for you and on behalf of your tribe, too?”

He replied:

“Yes, it is for me and on behalf of my tribe, too.” (Muslim, Jumu’a, 46; Ibn Hanbal, I, 302; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 241)

Right after our beloved Prophet (pbuh) convinced Dimad al-Azdi (r.a.) to convert to Islam, he took his allegiance on behalf of his tribe. Consequently, he appointed Dimad as a teacher to his tribe.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was mocked and stoned in Taif where he had gone to look for potential new converts and opportunities. When he was on his way back to Mecca, he sat under a tree to rest. He was wounded and in pain.



Just then a slave named Addas came by him and he forgot all his pains. He began to tell Addas about Islam. Addas said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about Yunus b. Matta.” When the Prophet (pbuh) told him about everything that had been revealed to him about the Prophet Yunus (A.S.) by Allah the Almighty, Addas converted to Islam saying:

“I bear testimony that you are Allah’s servant and Messenger.” Then he kissed Prophet’s head, hands, and feet. (Ibn Hisham, II, 30; Yaqubi, II, 36)

Addas (r.a.) was Allah’s Messenger’s (pbuh) only gain from the city of Taif, where some of his relatives were also residing. He became very happy by Addas’s conversion. Maybe he was thinking that the conversion of one slave was worth all his pain and effort.

Later, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) thought to migrate to Medina and spread Islam there. He set off on another difficult and dangerous journey. Even though idol worshippers mobilized all their means to kill him and despite many other dangers he never gave up doing his mission. He talked about Islam to everyone he met. Sa’d b. Dalil⁸ narrated from his father:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and Abu Bakr (r.a.) stopped by during their migration to Medina. At that time, one of Abu Bakr’s daughters was with us for fostering. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) wanted to go to Medina by the shortest rout. We told him:

“This is the road of Gair in the passage of Raquba. There live there two thieves named Muhanan from the tribe of Aslam. Let us go and take care of them.” The Prophet (pbuh) told us:

“*Take me to them.*” So we set off our journey. When we passed Raquba and arrived the foot of a hill, one of the thieves said to his friend:

“This man is from Yemen.”⁹ Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) called them and talked to them about Islam and asked them to accept Islam. They then converted to Islam. He asked them their names and they replied:

8. This Companion became known by the name Dalil (sign or indicator) for he showed the Messenger of Allah a shortcut to Medina and guided him on the rout of Raquba.
9. What he meant was that the Prophet was from Mecca, because at that time Mecca was in the region of Timhama which was within the borders of Yemen. This is why the Ka’ba was also called “al-Ka’bah al-Yemaniyya. (Ibn Athir, *al-Nihaya*, V, 300)

“We are Muhanan (two despised people).” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“On the contrary, you are Mukraman (two honored people).” Then he asked them to go to Medina as forerunners. (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 74)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was not concerned about conveying his message even during the times when his enemies wanted to kill him. He delivered the message of Islam even if his listeners considered themselves despicable and worthless. Thus, he praised those two thieves and brought them into the Muslim community.

Conveying the message of Islam was the only reason why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) conducted his battles. Even during his battles he tried to inform people about Islam. For example, during the siege of Haibar a Jewish man asked for mercy and took refuge in the Muslim army. After he gave very valuable information about the enemy, he asked:

“O Abu al-Qasim! You will protect me and you will not shed my blood, will you?” Allah’s Messenger told him:

“You are safe and under our protection.” Jewish man asked:

“Forgive my wife who is in the castle of Nizar” He (Allah’s Messenger) replied:

“I forgive your wife, too.” And then he invited him to Islam. The Jewish man requested a few days in which to think and finally converted to Islam. (Waqidi, II, 647-48)

Since the object of a battle was to invite people to Islam and deliver its message to others, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) acted with the hope of saving people in eternity even during battle time.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) seized every opportunity to teach significant matters to his Companions and to place the beauty of Islam into their hearts. Umar b. Khattab (r.a.) narrates:

“Some Sabi (i.e. war prisoners, children and woman only) were brought before the Prophet. A woman amongst them had milk in her breasts to feed and whenever she found a child amongst the captives, she took it to her chest and nursed it. The Prophet asked us,





“Do you think that this lady can throw her son in the fire?” We replied, “No, if she has the power to not throw it (in the fire).” The Prophet then said,

“Allah is more merciful to His servants than this lady to her son.” (Bukhari, Adab, 18; Muslim, Tawba, 22)

Another day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) saw Abu Huraira (r.a.) planting a tree and asked:

“O Abu Huraira! What are you planting?” He replied:

“I am planting a tree for myself.” Then The Prophet (pbuh) told him:

“Would you like me to tell you of a better tree than this?” Abu Huraira replied affirmatively and excitedly began to wait for Prophet’s answer. Then the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Say: *subhanallahi wa-al-hamdu lillahi wala ilaha illallahu akbar* (Glory and all praises be to Allah. And there is no god but Allah the Greatest). For each one of these words a tree will be planted for you in Paradise.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 56)

Thus, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) taught his Companion Abu Huraira (r.a.) another virtuous deed in addition to planting trees. When he was teaching that deed, he used the action of his Companion to make abstract issues more easily understandable. Here the Prophet (pbuh) also pointed out that one can earn spiritual rewards in his afterlife through the remembrance of Allah and he taught one of the most virtuous formulas of that remembrance.

F. Facilitating things and not making them difficult

**“Allah does wish to lighten your (difficulties):
for man was created weak (in flesh).”**

(al-Nisa 4; 28)

Facilitation is one of the principles that a preacher of Islam should know and comply with. That the religion has come to facilitate and not to make things difficult is something repeated many times in the Qur’an and in the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh). There are several wisdoms behind this principle. The principle of facilitation is an inherent part of conveying the message of



religion and making people accept Islam. This principle is also valid in every other aspect of life.

Human nature is apt to choose that which is easy and is prepared to accept something only after becoming accustomed to it. Offering something difficult to do, on the other hand, may push the listener away, and may even cause complete rejection. This is why it is necessary be equipped with a gradual method of presenting the easiest option and going from easy to difficult, from the essentials to the particulars, and from known to unknown provided that it remains within the boundaries of legality. People have various characters and temperaments, so one needs to take the weakest one into consideration and to act in a way that everyone else can. Allah the Almighty states:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

“...Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty...” (al-Baqarah 2; 185)

“...He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion...” (al-Hajj 22; 78)

When chapter of al-Inshirah (94) was revealed, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became very happy that Allah the Almighty ordained two eases for each difficulty and he said:

“*One hardship cannot overcome two eases; because* **“So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.”** (al-Inshirah 94; 5-6) then he (pbuh) joyfully came to his Companions.¹⁰ (Hakim, II, 575)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) perfectly manifested Allah’s Mercy to His servants in every step of his life. Indeed, it is expressed in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh):

It was narrated by Anas b. Malik (r.a.):

10. The words of ‘*usr* (difficulty) and *yusr* (ease) are repeated in these verses. But the word “‘*usr*” is repeated in the verse with a definite article (ال) whereas the word *yusr* is repeated in an indefinite form. According to Arabic language repetition of a definite word refers to the repetition of the same thing and the repetition of an indefinite word points to different things. This is why even though the word ‘*usr* is repeated twice, it means only one difficulty and *yusr* means two different eases. (See Bukhari, Tafsir, 94)



يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا بِشْرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Facilitate things to people (concerning religious matters), and do not make it hard for them and give them good tidings and do not make them run away (from Islam).” (Bukhari, Ilm, 11)

In order to ensure ease in communicating with people, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that “*we are ordered to talk to people in accordance with their level of comprehension*” (Daylami, I, 398/1611; Ali al-Muttaqi, X, 242) and he did not approve speech and behavior which are too hard for the addressee to understand.

Abu Huraira narrates the following incident in this context:

“A Bedouin stood up and started urinating in the mosque. The people caught him but the Prophet (pbuh) ordered them to leave him and to pour a bucket or a cup of water over the place where he had urinated. The Prophet (pbuh) then said,

“You have been sent to facilitate things and not to make them difficult.” (Bukhari, Wudu, 58; Adab, 80)

Taking the Bedouin’s old habits into account Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was patient with him even under such circumstances where one would become easily upset. He made things easy for him and expressed that his followers should do the same.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) often emphasized that he was a tolerant person. Another example occurred in the incident known as “*i’la*” in which the Prophet (pbuh) stayed separated from his wives for a month. He gave his wives the option to choose between this world and Allah and His Messenger. And he told them to consult their families. He then went first to A’isha (r. anha) and said:

“O A’isha! I want to propose something to you, but wish no hasty reply before you consult your parents.” She said:

“O Messenger of Allah! What is that?” He (the Holy Prophet) recited to her a verse,¹¹ whereupon she said:

11. ^{*} “O Prophet! Say unto your wives: If ye desire the world’s life and its adornment, come! I will content you and will release you with a fair release. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, verily Allah has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward.” (al-Ahzab 33; 28-29)

“Is it about you that I should consult my parents, O Messenger of Allah? Nay, I choose Allah, His Messenger, and the Last Abode; but I ask you not to tell any of your wives what I have said He replied:

“If one of them will ask me, I will inform her. God did not send me to be harsh, or to cause harm, but He has sent me to teach and make things easy.”
(Muslim, Talaq, 29)

Allah the Almighty states that His servants will gain honor by means of piety and only by the level of their piety they can be superior to one another. Despite its significance, Allah the Almighty advises His servants to act in moderation even with regards to piety. Thus, He manifests His endless Mercy to His servants. It is stated in a verse

“So fear Allah as much as you can...” (al-Taghabun 64; 16)

When we compared this verse with the following one we can see that there is a great relief for the believers with respect to fearing God: **“O ye who believe fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.”** (Al-i Imran 3; 102)

When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) took allegiance from his Companions he would tell them to do good deeds to the extent of their ability and strength. A wonderful example of this is narrated by Umayma bint Ruqayqa (r.anha):

“I went to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) with the women who took an oath of allegiance with him for Islam. They said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We take a pledge with you not to associate anything with Allah, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill our children, nor to produce any lie that we have devised between our hands and feet, and not to disobey you in what is known.” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

“In what you can do and are able to do.”

Umayma continued, “They said,

“Allah and His Messenger are more merciful to us than ourselves. Come, let us give our hands (in allegiance) to you, Messenger of Allah!” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

“I do not shake hands with women. My word to a hundred women is like my word to one woman.” (Muwatta, Bay’ah, 2; Tirmidhi, Siyar, 37)



Allah's Apostle (pbuh) would ask from his followers even to act moderately in performing acts of worship saying:

"...Do (good) deeds which are within your capacity (without being over-taxed)..." (Bukhari, Iman, 32) Because of this he sometimes had to rebuke some of his Companions who had not been acting according to his command. One of these incidents took place as follows:

"Jabir (r.a.) reported that Mu'adh b. Jabal used to pray with the Apostle (pbuh), then came and led his people in prayer. One night he said the night prayer with the Apostle of Allah (pbuh). He then came to his people and led them in prayer beginning with Surah al-Baqara. A man turned aside, pronounced the *taslim* (salutation for concluding the prayer), then prayed alone and departed. The people said to him:

"Have you become a hypocrite, so and so?" He said:

"I swear by Allah that I have not, but I will certainly go to Allah's Messenger (pbuh) and will inform (him) about this." He then came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we look after camels used for watering and work by day." Mu'adh said the night prayer with you. He then came and began with Surah al-Baqara. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) then turned to Mu'adh and said:

"Are you there to (put the people to) trial? Recite: "By the Sun and its morning brightness" (al-Shams 91), "By brightness" (Duha 93) "By the night when it spreads" (al-Layl 92), and "Glorify the name of thy Lord most high" (al-A'la 87)." (Muslim, Salat, 178; Bukhari, Adhaan, 60, 63, 66)

A deed which strains people's limits was not approved by the Prophet (pbuh), even if it was an act of worship. This is why he forbade actions which draw people away from the congregation; whereas he promised salvation from the Hellfire for those who facilitate things to others saying:

أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَنْ تَحْرَمُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارُ، عَلَى كُلِّ قَرِيبٍ هَيِّنٍ سَهْلٍ

"Should I inform you whom the Hell will not burn? Hell will not burn those who are affable, kind, and facilitate things to others." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 45)

Islam, the religion of mercy, compassion, and love, wants goodness for humanity and guides people to the easiest and most appropriate paths according to their standards. Therefore it cannot be allowed that some people who do not understand the true Islam make it difficult and so draw people away from it because of their false views and thoughts. Those who fall into such a mistake will be responsible for a great sin. However, it should not be forgotten that by facilitating things people should not be encouraged to negligence and laziness. One should never make concessions for Allah's and His Messenger's commands under the disguise of facilitation.

G. Giving people good tidings and not making them run away

**Garkedere âlemleri bir katre âb-ı mağfiret
Var kıyâs et vüs'at-ı deryây-ı rahmet neydiğin¹²
Bâkî**

Making people love Islam should be the primary goal achieved by preachers of Islam. Trying to make people accept something only by fear instills hatred. The Holy Qur'an uses not just the element of fear. On the contrary, when we examine it we can see that Hell and Paradise, believer and non-believer and depictions of good and bad are mentioned as much as they are needed, but the endearing side has more significance.

Saying that **"...but My Mercy embraces all things..."** (al-Araf 7; 156) Allah the Almighty emphasizes the vastness of His Mercy. This is also underlined by the Prophet (pbuh) in the following report:

"The Prophet said, *"When Allah created the Creation, He wrote in His Book--and He wrote (that) about Himself, and it is placed with Him on the Throne—'Verily My Mercy overcomes My Anger.'"* (Bukhari, Tawhid, 15)

Our Lord the Almighty reminds His servants that He is The Forgiving, The Beneficent, and The Merciful. *The basmala* which we say at the beginning of all our actions and *surah al-Fatihah* (1), which we recite in every cycle of our prayers reminds us of these Divine attributes all the time. One of the incidents which manifest the endless Mercy of Allah the Almighty was narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas.

12. Even a single drop from the fountain of Mercy is enough to submerge the entire universe (and is enough to forgive all sins). Compare how great and vast the Sea of Mercy is.





“Some people amongst the polytheist who had committed many murders and had indulged in fornication came to Prophet (pbuh) and said:

“Whatever you assert and whatever you call to is indeed good. But if you inform us that there is atonement for our past deeds then we will embrace Islam. Then it was revealed:

“And those who call not unto another god along with Allah and slay not any soul which Allah has forbidden except in the cause of justice, nor commit fornication; and he who does this shall meet the requital of sin. Multiplied for him shall be the torment on the Day of Resurrection, and he shall therein abide disgraced, except him who repents and believes and does good deeds. Then these! For Allah shall change their vices into virtues. Verily Allah is Ever Forgiving, Merciful.” (Furqan 25; 68-70) (Muslim, Iman, 193)

Those who lost their hope because of the sins they had committed regained hope by this good news and attained eternal salvation.

Our Lord, The Beneficent and The Merciful, sent our Prophet (pbuh) as a mercy to humanity. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) gave people the glad tidings about the beauty of the Hereafter and tried to keep them away from evil. In the following verse Allah the Almighty stated the Prophet’s attribute of being the announcer of the good news before his attribute of being a warner:

“We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.” (Saba 34; 28)

This is because when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) began his mission, he first gave people the glad tidings of Paradise saying:

“I invite you to bear testimony and embrace Islam saying “La ilaha ila-llahu wahdahu la sharika lah (There is no god but Allah, Who is One with no partners). I am His servant and His Messenger. If you accept and acknowledge this, then I will guarantee you that you will enter Paradise.” (Baladhuri, I, 119-120)

“Which one of you accepts to help in my mission and be my brother and thus to attain (a place in) Paradise?” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 187)

Just as those who are invited to embrace Islam and repent for their sins, those who pronounce their faith and endeavor to ascend the steps of perfection in their belief also need such glad tidings. In order to be desirous in performing good deeds and fulfilling their mission people need to hear such pleasing news. This was why Allah's Messenger sometimes gave his Companions the glad tidings of Paradise. The ten Companions, who are known as "*asharah mubashsharah* (ten to whom joyful tidings have been given)," are very famous. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 27; Ibn Hanbal, I, 187-188)

The Prophet's glad tidings were not limited to those ten Companions. He also gave joyful tidings to many of his Companions and to those who perform good deeds amongst his followers. For instance, his Companions who attended the Battle of Badr (Bukhari, Maghazi, 9) Khadijah (r.anha) (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 29), Abdullah b. Salam (r.a.) (Bukhari, Adab, 55; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 36) and Haritha b. Suraqa al-Ansari (r.a.) are just some of them.

However one should be very careful about giving people joyful news. One should abstain from giving such tidings that may withhold people from acts of worship or may cause laxity in their actions. One should not allow Satan to deceive humans by presenting the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah the Almighty. Allah the Almighty warns His servants in this matter as follows:

وَلَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

"...nor let the arch deceiver deceive you in respect of Allah..." (Luqman 31; 33) Kazim Paşa says that:

Ümid-i afv ile olma harîs-i isyân kim
Ziyân-resîde eder âdemi hisâb-ı ferâh

"Do not attempt to go astray and commit evil with the hope to be forgiven, because many of those who do calculate loosely end up as losers."

One should keep a good balance between the two approaches, i.e. being hopeful of being forgiven and fearful of being punished. It is seen in the following report that the Prophet (pbuh), too, was concerned about this matter:

"Once Mu'adh was riding with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Allah's Apostle said:

"O Mu'adh b. Jabal." Mu'adh replied,



“Yes, O Allah’s Apostle! What is it?” Again the Prophet said,

“*O Mu’adh!*” Mu’adh replied thrice,

“Yes, O Allah’s Apostle! What is it?” Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,

“There is none who testifies sincerely that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is his Apostle, except that Allah will save him from the Hell-fire.”

Mu’adh said,

“O Allah’s Apostle! Should I inform the people about this glad tidings so that they may rejoice?” He replied,

“When the people hear about it, they will solely depend on it.” Yet Mu’adh (r.a.) narrated the above-mentioned tradition just before his death, being afraid of committing the sin of not transmitting this knowledge.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 49)

Just as the existence of those who would become encouraged by such glad tidings and do more good deeds, like Muadh (r.a.), there are also those who may trust such news and become lazy. In fact, the number of the latter group is much greater than that of the former. Therefore, it is a very important principle for a preacher of Islam to calculate the possible effects of his words.

H. Warning about the Divine Punishment

Kıl tevbe seyyiâtına gözler kapanmadan Vaktiyle gör hisâbını defter kapanmadan

Bursalı Mustafa Huldi¹³

Allah’s Messenger’ mission was to teach people the Truth, give them the good news of Paradise, and protect them from Hellfire. He invited people to Islam by frightening those who did not submit themselves and obey the commands of Allah by the glad tidings of Paradise; because fear has a more powerful effect. This is why causing fear is the last resort to show the straight path to those who do not come to it and through good tidings. Since the aim is to save every single human being from receiving the Divine punishment.

13. * “Repent for your sins before your eyes are closed, settle your accounts before your book is closed”

Allah the Almighty has prepared a great torment in the Hereafter for those who fail their test in this world. Informing the entire humanity about this truth is the requirement of being this world as a testing place. Those who insist in making mistakes will have to face its consequences.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned his followers about the Divine punishment by the order of Allah the Almighty. He began warning from his closest relatives. He addressed to Hashim clan saying:

"I will turn away from you if you come on the Judgment Day with the burden of this world instead of your good deeds. Then you will tell me "O Muhammad," but I will do this."

When he was saying "I will do this," he turned his face from them to another direction and repeated this twice." (Ibn Ishaq, III, 128; Yaqubi, II, 27)

Thus the Prophet (pbuh) told his relatives about the horror and the punishment they will face on the Judgment Day. And he warned them he would not be able to help them on that Day if they die as non-believers.

We see the same situation in Hamzah's conversion. After Hamzah (r.a.) had spent a sleepless night filled with many doubts, he came to the Prophet (pbuh) early in the morning. And He talked about his doubts:

"O son of my brother! I am in such a conundrum that I cannot find a solution. Please tell me something and show me an exit-way. Upon this our Prophet (pbuh) gave him some advice and told him about both the blessings and the torments of the Hereafter. Thus he frightened his uncle with the punishment and heartened him with the Paradise. As a result of Prophet's talk Hamzah (r.a.) converted to Islam and attained the certain knowledge. (Hakim, III, 213; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, III, 84)

In the following lines how nicely Jalal al-Din Rumi (q.s.) depicts the efforts of the prophets to save humans from dangers:

"The prophets said, "The foul and evil presage has its support from within your souls. If you are asleep in a perilous place, and a dragon is approaching you from a spot close at hand. And a kindly person has made you aware of it by saying, 'Jump up quickly, or else the dragon will devour you' - If you say, 'Why are you uttering an evil warning?' He will reply, 'What warning? Get up





and see in the light of day. I myself will deliver you from the midst of the evil warning and will take you home.'

A prophet is such a person who acquaints you with hidden things, like the prophet who has seen what the people of this world have not seen. If a physician says to you, 'Do not eat unripe grapes, for such an illness (as is caused by them) will produce grave trouble and mischief,' would you blame the one who advises you saying "why should it cause trouble?" (Mathnawi, III, verses: 2955-2962)

Believers should pay attention to such warning by the prophets and they should be very careful not to forget the Hereafter by indulging in this world. Throughout his twenty-three year long prophetic life Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gave the glad tidings of Paradise and Divine Mercy to everyone who met and warned them about Hell and its torments. Even though some people resisted and threw themselves into the fire, he strived to save them from falling into the pits of Hell. One day he warned his Companions and emphasized the seriousness of this matter:

"When Allah created Paradise, He said to Gabriel:

"Go and look at it." He went to look at it, then came back and said:

"O my Lord! By Your might, no one who hears of it will fail to enter it.

He then surrounded it with disagreeable things, and said:

"Go and look at it, Gabriel. He went and looked at it, then came and said:

"O my Lord! By Your might, I am afraid that no one will enter it."

When Allah created Hell, He said:

"Go and look at it, Gabriel." He went and looked at it, then came and said:

"O my Lord! By Your might, no one who hears of it will enter it."

He then surrounded it with desirable things and said:

"Go and look at it, Gabriel." He went, looked at it, then came and said:

"O my Lord! By Your might and power, I am afraid that no one will remain who does not enter it." (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 21-22; Tirmidhi, Jannah, 21)



Here the Prophet's aim is not to cause hopelessness amongst people but to attract the believer's attention to the seriousness of the issue of reward and punishment.

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) frightened those who commit the deeds prohibited by Allah the Almighty with the torment of Hellfire. One of them is as follows:

"The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"When I was taken up to Heaven on the night of ascension I passed by people who had nails of copper and were scratching their faces and their breasts. I asked Gabriel:

"Who are these people, Gabriel?" He replied:

"They are those who were given to back biting and who aspersed people's honor." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35)

Regarding those who unjustly want to take people's property, the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

"Whoever usurps somebody's land unjustly, he will be punished in such a way that his neck will be encircled with it down in the seven earths (on the Day of Resurrection)." (Bukahri, Mazalim, 13)

When our beloved Prophet (pbuh), the announcer of the good news and the warner, was giving his farewell speech soon before his death and announcing to his followers his last warnings, he stated the significance of people's rights:

"O People! Whoever had usurped unjustly another's rights should return it now. He should not think that he will be disgraced. Know well that being disgraced in this world is much lighter than being disgraced in the Hereafter." (Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil*, 319)

Upon these warnings some people admitted their previous injustices and mistakes and asked that the Prophet (pbuh) pray for them to be forgiven. Then someone stood up and said:

"O Messenger of Allah! I am a liar and a hypocrite. There is no sin left that I did not commit." Umar (r.a.) told him:

"O man! You have disgraced yourself." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:





“O Ibn Khattab! Being disgraced in this world is much lighter than being disgraced in the Hereafter.” Thus, he warned the believers about the horror of the Hereafter and told them to be careful not to be disgraced there. The he prayed for the man:

“O Allah! Bless him with righteousness and the maturity of faith. Turn his mistakes into goodness.” (Tabari, *Tarikh*, III, 190)

Our beloved Prophet also warned those who are not meticulous in their acts of worship. According to the narration of Ali ibn Abu Talib (r.a.):

“The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) said:

“If anyone who is sexually defiled leaves a spot to the extent of the root of a hair without washing, such and such an amount of Hell-fire will be suffered due to it.” Then Ali (r.a.) repeated this warning thrice and said:

“Because of this tradition I treated my head (hair) like an enemy.” From that time on, he cut his hair for the fear of leaving roots of hair dry. (Abu Dawud, *Taharah*, 97)

To achieve the straight path depends on the strength of the faith in the Hereafter. It is unthinkable that those who have certain faith in the Hereafter can commit evil deeds. Since people usually live their lives by taking into account that which they most fear, it is only natural that the fear of being questioned in the Hereafter and fear from the Divine punishment supercedes other fears. This is why Allah the Almighty mentioned belief in the Hereafter and described Judgment Day in many places in the Holy Qur’an.

We have so far examined the manners and methods that need to be followed by the preachers of Islam. When one follows the proper methods in any given task, it would be possible to obtain result more easily, and doing things without following the proper methods makes it difficult to reach one’s objective. One of the most important goals of believers in this world is to place faith and love for Allah the Almighty into the hearts. Even the simplest jobs like planting a flower or placing a brick into a wall demands the application of the right methods, it is obvious that a sensitive task like addressing people’s souls requires certain manners and methods. A preacher of Islam should apply the above mentioned methods and then expect guidance from Allah the Almighty.



It is said that:

إِذَا تَقَرَّرَ الْوُضُوءُ بِالْأُصُولِ نَطَقَ اللِّسَانُ بِالْفُضُولِ

“When someone reaches his goal by applying the proper methods, his tongue begins to utter virtuous and wise words.”





III. THE PROPHET'S MEANS IN HIS CALL AND IN CONVEYING HIS MESSAGE

In accordance with the command of the following verses: **“O you wrapped up (in a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning!”** (al-Muddaththir 74; 1-2) **“O Messenger! Proclaim the (Message) which has been sent to you from your Lord. If you do not, you will not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission...”** (al-Maidah 5; 67) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began conveying the message of Islam. He exerted all his efforts and energy to save humans from going astray and to help them to achieve eternal salvation.

Our Prophet (pbuh) conveyed the religious rules, regulations, commands and prohibitions by using lawful means. At the head of these come the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet’s miracles, his exemplary life, his invitations and feasts, teachers and missionaries trained by him, and his letters and delegates sent to foreign rulers. We need to analyze the Prophet’s missionary means well, and such an analysis will teach us the best way to deliver Islam to people in every place and time, and it will clear our horizon and enlighten our path.

A. The Holy Qur’an

“...(O Prophet) but warn by the Qur’an him who fears My threat.”

(Qaf 50; 45)

The Holy Qur’an builds up the foundation and methodology of the Prophet’s missionary activities. Based on the succinct sayings of the Prophet (pbuh):

“1) The Qur’an guides a person through all kinds of trouble

2) It consists of information about previous societies, about the state of future societies, and about the rules of the incident which will take place amongst the people

3) It distinguishes the right from the wrong

4) It is not something of no benefit



5) *Allah the Almighty will destroy the mischievous ones who give it (the Qur'an) up*

6) *Allah the Almighty will mislead those who look for guidance other than its guidance*

7) *It is the most trustworthy rope from Allah the Almighty, His supreme remembrance, and His straight path*

8) *Those who hold it tight will never go astray*

9) *Those tongues which recite it will not err*

10) *Scholars could not be satisfied with it*

11) *It never loses its freshness through its frequent recitations*

12) *Its superiority and miraculousness never ceases*

13) *When jinns listen to it, they could not help but say "...They said, We have really heard a wonderful Recital!"* (al-Jinn 72; 1)

14) *Those who use the Holy Qur'an in their speech speak the truth*

15) *Those who base their rulings upon the Qur'an reach the right decisions and issue just rulings*

16) *Those who apply it in their lives obtain spiritual reward*

17) *It is the Divine Word and those who are invited to it find the straightest path.*" (Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 14; Darimi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 1)

Hasan al-Basri (q.s.) says:

"Allah the Almighty revealed one hundred and four books. He summed the knowledge included in these books up in four of them: the Torah, the New Testament, Psalms, and the Qur'an. Then He inserted the knowledge of the three books into the Qur'an." (Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, II, 450)

The Holy Qur'an, which possesses the above mentioned general characteristics, was revealed to the heart of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and it is the greatest miracle of his prophethood. He (pbuh) comprehended the Truth through it and his inner world was enlightened by means of it. He transmitted its prosperity to people's hearts and exerted his entire effort to take humanity





to its enlightened atmosphere. Imam Shafii (may Allah have mercy on his soul) describes this as follows:

“The words of Muslim scholars are the interpretations of the Sunnah. And the content of the Sunnah is the exegesis of the Holy Qur’an. Every ruling issued by the Prophet (pbuh) is what he understood from the Qur’an and what can be included as the contents of the Qur’an.” (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, I, 4; Kattani, II, 122)

It is stated in the verses:

“Alif Lam Mim. This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil).” (al-Baqara, 2; 1-2)

“Alif Lam Ra (This is) a Scripture which We have revealed unto you (Muhammad) that thereby you may bring forth mankind from darkness unto light, by the permission of their Lord, unto the path of the Mighty, the Owner of Praise.” (Ibrahim 14; 1)

By means of the Holy Qur’an our Prophet, a mercy to the universe, took people out of the darkness of disbelief, polytheism, and oppression to the light of faith, Islam, and *ihsan*. This enlightened path is the sacred path leading to Paradise and to the manifestation of Allah drawn by Allah the Almighty the Omnipotent.

This is expressed in a verse:

“So We have only made it easy in your tongue that you may give good news thereby to those who guard (against evil) and warn thereby a vehemently contentious people.” (Mayram 19; 97)

The Qur’an was revealed in Arabic, or the language of people to whom it was revealed. And as a result of our Lord’s great Blessing, it was made easy on the Prophet’s tongue. By this means Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was able to convey the Qur’an to his people; by means of the Qur’an he gave the joyful tidings of Paradise to the pious believers and warned those who obstinately resisted the truth and showed enmity towards it.

The Qur’an, which has been facilitated for the people and about which people have been asked to contemplate, has the special effect of influencing its listeners. For someone who is right-minded even listening to the Qur’an is enough to realize that it is God’s words. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had the



responsibility to transmit the Qur'an to humanity, which is stated in the following verse:

“If one amongst the Pagans asks you for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allah; and then escort him to where he can be secure...” (al-Tawba 9; 6)

In other words, accustoming the ears hear the sound of the Qur'an helps faith settle into the hearts. In some other verses it is stated that the Prophet's characteristic of being the bearer of glad tidings and the admonisher of the torments of the Hereafter were exercised only through the Qur'an. (al-Shura 42; 7; Qaf 50; 45; Furqan 25; 52) Another verse informs the Messenger of Allah the manner of his method in inviting others to the path of Islam:

“Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching...” (al-Nahl 16; 125) Exegete Tabari interprets the word **“wisdom”** as the Holy Qur'an and the phrase **“beautiful preaching”** as the lessons and advice in the Qur'an which prove the unity of Allah and encourage believers. According to this interpretation invitation with wisdom and beautiful preaching means that it can be done by reciting and talking about the verses of the Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an is the greatest miracle of the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) said,

“There was no prophet among the prophets but was given miracles and as a result of which people had a sense of security or had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration 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.” (Bukhari, I'tisam, 1)¹⁴

In this report, the Prophet (pbuh) relates his hope about having the greatest number of followers with the miracle of the Qur'an. There is wisdom behind this:

14. The miraculous character of the Qur'an can be summarized in three points. The first one is that it has such an eloquent and clear style that even the most prominent masters of the Arabic language have not been able to compose a similar work. This character of the Qur'an is so superior that there is no scholar, philosopher, and poet who can even come close to it. The second one is that its linguistic style consists of the effectual characteristics of both poetry and prose. And finally, it contains the truth, for the salvation of human beings in every age.



The Qur'an does not resemble other miracles which happened at an exact time and were valid only for that time. It addresses human intellect through its style and meaning. Therefore, as long as intellect and contemplation exist in this world, Qur'anic verses will be read and contemplated upon. As a result, every day a new subtlety of the Qur'an will come to light.

Its meanings do not address a certain group of people of a certain time but it embraces the whole of humanity at all times. This is why there have been, and will always be, who affirm the miraculous character of the Qur'an. Consequently, the number of the Prophet's (pbuh) followers will continue to increase.¹⁵

The magnificent literary style of the Qur'an affects and fascinates people from all levels of society. This is why there are reports in the books of Islamic history about the polytheist who could not help but listen to the Qur'an even though they did not believe in it.

One night Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahil, and Ahnas b. Sharik came secretly to Prophet's house to listen to the Qur'an. Every one of them hid in a place unaware of the presence of the other. They spent the whole night listening to Prophet's recitation of the Qur'an. When they were leaving early in the morning, they saw each other. They then began to criticize one other saying:

"We should never do this again. If someone had seen us, it would have placed a doubt in his heart." And then they left. But the same thing happened the next day and the following day. Finally they told each other:

"We will not leave until we swear that we will never do this again." They left after they agreed upon not coming back. (Ibn Hisham, I, 337-338)

If the Qur'an has such a great effect upon those who refuse to believe just because of their stubbornness and grudge, its effect is undoubtedly much

15. Indeed the scientific discoveries made many centuries after the Qur'an's revelation have reconfirmed its miraculous character and that it is the Divine Word. The stages of the creation of human beings, secrets of the universe, earth, the states of the sun and the moon and many other researches in physical, medical, geographical, and social fields reveal these realities. For instance, teleporting objects has been a recent scientific discussion and research has been continuing. In 2001, for the first time some water was disassembled into molecules and successfully teleported to another place. But this scientific fact was informed by the Qur'an about fifteen centuries ago. In chapter al-naml (27) verse 40 it is stated that the throne of Balkis had been brought to her from two thousand kilometers away in less time than twinkling an eye. (Ömer Çelik, p. 113-122)

greater upon those who sincerely and faithfully open their hearts to Islam. One of the best examples of this is as follows:

The ruler of Abyssinia had sent seventy of his people to Medina along with Ja'far (r.a.). All of them were softhearted prominent religious authorities. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) recited chapter Yasin (36) to them. They began to cry while they were listening and said:

"This is very similar to the words revealed to Jesus (A.S.)" Then they converted to Islam and then Allah the Almighty revealed the following verses:

"And when they hear what has been revealed to the messenger you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of truth)." (al-Maidah 5; 83) (Qastallani, I, 292; Diyarbekri, II, 31; Tabari, *Tafsir*, VII, 4)

The verses below express how much the true scholars who know with certainty that the Qur'an is the Word of Allah are moved by the miraculous effects of the Qur'an:

"Say: whether you believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given knowledge beforehand, when it was recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration, and they say: Glory to our Lord, truly has the promise of our Lord been fulfilled. They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility." (al-Isra 17; 107-109)

Allah the Almighty calls the Qur'an and the information given in it the "al-Naba al-Azim - tremendous tiding." (Sad 38; 67) This tremendous tiding shaped the agenda of the time and deeply affected everybody. When polytheists attacked the invitation of the Qur'an, it responded to their questions and clearly showed them the falsity of their faith and thoughts. It also presented them scenes from Hell and warnings about the painful torment awaiting the non-believers.

Since the Arab society of the time was very fond of poetry, they were easily impressed by an eloquent speech and showed interest in it. Their interest in poetry was so powerful that one line was enough for them to praise or to abase someone. Since non-believers knew that the Qur'an possessed a very strong literary effect, they did not just prevent themselves from listening to it but also trying to prevent others. They exhorted:





“... Do not listen to this Qur’an and make noise therein, perhaps you may be overcome.” (Fussilat 41; 26) The following report about Walid b. Mughirah adequately manifests this matter:

“One day Walid b. Mughirah came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked of him:

“Read me something from the Qur’an.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) recited the following verse:

“Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and he forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: he instructs you, that you may receive admonition.” (al-Nahl 16; 90) Walid told him:

“Recite it one more time.” When the Prophet (pbuh) recited the verse, Walid could not help but say:

“By Allah there is such beauty, eloquence, and light in this word that it is like a very green tree whose roots are watery and branches are filled with fruits. No human can utter such words. It certainly is superior to all the other words and no other word can outdo it. It can easily overcome its rivals.”

Walid stood up and went to Abu Bakr’s house. He asked some questions about the Qur’an and received answers to them all. Then he went to Quraish and said:

“What Ibn Abi Kabsha¹⁶ says does indeed deserve to be admired. It is neither poetry nor magic nor nonsense. It certainly is the word of Allah.” When some people from Quraish heard Walid’s words, they made plans to prevent him from converting to Islam and succeeded.” (Hakim, II, 550; Tabari, *Tafsir*, XXIX, 195-196)

Walid, who was one of the foremost men of letters of his time, was astonished by the salient language and eloquent style of the Qur’an but he was not bestowed with the honor of embracing Islam.

16. A man named Abu Kabsha from the tribe of Huzaa’ had opposed to his tribe worshipping the idols. Polytheists used to call the Prophet (pbuh) by the same name for they likened him to Abu Kabsha. According to another view, it was the nickname of one of the Prophet’s maternal or paternal grandfathers or it was the nickname the Prophet’s foster father.



Another example of the Qur'an's impressive nature can be seen in the incident of Umar's conversion to Islam. Before his conversion, Umar was one of the harshest enemies of the believers. One day, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) prayed in the house of Arkam saying:

"O Allah! Strengthen Islam with Amr b. Hisham or Umar b. al-Khattab whichever is more beloved to You." (Ibn Hisham, I, 367) Umar (r.a.) narrates:

"Before I embraced Islam, one day I went out of the house to find and torture the Prophet. He had come to the mosque before me. I stood before him. He began to recite chapter Haqqah (69). I was amazed by the eloquence and clarity of the words that I was hearing. I thought:

"Maybe he is a poet like the people of Quraish say." At that moment the Prophet began reciting the verses:

"But nay! I swear by all that you see and all that you see not that this is verily the word of an honored messenger; it is not the word of a poet: little it is you believe!" (al-Haqqah 69; 38-41)

I thought:

"Maybe he is a soothsayer and he sensed what I was thinking." Just then the Prophet recited another verse from the same chapter:

"Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little admonition it is you receive. It is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds." (al-Haqqah 69; 41-43) When the Messenger of Allah finished the recitation of the chapter, I felt relieved and my heart inclined towards Islam. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 17; Haythami, IX, 62)

Finally, Umar (r.a.) was entranced by the beginning verses of surah Taha (20) which he heard in his sister Fatimah's house. He said:

"How wonderful and valuable these words are!" And he came back to the Prophet (pbuh) and embraced Islam. (Ibn Hisham, I, 369-371)

We can see the Qur'an's great influence by Umar's conversion to Islam. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) benefited from the miraculous nature of the Qur'an to invite people to the true religion.

The poet Tufail b. Amr al-Dawsi was one of the people who embraced Islam because of the miraculous language of the Holy Qur'an. When he came to Mecca, some people from Quraish came to him and gave him some advice:



“O Tufail! You are a poet and a respected member of your tribe. You came to our town, but be careful about that man. He has been a problem for us. He destroyed our society and our jobs. His words are like magic enchanting people and destroy their relationship with their fathers, brothers, and wives. We are afraid that what happened to us might also happen to you and to your people. Never talk to him and listen to anything he says.” Tufail was influenced by their suggestions so he decided not to listen or talk to the Prophet (pbuh). When he arrived at the Ka’bah, he even placed some cotton into his ears so as not to hear what the Prophet was saying. Then he thought:

“Shame on me! I am an intelligent poet. I can distinguish between good and bad speech. So what could be wrong with listening to what this man is saying? If it is good I will accept it; if it is bad I can reject it.” Then he began to wait. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) left to go home, Tufail followed him and entered his house after him. Then he said:

“O Muhammad! Your people told me such and such about you. They scared me so much that I stuffed cotton into my ears so as not to hear you. Then thanks to Allah I managed to listen to you. Would you please tell me about your mission?” Tufail continued his words:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told me about Islam and recited from the Qur’an. By Allah until then I have not heard anything as beautiful as the Qur’an and any religion better than Islam. I immediately bore witness that there is no god but Allah and embraced Islam.

Tufail attained light, peace, and relief in Islam. A few days later he asked permission from the Prophet (pbuh) to go back to his tribe to convey the message of Islam. He also asked the Prophet (pbuh) to pray for him to bestow on him the ability to do some kind of miracle in order to show his people and prove his words. As a result of Prophet’s supplication, first a light appeared right between his eyes, then upon his request this light left his face and appeared on top of his staff. Then he went back to his tribe. (Ibn Hisham, I, 407-408; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 237-238)

Another example demonstrating that the Qur’an was the essence of the Prophet’s mission is given by Uthman (r.a.):

“I went to visit my aunt Arwa. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came with me. I began to watch him. I was feeling sad that day. The Prophet (pbuh) turned to me and asked:

“What is wrong O Uthman?” I said:

“I am sad because of what they are doing to you and saying about you.” Just then, he said “*La ilaha illallah*” and I began to shiver. After that he recited the following verses from chapter al-Zariyat (51):

“And in heaven is your sustenance, as (also) that which you are promised. Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth, as much as the fact that you can speak intelligently to each other.” (al-Zariyat 51; 22-23) He then stood up and left, but I ran after him and converted to Islam. (Ibn Abdilber, IV, 1779)

Similarly the six people from Medina who were present at the first Aqabah pledge of allegiance embraced Islam following the Prophet’s recitation of verses 35-52 of chapter Ibrahim. (14) (Ibn Hisham, II, 38-40; Ibn Sa’d, I, 217-219; Haythami, VI, 42)

The Companions trained by Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) as instructors and missionaries of Islam also followed the same method. Abu Bakr (r.a.) used to warm people’s heart to Islam by soothing them through the Qur’an. He was a compassionate, soft-hearted and gentle person. In aid of the oppressed non-believers, he had built a small place to worship at the corner of his garden. Whenever he recited the Qur’an, his voice would tremble in awe and he would begin shedding tears. Those who hear his recitation while passing by his house would stop and listen to him. Sometimes there would be crowds in front of his house and the people of Quraish were not happy with this scene. They were scared that Abu Bakr’s recitation of the Qur’an was going to cause their children and slaves to go astray. They went to complain about him to his guardian Ibn al-Daghina. Ibn al-Daghina told Abu Bakr:

“O Abu Bakr! Either sit in your house quietly or announce that you no longer are under my protection.” Abu Bakr (r.a.) gave him the following response:

“I return your guardianship to you. Allah’s protection is enough for me. (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45; Ibn Hisham, I, 395-396)



We observe one of the most remarkable examples of preaching by using the Qur'an in Mus'ab b. Umair's (r.a.) invitation of Usaid b. Hudair and Sa'd b. Muadh to Islam. In Medina Mus'ab (r.a.) had awakened the hearts and minds of many by means of the Qur'an. He combined the enchanting and persuasive tone of the Qur'an with his beautiful voice and won many people's hearts. He had educated the Medinan helpers, who opened their doors to the migrants of Mecca. (Ibn Hisham, II, 43-46; Ibn Sa'd, III, 604-605; Ibn al-Athir, *Ushd al-Ghabah*, I, 112-113)

The recitation of the Qur'an with a spiritually improved heart leaves indelible traces on people's souls. Everybody is benefited from it to the extent of their knowledge and wisdom. There are all kinds of cure for spiritual problems. Every single verse has the quality to cure the troubles of both individuals and the whole society. This is why Muslim preachers need to know how to choose which verses should be read to which audience. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would pay special attention to this matter. He would choose and recite verses in accordance with the state of his audience. He disciplined his Companions in the same manner. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would tell his envoys which verses and chapters they should recite considering the beliefs of the country that they were going to be visiting. For instance, he told Iyash b. Abi Rabi'a, his emissary to the head of Himyar, to recite chapter al-Bayyinah (98). (Ibn Sa'd, I, 282)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would write some verses in his letters considering the faith of his addressee. The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) also paid him (pbuh) the utmost attention in order to employ the Holy Qur'an as an instrument in their call to Islam.

Believers who migrated to Abyssinia and Meccans who wanted to return them to Mecca were in the court of the king of Abyssinia. The king listened the claims of Meccan polytheists but he wanted to hear the other side of the story before giving any judgment, and summoned Ja'far ibn Abi Talib to the court to answer the charges against the Muslims, and there Ja'far (r.a.) gave a most memorable speech. While listening to Ja'far's defense the King asked him:

“Do you have anything in your memory of the things that were revealed to the Prophet of the Muslims by Allah?” Ja'far (r.a.) replied in the affirmative and began to recite verses from chapter Maryam (19). He recited the verses

about Zechariah (A.S.), John the Baptist (A.S.), and finally about Mary mother of the believers. The Quranic verses softened the hearts.

These verses intentionally chosen by Ja'far (r.a.) were about issues which about which the Christians could also relate to. When Ja'far (r.a.) ended his recitation, the Abyssinian King raised his head and said:

“Certainly the fountainhead of what I have just listened to and that of the verses revealed to Jesus (A.S.) are the same thing. He then turned to the Mccan envoys and told them:

“Go back to your home. By Allah I will never give Muslims to you and they are free to live in my kingdom for as long as they wish.” (Ibn Hisham, I, 358-360)

In addition to the matchless eloquence and the clarity of the Qur'an, Ja'far's ability and wit in choosing the appropriate verses played an important role in this incident, which occupies a very significant place in Islamic history.

These examples clearly prove how significant and influential the Qur'an was, and still is, as an instrument in the call to Islam. This is why Muslim preachers must have a strong knowledge of the Qur'an and use it adequately in their missionary activities. They should even try to become a living Qur'an just as the Prophet (pbuh) was and invite people to Allah by means of their morals and manners shaped by the Qur'an.

B. The Prophet's Miracles

**Bâkî mu'cizelere ne hâcet vâsf-ı hak isbâtına
Câhil iken el, senin ilmin yeter bürhân sana¹⁷**

Fuzûlî

Miracles are extraordinary events that take place at the hands of the prophets and render their audience unable to demonstrate something similar. The Qur'an states that prophets were forced to demonstrate some miracles in order for people to accept their teachings and invitation.

It should be stated that miracles are not imperative proofs of prophethood but just signs showing its authenticity and affecting the audience instantly. The

17. Why should I need other miracles? The Qur'an and your knowledge (sunnah), which you brought when people were ignorant, are enough to prove that you are a true prophet.

real object of prophethood is to teach virtues and good morals. This is why the prophets' morals and exemplary lives were more important and had more effect upon the non-believers than the demonstration of instantaneous, external, and temporary events of an extraordinary nature. People need to follow the customs of the prophets. Allah the Almighty expresses that the Qur'an should be enough for those non-believers who ask for a miracle:

“Yet they say: Why are not Signs sent down to him from his Lord? Say: The Signs are indeed with Allah: and I am indeed a clear Warner. And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to thee the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is Mercy and a Reminder to those who believe.” (al-Ankabut 29; 50-51)

Non-believers' requests for miracles were not sincere and were not done with the intention of accepting the truth. Their only reason to make such requests was to mock, deny, and stand against the truth. When a miracle was demonstrated, this would have caused the destruction of the deniers. Since the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not want his people to be destroyed because of this sin, he usually opposed such requests. The following presents a good example of this:

One day the polytheists of Quraish asked the Prophet (pbuh) to show a miracle. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“What kind of miracle do you want me to show?” They replied:

“Transform the hill of Uhud into gold for us.” He (the Holy Prophet) asked again:

“If I do this, would you acknowledge my prophethood?” They said:

“Yes, if what you say is true and if our faith will make you happy, then transform the hill of Uhud into gold for us and we will believe in you.” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked one more time:

“Will you really do what you say?” The polytheists swore and responded in the affirmative. Upon which Allah's Messenger (pbuh) prayed to Allah. Then the Archangel Gabriel (A.S.) came and stated:

“O Muhammad! Your Lord sends His greetings to you and says: “If you wish, I will transform the hill of Uhud into gold for them. But I will punish severely all those who deny My message afterwards. If you wish, I will not

do what you prayed for and leave the gates of repentance and mercy open for them.” After which the Prophet (pbuh), a mercy to the universe, prayed:

“Dear Lord! Please do not turn the hill of Uhud into gold and then punish them. On the contrary, keep Your gates of mercy and repentance open for them. Give them time until they become repentant.” Later, the polytheists got scared and changed their requests. The following verse was revealed as a result of this incident:

“And we refrain from sending the Signs, only because the men of former generations treated them as false: we sent the she-camel to Thamud to open their eyes, but they treated her wrongfully: we do not send signs save to warn (not to destroy or to punish).” (al-Isra 17; 59) (Ibn Hanbal, I, 242; Tabari, *Tafsir*, XV, 108)¹⁸

Nonetheless, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) showed miracles from time to time and because of them many people converted to Islam. In the early years of his mission, a bedouin came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked:

“What is the proof that you are the Messenger of Allah?” Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) replied:

“Let me summon a bunch of dates from that tree. They will bear testimony that I am the Messenger of Allah.” He called to it and the bunch began to climb down from the tree and finally fell right before the Prophet (pbuh). It said:

“Peace and blessings be upon you O Messenger of Allah!” When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) commanded the bunch:

“Now go back to your place” it went back up and attached itself back into its old place. And the bedouin immediately converted to Islam. (Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 6)

Below are some of the Prophet’s other miracles, which strengthened the faith and helped people to find guidance:

A polytheist came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

18. Requests for miracles mostly came from the non-believers, whereas believers abstained from showing such disrespect, because seeing the Prophet (pbuh) was enough to feel reassured and believe.



“I will not convert to Islam unless you revive my dead daughter.” They went to her grave. When the Prophet (pbuh) addressed the dead girl, she arose out of her grave and said:

“Here I am O Messenger of Allah!” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked her:

“Would you like to stay with your father on earth?” She replied:

“No, because I have met on the other side something that is much more superior than my parents.” Then she went back into her grave and disappeared.

It is also known that at least two more miracles happened in Prophet’s life similar to this one. (Qadi Iyad, I, 279; Hamidullah, I, 125-126)

According to another report, when the Prophet’s uncle Abbas was brought to Medina amongst the captives of the battle of Badr, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“O Abbas! Yu are a rich man so pay ransom for yourself, for Aqil your brother’s son, for Nawfal b. Harith and for your contracted slave Utba b. Amr.” Abbas said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I am a Muslim. Quraish forced me to join the battle.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“Allah knows your faith. If you are telling the truth, Allah will reward you; however, in appearance your state was against us, therefore you need to pay your ransom” and he also confiscated from Abbas 800 pieces of gold as war booty. Abbas said:

“O Messenger of Allah! At least count this money as our ransom.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“No, it is the war booty that Allah has taken from you and given to us.” Abbas said:

“O Messenger of Allah! It looks like you will make me beg for the rest of my life.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked him:

“O Abbas! What about the pieces of gold that you gave to your wife Umm al-Fadl?” Abbas was surprised, and when he asked: “Which gold?” Allah’s Messenger said:

“The gold that you gave to your wife Umm al-Fadl on the day that you were leaving Mecca and then you said to your wife: “I do not know what will happen to me. If something happens to me, give such and such amount to Ubaidullah, such and such amount to Fadl, such and such amount to Qusam, and such and such amount to Abdullah.” Abbas was surprised all the more by these words and asked:

“Who told you this?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

“Allah told me.” Upon which Abbas converted to Islam saying:

“I swear by Allah Who has sent you as His Messenger, nobody except I and Umm al-Fadl knew this. You certainly are the Messenger of Allah.” (Bukhari, Jihad, 172; Ibn Hanbal, I, 353; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 13-15)

This miracle affected Abbas to such an extent that he converted to Islam.

Another instance that consists of a miracle of the Messenger of Allah took place as follows:

According to the narration of Umar (r.a.) someone from Sulaim clan hunted a big lizard and brought it to the Prophet (pbuh):

“I swear by Lat and Uzza that I will not believe in you until this lizard declares its faith in you.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked the lizard:

“O lizard! Whom do you worship?” The lizard replied in eloquent Arabic:

“Here I am at your service O Messenger of Allah! I worship Allah who owns the Throne in heavens, reign on earth, the path in seas, mercy in Paradise, and punishment in Hell.” After that the Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“Then who am I?” The lizard replied:

“You are the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds and the last Prophet. Those who acknowledge you are saved and those who deny you are perished.” Then the man excitedly said:

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. You are the true Messenger of Allah. By Allah you were the one that I hated most in my youth, but now I love you more than myself and my children. I believe in you with my inside, with my outside, and with my entire limbs.”



Then he narrated the miracle he had witnessed to one thousand people and all of them came and converted to Islam. (Haythami, VIII, 293)

Beside the miracles that the Prophet (pbuh) showed to guide people to the straight path, he also demonstrated miracles to his Companions, who were under physically and spiritually difficult circumstances.

Jabir b. Abdullah (r.a.) narrated:

“People became very thirsty on the day of the Hudaibiya Treaty. A small pot containing some water was in front of the Prophet (pbuh) and when he had finished the ablution, the people rushed towards him. He asked,

“What is wrong with you?” They replied,

“We have no water either for performing ablution or for drinking except what is present in front of you.” So he placed his hand in that pot and the water started flowing among his fingers like springs. We all drank and performed ablution (from it).” Jabir (r.a.) was asked:

“How many were you?” he replied,

“Even if we had been one-hundred-thousand, it would have been sufficient for us, but we were fifteen-hundred.” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 25)

A similar miracle was narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira:

“We were accompanying the Apostle (pbuh) in a march (towards Tabuk). The people’s provisions were almost depleted and the situation became so critical that the soldiers decided to slaughter some of their camels. Upon which Umar (r.a.) said:

“O Messenger of Allah, I wish that you could pool together what has been left of the provisions with the people and then invoke Allah’s blessings upon it.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did accordingly. The one who had wheat in his possession came to him with his wheat, he who had dates with him came with his dates and he who possessed stones of dates did likewise. It was asked:

“What did they do with the date-stones?” They said:

“The people were sucking them and then drank water over them.” And then the narrator continued:

“He (the Holy Prophet) invoked the blessings of Allah upon these provisions. And there occurred such a miraculous increase in the stocks that the people replenished their provisions fully. At that time he (the Holy Prophet) said:

“I bear testimony to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and I am His messenger. The bondsman who would meet Allah without entertaining any doubt about these two fundamentals would enter heaven.” (Muslim, Iman, 44)

As it can be seen from the examples above, Allah’ Apostle (pbuh) sometime used miracles to warm people’s hearts to Islam while performing his mission. In this context he manifested many miracles. However, we should also remember that the Prophet (pbuh) showed all these miracles with the help and permission of Allah the Almighty not by his own initiative.

C. His Exemplary Life

Revîşi pâk gerek da’vî-i İslâm edenin¹⁹

Eşrefoğlu Rûmî

The good and praiseworthy actions and behavior of the preacher are among the most important means used in the call to Islam and to Allah the Almighty. A preacher of Islam should be like a living book from which his audience reads the principles of Islam. In order to make the message of Islam reach the audience and be successful, its preacher should be a good example and apply the principles that he preaches to his own life. In other words, a preacher must have the characteristics of praiseworthy morality, consistency of speech and actions, and unity of knowledge and actions because human nature tends to accept seeing behavior and actions more than simply hearing about them. Put differently, Islam needs to be represented by actions rather than preached in words.²⁰

19. All actions of those who claim to be the true Muslims must be pure, flawless, and in accordance with the regulations of Islam.

20. Ali Köse who studied native British converts to Islam in his dissertation states in the conclusion part of his study that “Many converts recounted that their conversion was the result of the positive examples of Muslims. Contact with a follower of Islam may have increased the likelihood of conversion and been instrumental in the process. (Ali Köse, p. 194)

In the verses below Allah the Almighty invites preachers of Islam to be exemplary people and wants their actions to not conflict with their words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبِرَ
مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do.” (al-Saff 61; 2-3)

اتَّامُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“Do you enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (to practice it) yourselves, and yet you study the Scripture? Will you not understand?” (al-Baqarah 2; 44)

The words of those who do not have a strong personality and whose words are not compatible with their actions will not have any effect upon their listeners. Therefore, prophets and their followers have to be careful about the consistency of their words and actions. The Prophet Shu’aib (Jethro) (A.S.), who is also known as “the preacher to the prophets”, addresses his people as stated in the verse below:

“...I wish not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do...” (Hud 11; 88)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who was the most excellent exemplar in every aspect of his life, demonstrated this attribute perfectly.

Allah’s Messenger was so careful about living in accordance with his teachings that those who looked at him did not need anything else to be convinced that he was telling the truth and to acknowledge his prophethood. Abdullah b. Rawaha’s following line is a good statement of this reality:

لَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ مُبَيِّنَةٌ لَكَانَ مَنْظَرُهُ يُنْبِئُكَ بِالْحَبْرِ

“Even if he did not come with evident miracles, just looking at his blessed face, observing his morals and disposition give you satisfactory knowledge.” This is not an exact translation of the Arabic sentence!

This admirable attribute existed in the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) before his prophethood. He had lived a decent life for forty years and never been involved with the sins and ugliness prevalent in his society. This fact is referred to in the following verse:

“...I dwelt among you a whole lifetime before it (the revelation came to me). Have you then no sense?” (Yunus 10; 15-16)

These divine statements shed light on the life of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) before his prophethood, and in a way it’s a warning of the Prophet’s (pbuh) saying:

“O Meccans who stubbornly and persistently oppose me! I was amongst you for forty years before I brought you the Qur’an. Is not my existence for such a long time amongst you enough to know how trustworthy I am and that the Qur’an is nothing but the word of Allah?”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was the most superior one in munificence, most perfect one in modesty, most eminent one in nobility, most trustworthy one, strongest one in endurance, and the farthest one from all kinds of dissipation amongst his people. *Al-amin* (the most trustworthy one) was the Prophet’s second name. When he was twenty five years old, he was known in Mecca only by the name of al-Amin. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 121, 156) See how nicely Khadijah (r. anha) emphasized this characteristic of the Prophet (pbuh) in the following report:

“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 those who are deserving and afflicted by calamity. You speak the truth. You are trustworthy. You have good morals.” (Bukhari, Bad’ul wahy, 1; Ibn Sa’d, I, 195)

In his first address on the hill of Safa Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) presented his exemplary life as his primary proof to persuade his listeners. He (pbuh) began his speech by asking:

“If I were to inform you that there were horsemen emerging out of the foot of this mountain, would you believe me?” and his audience replied:



“We have not experienced any lie from you.” As a result of this response our beloved Prophet (pbuh) began to convey them the message of Islam. (Muslim, Iman, 355; Ibn Sa’d, I, 200)

The following example about the necessity of the consistency of words with actions of the preachers is also very remarkable. When the ruler of Uman received the Prophet’s letter inviting him to Islam, he asked for information about Prophet’s life. After receiving what he had requested, he said:

“Allah granted me the opportunity to know this illiterate Prophet. He would not order goodness unless he lives it first in his own life and he would not prohibit a wrong action unless he gave it up himself first. He will certainly be victorious. He cannot be stopped. He will certainly be superior and will not be left alone. He keeps his word and fulfills his promise.” Finally, he converted to Islam saying “I definitely accept that he is a prophet.” Then he composed a poem about his conversion addressing a Prophet’s emissary Amr b. As (r.a.):

أَتَانِي عَمْرُو بِالتِّي لَيْسَ بَعْدَهَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْءٌ وَالتَّصِيحُ نَصِيحُ
فِيَا عَمْرُو قَدْ أَسَلَمْتُ لِلَّهِ جَهْرَةً يُنَادِي بِهَا فِي الْوَادِيَيْنِ فَصِيحُ

“Amr brought me such a truth that no truth exists beyond it. The adviser of that Truth is a true adviser. O Amr! I openly submit myself to Allah. An eloquent tongue is shouting my state in these valleys.” (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, I, 262)

When Abdullah b. Salam, a prominent Jewish scholar of the time, saw the Prophet’s face, he said: “This face cannot belong to a liar” and then converted to Islam. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 42)²¹

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) attached importance to the fact that his message be material rather than be abstract statements. According to the narration of Anas (r.a.) “Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would want Muhajirs and Ansar to pray right behind him in order to see closely and learn (how to pray) directly from him.” (Ibn Majah, Salat, 44)

21. Ja’far al-Sadiq (q.s.), one of the early sufi masters of the golden chain, says that:

كُونُوا لَنَا دُعَاةً بِغَيْرِ السِّبْتِكُمْ لِيُرَوْا مِنْكُمْ الْوَرَعُ وَالْإِحْتِهَادُ وَالصَّلَاحُ وَالْخَيْرُ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ دَاعِيَةٌ.
“Be inviters to Islam not by your tongues but by your exemplary lives. Show modesty, effort, piety, and goodness in your actions. These (attributes) are the real inviters.”



Again when he performed his pilgrimage, he demonstrated most of the rites while he was on his camel to let believers see easily and he said:

“O People! Learn your rituals (by seeing me performing them), for I do not know whether I will be able to perform pilgrimage after this one.” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 318; Muslim, Hajj, 310)

Just as being an example in performing the acts of worship, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became an actual criterion in abstaining from prohibitions. For instance, Allah’s Apostle had a gold ring and he used to wear it with the stone towards the inner part of his hand, and so the people had similar rings made for themselves. Later, the Prophet sat on the pulpit and removed his ring saying,

“I used to wear this ring and turn its stone towards the palm of my hand.” He then threw it away and said,

“By Allah, I will never wear it.” Therefore, all the people threw away their rings as well. (Bukhari, Aiman, 6)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) prepared the circumstances for the people he invited to Islam in order for them to see the living Islam and so make their decisions accordingly. Instead of gathering the captives of the battle of Badr in one place, he advised his Companions to host them one by one. The aim of this approach was to let the captives see closely how the Companions lived Islam, the beauty of Islam, and thus to let their hearts warm to the path of the truth. (Ibn Hisham, II, 288)

Similarly, the same aim was observed in the Companions’ hosting the members of foreign delegations separately. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 432) For instance when the delegation from Taif came to Medina, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) hosted them in the mosque to let them listen to the Qur’an, to see how believers peacefully pray in reverence. (Abu Dawud, Imarah, 26)

After teaching them Islam, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would send the new converts back to their towns so that they could convey the message of Islam to their people through their exemplary lives. Malik b. Huwairth narrated:

“I came to the Prophet with some men from my tribe and stayed with him for twenty nights. He was kind and merciful to us. When he realized our longing for our families, he said to us,





“Go back and stay with your families and teach them the religion and tell them the things needed to be told.” Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) ordered us to do some more things some of which I still remember and others of which I do not. . Then he (the Holy Prophet) continued:

“Offer the prayer just as you saw me praying and one of you should pronounce the Adhan for the prayer when it is time is due and the oldest one amongst you should lead the prayer.” (Bukhari, Adhaan, 18)

Ottomans sent religious families with exemplary lives first to the lands they conquered following the custom of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). People who saw the believers’ sincere and peaceful lives embraced Islam in crowds. Today preachers of Islam have to apply the same method in delivering the message of Islam all around the world.

D. Teachers and Missionaries Trained by the Prophet (pbuh)

“O Messenger of Allah! Send us an instructor to teach us our religion and the Qur’an.”

Hamidullah, *Wathaiq*, p. 52

While preaching Islam by his actions and words Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also trained many instructors and missionaries which enabled him to deliver the message of Islam to a much wider audience. He appointed his talented Companions as instructors both inside and outside of the borders of Mecca and Medina. Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) also sent missionary envoys to the neighboring tribes which requested instructors from him to learn Islam.

After the migration, our Prophet (pbuh) had a special section built next to the mosque which he used like a college and trained the teachers and missionaries of Islam. Those who were trained in that school are known as “*Ashab al-Suffah* or the Companions of *suffah*.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was their head instructor. Some Companions like Abdullah b. Mas’ud, Ubai b. Ka’b, and Muadh b. Jabal also gave lessons. The needs of the Companions of *suffah* were covered by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and he also encouraged the wealthy Companions to help them.

Since the Companions of *suffah* were constantly with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and were busy with learning, they mastered the regulations of Islam, the Qur’an and Sunnah well. When newly converted tribes asked for an



instructor, the Prophet (pbuh) usually sent some of the Companions of *suffah*. Thus, they played an important role in conveying and spreading the message of Islam.

From the first day that Our Prophet (pbuh) began to call people to Islam, he considered everybody who believed in him to be a prospective instructor. Indeed he stated at the end of his farewell sermon that:

“... *It is incumbent upon those who are present to convey this message to those who are absent, for some of those to whom it is conveyed may comprehend and apply it better than some of those who have heard it directly...*”
(Bukhari, Adaahi, 5)

Following the directions of the Prophet (pbuh) these distinguished people enlightened their surroundings like candles.

Abu Bakr (r.a.) was one of the prominent ones from among these distinguished people. He immediately began to invite people to Allah openly as soon as he embraced Islam. Abu Bakr (r.a.) was a gentle person loved by everyone. He was a good mannered, trustworthy, and honest merchant. Since he was knowledgeable and a good speaker many people would come to benefit from him. He would speak about Islam and Allah to those whom he saw fitting. Zubair b. Awwam, Uthman b. Affan, Talha b. Unaidullah, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, Abdurrahman b. Awf and many others embraced Islam by his guidance. (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, III, 80)

Twelve Muslims who had met the Prophet (pbuh) at the second Aqabah pledge of allegiance began to spread Islam in Medina. Later, *ansar* wrote a letter and sent it to the Messenger of Allah. The letter consisted of the following request:

إِنْعَثْ إِلَيْنَا رَجُلًا يُفَقِّهُنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَيُقَرِّئُنَا الْقُرْآنَ

“O Messenger of Allah! Send us an instructor to teach us our religion and the Qur’an.”

Upon which Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) appointed Mus’ab b. Umair (r.a.) as an instructor and sent him to be the pioneer of Islam in Medina. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 220; Hamidullah, *Wathaiq*, p. 52)



This young Companion, an admirer of the Prophet (pbuh), began to tell people about Islam day and night. As'ad b. Zurara (r.a.) was one of the first converts to Islam and helped Mus'ab (r.a.) in his mission. The following information which we will narrate from the Islamic history books clearly shows the reasons for the success of Mus'ab's policy and method of preaching.

One day As'ad b. Zurar and Mus'ab b. Umair (r. anhum) sat by the well in the garden of Zafar clan. When Sa'd b. Muadh, one of the prominent members of Abdulashhal clan, heard this, he told Usaid b. Hudair:

“You are a calculating man who does not need anybody. Go to those men who came to our neighborhood to ruin the faith of our weak and warn them not to come here again. If As'ad b. Zurara was my relative, I would do it myself.”

Usaid picked up his spear and went there immediately. He told them angrily:

“What brought you here? Have you brought this stranger to ruin the faith of our weak? I do not want to see you doing this again. If you value your lives, leave this neighborhood immediately.” Mus'ab (r.a.) acted sagaciously and said to him:

“Would you sit and listen to what I say? You are an intelligent man. If you like what I say, you may accept them or if you do not, you won't.” Usaid said:

“You are right.” and stuck his spear to the ground and sat down.

Mus'ab told him about Islam and recited parts of the Qur'an.

As soon as Usaid listened to the Qur'an, the light of Islam shone in his face and his heart softened towards Islam. He converted to Islam saying about the Qur'an:

“What lovely and lofty words!”

After a while, Sa'd b. Muadh came to them in a fury, but like Usaid, he embraced Islam after listening to Mus'ab (r.a.). Then he went to his people:

“O sons of Abdulashhal! How do you know me?” They said:

“You are a noble person, superior in thinking and a good leader.” Upon which Sa'd b. Muadh (r.a.) told them:

“Until you declare your faith in Allah and His Messenger, let talking to any of your men or women be prohibited.” No one from the Abdulashhal clan was left who did not embrace Islam that evening. (Ibn Hisham, II, 43-46; Ibn Sa’d, III, 604-605; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, I, 112-113)

Just like Medina, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent some of his Companions as instructors to other regions. One day after performing the dawn prayer, he turned to the congregation and asked:

“*O Ansar and Muhajir! Which one of you would go to Yemen?*” Abu Bakr (r.a.) said:

“I would O Messenger of Allah!” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) kept his silence and did not respond to him. Then he asked again:

“*O Ansar and Muhajir! Which one of you would go to Yemen?*” Umar (r.a.) said:

“I would O Messenger of Allah!” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) kept his silence and did not respond to him. When he asked for a third time:

“*O Ansar and Muhajir! Which one of you would go to Yemen?*” Mu’adh b. Jabal (r.a.) said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I would go.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“*O Mu’adh! This job is yours.*” Then he turned to Bilal (r.a.) and asked:

“*O Bilal! Bring me my turban.*” When his turban was brought, he wrapped it on Mu’adh’s head. Then he asked:

“*How will you judge when the occasion of deciding a case arises?*” He (Mu’adh) replied:

“I shall judge in accordance with Allah’s Book.” He (the Holy Prophet) asked:

“What will you do if you do not find any guidance in Allah’s Book?” He replied:

“I shall act in accordance with the Sunnah of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh).” He asked:

“What will you do if you do not find any guidance in the Sunnah of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) and in Allah’s Book?” He replied:



“I shall do my best to form an opinion and I shall spare no effort.” The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) then patted him on the breast and said:

“Praise be to Allah Who has helped the messenger of the Apostle of Allah to find something which pleases the Apostle of Allah.” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 230; Ibn Sa’d, III, 584; Diyarbekri, II, 142)

Besides Mu’adh (r.a.) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent Ali (r.a.) to Yemen. Ali (r.a.) said that:

“Some people from Yemen came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Send us people to teach us the religion of Allah and judge amongst us according to the book of Allah.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told me:

“O Ali! Go to the people of Yemen and teach them Sunnah and judge amongst them by the book of Allah.” I said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I am young and inexperienced. I may face issues that I do not know.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) put his hand upon my chest and told me:

“Go! Allah will inspire the right judgment in your heart and give perseverance to your tongue.” After the Prophet’s words I have never had doubts about my judgments. (Ibn Majah, Ahkam, I; Hakim, III, 210)

Like the Prophet (pbuh) the first four rightly guided caliphs of Islam sent instructors and missionaries to the various regions of the Muslim lands. For instance, upon a request coming from the governor of Damascus, Umar (r.a.) sent Mu’adh b. Jabal, Ubadah b. Samit, and Abu al-Darda (r. anhum) to teach the Qur’an and the regulations of Islam. He advised them:

“Begin preaching and teaching Islam from the city of Humus. You will find its people with different abilities. Some comprehend quickly. If you meet such people, guide some people to them to learn the Qur’an. After making some advancements, one of you should stay in Humus, one of you should go to Damascus, and the other one of you should go to Palestine.”

After they had served in Humus for a while, Ubada (r.a.) stayed there, Abu al-Darda (r.a.) went to Damascus, and Mu’adh b. Jabal (r.a.) went to Palestine. After Mu’adh (r.a.) passed away due to the plague, Ubada (r.a.) took his

place. Abu al-Darda (r.a.), on the other hand stayed in Damascus until the end of his life. (Ibn Sa'd, II, 357)

One of the remarkable points of these reports is that these instructors stayed and served in the cities to which they had been appointed until the end of their lives and did not return to Medina.

Abu Idris al-Khawlani narrated a memory about those days as follows:

“I entered the Damascus mosque and there was a young man with a beautiful mouth and white teeth sitting with some people. When they disagreed about something, they referred it to him and proceeded from his statement. I inquired about him, and it was said, “This is Muadh b. Jabal.” The next day I went to the noon-prayer, and I found that he had preceded me to the noon prayer and I found him praying.”

Abu Idris continued, “I waited for him until he had finished the prayer. Then I came to him from the front and greeted him saying,

“By Allah, I love you for the sake of Allah!..” (Muwatta, Sha'r, 16)

Muslim states established after the four rightly guided caliphs followed the Prophet's method of Islamization of the lands that they conquered. They sent instructors and callers of Islam to such lands.²²

Only twenty thousand of the one hundred and twenty thousand Companions who had been present at the farewell sermon of the Prophet (pbuh) died in and were buried in Mecca and Medina. With their love and joy the rest of those Companions set off on journeys and spread all around the world to deliver the message of Islam. For centuries they enlightened the people with the light of the torch they had received from the Messenger of Allah. Today, many people in all parts of the world are in need and wait for the call of their Creator to be conveyed to them. Those who follow in the footsteps of Allah's Messenger

22. Ottomans who followed the policy of Allah's Messenger (pbuh), for instance, usually sent scholars and Sufis to the conquered lands. These people were shown where they needed to settle and many times they were given small villages or districts. Those scholars and Sufis, who went to the newly conquered lands, settled there, and founded convents, played a very important role in the Islamization of these lands. For instance, the rate of Muslim population in the city of Trabzon, which had a population of 7017 in 1523 was %14.3. This rate went up to %46.7 in 1553 and %53.62 in 1583 thanks to the efforts of these men and women. In the following years the ratio of the Muslim population to the non-Muslim one continued to rise. (Gülfettin Çelik, p. 88)

(pbuh) and his Companions (r. anhum) should mobilize all their efforts to meet those people's needs.

E. Letters and Envoys

“O Messenger of Allah! Send us wherever you would like to send us. We will obey and fulfill your command.”

Ibn Sa'd, I, 264

Another means used by the Messenger of Islam (pbuh) in his call were his letters and his delegates to the rulers of neighboring countries. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sent his emissaries to the countries where he did not have a chance to go himself. Thus he fulfilled his mission through his envoy.

According to these sources our Prophet (pbuh) sent some letters during the Meccan period. For instance, in the first years of his prophethood, when an old man named Aksam b. Sayfi from the tribe of Tamim sent a letter and asked for information about Islam, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) replied to his request by the following letter:

From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Aksam b. Sayfi ...

*May the peace of Allah be upon you. I inform you about my praises to Allah. Allah commands me to say “La ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lahu – There is no god but Allah Who is the One with no partners.” and preach these words to everybody. All creation and rules belongs to Allah. Everything is His. Allah creates them, takes their lives, and resurrects them in the Hereafter. Return is most certainly to Him. I informed you about the prophets' message. You will undoubtedly be asked about the Great Tiding. You will soon hear its news.” (Hamidullah, *al-Wathaiq*, p. 254-255)*

In his letter which he sent with the first group which migrated to Abyssinia, he invited the king of Abyssinia to Islam and asked him to protect the believers who came to seek shelter in his kingdom. Nonetheless, the Prophet's attempts to establish connections with neighboring countries through letters and envoys began in the sixth year after his migration to Medina. When the Prophet (pbuh) came back to Medina from the treaty of Hudaibiya, one day he went to his Companions and said:

“O People! Allah the Almighty has surely sent me as a mercy to everybody. Do not oppose me like the disciples of Jesus (A.S.), the son of Mary, opposed him.” Companions asked:

“How did the disciples opposed him?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“He invited them to a thing to which I will invite you. Those whom he sent to near places obeyed him and found salvation, while those whom he sent to far lands frowned and acted slowly.” The Companions stood up and said:

“We will go wherever you would like us to go. We will fulfill your order. By Allah we will not oppose you in anything.” When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) decided to write letters to the rulers of neighboring countries, the Companions told him:

“O Messenger of Allah! They will not read a letter unless it is sealed.” Then Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had a silver ring made for himself and engraved upon it the words: “Muhammad, Messenger of Allah.” Later he used this ring to seal his letters.” (Muslim, Libas, 57, 58; Ibn Sa’d, I, 264)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had his letter to Ashama, the king of Abyssinia, written as follows:

“In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful,

From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Ashama the king of Abyssinia. Embrace Islam. I inform you of my praises to Allah that there is no god but Him. He is the Ruler, the Holy, the Peace, the Guarantor, and the Guardian. I bear testimony that Jesus son of Mary is the spirit and word of Allah. Allah dropped him into the chaste, pure, and protected Mary so that she became pregnant with Jesus. Just like Allah created Adam with His Hand and Breath, He created him (Jesus) with His Spirit and Breath.

I invite you to Allah the One Who has no partner, to be continuous in obeying Him, to abide by me, and to believe in the book revealed to me, for I am the Messenger of Allah. I sent you my cousin Ja’far and a group of Muslims. Host them and do not object. I invite you and your army to Allah. Thus, I fulfilled my duty to deliver (the message) and advised to you. Accept my advice. Peace be upon those who follow the guidance.”



When the king received the Prophet's letter, he kissed it and rubbed it to his eyes. He modestly descended from his throne, sat down, and embraced Islam by bearing testimony. And then he said:

"If I had the possibility to go to him, I would certainly do it. May Allah be my witness this is the illiterate prophet for whom Jews and Christians were waiting. As Moses (A.S.) gave the glad tidings of Jesus (A.S.), Jesus (A.S.) gave the good news of Muhammad's (A.S.) coming. Even though getting the news is not same as seeing him personally, what can I do? I do not have much support from the Abyssinians. I am waiting for the number of my helpers to rise and their hearts to warm to Islam."

Then the king sent the following response to the Prophet's letter:

"In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful,

This is a letter from Ashama the king of Abyssinia to Muhammad the Messenger of Allah:

O the Prophet of Allah! May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you. There is no god but Him, and He is the One Who has guided me to Islam.

Your letter about Jesus reached me. I swear by the name of the Lord of the heavens and earth that Jesus did not say anything about himself more than what you said about him. In fact, he is just like you described him. We have perceived why you have been sent and we have hosted your cousin and his friends.

I bear testimony that you are truthful and have been sent to confirm the previous prophets. I took allegiance to your cousin as your representative and submitted myself to Allah the Lord of the worlds. I am sending my son Erha b. Ashama to you. Unfortunately, I cannot influence anybody other than my own family in this respect. If you would like me to come to you, I will do so. I bear testimony that everything you say is true. May the peace of Allah be upon you O Messenger of Allah!" (Ibn Sa'd, I, 258; Hamidullah, *al-Wathaiq*, p. 100, 104-105)

The Prophet's letters were usually regarded with friendliness by their addressees. This demonstrates that the Prophet's message was heard by neighboring countries and it achieved an influential state. By using this power and influence, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) invited people to Islam on every occasion.

A letter from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was brought to Hiraql (Cesar), the Emperor of Rome (who was on a visit to Jerusalem at that time) by Dihya b. Khalifa al-Kalbi. Dihya (r.a.) delivered it to the governor of Busra and the governor passed it on to Hiraql. When Hiraql finished reading the letter, clamor and confusion was raised around him. The Emperor had first wanted to convert to Islam but he changed his mind as a result of the pressure from his people. (Bukhari, Bad'ul Wahy, 5-6; Muslim, Jihad, 74; Ibn Hanbal, I, 262)

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) sent Abdullah b. Hudhaifa (r.a.) to the Persian Shah Chosroes. He (pbuh) stated in his letter:

"In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful,

From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Chosroes the leader of Persians. May peace be upon those who find guidance, who believe in Allah and His Messenger, who bear testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and Messenger!

I invite you to belief in Allah for I am a Messenger sent by Allah to all humanity to warn those who live and inform of the punishment of those who deserve to be punished. Embrace Islam and gain safety. If you turn away from my invitation, the sins of all Zoroastrians will be upon you."

After Chosroes had listened to the Prophet's letter, he ordered his men to take Abdullah b. Hudaifa (r.a.) out. As soon as Abdullah left the presence of the Shah, he started his journey back to Medina. He said to himself:

"By Allah, I do not mind either of the two ways (death or life) for myself. I have delivered Allah's Messenger's letter and fulfilled my job." (Ibn Hanbal, I, 305; Ibn Sa'd, I, 260; IV, 189; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, IV, 263-6; Hamidullah, *al-Wathaiq*, p. 140)

For Companions it was an honor to take the letters of the Prophet to the faraway lands. They never hesitated to fulfill their task. There were those who faced dangerous moments like Abdullah b. Hudhafa (r.a.). Each one of them had only one goal in mind, that was, to deliver the Prophet's letter to its destination. They would not even think about death, captivity, or other hardships that they might face on their path.

One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked:



“O People! Which one of you would deliver this letter to the Muqawqis of Alexandria expecting the rewards just from Allah?” Khatib b. Abi Baltaa (r.a.) stood up and came closer to the Prophet and he said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I can deliver it.” Allah’s Messenger told him:

“O Khatib May Allah bless you in this task.” Khatib took the Prophet’s letter to Muqawqis of Alexandria.²³ Below is what was written in the letter:

“In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful,

From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Muqawqis, ruler of the Copts of Alexandria,

Peace be on him who has taken the right course. Thereafter, I invite you to accept Islam. Therefore, if you want security, embrace Islam. Embrace it so that Allah, the Sublime, shall reward you doubly. But if you refuse to do so, responsibility for the transgression of the entire nation shall be yours.

“... O People of the Book come to common terms between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah...” (Al-i Imran 3; 64)

After reading the Prophet’s letter Muqawqis called Khatib b. Abi Baltaa (r.a.) and gathered the clergy. Khatib narrates the rest of the incident as follows:

“Muqawqis told me:

“I will speak with you and ask you some things that I would like to understand.” And he continued:

“Is not your master a prophet?” I replied:

“Yes, he is the Messenger of Allah.” He asked again:

“If he is really a prophet, why did not he pray against his people who forced him to leave his home town and take shelter in another one?” I said:

23. There are specific titles for the rulers of neighboring countries: For the emperors of Byzantine “Kaisar,” for the shahs of Persia “Kisra,” for the kings of Abyssinia “Najashi,” for the rulers of Egypt “Pharoah,” for the rulers (or vicegerents) of Alexandria “muqawqis,” for the rulers of Yemen and Shihhir “Tubba,” and for the rulers of India “Batlimus.” These are the titles and not the names of the rulers. (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, XI, 228)

“You believe that Jesus son of Mary was a messenger of Allah, don’t you?” Since he was a true prophet, would it not be better if he prayed for Allah to raise him up to the skies and destroy his people when they wanted to hang him?” Muqawqis could not find anything to say. After a moment of silence, he told me to repeat what I had just said. I repeated my words. Muqawqis stayed quiet for a while and then said:

“You said a good thing. You are a wise man. You speak wisely and the words are coming from a wise man.” Then I told him:

“A man before you claimed that he was the lord almighty. Allah the Almighty punished him with the torments of this world and the Hereafter. Take a lesson from the end of those before you and do not become a lesson for the generations that will come after you.” Muqawqis said:

“We have a religion and we will not change it unless we find a superior one.” I told him:

“Islam is certainly superior to your religion. We invite you to Islam which Allah has chosen as the religion for humanity. Muhammad Mustapha (pbuh) invites not only you but the whole of humanity. Amongst them the people of Quraish treated him the harshest, and the Jews did him the worst of enmities. The Christians were the closest ones amongst the people. Jesus (A.S.) gave the glad tidings of Muhammad (A.S.) just like Moses (A.S.) had given the glad tidings of Jesus (A.S.). Our invitation to you to the Qur’an is like your invitation to the followers of the Torah to the Bible. Every man needs to follow the Prophet of their time. And you are amongst those who have reached the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, by calling you to Islam, we are not taking you away from the religion of Jesus (A.S.). By contrast, we offer you the opportunity to act in accordance to his prophethood.” Muqawqis said:

“I examined your prophet’s religion. I found that it does not order to give the world up and prohibit desirable and acceptable things. Your prophet is neither a sorcerer nor a liar who claims to obtain news from the unknown. On the contrary, he carries the signs of prophethood like disclosing the unknown world and bringing news from it. But I would like to think a little more about it.” The he wrote the following response to the Prophet’s letter:

“In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful,

From Muqawqis to Muhammad b. Abdullah



I read your letter and understood what you have written. I know that the coming of a Prophet is still due. But I thought, he would be born in Syria – I have hosted your messenger with respect and honor. I am sending two concubines for you as presents. These concubines belong to a very respectable family amongst us. In addition, I send you some clothes and a steed for riding. May peace be upon you.”

Muqawqis neither rejected nor embraced Islam. He also enjoined me: “Be careful! Copts should not hear a single word from you.” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, IV, 266-267; Ibn Sa’d, I, 260-261; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, III, 530-531)

Not only sending the Prophet’s letters and their contents are important but also the personality and manners of those delivering the letters. Because it affected the acceptance of the letters to whom they were sent. And the Messenger of Allah, who knew this fact well, paid the utmost attention to his envoys to have various praiseworthy qualities.

As we know from the sources, these delegates were intelligent, eloquent, persuasive, gifted and capable people. They knew and understood the essence of Islam and led exemplar lives.

These delegates were chosen from the people who had, for some reason, already visited the lands they were sent to and knew the customs, beliefs and thoughts of their people. They also knew their language. They were neat and organized for these are very important qualities by which to influence the audience. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“You are coming to your brethren; so tidy your mounts and tidy your dress, until you become like a mole, which is the symbol of the face of beauty, among the people. Allah does not like ugly appearances, obscene words or deeds.” (Abu Dawud, *Libas*, 25)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) made very significant recommendations to his delegates. For instance, he wrote a letter to Haris, Mesruh, and Muaim b. Abdikulal, who were in Himyar. When he was sending the letter with Iyash b. Abi Rabia al-Mahdhumi, he advised him that:

“When you arrive there, do not enter at night. Wait for the morning. Then perform ablution and offer two cycles of prayer. Pray for Allah to bestow upon you success and to receive a friendly reception. And then make your prepara-

tions well. Take my letter in your right hand and give it to them with your right hand. If you do so, they will accept you.” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 282)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent many letters and envoys. He used them as instruments in his mission. He exerted the utmost effort under the circumstances of the time, and efforts bore fruits both in the short and long-run and prepared the basis for the neighboring countries to accept Islam.

In this age, when telecommunication is so easy and technology is so advanced, we need to benefit from all kinds of the technological achievements in conveying the message of Islam to humanity.

F. Guest Delegations

“Go back and stay with your families and teach them the religion and tell them whatever needs to be said.”

Bukhari, Adhan, 18

During the final years of the Medinan period when Islam became known around Medina, delegates from neighboring tribes began to come to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and embrace Islam. These delegates had various objectives and requests:

- 1) To inform that their tribe converted to Islam and to pledge allegiance on behalf of their people
- 2) To learn the Islamic regulations and teach them to their people when they return
- 3) To ask instructors and missionaries to teach them Islam
- 4) To sign treaties and accept to pay *jizya* tax even though they did not accept to convert to Islam
- 5) To discuss religious and scholarly matters with the Messenger of Allah
- 6) To learn the situation of the Prophet and the Muslim state

Below are some examples in this context.



One of the guest delegates came to the Prophet (pbuh) was from the tribe of Tayy. When they came to Medina, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was in the mosque. He looked at the delegates and said:

"I advise you something better than Uzza which has no benefit to you but which you worship." Zaid al-Hayy said:

"O Messenger of Allah! I came to you from a place nine-day away exhausting my animal. My nights were sleepless and my days were waterless." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) held Zaid's hand and told him:

"All praises be to Allah Who brought your heart closer to faith and brought you here after passing many obstacles." and then asked:

"Who are you?" Zaid replied:

"I am Zaid al-Hayy. I bear testimony that there is no god but Allah and you are His servant and Messenger." Allah's Messenger told him:

"You are not Zaid al-Hayl but Zaid al-Hair from now on."

When the Prophet (pbuh) told the delegates of Tayy about Islam and offered them to embrace it, they immediately converted to Islam. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 245; Ibn Sa'd, I, 321)

Representatives of Sa'd-i Hudhaim from Yemen had already embraced Islam. They came to Medina to pledge allegiance and learn the stipulations of Islam. One of them Abu Nu'man narrates:

"We set off on a journey to go to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). When we arrived at the gate of the Prophet's mosque, we saw that the Prophet (pbuh) was leading a funeral prayer so we waited. After the prayer, Allah's Messenger turned to us and asked:

"Who are you?" We said:

"We are from the Sa'd-i Hudhaim clan." He asked again:

"Are you Muslims?" We replied affirmatively. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked:

"Have you prayed in your brother's funeral?" We replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! We thought we were not allowed to do that until we pledged allegiance to you." Then the Prophet (pbuh) told us:

“You become Muslims no matter where you accept Islam.”

We pledged allegiance and then went back to our camping site. Allah’s Messenger ordered his Companions to treat and host us well. After we stayed for three days in Medina, we came to the Prophet to say goodbye. As we were leaving, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gave an order to Bilal and he gave us many silver pieces as presents and we went back to our tribe. (Ibn Qayyim, III, 652-653; Ibn Sa’d, I, 329-330)

Envoy from the Banu Tujib is another good example for the delegates that learned Islam from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and returned to their tribes to teach what they learned. A thirteen-man envoy came to the Prophet (pbuh). They brought their almsgiving with them. This pleased the Prophet very much. He welcomed the envoy and ordered Bilal al-Habashi to host them well. The envoy of Banu Tujib said:

“O messenger of Allah! We brought to you the right of Allah in our possessions.” Allah’s Messenger told us:

“Take it back to your people and distribute it among the poor.” The envoy said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We brought you the amount left after we gave our share to the poor.” Abu Bakr (r.a.) said:

“O Messenger of Allah! There is no envoy among the Arab tribes like the one from Banu Tujib.” Our Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Guidance is in the hand of Allah the Almighty. He opens the heart of those for whom He wants goodness.”

Banu Tujib’s envoy asked the Prophet (pbuh) about issues from the Qur’an and Sunnah. Answers to their questions were given to them in writing, and because of their efforts, the Prophet’s love and interest deepened for them. After staying for a few days the envoy wanted to go back. They were told:

“Why do you hurry?” They said:

“We will go back to our people and tell them what we saw, asked, and learned from the Messenger of Allah.”

They came to our beloved Prophet (pbuh) and said goodbye. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent and asked Bilal (r.a.) to give them some gifts. He also told



Bilal to give them gifts more than the other tribes had been given. (Ibn Sa'd, I, 323; Ibn Qayyim, III, 650-651)

As can be seen in this incident, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) took more interest in those who were demanding and eager to learn about the Qur'an and Islam. Similarly, the Prophet (pbuh) appointed one of the members of an envoy as the leader of it because of his knowledge of the Qur'an even though he was the youngest member. (Ibn Sa'd, V, 508; Ibn Hisham, IV, 185; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 218)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) regarded his guests with the utmost care and courtesy. He always talked to them politely and complementarily. His polite treatment and close attention to the problems of his guests made Islam heard and received well in every way.

Since delegates were representatives of a group of people, it was necessary to treat them with courtesy and respect; because their gratification meant the gratification of their tribes, whereas their dissatisfaction meant a distancing of their tribes from Islam. These prophetic principles have maintained their validity for all time.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had designated a special place in his mosque to meet foreign delegates. This place was called "*ustuwat al-wufud* or the pillar of the delegations." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) used to put on nice and clean clothes when he was expecting a delegation. He also ordered his Companions, who were going to be with him in the meeting, to do the same. For instance, he wore costly clothes made in Yemen when he (pbuh), Abu Bakr, Umar, and Ali (r. anhum) were going to meet a delegation from Kinda. (Ibn Sa'd, IV, 346)

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) also appointed some of his Companions for the protocol. Their job was to inform the Prophet (pbuh) about the arrival of the delegations and to meet the delegations and give them instructions about how to act in the presence of the Prophet. Abu Bakr (r.a.) was responsible for the protocol, the Prophet's personal servant, Thawban (r.a.), was in charge of serving the guests while Bilal (r.a.) organized the kitchen duties. Delegates were sometimes offered meat and bread and sometimes milk and bread. (Kattani, I, 348)

Our prophet (pbuh) would ask about the delegates' health and state, get information about their land, listen to their requests, answer their questions, and take care of their problems. (Nasai, Umra, 5) Many times he (pbuh) would

compliment his guests and serve them personally. For instance, he had once begun to serve his guests when his Companions requested:

“O Messenger of Allah! May our parents be sacrificed for you. Let us serve them.” He said:

“They have served my Companions and in return I would like to reward them” and he continued to serve them. (Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, VI, 518; VII, 436)

Day and night whenever he (pbuh) found time, he would visit and talk to the members of guest delegations. For instance he used to visit and have a talk with an envoy from Thaqif every day after the night prayer. One night he remained standing for such a long time (talking to them) that he placed his weight on one leg and then sometimes on the other. (Abu Dawud, Ramadan, 9)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was extremely modest, sincere, and warm towards his guests. If the delegates spoke in a different dialect, he would address them in their dialect. Moreover, the coldness and formality of diplomatic protocol would not be observed in the Prophet’s words and actions. (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 9, 343)

When the delegates were going back to their home town, the Prophet (pbuh) would ask them to teach their people what they learned from him. (Nasai, Adhan, 8)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would encourage the visiting delegations to stay for some time in Medina and learn the Qur’an and the principles of their religion. He wanted them to see how he practiced Islam so they could understand it. For instance, when the delegation of Abd al-Qais came, he asked the ansar to host and treat the members of the delegation well. Meanwhile he also enjoined them to learn religious knowledge and to memorize some chapters from the Qur’an in order to recite in their prayers. When the Prophet visited them in the morning, he asked about their health and if everything was alright. They expressed their pleasure. Then the Prophet (pbuh) entrusted them to the ansar one by one or in twos. This was a useful method for them to learn Islam. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was very happy with Abd al-Qais’s determination to learn their religion and with the efforts of the ansar. And he personally checked what they had learned and listened to the chapters they had memorized for their prayers. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 432)



There were special guest houses assigned in Medina for the delegations that stayed ten days or longer. For instance, Abdurrahman b. Awf's house was used for such purposes and it was also reported that another one was Ramla bint al-Harith's big and beautiful house. (Abu Dawud, Ramadan, 9; Kattani, I, 347)

The Prophet's methods and principles are universal principles reflecting the nature and the reality of human being. It is necessary for us to apply these principles in our missionary activities.

G. Donations, Gifts, Feasts, and Gatherings

People feel indebted towards favors. They have a natural tendency towards property, possessions, and material wealth, and they would like to satisfy this need and desire in various ways. Thus they feel affection towards those who help them to solve their problems and to fulfill their needs. In this way mutual love, friendship, fondness, alliance, and coalescence come alive amongst people. Allah the Almighty states in a verse regarding the characteristics and methods of a preacher:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

“Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!” (Fussilat 41; 34)

Therefore, a Muslim preacher should use benefaction as one of the effective means of conveying the message of Islam and give gifts in accordance with the state of his addressees. This way he can turn enmities into friendships and coldness into warm relationships. Indeed, Allah's Messenger said:

“Exchange gifts to remove enmity and grudge amongst you. And love each other.” (Tirmidhi, Wala, 6)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) accepted the gifts given to him within the limits of these principles. Whenever he had the chance, he was also attentive in giving gifts to his friends and enemies alike. Even during his final illness he ordered his Companions to give gifts to the guest delegations. (Bukhari, Jizya, 6)



Especially during the first years of his prophethood Allah's Messenger (pbuh) used to organize feasts for his close relatives. After the meal, he used to talk to them about Islam and invite them to embrace it. Ali (r.a.) narrates an incident in this respect as follows:

"When Allah the Almighty's order to warn close relatives about the torment of the Hereafter was revealed (al-Shuara 29; 214), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) called me and told me to send an invitation to the Abdulmuttalib clan. Then he told me to prepare a meal for them. I fulfilled his order. The Abdulmuttalib clan gathered together, there were about forty men. When they came, the Prophet (pbuh) asked me to bring the dish. I brought it and placed it before the Prophet (pbuh). After he split the meat into pieces and put a piece on the plate, he said:

"Here please eat! In the name of Allah."

They ate until they were full. I swear by Allah that even a single person could not finish the meal that I prepared for them.

Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked me:

"O Ali! Offer them some milk, too."

I brought them the milk bottle and all of them drank from it. I swear by Allah that not even one of them could finish the milk in the bottle. When they got up from the table, it was like nobody had touched the meal and the milk. No sooner had the Prophet wanted to begin to talk, Abu Lahab prevented him and the tribe left. Allah's Messenger organized another meeting. He again offered them a feast, after which, he explained Allah's commands to them. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 111, 159; Ibn Sa'd, I, 187; Haythami, VIII, 302-303)

In this context Allah the Almighty states the manners of entering the Prophet's house:

"O you who believe! Enter not the dwellings of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless permission be granted to you. But if you are invited, enter, and, when your meal has ended, then disperse. Linger not for conversation..." (al-Ahzab 33; 53)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gave gifts abundantly, especially to *muallafa al-qulub* or to those whose hearts were to be reconciled to Islam, from his share of the war booty. By giving those people gifts from charity and almsgiv-



ing he averted the possible dangers which some of them might cause; thus he relieved the believers' hearts. Giving them gifts also aimed to strengthen the faith of new converts.

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported that a person requested Allah's Apostle (pbuh) to give him a very large flock and he did so. The man went to his tribe and said:

"O people! Embrace Islam. By Allah, Muhammad donates so much as if he did not fear want."

Anas (r.a.) said that some people embraced Islam for the sake of the world but later Islam became dearer to them than the world and what it contains." (Muslim, Fadail, 57-58)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) never forgot to give gifts to the guest delegations. Once a twenty-people delegation from Bahrain wrote him a letter to visit Medina, twelve of them from the tribe of Abd al-Qais. After they had visited the Prophet (pbuh), they embraced Islam. They asked questions about Islam and learned their new religion.

When they were going back to their country, the Prophet (pbuh) ordered that each one of the delegates from Abd al-Qais be given presents. He gave the representative of the delegation Abdullah b. Awf twelve and a half *uqiyya* silver as a gift. (Ibn Sa'd, I, 315)

In another instance, a thirteen-people delegation from Bani Murra under the leadership of Harith b. Awf came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) asked them:

"How is your land?" They replied:

"We suffer from drought and famine. Our animals have a very hard time. Pray to Allah for us." Upon this Allah's Messenger (pbuh) prayed for them saying:

"O Allah! Water them with Your rains."

A few days later delegates of Bani Murra wanted to go back to their land. They came to say goodbye to the Prophet (pbuh). He appointed Harith b. Awf as their leader and ordered Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.) to give them some gifts. Bilal gave each delegate ten *uqiyya* silver except Harith b. Awf, to whom he gave twelve *uqiyya* silver. (Ibn Sa'd, I, 298; Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, I, 410)



There were also instances that the Messenger of Allah granted some lands and springs to the delegates visiting him. Once a delegation from Bani Uqail came to the Prophet (pbuh), embraced Islam, and then pledged allegiance to the Prophet on behalf of their people. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) allotted them a place called Aqiq and an inscription written by the order of the Prophet on red leather which read as follows:

"In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful,

This is a writing of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah given to Rabi', Mutarrif, and Anas:

As long as they perform their prayers, pay their alms, and obey, the land of Aqiq is granted to them. By this assignment, they are not given another Muslim's right." (Ibn Sa'd, I, 301-302)

The Prophet's gifts, donations, and feasts are too many to count. He even asked his followers in his will:

"...show hospitality to the (foreign) delegations as I used to show them hospitality..." (Muslim, Wasiyya, 20)

However, the People's tendency and desire for worldly possessions at the time of the Prophet was the same as it is in the contemporary age. It may even be worse. This is why we have to employ this instrument in delivering the message of Islam to humanity.

Today, Christian missionaries attach the utmost significance to and invest immense amounts in this matter. It is their realization of people's tendency towards this world and its effects upon the human soul what directs them to employ this method. Therefore, those who preach Islam in the contemporary age should pay attention to their audiences' financial problems and try to solve them. This is the most influential method because "the first Islamic message which needs to be given to a hungry person should be to feed him."



IV. THE PROPHET’S EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES STANDING BEFORE HIS CALL

“*And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline)...”*

(al-Hajj 22; 18)

In our life it is impossible to make a lasting achievement without paying its price first. The greater the reward, the greater the price that will be paid. Just like the worldly gains the situation is same for the spiritual rewards. The price for the spiritual rewards might even be greater. Paradise and the manifestation of Allah are the greatest rewards a servant can attain. And their price is stated in the following verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

“Allah has purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for their (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain...” (al-Tawba 9; 111)

It is normal to have obstacles before any task needed to be done. One who intends to do a good deed should also take this fact into consideration. The obstacles will be great to the extent of the greatness of the deed.

The highest spiritual rank a human being can attain in this world is the rank of prophethood. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) who was divinely appointed to this task overcame these obstacles with the help of Allah the Almighty. His greatest task was to take all the obstacles away and deliver Allah’s Will to human beings. When performing this task, many fierce enemies that did not want people’s welfare appeared before the prophets. This is stated in a verse:

“Likewise did we make for every Messenger an enemy- evil ones among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If your Lord had so planned, they would not have done it: so leave them and their inventions alone.” (al-An’am 6; 112)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) used the most appropriate methods to overcome the obstacles before his mission. First he endured all the tortures and oppressions of his and his followers’ enemies with patience and perseverance. After believers were permitted to fight against their enemies during the Medinan period, he began to employ struggle along with patience as a method for removing obstacles.

A. A Period of Patience and Perseverance

Obedying the following divine command:

فَاُضِدِّعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“So proclaim that which thou art commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters.” (al-Hijr 15; 94) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began to invite people openly to believe in the Oneness of Allah. He knew no obstruction and presented no excuse in this matter. (Ibn Hisham, I, 275-276; Ibn Sa’d, I, 119)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was told that fighting was not allowed and counselled those who could not stand the oppression and asked permission from the Prophet (pbuh) to fight back with patience and perseverance. Below are some of the remarkable examples of oppressions that the Prophet and his followers faced during the Meccan period:

When the pilgrimage season was getting close, polytheists looked for ways to prevent the Prophet (pbuh) from conveying his message. They gathered in the house of Nadwa to decide what kind of slanderous lies they were going to tell about the Prophet. There were proposals to call him a soothsayer, lunatic, poet, or magician.

Walid b. Mughirah whom they consulted did not accept any one of the above and said:



“Calling him a magician is probably the most rational one because his words are like magic. It separates a person from his father, his brother, his wife, and his people.

Upon which the polytheists of Quraish called to the people of Mecca and tried to convince them that the Messenger of Allah was a magician. They insistently enjoined everybody they met not to meet and talk to the Prophet under any circumstances. (Ibn Hisham, I, 283-285)

The Prophet’s house was located between the houses of his worst enemies, i.e. Abu Lahab and Uqba b. Abi Muayt. They used to bring animal intestines and throw them in front of the Prophet’s house. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would be saddened by what they were doing and reproach them saying:

“O Sons of Abdi Manaf! What kind of neighborliness is this?” and he pushed the animal parts away with his bow.

Abu Lahab would not be satisfied with this and he would throw stones at the Prophet (pbuh) from his house and from the house of his neighbor Adiy b. Hamra al-Thaqafi. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 201; Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, II, 70)

Abu Lahab’s wife Umm Jamil was among the fiercest enemies of the Prophet. She supported and helped her husband in his disbelief, denial and obstinacy. Umm Jamil used to collect thorny tree branches and make a pile from them. Then she would disperse these branches on the paths on which the Prophet used to walk in order to hurt him. Allah the Exalted revealed the surah Tabbat (111) about Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamila. When Umm Jamila heard about this Qur’anic chapter, she immediately went to the Ka’bah to see the Prophet and Abu Bakr. She had a stone in her hand.

When Abu Bakr saw her coming, he told the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Umm Jamil is an evil woman. She is coming towards you. I fear she will do you harm I wish you would leave before she does something to you.”

Allah’s Messenger said that:

“She cannot see me.” Indeed Umm Jamil could not see the Prophet (pbuh). (Ibn Hisham, I, 378-379)

Non-believers of Quraish who did not like the Prophet used try to insult the Prophet (pbuh) by changing his name from Muhammad, meaning the

praised one, to *Mudhammam* or the disparaged one. (Ibn Hanbal, II, 244; Ibn Hisham, I, 379)

When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went back to his home depressed by the insults of the disbelievers, Allah the Almighty diminished his pain through the comforting and consoling words of Khadijah (r. anha). (Ibn Hisham, I, 259)

Believers, too, had to endure troubles and show patience. Polytheists used to catch them and force them to wear extremely hot iron shirts, and lay them down under the burning sun and thus melting their body fat. By means of these tortures they were trying to make the believers say the things they wanted.

Every tribe from Quraish tried to force the believers to turn away from their religion by means of keeping them hungry and thirsty, beating them and throwing them into prison, and holding them under the burning sun during the hottest hours of the day. Some believers could not stand the tortures and left their religion. Some others resisted and Allah the Almighty protected them from abandoning Islam. Some of them gave their lives under such torture like Ammar b. Yasir's father, mother, and sister.

Quraish's idol worshipping population used to practice various kinds of torture depending on the person that they were torturing. Whenever Abu Jahl heard that a wealthy and strong person converted to Islam, he insulted, and threatened the man saying:

"Have you left your father's religion? However, he was better than you. Do you disregard his views and dishonor him? We will not respect your view anymore and thus we will reveal its falsity and we will destroy your reputation."

If the person who converted to Islam was a merchant, he would say to him:

"I swear we will ruin your trade and make you bankrupt."

If the convert was a weak and poor person, he would beat him and try to deceive and draw him out of Islam."

Once Abdullah b. Abbas (r. anhum) was asked:

"Were the Companions of the Prophet ever tortured so much that they were allowed to deny their religion?" He replied:





“Yes, they were. By Allah, sometimes the polytheists beat the Companions and left them without food and water so much that they could not sit for a while and they would say whatever the polytheists wanted them to say. As soon as they recovered, they would return to the faith of Unity. The exception in the following verse is about those Companions:

“Anyone who, after accepting Faith in Allah, utters unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty.” (al-Nahl 16; 106) (Ibn Hanbal, I, 404; Ibn Hisham, I, 339-343; Ibn Sa’d, III, 233)

When the torture in Mecca became unbearable, Muslims came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked for a way to escape through migration. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) showed them Medina. Then they set off on a journey to Medina. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 226)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and his Companions endured such torture and torment by patience and perseverance. They continued to live the Islamic faith and call everyone to live it, and conveyed the message of Islam without fighting by the sword.

B. The Period of Battles

The Polytheists of Quraish increased their attacks and denied the Messenger of Allah’s prophethood. They forced the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions to leave their lands and migrate. Upon this Allah the Almighty had given the believers the ability to fight against them, and had also promised to help them in their fight against their oppressors. The first verse which permitted believers to fight reads as follows:

“To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is Most Powerful for their aid; Those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said: Our Lord is Allah...” (al-Hajj 22; 39-40)

In other verses, in addition to permission to fight, when believers need it, they are ordered to continue to fight until there is no oppression left on earth and until the only religion on earth becomes the religion of Allah:



“And fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.” (al-Baqara 2; 193)

“And fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere...” (al-Anfal 8; 39)

After the revelation of these Divine statements, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) organized military expeditions upon his enemies who prevented him from delivering Allah’s message to the people.

It has become obligatory upon believers to fight against tyrants who impede them from the path of Allah the Almighty. There are many verses and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) commanding it. Allah the Almighty even describes fighting for His cause when it is necessary as the most profitable trade:

“O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: that will be best for you, if you but knew!” (al-Saff 61; 10-11)

When we examine the issue of jihad for the cause of Allah, we see that there are many other things which are considered its subcategories. Purification of one’s soul and disciplining it is considered one type of jihad. (Tirmidhi, Jihad, 2) Fulfilling Allah’s commands and abstaining from His prohibitions is considered another type. (Nasai, Hajj, 4) Giving advice to a Muslim and conveying the rules of Islam to non-believers and persuading them through evidences are also among the types of fighting for the cause of Allah. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 456) Believers’ struggle to remove the obstacle before spreading Islam and protecting their religion, chastity, country, and property are also counted as part of striving for the sake of Allah.²⁴

Therefore, jihad refers to all kinds of individual and social efforts to live according to the principles of Islam, to purify one’s soul and to exalt the Word

24. See for the verses in this context al-Nisa (4; 95); al-Anfal (8; 72); al-Tawbah 9; 20, 41, 44, 81, 88. And see for the traditions Bukhari, Mazalim, 33; Muslim, Iman, 226; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 29.



of Allah. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Prophet's twenty-three-year long prophethood was spent in order to realize this goal.

Islam means to submit oneself to Allah and to live in peace. Therefore, peace is the primary aim of our religion. If Muslims are able to achieve their goals without a fight, then they do not choose to fight. They even stop a war which is about to begin, if their opponent offers a peace agreement; because Allah the Almighty said in the Qur'an that:

“But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do you (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for he is the one that hears and knows (all things).” (al-Anfal 8; 61)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also said:

“O people! Do not wish to meet the enemy, and ask Allah for safety, but when you face the enemy, be patient, and remember that Paradise is under the shades of swords.” (Bukhari, Jihad, 112)

The following speech given by the Prophet at Hudaibiya clearly shows that his aim was not to fight but to remove the temporary obstacles between people and guidance:

“Allah's Apostle said, “We have not come to fight anyone, but to perform Umra. No doubt, the war has weakened Quraish and they have suffered great losses, so if they wish, I will conclude a truce with them, during which they should refrain from interfering between me and the people, and if I achieve victory over those people, Quraish will have the option of embracing Islam as the other people do, if they wish; they will at least get strong enough to fight. But if they do not accept the truce, by Allah in Whose hand my life is, I will fight with them defending my Cause till I am killed, but (I am sure) Allah will definitely make His Cause victorious...” (Bukhari, Shurut, 15)

These words which manifest the Prophet's understanding of war shows that peace should be the constant state for humanity. Nevertheless, it is impossible to realize this goal because of the Divine laws established by Allah the Almighty in human and social life. Countries and nations begin to fight each other for different reasons and goals.

We can enumerate the reasons for believers to fight in the light of verses and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows.

Defense is the main reason to fight. The following verse attracts our attention to this point:

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.” (al-Baqarah 2; 190)

The second reason is to help weak Muslims who are being submitted to the non-believer’s attacks. This is also stated in a verse:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ
وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا
وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا

“And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill treated (and oppressed)? Whose cry is: our Lord rescues us from this town, whose people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Your presence some protecting friend! Oh, give us from Your presence some defender!” (al-Nisa 4; 75)

And the third one is to fight against those who defame Islam and create obstacles before believers to perform the requirements of their religion on earth. The following verses are about this matter:

“And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.” (al-Baqarah 2; 193)

“Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” (al-Tawbah 9; 29)

The object of Islam in jihad is not to kill the enemies of Islam and cause people to hate the religion. In fact, the total amount of deaths in the battles of the Prophet (pbuh) was around 250 people. (Hamîdullah, *Hiz. Peygamber'in Savaşları*, p. 21) The believer’s only goal is to exalt the Word of Allah and to



guide people to the straight path by obtaining the rule and domination. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) expresses this goal on various occasions.

It was narrated by Abdullah b. Amr b. al-As (r.a.):

“When I asked:

“O Apostle of Allah, tell me about jihad and fighting.” He replied:

“O Abdullah! If you fight with endurance seeking your reward from Allah, Allah will resurrect you showing endurance and seeking your reward from Him, but, if you fight for showing off and pride seeking to acquire much, Allah will resurrect you in that state. In whatever state you fight or are killed, Abdullah ibn Amr, in that state Allah will resurrect you.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 24)

A bedouin came to the Prophet and asked,

“O Allah's Apostle! What kind of fighting is for Allah's cause?” I ask this, because some of us fight because of anger and some for the sake of pride and haughtiness.” The Prophet raised his head and said,

“He who fights so that Allah's Word (Islam) should be superior, then he fights for Allah's cause.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 45; Muslim, Ijarah, 149-150)

In another instance a man asked the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Apostle of Allah! What do you say about a man who wishes to take part in jihad in Allah's path desiring some worldly advantage?” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“He will have no reward.” The people thought this was a harsh consequence, and they said to the man:

“Go back to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh), for you might not have made him understand well.” He, therefore, went and asked again:

“O Apostle of Allah! What do you say about a man who wishes to take part in jihad in Allah's path desiring some worldly advantage? He replied:

“There is no reward for him.” The people again said to the man:

“Return to the Apostle of Allah. “He, therefore, asked the Prophet (pbuh) a third time. He replied:

“There is no reward for him.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 24)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) explained the goal of his efforts and his battles as follows:

"I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah."

(Bukhari, Iman, 17)

This was why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would not attack the countries where *adhan* was called. (Bukhari, Adhan, 6) He also gave an order to his army:

"If you see a mosque or hear adhan in a place, do not touch anybody from its residents." (Ibn Hanbal, III, 448-449)

Since his aim was to have people attain eternal salvation and give them a new life. An incident that reflecting this goal was narrated by Muslim b. Harith al-Tamimi as follows:

"The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) sent us on an expedition. When we reached the place of attack, I galloped my horse and outstripped my Companions. I saw women and children crying. I asked them:

"Would you like to save your lives?" They responded affirmatively. Then I said:

"Say "There is no god but Allah," and you will be protected." And they said it.

My Companions blamed me, saying:

"You deprived us of the booty." When we came to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh), they told him what I had done.

So he called me, appreciating what I had done, and said:

"Allah has recorded for you so and so (a reward) for every man of them."
(Abu Dawud, Adab, 100-101)

When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was going to send his army to battle, he would advise the commander of the army to be pious towards Allah and to treat the believers nicely. He would then tell them:



“Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war; do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children. When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm.

1) Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them.

2) Then invite them to migrate from their lands to the land of Muhajirs and inform them that, if they do so, they shall have all the privileges and obligations of the Muhajirs. If they refuse to migrate, tell them that they will have the status of Bedouin Muslims and will be subjected to the Commands of Allah like other Muslims, but they will not get any share from the spoils of war or Fai' except when they actually fight with the Muslims (against the disbelievers). If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the Jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and do not touch them.

3) If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them.” (Muslim, Jihad, 3; Ibn Hanbal, V, 352, 358)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) and his Companions presented the best way for the removal of obstacles before conveying the message of Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) attended twenty seven battles and organized thirty seven military expeditions in the ten-year-long Medinan period. (Hamidullah, *Hz. Peygamber'in Savaşları*, p. 21) In every battle and expedition he (pbuh) put up a struggle with his life and everything he had. He became the embodiment of bravery and solidity on the battlefield. He even became a shelter on the battlefield for his fearing Companions. Ali (r.a.) said that:

“When the battle intensified on the day of Badr, we hid behind the Prophet (pbuh). On that day he was the bravest one of all of us. There was not anybody who got closer to the enemy lines than him.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 86)

On the day of Uhud believers were dispersed. Allah the Almighty had honored some of the Companions with martyrdom. Enemy soldiers got very close to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). The Prophet's tooth was broken, his lips and face were bleeding. He fell into a hole which had been dug by Abu Amir as a trap for the Muslims. Ali (r.a.) held the Prophet's hand and Talha b.

Ubaidullah (r.a.) helped him to stand up, by this means they took the Prophet (pbuh) out of the hole.

By using his teeth Abu Ubaidah b. Jarrah extracted the piece of helmet sticking into Prophet's face. One of his front teeth got broken, when he was doing this. It was an unbearable scene for the Companions so they asked the Prophet (pbuh):

"Why do you not curse the polytheists of Quraish?" Instead Allah's Messenger prayed for them saying:

"I am not sent to curse. By contrast I am sent to invite all to the straight path and be a mercy for humankind. O Allah! Guide my people for they do not know." (Bukhari, Maghazi, 20; In Hanbal, III, 201; Ibn Sa'd. III, 410)

Just like the Prophet (pbuh) his Companions also manifested many examples of bravery and sacrifice. Some of them were as follows:

Amr b. Jamuh (r.a.) was a crippled. His four sons used to attend the battles with the Prophet (pbuh). When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was going to Uhud, Amr wanted to go with him. He told his sons:

"Get me ready for the battle." They replied:

"You are not obliged to fight. Allah the Almighty has excused you and we are going on behalf of you." Amr told them:

"On the day of Badr you prevented me entering Paradise. By Allah even if I come back alive today, one day I will certainly become a martyr and enter Paradise."

Then he turned to his wife and said:

"While everybody becomes a martyr and enters Paradise, am I going to sit here with you?" he picked up his shield and prayed:

"O Allah! Do not let me come back to my family." Then he went to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

"My sons want me to leave in Medina and prevent me to go with you and fight. By Allah I desire to be a martyr." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told him:

"Allah the Almighty has excused you. It is not obligatory for you to fight." Amr b. Jamuh (r.a.) responded:



“O Messenger of Allah (pbuh)! Do you not deem it suitable for me to fight and become a martyr?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“*Yes, it is suitable for you.*” then he turned to Amr’s sons:

“*Do not hold him back. Hopefully Allah will bestow martyrdom on him.*” Amr b. Jamuh faced the direction of the Qiblah and prayed:

“O Allah! Bestow martyrdom upon me. Do not make me return to my family sad and destitute.” He attended the battle and became a martyr. Later the Prophet (pbuh) told about him:

“*By Allah in Whose hand is my existence, I saw Amr walking lame in Paradise.*” (Waqidi, I, 264; Ibn al-Athir, *Ud al-Ghabah*, IV, 208)

Once again Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) inspected the army on the way to Uhud. He allowed the young Companions, who were old enough to attend the war, to come and sent back those who were too young. Samura b. Jundab and Rafi’ b. Khadij were among those who were not allowed to participate.

Zuhair b. Rafi’ asked the Prophet (pbuh) to let Rafi’ stay in the army saying:

“O Messenger of Allah! Rafi’ is a good archer.” Rafi’ b. Khadij narrates the rest of the incident as follows:

“I had *mast* (inner shoes) on my feet. I tried to look longer by standing on tip of my toes. And so the Prophet (pbuh) allowed me to join the army. When Samura b. Jundab heard that I was allowed to stay, he told his step-father Murai b. Sinan:

“Father, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) let Rafi’ join the army, and he sent me back; but I can beat him at wrestling. Mutai (r.a.) talked to the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! You rejected my son but let Rafi’ stay although my son can defeat him at wrestling.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) turned to Rafi’ and Samura and said:

“*Wrestle then.*” They did and Samura won. After which the Prophet (pbuh) also let him join the army. (Tabari, *Tarikh*, II, 505-06; Waqidi, I, 216)

After the battle of Uhud ended, the enemies needed to be followed to make sure that they did not return. Jabir b. Abdullah told the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Allah’s Apostle! Someone announced that those who did not attend the battle yesterday are not allowed to join the following expedition, but I really want to attend. My father held me back to take care of my seven sisters and told me:

“O my son! None of us have any male relatives to whom to entrust your sisters. If we had, I would not prefer myself over you to go to fight. Why do not you stay with your sisters and take care of them?” Then Jabir continued:

“This is why I stayed back, please let me join the expedition this time.”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) let nobody but him attend. (Waqidi, I, 336)

Despite their hardships, the Companions’ efforts to remove the obstacles before Islam had reached such high level that Allah the Almighty praised them in his sacred Book. During the preparations for the battle of Tabuk on the one hand there were believers crying because they were not able to attend the expedition due to their poverty and lack of an animal on which to ride. On the other hand, there were hypocrites making simple excuses in order to escape from it.

The poor believers asked for rides from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to join the expedition. When the Prophet (pbuh) told them:

“*Unfortunately I cannot find any mount to give you*” they went back crying. Then Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse about them:

“Nor (is there blame) on those who came to thee to be provided with mounts, and when you said, I can find no mounts for you, turned back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide the expenses.” (al-Tawbah 9; 92)

When Abdurrahman b. Ka’b and Abdullah b. Mughaffal (r. anhum), two of the Companions who were praised by this verse, returned crying, Ibn Yamin (r.a.) asked them:

“Why are you crying?” They said:

“Hoping to get a ride, we went to the Messenger of Allah, but he could not find anything to give us. And we do not have any animals to ride and go on the expedition.” Ibn Yamin gave them a camel and some dates as provisions. Abbas (r.a.) also provided mounts for two of the crying Companions and Uthman (r.a.) gave mounts to three of them. Thus, they found the means to go to the



expedition. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 172; Waqidi, III, 994) Later Allah's Messenger (pbuh) provided mounts for some of them. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 78)

C. The Period of Peace

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) demonstrated patience and perseverance during the Meccan period and fought in battles during the early years of the Medinan period. Finally, in the sixth year of the Medinan period he got the opportunity to make peace with the treaty of Hudaibiyah. The climate of peace generated by the treaty was a turning point for Islam. Due to that Allah the Almighty called this treaty a "fath mubin or a clear victory." (al-Fath 48; 1) When the Meccans did not allow the believers to circumambulate the Ka'bah at Hudaibiyah, believers got upset and wanted to fight them, but the Messenger of Allah told them to be patient and wait for the following year. When he called Hudaibiyah a great victory, one of his Companions grumbled:

"We were prevented from circumambulating the Ka'bah and slaughtering our animals in the Haram. The Messenger of Allah gave two new converts back to them. What kind of a victory is this?"

When the Prophet (pbuh) heard his complains, he explained how the peace would help Islam to spread saying:

"Yes, this treaty is a victory. The polytheists are content with you to come to their lands and to take care of your works and to be safe while coming and going back. They will learn Islam from you whom they did not want and did not like so far. Allah will make you victorious and you will come back safe and sound. This is the greatest of all victories." (Halabi, II, 715)

Abu Bakr (r.a.) made the following evaluation about the treaty of Hudaibiyah:

"There had never been a greater victory in Islam than the treaty of Hudaibiyah, but the narrow-minded people opposed it. People were impatient about the matters between Allah and His Messenger (pbuh), but Allah the Almighty is not hasty in His actions and He does not do anything until it becomes the right time." (Waqidi, II, 610; Halabi, II, 274)

Peace is always better and blessed. This is stated by Allah the Almighty as:

وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ

“...Peace is better...” (al-Nisa 4; 128) The climate of peace that emerged out of the treaty of Hudaibiyah brought many advantages for the spread of Islam just as the statement of this verse.

First of all, by this means the people of Quraish, who saw Muslims as minorities and hoped to erase them from the pages of history, had to formally acknowledge the Islamic state.

During the period of peace Islam found new opportunities and area to spread to. By this means, Muslims began to get together with polytheists, recite from the Qur’an to them, and talk to them about Islam. Moreover, those who kept their conversion secret were able to fearlessly announce it. (Ibn Qayyim, III, 309-310)

However, before then, the two parties were not able to see each other easily. After the treaty, the polytheists began to visit Medina and the believers were able to go to Mecca freely. They had the chance to visit their relatives and old friends. Thus, people were able to see the Prophet’s good manners, miracles, and the beauty of his path. They began to listen to the principles of Islam and advice from Muslims. The polytheists’ hearts softened and began to tend towards Islam and the desert bedouins waited for the people of Quraish to convert to Islam. (Qastallani, I, 168)

During this period, Islam spread all around Arabia and prominent polytheists, such as Amr b. al-As, Khalid b. Walid (r. anhum) and others, converted to Islam. (Waqidi, II, 624)

Representatives of Islam were able to go to different places in safety and found the opportunity to tell people about Islam. During this period the number of Muslims multiplied. Imam Zuhri explains the consequences of the Hudaibiyah treaty on the basis of the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows:

“Before, Muslims and polytheists were fighting everywhere they met. After the treaty of Hudaibiyah they ceased to fight. A state of trust was established between the parties. They got the chance to meet and socialize and they even began to cooperate in various matters.



At the time, to whomever Islam was related they realized the Truth and embraced Islam after a short period of reflection. The number of those who converted to Islam in two years after the agreement reached and even surpassed the number of converts during the previous nineteen years.”

As Ibn Hisham noted:

“According to the narration of Jabir b. Abdullah, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) went to Hudaibiyah together with 1400 men. Two years later, during the conquest of Mecca, he had 10000 men with him. According to another report, the number was 12000 Muslims with 2000 men joining them on their way to Mecca. These numbers prove how exact Zuhri had been in his evaluation.” (Haythami, VI, 170; Ibn Hisham, III, 372)

Even though Meccans broke the agreement two years later, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) exerted great effort to keep the peace agreement. Even though he wanted to go for an expedition to Mecca, upon their violation of the agreement, he waited and took some strategic precautions to resolve the issue without shedding blood. First he told his Companions to get ready for an expedition but did not reveal his intentions and tell them where he was going to be. (Ibn Sa’d, II, 134)

Even Abu Bakr (r.a.), his best friend and partaker to his secrets, did not realize they were going to Mecca. He asked Aisha (r. anha), his daughter and the Prophet’s wife, where the campaign was going to be and she said:

“I do not know. Maybe he (the Holy Prophet) wants to go to Bani Sulaim, maybe to the people of Saqif, or maybe to the people of Hawazin.” (Ibn Hisham, IV, 14)

Once again Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) held the passages to prevent Meccans from making preparations to fight and thus to make possible a peaceful conquest. He did not let any news or agent go in and out of Mecca. Indeed, his following prayer also manifests this intention:

“O Allah! Hold the agents and messengers of Quraish and make them blind and deaf until we suddenly arrive at their lands. Blindfold the eyes of Quraish so that they may find us suddenly in front of them.” (Ibn Hisham, IV, 14)

After departing from Medina, the Muslim army stopped by some allied tribes on its way to deceive the people of Quraish. It traveled on a circle-shape

route in order to hide its real destination. When it came close to Mecca, every soldier was ordered to light a separate fire in order to look larger. (Hamidullah, *Islām Peygamberi*, I, 264-265)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) struggled for nineteen years to provide peace for Islam and Muslims. After gaining enough strength and power, he did not use them to destroy people and capture their lands but to open their hearts to Islam. Of course, this is what was expected from a Prophet who was sent as a mercy to the universe. Allah the Almighty emphasizes believers' idea of war and peace as follows:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

“Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity. And Allah's is the sequel of events.” (al-Hajj 22; 41)

Even though Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had the power to enter Mecca by force, his efforts to enter it peacefully is the most apparent proof in this matter, because his greatest wish was that all people, without exception, embrace Islam. Announcing a general amnesty after the conquest of Mecca, when he was at the peak of his military strength, was also another magnificent manifestation of this.





CHAPTER TWO

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN EDUCATION, DISCIPLINE AND PURIFYING THE SOUL

- I. THE PROPHET'S ESTEEM FOR KNOWLEDGE
- II. THE PROPHET (PBUH) AS A TEACHER
- III. THE PROPHET'S DUTY TO DISCIPLINE AND
PURIFYING THE SOULS
- IV. THE PROPHET'S METHOD OF CORRECTING
MISTAKES





“He who has purified himself has succeeded” (Al-A'la 87; 14)

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN EDUCATION, DISCIPLINE AND PURIFYING THE SOUL

“... *S*ay, O my Lord! Advance me in
knowledge.”

(Taha 20; 114)

I. THE PROPHET’S ESTEEM FOR KNOWLEDGE

Ilm literally means “knowing.” It is also described as “knowledge which conforms to the reality or comprehends things as they are.” Ignorance is its opposite.

Islam esteems knowledge and strongly encourages its acquirement. Thus, it regards enlightening the soul and mind as very important. In the first verses revealed by Allah the Almighty, He commands to read and learn His Messenger and he reflects such to all humanity in his personality:

“Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honorable, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught man that which he knew not.” (Al-Alaq 96; 1-5)

The repetition of the order **“Read”** twice in the above verses manifests how important acquiring and teaching knowledge is in Islam. These verses indicate that Allah the Almighty is the real source of knowledge and this in a way suggests “Remember your Lord’s name; Read in accordance with His consent; Understand the deeper meanings, Read yourself and universe so that you may reach the knowledge of Allah and live the highest level of servitude.”

Allah the Almighty encourages His Messenger to continue to make supplications to increase his knowledge by saying:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

“...say, O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.” (Taha 20; 114) In this respect the Prophet (pbuh) showed that he followed this command saying: *“There is no goodness for me in a day passed without learning something which brings me closer to Allah.”* (Ali al-Muttaqi, X, 136) For knowledge is such an endless treasure that it not only benefits its owner but also other people and even the whole of Creation, because it is the most important means to separate the right from the wrong. More knowledge does not impose an extra burden upon a person but it becomes a virtue. In this context the more someone’s knowledge increases the more his modesty is strengthened since he gets rid of unnecessary thoughts and concerns, understands the truth and tries to be a better person. Allah the Almighty emphasizes that He will exalt His knowledgeable servants if they fulfill the requirements of their knowledge in the following verse:

“...Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks.” (al-Mujadalah 58; 11)

In some of his sayings Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) praises the scholars as follows:

“...If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion...” (Bukhari, Ilim, 10; Muslim, Imara, 175)

“The world and everything in it are worthless except the remembrance of Allah, things that gets someone closer to Him, a scholar who transmits knowledge, and a student willing to learn it.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 14)

Teaching others is one of the greatest charities and most rewarding deeds. For instance, educating students, writing and publishing books, transmitting knowledge by using the means of modern technology can be considered among the deeds which are stated in a prophetic saying as continuous charity. (Muslim, Wasiyyah, 14)

One day, Safwan b. Assal (r.a.) met to the Prophet (pbuh) in the mosque and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I came to acquire knowledge.” The Prophet (pbuh) told him:

“Welcome to the one who wants to learn! Angels make circles with their wings around the seeker of knowledge up to the first level of the heavens.”
(Haythami, I, 131)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) encourages us to seek knowledge sincerely saying:

“If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure at the one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the heavens and the Earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout man is like that of the night of a full moon over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither gold nor silver, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion.” (Abu Dawud, Ilm, 1; Tirmidhi, Ilm, 19)

The Qur’an states that knowledge in its nature makes people gain positive qualities and makes them more conscious towards Allah the Almighty. We can observe this fact when we examine the whole context of the verse **“...Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not? ...”** (al-Zumar 39; 9).

At the beginning of this Qur’anic chapter (surah al-Zumar) it is ordered to worship only Allah, making religion devotion purely for Him. The following verses deal with the creation of the earth and the heavens, the succession of the day after the night, the moon and sun following their courses, and the creation of man. Contemplating over such cosmic verses leads the servant to the knowledge of Allah. Then the following verses explain the people’s situation with regard to the knowledge of Allah and mention the attributes of “knowledge” and “ignorance.” Allah the Almighty says in the Qur’an:

“When some trouble touches man, he cries unto his Lord, turning to Him in repentance: but when He bestows a favor upon him as from Himself, (man) doth forget what he cried and prayed for before, and he does set up rivals unto Allah, thus misleading others from Allah’s Path. Say, enjoy your blasphemy for a little while: verily thou art (one) of the Companions of the Fire. Is he who pays adoration in the watches of the night, prostrating and standing, beware of the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (to be accounted equal with a disbeliever)? Say



(unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed.” (al-Zumar 39; 8-9)

In these verses some negative situations such as:

- 1) Infidelity and ingratitude
- 2) Praying to Allah only in times of hardship
- 3) Not praying during times of ease
- 4) Attributing partners to Allah in order to make people go astray are counted among the manifestations of ignorance and lack of knowledge.

On the other hand, some good manners such as:

- “1) Continuing to worship and pray at night
- 2) Being cautious in this world because of the questioning and punishment in the Hereafter
- 3) Not to lose hope of Allah’s endless mercy” are presented as the manifestations of true knowledge. Those who possess such qualities are considered scholars even if they cannot read or write, because people’s salvation depends on living in accordance with knowledge.²⁵

When those two opposite human types are compared, the first group can be described as “those who do not know” and the second one as “those who know.” According to the verses these two groups are not equal. The following verse (al-Zumar 39; 10) announces the requirements to join the second group as follows:

- 1) To live a pious life under continuous devotional observation of Allah
- 2) To do good deeds
- 3) To migrate if it is necessary to protect religion

25. A common meaning is usually looked for between the words which share the same letters. The words *‘ilm* (knowledge) and *‘amal* (action) in Arabic is made up of the same three letters, but the only difference between them is the place of two letters. This is why scholars searched for parallels between their meanings and did not consider it appropriate to call someone “*alim* or scholar” unless he acts in accordance with his knowledge. Similarly, in modern psychology knowledge which is transformed into the consciousness is accepted as behavior.

4) To show patience towards the obstacles faced in living Islam and conveying its message.

What we understand from the above mentioned verses is that knowledge of Allah and cognizance of the truth is true knowledge. Such knowledge sharpens someone's insight and sagacity and so enables him to get in touch with the unalterable truth. If a field of science directs a person to Allah the Absolute Ruler, it is accepted as true knowledge. Otherwise, according to the description of the Qur'an, abstract and disconnected information that fill the brain but does not take a person to the facts about the universe is not true knowledge.²⁶

The same thing can be said about dealing with the natural laws of the universe and with other fields of science. They should become means of attain Divine knowledge. Otherwise, they will be nothing but a curtain. Those who ignore Allah's commands, work for their worldly pleasures and comfort, study under circumstances, which are not approved by Islam, and then say "what I do is among Allah's commands" will later recognize their faults.

It is a serious situation if someone's knowledge increases in appearance but no change is seen in his spiritual state because increased knowledge is supposed to bring greater piety, reverence, and fear of Allah. True scholars know that Allah the Almighty however, must be known. In their hearts they carry endless love and reverence for Allah. It is stated in a verse:

"...Those who truly fear Allah, among His Servants, [are those]who have knowledge..." (al-Fatir 35; 28)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also said that:

26. Imam al-Ghazali says in his *ihya' ulum al-din* that "In the early years of Islam the term *'ilm* was used to refer to the science of religion, the science of the knowledge of God and His verses. This is why when Umar (r.a.) passed away, Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) exclaimed: "Nine-tenths of the knowledge of religion have passed away." He described knowledge as "*'ilm billah* or knowledge through Allah." Today the term *'ilm* deviated from its original meaning and it became locked into a vicious cycle. Even those who debate the cases of jurisprudence and of other religious sciences with their adversaries and are called as *'alim* or learned men. Therefore, the original meaning of the term *'ilm* has been shifted and it has begun to be used for secondary matters. But what has been said about the excellence of learning and the merits of the learned men in the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) apply to those who are versed according to the former meaning. The change in the meaning of the term *'ilm* has caused many people to follow wrong paths and thus to perish." (Ghazali, I, 76)



“...By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you...” (Bukhari, Nikah, 1; Muslim, Siyam, 74)

When it is compared to Allah’s knowledge, people’s knowledge is very little. Indeed, Allah the Almighty states in the Qur’an:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“...of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men).” (al-Isra 17; 85) However if someone can reach piousness by living in accordance with his little knowledge, he attains a sagacious state as a blessing from Allah the Almighty. Thus, he begins to benefit from higher knowledge (*ma’rifah*) and some Divine secrets become clear to him. It is stated in another verse:

“...So fear Allah; for it is Allah that teaches you...” (al-Baqara 2; 282)²⁷
The following saying of the Prophet also corroborates this meaning:

“To a servant who lives in accordance with what he knows, Allah the Almighty teaches what he does not know.” (Abu Nu’aim, X, 15)

While Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) encouraged the acquisition of beneficial knowledge, he took refuge in Allah from useless sciences and warned his Companions about them. In addition to giving his Companions the necessary instructions, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also had another important task, i.e. disciplining and purifying hearts.



27. Exegete Qurtubi makes the following interpretation: “In this verse there is a promise that Allah the Almighty will teach those who fear Him. In other words, Allah the Almighty bestows in the pious servant’s heart a light through which he can recognize the Truth and distinguish right from wrong.” (Qurtubi, III, 406)



II. THE PROPHET (PBUH) AS A TEACHER

I have also been sent as a teacher.

(Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 17)



The prophets are the first teachers and trainers of humanity. Allah the Almighty chose them amongst people and sent them to invite His servants to the Truth in the best of manners. Allah the Almighty declares the missions of the prophets as reflected by our beloved Prophet:

“Even as We have sent unto you a messenger from among you, who recites unto you Our revelations and causes you to grow, and teaches you the Scripture and wisdom, and teaches you that which ye knew not.”

(al-Baqara 2; 151)

In another verse it is stated that:

“Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who recites unto them His revelations, and causes them to grow, and teaches them the Scripture and wisdom; although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error.” *(Al-i Imran 3; 164)*

Even though Allah’s Messenger was raised illiterate, Allah the Almighty taught him everything he needed. He even bestowed on the Prophet (pbuh) such a scholarly rank that nobody had ever achieved before. This fact is expressed in a verse as follows:

“...For Allah has sent down to you the book and wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before): and great is the Grace of Allah unto you.” *(al-Nisa 4; 113)*

Allah the Almighty did not send His most beloved friend (pbuh) for a specific time or for a specific nation. On the contrary, he was sent to be a shining lamp for all times and places and an educator who enlightens the eyes and souls beyond the ages. Such is expressed in the following verse:





“...And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most of mankind know not.” (Saba 34; 28)

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) stated that he was sent as an instructor and his real task was to teach people on various occasions. According to Abdullah b. Amr’s (r.a.) narration Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) met two groups of people sitting in circles. One group was reciting the Qur’an and praying to Allah. And the other one was busy with learning and teaching. When Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) witnessed this scene, he said:

“All of them are busy with goodness. These people are reciting the Qur’an and praying to Allah the Almighty. Allah may accept their requests or not. Those, on the other hand, are learning and teaching knowledge. I have also been sent as a teacher.” and sat with the latter group. (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 17)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was a peerless instructor and instructor disciplined by the Lord Almighty Himself. His billions of followers are the most remarkable proof of this fact. Even though the earliest audiences of the Prophet (pbuh) usually consisted of people that were hard to discipline, he presented the most suitable approach to them, showed patience in the face of their oppression and torments and finally managed to convince them to accept his message. Stubborn people of the Age of Ignorance eventually gathered together around the Prophet (pbuh) like castles. They sacrificed their lives and everything they had in his path; they left their abode for his cause and their souls reached a state that they responded to his slightest request saying “O Messenger of Allah! May my father, mother, and everything be sacrificed for you.”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began educating his followers from his closest relatives and then every passing day he widened the circle. During Meccan period he taught the fundamentals of the religion in his home or in his Companions’ homes, whereas in Medina he continued his activities everywhere he found a chance.

The prophet’s fast success depended on his educational methods supported by the light of his prophethood. If we would like to find the shortest way to people’s hearts, we need to learn, understand and apply these prophetic methods.



III. THE PROPHET’S DUTY TO DISCIPLINE AND PURIFYING THE SOULS

The Arabic term “Rabb,” which is a Divine attribute, occurs in about a hundred places in the Qur’an, and it bears meanings like instructor, owner, master, lord, and administrator. Moreover, the Holy Qur’an opens with a verse consisting of this attribute:

“Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.” (al-Fatiha 1; 1)

Discipline means gradual achievement of perfection. Every creation in the universe attains perfection through methods peculiar to its kind. Of course, Allah the Almighty is Who establishes these methods. The process of creation and refinement of human beings is the best example for Allah’s gradual training. Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır describes this process as follows:

“A small island emerges in a corner of the world; earth hardens and petrifies; rocks dissolve; mines germinate. Herbs, plants, and trees sprout from the seeds inside the rocks and earth and animals proliferate from these plants. Millions of human seeds erupt from a single drop of semen; an embryo passes the stages of turning into a living being after a process of elimination and insemination; from it emerges a fetus and then a crying baby is born; then a crawling, tumbling, and stammering infant. And then a naughty little child develops into an adolescent, who can distinguish right from wrong and who is ready to give his own fruits. After that, he grows up and reaches at the peak of his strength. Later his physical side begins to merge into his spirituality; he becomes an old man with a weaker intellect and slower perception. And finally he becomes such an old man that he is ready to be a good or bad spirit and fly away. In short, people keep saying “I” as if they are not changing in this continuously changing world while going towards the inevitable end...” (Elmalılı, I, 65)

Discipline is necessary for humans to enhance their qualities and abilities. This is why Islam attaches the utmost significance to human discipline. Those who are refined by the measures from the Qur’an and Sunnah and act according to these measures attain the opportunity to reach a state superior to



the angels. Those who are deprived from measures of Islamic refinement and act under the negative effects of the inner self, carnal desires and self-interests will face the danger of falling to a state lower than animals. This was why the real goal of all the prophets, especially including the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), had been to discipline people in accordance with the Divine Will. Due to the meaningless of life without religion, people from all levels of society need a religious trainer and instructor in their lives and the prophets and their immediate followers come at the head of such instructors.

Today, people use the term “education” instead of refinement and discipline. In the modern sciences education is described as taking a person towards a certain goals through various stages and the activities employed in the process of advancing human personality towards perfection. These are not random activities, but are performed based on certain principles. And they are regulatory activities preparing generations for social life and giving them all the equipment they need.

A person may obtain the identity of a true person after passing through the process of planned education, because a person’s real value will come to the surface by means of education and the refineness obtained by it. It is usually a difficult thing to achieve certain abilities by oneself. This is why people need a planned education.

“*Tazkiya*” is another term that shares a similar meaning in this context. It literally means purification, chastening, and clearing of accusations and doubts, in addition to increasing, being fruitful and beneficent. In short, *tazkiya* refers to a person’s entire intellectual and spiritual process of education. Following this brief introduction, we may now begin to examine the fields in which the Prophet (pbuh) refined human beings.

A. Correcting False Beliefs

All prophets, beginning with Adam (A.S.) until our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), invited people to the same principles of faith. And the principle of *tawhid*, that is to believe in the unity of Allah and not to associate any partners to Him, comes at the head of these principles. This is stated in a verse as follows:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي
إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ

“And We did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore serve Me.” (al-Anbiya 21; 25)

Arabs believed in the existence of Allah even before the emergence of Islam, they however, associated partners to Him in their worship. Their aim was to acquire intercessors to get closer to Allah the Almighty and thus to gain honor and dignity. Below are some of the verses of the Qur’an which highlight this :

“If indeed you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law), they will certainly reply, Allah. How are they then deluded away (from the truth)?” (al-Ankabut 29; 61)

“Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to Allah (alone) and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying), We do not serve them save that they may make us nearer to Allah, surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful.” (al-Zumar 39; 3)

“Allah has said: take not (for worship) two gods: for he is just one Allah: then fear Me (and Me alone).” (al-Nahl 16; 51)

In the above verses people are asked to purify their faith from all elements of polytheism and to have a true belief in the Oneness of Allah. The primary duty of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), who was sent on a Divine mission, was to save people of the Age of Ignorance from their false beliefs and give them the opportunity to find true faith in the Unity of Allah.

The simplest requirements for faith in the Unity of Allah (*tawhid*) is to say the statement “*La ilaha illa Allah* – There is no god but Allah” and then to live in accordance with the requirements of this statement. Faith in *tawhid* can be attained first through purification from false beliefs. The first part of the statement of *tawhid*, i.e. “*La*” or the negation of all false gods, is stated as the primary condition for achieving the true faith in the Unity of Allah. The



mission of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) began from this point. After the negation of false beliefs, the true faith is established by the words “*illa Allah.*”

The most succinct statement of *tawhid* can be seen in chapter *Ihlas* (112). Allah the Almighty says in this chapter, which is also known as *surah al-tawhid*:

“Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.” (al-Ihlas 114; 1-4)

The details of the principle of *tawhid*, which are summarized in the Qur’anic chapter above, are also detailed in other verses of the Qur’an as follows:

“...Say: Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty.” (al-Ra’d 13; 16)

“To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: how can He have a son when He has no consort? He created all things, and He has full knowledge of all things. That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things: then worship Him: and He has power to dispose of all affairs.” (al-An’am 6; 101-102)

As a requirement of the principle of *tawhid*, Allah is also mentioned in the Qur’an as the sole Governor of everything in the universe as follows:

“It is Allah who causes the seed grain and the date stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead, and He is the one to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah: then how are you deluded away from the truth? He it is Who cleaves the day break (from the dark): He makes the night for rest and tranquility, and the sun and moon for the reckoning (of time): such is the judgment and ordering of (Him), the Exalted in power, the Omniscient. And He it is Who has set for you the stars that you may guide your course by them amid the darkness of the land and the sea... And He it is Who has brought you into being from a single soul... And He it is Who sends down water from the cloud...” (al-An’am 6; 96; 99)

All these verses express the Unity of Allah and His matchless power.

It should not be forgotten that faith in the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is a part of the principle of *tawhid*. Indeed, the second part of the statement of

tawhid consists of the expression “*Muhammadun rasulullah* – Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The faith in the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) is the second principle of belief mentioned in the Qur’an after faith in Allah.

We have been informed about the other principles of faith in various verses of the Qur’an. These principles are faith in the prophets of Allah, His revealed books, the angels, destiny, and the Last Day. (al-Nisa 4; 136, al-Hadid 57; 21, 22)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) conveyed all these principles of faith to humanity and those who believe in him have resolutely submitted themselves and accepted these principles. It is certainly not easy for a person to leave the customs and habits of his environment in an instant. This difficulty become more obvious in the event of conversion which is the most serious change a person may face in his life. Indeed, we see that in Islamic history some of the Companions were strongly admonished by the Prophet (pbuh) for their actions and thoughts against the principle of *tawhid*. The following incidents are the most vivid examples from the age of happiness.

In the battle of Hunain the people saw a tree called *dhat anwat*. The polytheists used to consider this tree sacred and hang their weapons on it. Some of the Companions told the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Designate something for us like the polytheists’ *dhat anwat* tree.”

Saddened by this request Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) responded to them:

“*Hallowed be Allah! This is similar to the saying of the people of Moses “...O Moses! Make for us a god even as they have gods...”* (A’raf 7; 138)²⁸ *I swear by Allah in Whose hand my soul is, you are following in the footsteps of the people before you.*” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 218, 340)

In another report, it is stated that when Qais b. Sa’d entered the city of Hirah, he saw its people prostrating before their commander. He thought that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was someone more deserving to be prostrated before. After he narrated what he witnessed to the Prophet (pbuh), he said:

28. After crossing the Red Sea, the sons of Israel met the tribe of Amalika, which was worshipping a calf. They asked Moses to make a god like theirs. Moses (A.S.) refused their request saying that they surely were a people without knowledge.



“O Messenger of Allah! You are more deserving to be prostrated to than them.”

Upon this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) warned that Companion saying: “... *Do not do that.*” (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 39-40; Darimi, Salat, 159)

Another exemplary incident occurred as follows: According to the narration of Jubair b. Mut’im (r.a.) a bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! People are in hardship. Family members have lost all their possessions. Our animals have perished. Pray to Allah to send rain to us. We ask for your intercession before Allah and Allah’s intercession before you.”

Upon this request, the Prophet (pbuh) warned the man saying:

“Shame on you! Are you aware of what you are saying? Subhanallah (Hallowed be Allah.)” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) repeated the phrase “*subhanallah*” so much that concern appeared on the Companions’ faces. Then the Prophet (pbuh) continued his words:

“Shame on you! Allah cannot be made an intercessor towards any of His creation. Allah’s Glory transcends such things...” (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 18)

The bedouin’s request to make Allah a mediator for the Messenger of Allah was a mistake according to the principles of Islamic faith because intercession can not be done for a superior being. Even though asking Prophet’s intercession towards Allah is possible, but the opposite is against the principle of *tawhid*. Since no creation can be superior to Allah the Almighty, it would not be appropriate to ask His intercession towards any being. Indeed, none of the prophets made such claims. Rather, they repeatedly emphasized that they were just human beings and received revelations from Allah the Almighty. This is stated in the Qur’an as follows:

“It is not (possible) for any human being unto whom Allah had given the Scripture and wisdom and the Prophethood that he should afterwards have said unto mankind: Be slaves of me instead of Allah; but (what he said was): Be you faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the Scripture and of your constant study thereof.” (Al-i Imran 3; 79)

Having such concerns Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked for Allah's curse upon Jews and Christians who turned their prophets' graves into places of worship (Bukhari, Janaiz, 96), and warned his followers not to exceed the limits of the principle of *tawhid* by showing too much reverence towards him.

“Um Habiba and Um Salama mentioned about a church they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were pictures. They told the Prophet about it, on which he said,

“If any religious man dies amongst those people they would build a place of worship at his grave and place pictures on it. They will be the worst creatures in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection.” (Bukhari, Salat, 48)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) changed some of his Companions' names for they had connotations of disobedience and polytheistic ideas. For instance, he changed the names like “Abduluzza – slave of Uzza” and “Abdushshams – slave of sun” to “Abdullah – slave of Allah,” “Abdulaziz – slave of the Victorious,” or “Abdurrahman – slave of the All-Compassionate.”²⁹ And he changed the name Asiya (Disobedient) to Jamila (i. e. good and handsome)” (Muslim, Adab, 14)

However, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) allowed some types of incantation (*ruqyah*) which were cleaned of their polytheistic elements. Awf b. Malik Ash-ja'i reported:

“We practiced incantation in the pre-Islamic days and we said:

“O Messenger of Allah! What is your opinion about it? He (pbuh) said:

“Let me know your incantation.” And then he continued:

“There is no harm in the incantation which does not have a sign of polytheism.” (Muslim, Salam, 64)

Umair (r.a.) narrates:

“I presented the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) the incantation that I was using for the treatment of mentally handicapped people. And he took out some parts of it and ordered me to keep the rest.” (Tirmidhi, Siyar, 9)

Ruqyah or incantation means treatment through supplications. If a *ruqya* does not consist of elements of polytheism or things that are against the prin-

29. See Ibn Abdilbarr, II, 837; III, 871, 1006.



ciple of trusting Allah, it is permissible from the perspective of Islamic faith. In later periods of Islam ruqyah was started to be performed in the form of reciting verses and supplications from the Qur'an as a protection against the evil eye and the wickedness of the wicked. According to a report, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saw a small girl in the house of Umm Salama on whose face he had been seeing black stains and told her:

"She was under the influence of an evil eye," and he asked that

"She should be cured with the help of incantation (hoping) that her face should become spotless." (Muslim, Salam, 59)

We also see in another narration that he allowed the practice of incantation using the first chapter of the Qur'an (surah al-Fatiha.) (Muslim, Sala, 65)

It should not be forgotten that it is Allah Who bestows the cure whether the treatment is sought through performing incantation or taking medicine. Otherwise, attributing the cure to a being other than Allah would be a dire mistake. Unfortunately, today people ignore the Prophet's traditions and orders about ruqyah and are inclined towards its application during the age of ignorance. They no longer trust in Allah and begin to go to ill-intentioned people like witch-doctors and see them as the curer of their problems. The good intentions of people who do not have enough Islamic knowledge are being abused, and the name of Islam is blemished by turning it into a source of profit. The only way to protect people from such abuses is to have them gain appropriate and adequate knowledge about Islam.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that,

"Avoid the seven great destructive sins." The people asked,

"O Allah's Apostle! What are they?" He said,

"To join others in worship along with Allah, to practice sorcery, to kill the life which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause according to Islamic law, to practice usury, to eat up an orphan's wealth, to give back to the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting, and to accuse chaste women, who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers." (Bukhari, Wasaya, 23; Muslim, Iman, 145)

Therefore, a believer's engagement with sorcery and its practice are prohibited in Islam. Those who believe that they are under the effects of witch-

craft should take refuge in Allah, pray, perform acts of worship and give charity to the needy, instead of seeking help from those who practice sorcery as a profession. It is also possible to seek help from trustworthy and pious scholars if they can help within the limits of Islamic principles.

One of the false beliefs that was corrected by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was people's knowledge about the unseen. This is why it is considered infidelity to believe in the words of those, like soothsayers and fortune-tellers, who claim to receive information from the world of the unseen; since it is stated by the Prophet (pbuh):

“Whoever goes to a soothsayer and fortune-teller and then acknowledges what he/she says, he/she denies the thing revealed to me.” (Ibn Hanbal, II, 429)

In another narration Aisha (r.anha) was reported to say that:

“Some people asked Allah's Messenger (pbuh) about the soothsayers. He (pbuh) said to them:

“What they say is a mere superstition.” They said:

“O Allah's Messenger, they at times narrate to us things which we find true.” Thereupon, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Such words pertain to some truth which is inspired by an appointed angel. A genie snatches it away from the angel and then cackles into the ear of the soothsayer. And then they mix in this one truth more than one hundred lies.” (Bukhari, Tibb, 46; Muslim, Salam, 122, 123)

Here even though the Prophet (pbuh) emphasizes the lies of soothsayers, he also points out that they may obtain some news through genies and some truth may exist in their words. Moreover, leakage of information by devils and genies is also mentioned in the Qur'an. However the Qur'an also states that to obtain information through such ways was closed after the emergence of Islam. Our Lord Almighty says in the Qur'an that:

“Surely We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars, And (there is) a safeguard against every rebellious devil. They cannot listen to the exalted assembly and they are thrown at from every side, repulsed, for they are under a perpetual penalty, except him who snatches off but once, then there follows him a brightly shining flame.” (al-Saffat 37; 6-10)



Scholars who interpreted these verses pointed out that the issue of leaking information by devils and genies ended after the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh). So they emphasized that soothsayers' claims about the future are nothing but lies and guesses far from the truth. (Qurtubi, XV, 66, 67)

This matter is clearly expressed in a report narrated by Ibn Abbas (r. an-huma). He said that:

“Genies were ascending in the heavens and listening to the Divine revelations. Whenever they heard a word, they were adding ninety nine more words to it from themselves, such that one word was true, but the rest were false. When the Messenger of Allah was sent as a prophet, these genies were prevented from ascending through the heavens by means of meteorites. They informed Satan since before that time no meteorites had been thrown at them. Satan told them:

“This must be the result of an important event happening on earth.” He sent his soldiers to check it out, they found the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) praying in Mecca between two mountains. They went back and informed Satan about what they had seen. He said that:

“This is the important incident that happened on earth.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 72)

One of the most significant reasons for the prohibition of witchcraft, fortune-telling, etc. is to keep such false beliefs away from people's free-will; because a person deserves to be rewarded or punished through his free-will. Such actions also open doors to unlawful gains for some people by abusing other people's hopes and expectations.

On the other hand, when Muslim scholars interpret the verse: “**...therefore do not setup rivals to Allah while you know.**” (al-Baqara 2; 22), they talk about hidden polytheism along with openly practiced polytheism. Such kind of polytheism does not necessarily mean to worship idols openly, but to accept partners, abstract and psychological elements as equal to Allah the Almighty and may supposedly interfere with His actions. (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, I, 60, 61) Even though, in case of hidden polytheism, a person believes in Allah in appearance, there is the danger of heightening the thing accepted as a partner to the level of an idol. Indeed, we learn from the following incident that believers must strongly stay away from such situations. It was narrated by Zaid b. Khalid Al-Juhani (r.a.):

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) led the morning prayer in Al-Hudaibiya after a rainy night. When the Prophet (pbuh) had finished the prayer he faced the people and said,

“Do you know what your Lord has said?” They replied:

“Allah and His Apostle know better.” The Prophet said:

“Allah says, ‘In this morning some of My worshipers remained true believers and some became non-believers; he who said that it had rained with the blessing and mercy of Allah is the one who believes in Me and does not believe in the stars; but he who said it had rained because of such and such a star is a disbeliever in Me and is a believer in stars.’” (Bukhari, Adhan, 156; Istisqa, 28)

As it is pointed out in this tradition, Allah the Almighty is the real Doer of the events in the universe. Therefore, everything like rain, snow, heat or cold should be attributed to Him. But when some people suffer a hardship or receive a benefit, they attribute it to mortal beings, instead of Allah the only Creator, as the source of it. For instance, saying, confirming, and then believing in statements like “I owe you my life,” “if you and Allah wish, this job gets done,” or “I was going to die, had it not been for this doctor,” is the result of this type of polytheism. When Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) was talking about hidden polytheism, he said that “it is more concealed than the leg movements of a black ant walking on a black rock a dark night.” (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, I, 61)

With the hope of gaining cures for material and spiritual problems, tying pieces of cloth or rope to trees, graves, and tombs is another example of such creedal aberrations.

To perform acts of worship in order to show-off is considered another type of hidden polytheism. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated that a person’s increased care in performing his acts of worship, just because of the people watching him praying, is a manifestation of hidden polytheism. (Ibn Majah, *Zuhd*, 21)

There is an emphasis upon this matter in the following prophetic saying:

“Associating partners with Allah the Almighty is the worst thing that I worry about for my ummah. By this, I do not mean that they will worship the moon, the sun, or an idol. But what scares me are the actions and hidden desires (showing off) which will be done for other than Allah the Almighty’s contentment.” (Ibn Majah, *Zuhd*, 21)



Those who do their deeds just to show-off will be left alone with their deeds in the Hereafter and they will not receive any benefit from them. At one time Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told his Companions that:

"Little polytheism is what worries me most about you." When Companions asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! What is little polytheism?" He said:

"Hypocrisy is the little polytheism. When people are given the compensation of their deeds on the Last Day, Allah the Almighty says that: 'Go to those for whom you were doing your deeds to show-off and look if you will find any reward in them.'" (Ibn Hanbal, V, 428)

Another remarkable account in this respect is as follows:

"The first of men whose case will be decided on the Day of Judgment will be a man who died as a martyr. He shall be brought before the Judgment Seat. Allah will make him recount His blessings (i.e. the blessings which He had bestowed upon him) and he will recount them (and admit having enjoyed them in his life). Then Allah will say:

"What did you do to deserve these blessings?" He will respond:

"I fought for Your sake until I died a martyr." Allah will say:

"You have told a lie. You fought that you might be called a 'brave warrior'. And you were called so." (Then) orders will be passed against him and he will be dragged with his face downward and cast into Hell.

Then a man who acquired knowledge and conveyed it to others and recited the Qur'an will be brought forward. He will be brought and Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them and admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime. Then Allah will ask:

"What did you do to deserve these blessings?" He will say:

"I acquired knowledge and taught it to people and recited the Qur'an seeking Your pleasure." Allah will say:

"You have told a lie. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called 'a scholar,' and you recited the Qur'an so that it might be said: 'He is a Qari' and such has been said." Then orders will be passed against him and he shall be dragged with his face downward and cast into the Fire.

Then a man whom Allah had made abundantly rich and had granted every kind of wealth will be brought forward. Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will do so and admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime. Allah will then ask:

“What have you done to deserve these blessings?” He will say:

“I spent money in every cause in which You wished that it should be spent.” Allah will say:

“You are lying. You did so that it might be said about you: ‘He is a generous fellow’ and so it was said.” Then Allah will give orders and he will be dragged with his face downward and thrown into Hell.” (Muslim, Imara, 152)

The reason for which someone arrives at such a sorrowful end is a lack of satisfaction with the contentment of Allah and seeking other people’s appreciation, admiration, and approval. This turns him into other people’s servant not Allah’s, and it would not be possible to live a mature life of belief and practice in such a situation.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) tried to correct customary beliefs which were not based on Islamic principles. His approach to people’s behavior during the solar eclipse at the time of his son Ibrahim’s death can be given as an example. People had thought that sun had eclipsed because of Ibrahim’s death. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) performed two cycles of prayer and then warned his Companions saying:

“The sun and moon are the signs of the existence and Oneness of Allah. They are eclipsed neither for someone’s death nor for someone’s birth. When you witness solar or lunar eclipse, remember Allah and offer prayer.” (Nasai, Kusuf, 14)³⁰

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) warned his followers about all kinds of actions and behaviors which are against the principle of *tawhid*. Therefore, what we are supposed to do is to comprehend this principle, to know Allah well and attain His knowledge, and not to associate any open or hidden partners to Him; because those who associate partners to Allah will be far from the principle of

30. In some regions of the world believers play drums and fire guns instead of offering prayers and supplications. These are innovations and superstitions and have no basis in Islam.



tawhid and break their ties with their Lord. May Allah protect us from deviating from the principle of *tawhid*. Amin!

B. Teaching the acts of worship

“Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein...”

(Taha 20; 132)

Acts of worship shows servitude, obedience, and submission. They regulate all actions, behavior, and words according to the measures of the Creator. According to this definition all good deeds have the attribute of worship. However, we will examine this issue within the limits of certain types of worship, i.e. ritual prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage.

Acts of worship must be performed only for Allah. This is stated in the following verse:

“And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the religion right and straight.” (al-Bayyina 98; 5)

Allah the Almighty has created His servants in a way that they feel peace and comfort in worship. In order to pursue a balanced life people should have a tranquil heart. The more a person gets closer to Allah the more tranquility of his heart increases. Learning how to worship Allah can be achieved through a planned education.

The education of worship should begin at a young age, during when both acts of worship and their positive results can settle in the soul in a natural and healthy way; for every teaching given to a child is like a script inscribed on marble.

Giving a child education about Islamic worship is an important task especially for those who have brought him/her into this world. In this context Islam holds the father primarily responsible. This is expressed in a verse as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا
وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...” (al-Tahrim 66; 6)

Muslim exegetes, who interpret this verse, say that father or the head of a household is primarily responsible for the supervision and religious education of his family members. (Qurtubi, XVIII, 95; Razi, XXX, 41)

Even though Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) emphasized the responsibility of the father, he also pointed out a mother’s share in this responsibility in his following saying: *“Beware. Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable with regard to his flock...A man is a guardian over the members of his family and shall be questioned about them (as to how he looked after their physical and moral well-being). A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them...”* (Bukhari, Wasaya, 9; Muslim, Imara, 20) Of course, raising and caring for children is amongst the mothers’ tasks.

The education of worship (religious education) should begin with teaching the principles of ritual prayer which is the pillar of Islam. Those who would like to give their children the correct education of prayer should themselves first present exemplary behavior and begin to perform their five daily prayers. This issue is pointed out in the Qur’an stating: **“Enjoin prayer on your people, and be constant therein...”** (Taha 20; 132)

According to the recommendations of the Prophet (pbuh), seven is the age for children to begin prayer. Although a child who is raised in a religiously practicing family was accustomed to prayer beginning the day he was born. This beautiful act of worship attracts his attention and so he begins to imitate his elders and tries to perform his prayers. Thus, the parents’ task becomes just to correct their childrens’ mistakes. The necessary information about the principles of prayer and its significance should be given to the children who do not know how to pray by the age of seven and some short chapters of the Qur’an should be taught to them. In the education of worship one should approach a child by taking his personal characteristics and psychological state into consideration. One should remember that they are not responsible until the age of puberty based on the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): *“Children are not responsible until the age of puberty ...”* (Tirmidhi, Hudud, 1) Prophet’s practice in this regard serves as our guide.



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told Anas (r.a.) who was in the Prophet's service since a young age:

“Dear son! Avoid looking around during your prayer, for this removes the excellence of your prayer. If you cannot help yourself but to look around, then at least do not do this during obligatory prayers.” (Tirmidhi, Jum'a, 60)

Ummu Salama (r. anha) narrates:

“Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saw our little servant named Aflah praying. When he went to prostration, he was puffing out (not to get dust on his forehead.) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“O Aflah! Place your face on the earth.” (Tirmidhi, Salat, 163)

On the other hand, children should be allowed to come close to and watch their elders praying at home or in the mosque. Jabir b. Samura (r.a.) talks about his childhood and his memories with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as follows:

“I performed the noon prayer with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and then he went out to go to his family. I also went out with him. He met some children on his way. He began to pat their cheeks one by one. When it was my turn, he patted my cheeks, too. I felt a pleasant chill and fragrance on his hands. It was like he had taken his hands off an herbalist's basket.” (Muslim, Fadail, 80)

It was narrated by Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma):

“I stayed overnight in the house of my aunt Maimuna bint Al-Harith (the wife of the Prophet) while the Prophet was there with her at night during her turn. The Prophet led the night prayer in the mosque, returned home and after having performed four cycles of prayer, he slept. Later on he got up at night and then said the boy (referring to me) had slept. Then he got up for the prayer and I stood up by his left side but he made me stand to his right and offered five cycles of prayer followed by two more cycles. Then he slept ... and after a while he left for the dawn prayer.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 41)

Again we see in the reports that when Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma) was a child, he performed funeral and festival (*'eid*) prayers together with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). (Bukhari, Janaiz, 60; I'dain, 16)

In the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) we also see in which row of the congregation children should perform their prayers. According to these traditions men should pray in the first rows, boys stand in the following rows and girls and women stand in the final rows. The Prophet (pbuh) also advised old and mature people to stand in the first rows, telling his followers not to break the order among the rows. (Muslim, Salat, 132, 123)

Ibn Abbas (r. anhum), who had the honor of praying with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in his childhood, said that:

“I was praying next to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Aisha (r. anha) was praying behind us.” (Ibn Huzaimah, III, 18)

Anas bin Malik (r.a.) said that:

“One night an orphan and I offered prayers behind the Prophet in my house and my mother, Umm Sulaim, was standing behind us offering prayers.” (Bukhari, Adhan, 78)

Today, another remarkable point which needs to be mentioned about the children’s religious education is this: Adults show an excessive reaction to children’s actions in the mosques which causes them to be alienated from worship and the mosques. Thinking about this danger we should be more tolerant towards our kids. Our Prophet’s practices should be our guide in this matter. He led a congregational prayer in the mosque while his granddaughter Umamah was on his shoulders. Abu Qatadah (r.a.), who narrated this incident, said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was putting his granddaughter down when he bowed down and he took her up when he got up after prostration. (Bukhari, Adab, 18; Muslim, Masajid, 41-43)

In addition to education about ritual prayer, education about fasting is also very important in having our children achieve a religious consciousness. It is very important to make our children benefit from the spiritual atmosphere of our tables at the times of beginning and breaking our fast. Through fasting child gains sincerity and comprehend the omnipresence of the Divine Will. Despite his hunger and thirst, by staying away from food and drinks, a child also strengthens his self-control.

One should pay attention to gradualism when encouraging children to fast. In accordance with the level of their religious progress they should be told about the significance of seriousness in worship and they should be encour-



aged to fast the whole day but they should not be forced to do so. They may even be rewarded as an encouragement to fast. The Companions paid attention to these principles when educating their children. For instance, we observe in the sources that some Companions gave toys to their children to keep them busy until it was time to break their fast. Rubayyi bint Muawwiz (r. anha), a female Companion, narrated that:

“... We used to fast on the day of Ashura regularly and also have our children fast. We used to make toys of wool for them and if anyone of them cried for food, he was given the toys till it was time to break the fast.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 47; Muslim, Siyam, 136)

Imam Bukhari allocated a section in his *Sahih* under the title of “children’s fasting” and in that section he reported that Umar (r.a.) had said to a person who got drunk in Ramadan:

“Shame on you! Even our children fast.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 47)

In addition to teaching ritual prayer and fasting, it is praiseworthy to take children to pilgrimage and warm their hearts up to its religious ceremonies. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Minor and major pilgrimage are jihad for the old, the young, the weak, and women.” (Nasai, Hajj, 4)

According to the narration of Ibn Abbas (r. anhum) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) met a caravan around the region of Rawha and asked them:

“Who are you?” they replied:

“We are Muslims, and who are you?” The Prophet (pbuh) told them:

“I am the Messenger of Allah.” A woman lifted up a child and asked:

“Is this child’s pilgrimage acceptable?” He replied:

“Yes, it is and there will be a reward for you, too.” (Muslim, Hajj, 409)

Saib b. Yazid (r.a.) said that:

“When I was seven years old I was made to perform the farewell pilgrimage with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 449)

Considering the Prophet's many encouraging sayings about charity we realize the necessity of increasing a child's awareness of helping others for the sake of Allah. It was narrated by Abdullah b. Amr b. al-As (r.a.):

"A woman came to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) and she was accompanied by her daughter who wore two heavy gold bangles on her wrists. He said to her:

"Do you pay charitable tax (zakat) on them?"

She said: "No."

He then said:

"Would you be pleased that Allah will put two bangles of fire on your hands?"

Thereupon she took them off and placed them before the Prophet (pbuh) saying:

"They are for Allah and His Apostle." (Abu Dawud, Zakat, 4)

Even though there are some discussions among the Muslim jurists about whether paying charitable tax on children's possessions is required or not, it would be better to pay. It would even be nicer if some extra charity is given for them, for we see examples in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) supporting this approach.

Fitr or the charity given at the end of the month of Ramadan is another type of charity which should be examined in this context. There should be no distinction made for its payment based on age. Everybody who has the means should pay fitr not just for himself but for everyone in his family. Abdullah b. Umar (r. anhum) narrated that:

"Allah's Apostle (pbuh) enjoined the payment of one Sa' of dates or one Sa' of barley as Fitr for every Muslim, slave or free, male or female, young or old." (Bukhari, Zakat, 70)

Under appropriate circumstances children should be encouraged to give charity themselves, so they can become accustomed to helping others.

In the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) we also see the significant place of having everybody, young and old, enjoy acts of worship.



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) spent his utmost effort not to make his Companions get tired of worshipping. Even though he tolerated insults against him, he never tolerated acts which might draw people away from the mosque and congregation. Sometimes he would even get upset because of such actions.

Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari reported:

“A person came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

“I do not want to go to the dawn prayer on account of such and such man, because he keeps us (standing in prayer) so long.”

I never saw Allah's Messenger (pbuh) angrier when giving a speech than he was that day. He said:

“O people, some of you are scaring people away. So whoever of you leads the people in prayer he must be brief, for behind him are the weak, the aged, and people who have (urgent) business to attend to.” (Muslim, Salat, 182-185)

Again the Prophet (pbuh) would not lengthen his prayer when he heard a child crying thinking that his mother might be in the mosque and she might get anxious. (Bukhari, Adhan, 65)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) put emphasis on moderation and constancy in religious education. A believer must primarily perform the obligatory acts of worship and then be moderate but constant in performing supererogatory worship. In other words, worship should be done to the extent of one's strength and even if it is not much, it should be consistent. Jabir b. Abdullah (r.a.) narrates:

“Allah's Messenger (pbuh) passed by a man who was praying on a rock and came to Mecca. He stayed there for a while. On his way back he saw the man still on the rock praying. Upon which, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) stood up and put his hands together. Then he commanded thrice:

“O people! Be moderate.” And he continued: *“You get tired and bored of performing acts of worship, but Allah does not get tired (to be worshipped and to give rewards for it).”* (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 28)

The Prophet (pbuh) warned Abdullah b. 'Amr (r.a.) who tried to pray through the nights and fast during the days saying:

“You should not do that. So, fast for a few days and eat for few days, pray and sleep at night; for your body has a right upon you; your eyes have right upon you; your family has right upon you; your guests have right upon you. Fasting three days a month is enough for you as the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times and that will be equal to the whole year of fasting...” (Bukhari, Sawm, 55; Muslim, Siyam, 181)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) advised Abdullah b. Amr (r.a.) who insisted on doing saying:

“Fast one day and eat on the other day. Recite it in twenty days; recite it in ten days.” (Muslim, Siyam, 182, 189)

Below are some other prophetic statements in this regard:

“Religion is easiness.” (Bukhari, Iman, 29)

“The most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant even though it were little. Don’t take upon yourselves, except the deeds which are within your ability.” (Bukhari, Riqaaq, 18)

We deduce from the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) that it is more appropriate to perform a voluntary act of worship when one feels eager and energetic to do so. (Bukhari, Wudu, 53; Muslim, Musafirin, 222) Since worshiping Allah is required to be performed in full awareness and consciousness. Ritual prayer means a supplication, a request, begging, going into the presence, and finally meeting and speaking with Allah the Almighty. This is why one needs not only spiritual awareness but also physical energy and rigor.

Another issue which was specifically pointed out in the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) was to perform the acts of worship in deep reverence to Allah the Almighty and as if seeing Him. This is expressed in the following prophetic sayings:

“When you perform your prayer, be like someone who is about to leave this world.” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15)

“Sometimes a servant prays, but only one tenth, or one ninth, or one eighth, or one seventh, or one sixth, or one fifth, or one fourth, or one third, or half of it is written for him.” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 123-124/796)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) personally taught the rituals of pilgrimage and demonstrated all of its details to his followers during the farewell pilgrimage.





Like with other acts of worship, he also advised moderation in pilgrimage. The Prophet (pbuh) was returning (from the hill of Arafat to Muzdalifa) on the 9th day of Dhu'l Hijjah, when he heard a great hue and cry and the beating of camels behind him. So he beckoned to the people with his lash,

“O people! Do not rush. Hastening is not a sign of righteousness.”
(Bukhari, Hajj, 94; Muslim, Hajj, 268)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) showed the same sensibility in teaching fasting and pointed out some acts and behavior that a fasting person should avoid:

“Whoever does not give up false speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of him leaving his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.)”
(Bukhari, Sawm, 8)

This is why one should perform an act of worship in a state of “*ihsan*” mentioned in the well-known tradition of Gabriel, or to perform it as if he is seeing Allah the Almighty, because even though we do not see Him, He, verily, sees us. (Muslim, Iman, 1)

The following perception should never be forgotten in respect to one’s consciousness in performing acts of worship. No matter how much someone does goodness and performs acts of worship, he cannot attain salvation just because of them. Deeds are not the price of salvation, but the manifestation of gratitude for the blessings of the Lord Almighty. Allah the Almighty is the One who both gives His servants the strength to do the deeds and accepts them. Therefore, what one should do is to ask Allah’s grace and kindness and try to live a straight and moderate pious life. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Follow the middle path in your deeds. Know that nobody can attain salvation by means of his deeds.” The Companions asked,

“Even you (will not be saved by your deeds), O Allah’s Apostle?” He (pbuh) replied,

“No, even I (will not be saved) unless and until Allah bestows His Mercy on me.” (Muslim, Munafiqun, 76, 78)

When we examine the exemplary life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and listen to his advice, we can see that giving children religious education is primarily a parents’ job and it should begin in the early ages. Since children are affected adult’s acts and behavior, their exemplary lives play an important role



in education. People are naturally more easily affected from the people they see. In addition to endearing and simplifying, warning and not giving compromises in religious matters should be amongst the principles of religious education. One should also avoid all kinds of extremism which may damage the moderation and consistency in both teaching and performing the acts of worship.

C. The Prophet's Method of Training the Hearts

“The Day when neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”

al-Shuara 26; 88-89

Indeed human beings have been created as capable to do both good and evil. However, they have not been left without guidance before these two opposite choices. They have been given the distinguishing power of intelligence and another very significant blessing, namely a heart with which to control this power. A human being is described by the verses of the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) as a being with two aspects, material and spiritual. Even though his material side presents some significance in social and human relations, his real value is in the extent of the sensitivity of his heart, which is the center of his spiritual side. In the following sayings Allah's Messenger (pbuh) states that the heart, which is the place of Divine manifestation, is the only place of esteem:

“Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.” (Muslim, Birr, 34; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 9)

The real object of Islam is to help human beings achieve a pure and sensitive heart. Verses and traditions call such a heart a “sound heart.” This is mentioned in the following Quranic verse:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“The Day when neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a sound heart.” (al-Shuara 26; 88-89)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also prayed saying:





“O Allah! I ask from you perseverance in religion ...a tongue that tells the truth, and a sound heart.” (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 23; Nasai, Sahw, 61)

Below Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) pointed out that a sound heart is a heart which is free from prejudices and pollution of thoughts and feelings:

“None of my Companions must tell me anything about anyone, for I like to deal with you with no ill-feelings.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 28)

The heart has a central place in both realations between humans and Allah and between humans. Therefore, it is necessary to protect the purity of such a significant organ from all kinds of degeneration. Scholars have usually described a sound heart as a heart “which stays away from infidelity and sins,” “which is cleansed from polytheism and doubts,” “which believes in Allah and the Day of Judgementand resurrection after death,” “which is protected from false beliefs and worldly desires,” “which is cleansed from bad morals and adorned by good ones,” “which stays away from *bid’ah* (innovations in religion) and is satisfied with the true Sunnah.” (Baidawi, IV, 106; Razi, XXIV, 338; Qurtubi, XIII, 114; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, III, 352)

In short, a sound heart refers to a sacred state which is cleansed from moral and religious illnesses and has reached tranquility by obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, the most important thing in training a heart is to make it sound and to be able to present it to the Lord in its original state. In order to attain such a heart, one should successfully pass tests because hearts are being tested for piety. (al-Hujurat 49; 3) The way to reach the propitious state is by cleansing the heart from the illnesses stated by the Qur’an and Sunnah and adorning it with good manners.

1. Protecting the heart from Spiritual Diseases

**“Truly he succeeds that purifies it [the soul],
And he is indeed a failure who corrupts it.”**

al-Shams 91; 9-10

The Holy Qur’an describes the “imperious self – *nafs ammarah*” as the real source of all spiritual illnesses, such as rusting, going blind, losing all the spiritual functions of the heart. As described by our Sacred Book the inner self is created susceptible to both “sins” and “piety.” As a natural result of this it



has been declared as the axis of tendency towards sins and worldly desires. Some related verses are as follows:

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

“And inspired it [the soul] (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.” (al-Shams 91; 9-10)

فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

“...Therefore ascribe not purity unto yourselves...” (al-Najm 53; 32)

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ

“...the (human) soul enjoins unto evil...” (Yusuf 12; 53)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

“Truly he succeeds that purifies it [the soul], and he is indeed a failure who corrupts it.” (al-Shams 91; 9-10)

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ
الْهَوَىٰ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

“But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from lust, Their Abode will be the Garden.” (al-Nazi’at 79; 40-41)

The heart can be likened to a castle which has tried to be conquered by both reason and the inner self. Therefore, the inner self constantly causes anxiety to the heart in order to satisfy its whims and desires. It is stated in the Qur’an:

“It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.” (Qaf 50; 16)



When the inner self has the opportunity to affect the heart through suggestions mentioned in this verse, the will to commit evil emerges in the heart. Thoughts and actions come forth as a result of this, will weaken the heart and make it susceptible to spiritual illnesses. Unless this negative tendency is stopped, the heart faces losing its ability to distinguish right and wrong. Allah the Almighty says that:

“Have you seen him who makes his desire his god, and Allah sends him astray purposely, and seals up his hearing and his heart, and sets on his sight a covering? Then who will lead him after Allah (has condemned him)? Will you not then heed?” (al-Jasiyah 45; 23)

Thus, the most important thing to do to protect the heart is not to submit oneself to the whims of the inner self. The way to achieve this is, on the one hand, to destroy the elements strengthening the wants and desires of the inner self and on the other hand to reinforce the heart’s consciousness of piety through spiritual nourishments. In this way, the self’s effect over the heart will be weakened in both quality and quantity. Consequently, the heart will find an opportunity to perform its essential task. Purifying the self is not an easy job, for it is a person’s inner enemy and the inner and hidden enemy is the worst. The following statement of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) attracts our attention to the difficulty of fighting with the inner self:

“The real fighter (mujahid) is the one who fights with his self with regards to obeying Allah the Almighty.” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 21)

The first thing to do in fighting with the inner self is to get rid of the factors which evoke and strengthen its whims and desires. And Satan and a bad social environment come at the head of these factors.

That is why one should be aware of Satan and his soldiers. In this context, the Lord Almighty warns us in the following verse:

“O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you ... Lo! He sees you, he and his tribe, from whence you see him not. Lo! We have made the devils protecting friends for those who believe not.” (al-A’raf 7; 27)

After Satan was thrown out of the Divine presence, declared leading people away from the straight path as his task and said that he would do everything to succeed in this task:

“He [Satan] said: As You have caused me to remain disappointed I will certainly lie in wait for them in Your straight path. Then will I assault them from in front and behind them, from their right and their left: Nor will You find, in most of them, gratitude (for Your mercies).” (al--A'raf 7; 16-17)

Even though Satan's ways to misguide are varied and plenty, he does not have the power to force people to go astray. This is stated in the following verses:

“And Satan will say when the matter is decided: it was Allah who gave you a promise of truth: I too promised, but I failed in my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to call you, but you listened to me: then reproach not me, but reproach your own souls. I cannot listen to your cries, nor can you listen to mine. I reject your former act in associating me with Allah. For wrongdoers there must be a grievous penalty.” (Ibrahim 14; 22)

“But he had no authority over them, except that We might test to distinguish the man who believes in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it...” (al-Saba 34; 21)

“... Lo! The devil's strategy is ever weak.” (al-Nisa 4; 76)

As it is seen in these verses, Satan's success does not come from his power but from peoples' weaknesses. In other words Satan supports and stimulates the negative weaknesses of the self. This means that Satan's ways of infiltration into the heart are as many as the negative qualities of human beings. Some of them are: carnal desires, rage, ambition, jealousy, greediness, stinginess, fanaticism, excessive eating, passion for jewelry, hastiness, love for property and rank, worldly ambitions, and excessive devotion to this world. Salvation of the heart can be attained only by removing these illnesses from the heart. (Ghazali, III, 149 ff.)

Even though Satan's infiltration into the heart usually happens by means of the inner self, he might sometimes affect it directly. The Qur'an informs us that Satan whispers into the hearts of people and one should take refuge in Allah about this. (al-Mu'minun 23; 97, al-Nas 114; 1-6) In the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) it is stated that Satan may direct the heart (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 2); he



may reach every part of the body that blood can reach;³¹ and he may put some unwanted thoughts into the heart of someone praying. (Bukhari, Adhan, 4)

However it is also stated in the Qur'an that Satan will have no authority over believers who remember Allah, think about His rewards and punishment, and so observe the Divine limits:

“For over my [pious] servants no authority shall you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you.” (al-Hujr 15; 42)

Another element which evokes and strengthens whims of the inner self is the bad places in which sins are committed. Such environments cause deep and near incurable wounds in the human soul. This is why the Holy Qur'an points out that unless it is necessary, sitting with people who disbelieve and ridicule the verses of Allah the Almighty ends up being like them. (al-Nisa 4; 140) Likewise, for the same reason believers are asked not to take Jews and Christians for friends. (al-Maidah 5; 51) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) expresses an environment's power affect people in the following sayings:

“One is on his friend's religion.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 45)

“Every child is born with a true faith (i.e. to worship none but Allah alone) but his parents convert him to Judaism or to Christianity or to Zoroastrianism ...” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 80; Muslim, Qadar, 22)

When we consider how a locality's effects are reflected upon human feelings and behavior, we can better understand the dimensions of the social environment's effects upon the heart. The verse which mentions the desert Arabs as the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy refers to this matter. (al-Tawbah 9; 97)

Using the organs, such as the eyes, tongue, and ears, which connect a person to his surroundings, in a manner contrary to Allah's contentment has a

31. The reason for the emergence of this tradition is very remarkable. Safiya, the wife of the Prophet said that: “I went to Allah's Apostle to visit him in the mosque while he was in I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. I talked with him for a while, then I got up in order to return home. The Prophet accompanied me. When we reached the gate of the mosque, opposite the door of Um-Salama, two Ansari men were passing by and they greeted Allah's Apostle. He told them: Slow down! This lady is (my wife) Safiya bint Huyai.” Both of them said, “Subhan Allah, (How can we think of any evil about you?) O Allah's Apostle!” Upon this the Prophet said (to them), “Satan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it, (everywhere in one's body). I was afraid lest Satan might insert an evil thought in your minds.” (Bukhari, I'tikaf, 8 Adab, 121; Muslim, Salam, 24; Abu Dawud, Adab 81)

great influence upon stimulating the desires of the soul. If it is not necessary, male and female believers are not allowed to look at the opposite sex who is not legally related to them. (al-Nur 24; 30-31) Seductive words are also prohibited. (al-Ahzab 33; 32) In his following saying Allah's Messenger (pbuh) stated how much unnecessary stares damage the heart:

النَّظْرَةُ سَهْمٌ مِنْ سَهَامِ إبْلِيسَ مَسْمُومَةٌ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ خَوْفِ اللَّهِ
أَثَابَهُ - جَلٌّ وَعَزٌّ - إِيْمَانًا يَجِدُ حَلَاوَتَهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ.

“An unlawful look is an arrow from the arrows of Satan. Whoever stays away from it because of the fear of Allah, Allah bestows on him such faith that he feels its sweetness in his heart.” (Hakim, IV, 349/7875)

Therefore what needs to be done primarily in disciplining the heart is to protect our spiritual world from the negative effects of Satan, the inner self and a bad environment. In order to realize this, it is necessary to be protected from spiritual diseases, such as disbelief, heedlessness, vanity, rage, greed, and grudges. Now we can begin to examine how these diseases affect human spirituality.

a. Disbelief

“O Allah! Take us out from the darkness of disbelief into the brightness of Islam.”

Abu Dawud, Salat, 178

The Arabic word *kufir* literally means to cover and hide. Terminologically, it means to deny some or all of the principles in which a religion requires its followers to believe. One who does not believe in those principles is called *kafir* or one who conceals the truth.

People are driven into disbelief because of the blameworthy qualities of the inner self, e.g. pride and obstinacy. Even though sometimes a person knows the truth by heart and admits it by the tongue, he may refuse Islam as the true religion due to reasons like jealousy, fame, rank, social pressure, or nationalism.



Those who deny, belittle, or ridicule the principles of Islam and utter blasphemous phrases, when there is no necessity, fall into disbelief. However, one who is under death threat and says something blasphemous in order to save his life causes no harm to his faith. Indeed this is clearly expressed in a verse reading: **“Anyone who, after accepting Faith in Allah, utters unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty.”** (al-Nahl 16; 106)

The incident which caused the revelation of this verse further elucidates this issue. Polytheists had caught and tortured Ammar, his father Yasir, his mother Sumayya, Suhaib, Bilal, Habbab, and Salim (r. anhum). They tied Sumayya (r. anha) to two camels and martyred her and her husband under torment; whereas Ammar (r.a.) told whatever polytheists had asked him to say. Following which, people came to the Messenger of Allah and told him:

“Ammar has become a disbeliever.” Our Prophet (pbuh) said:

“No, Ammar has never become a disbeliever. He is full of faith. Faith has permeated in his flesh and blood.” Later Ammar came crying to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) on the one hand wiped his tears and on the other hand told him:

*“If they torture you again, tell whatever they want you to tell.”*³²

Disbelief may find a place in peoples’ inner worlds for various factors. The most obvious characteristic of disbelief is to make the heart’s ability to see and comprehend the truth, blind. The Qur’an describes this state as follows:

“Do they [those who oppose you] not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts.” (al-Hajj 22; 46)

“... they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning).” (al-A’raf 7; 179)

32. Also see Ibn Sa’d, III, 249; Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil*, II, 67; Haythami, IX, 295; Wahidi, p. 288-89.



Disbelievers even covered themselves with their garments and put their fingers into their ears not to hear the Divine message. (Nuh 71; 7) But covering their eyes and ears left their hearts in darkness.

As pointed out in the above mentioned verses human beings have three eyes: two in the head and one in the soul. The former is also found in animals; however the latter is only particular to human beings. If their ability of discernment gets blind, human beings descends to the level of animals and even to a lower level from the point of imperceptivity.

Unawareness of the truth is the obvious feature of disbelievers. And the cause of this is their ingratitude or the disbelief in their hearts. In short, it is blindness to the truth.

While both signs in the universe and the verses of the Qur'an invite humanity to the only eternal and past-eternal Truth, i.e. Allah the Almighty, the ingratitude of not knowing him and not taking notice of His message is the result of their hearts growing cold. One of the related verses of the Qur'an is as follows:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts.” (al-Mutaffifin 83; 14)

In the following tradition, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) explains how every committed sin prepares the ground for the heart becoming sealed:

“When a servant makes a mistake, a black dot gets placed in his heart. If he repents and asks forgiveness, his heart gets cleansed from that dot; but if he goes back and commits the same mistake, the number of dots increases and they eventually cover the entire heart. This is the rust upon the heart mentioned in the Qur'an.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 83; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 29)

In the above mentioned verse and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) pollution of the heart is explained as getting rust on it. In a way, in these accounts the heart is likened to iron. The heart hardens and gets rusty, like iron, because of sins. In another verse, the hardness of the hearts is described as follows: **“...Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: they became like a rock and even worse in hardness...”** (al-Baqara 2; 74)



A hardened, rusty, and sealed heart will not be affected by warnings and advice. This is also emphasized in some Qur'anic verses as follows:

“As to those who reject the faith, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).” (al-Baqara 2; 6-7)

Rusted souls, because of their disbelief in Allah and denial of His signs and rules, eventually become hard like rocks. They are eventually completely deprived of the remembrance of Allah, i.e. loving Him more than anything else, and fearing from Him more than anything else.

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) warned Muslims not to make concessions in following the Qur'an and Sunnah and especially to stay away from religious innovations. He then stated the necessity to stay away from the hardness of heart as follows:

“Beware! Do not let your desires and ambition make you forget your death. Otherwise your hearts get hardened ...” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 7)

According to a statement in the Qur'an, since deniers with hardened hearts have no way to reach tranquility by remembering Allah, they look for comfort in temporary ambitions. (al-Anbiya 21; 3) Their hearts are a mess (al-Hashr 59; 14) with false and mortal loves instead of love for Allah (al-Baqara 2; 165) and with fears other than the fear of Allah. (Al-i Imran 3; 151)

This is why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) always warned his Companions about disbelief and about the sins which might lead to disbelief. He also advised them to say the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ أَلْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِنَا وَأَصْلِحْ ذَاتَ بَيْنِنَا وَاهْدِنَا سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَنَجِّنَا
 مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَجَبِّتْنَا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ
 وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِي أَسْمَاعِنَا وَأَبْصَارِنَا وَقُلُوبِنَا وَأَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا وَتُبْ
 عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ وَاجْعَلْنَا شَاكِرِينَ لِنِعْمَتِكَ مُثْنِينَ بِهَا
 قَابِلِيهَا وَأَتَمِّمَهَا عَلَيْنَا

“O Allah, join our hearts, mend our social relationship, guide us to the path of peace, bring us from darkness to light, save us from obscenities, outward or inward, and bless our ears, our eyes, our hearts, our wives, our children, and relent toward us; You are the Relenting, the Merciful. And make us grateful for Your blessing and make us praise it while accepting it and give it to us in full.” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 178)

b. Hypocrisy

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie. Whenever he makes a promise, he always breaks it. If you trust him, he proves to be dishonest.”

Bukhari, Iman, 24

The Arabic word for hypocrisy, i.e. *nifaq*, comes from the three letter root of *na-fa-qa*, which literally means to dig a tunnel. A mole’s digging tunnels under the earth as a way to confuse its predators is also defined by same word.

Terminologically it refers to entering Islam from a gate and exiting it from another, in other words, to pretend to believe but to disbelieve in one’s heart. Two-faced and hesitant people who change their behavior based on the circumstances are also called *munafiq* or hypocrites. The state of hesitation is clearly expressed in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ

“O Messenger! Let not those grieve you, who race each other into unbelief: (whether it be) among those who say “We believe” with their lips but whose hearts have no Faith...” (al-Maidah 5; 41)

Considering the relationship between the heart and hypocrisy, it can be said that if two-facedness is in the heart, it requires infidelity; but if it is in actions it is considered just as a sin. (Qurtubi, VIII, 212) Therefore, hypocrisy is of two types: one pertaining to belief and the other pertaining to actions:



The former causes a person to be treated like a believer in this world but when his hypocrisy gets revealed in the Hereafter, he will face an end worse than the unbelievers.

The latter, on the other hand, is not related to faith, but it is a characteristic caused by some manners and behavior. For instance, in the following prophetic saying examples of hypocrisy in actions are given:

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie. Whenever he promises, he always breaks it (his promise). If you trust him, he proves to be dishonest.” (Bukhari, Iman, 24; Muslim, Iman, 107) Even though the attributes mentioned in this tradition are also attributes of people who have problems pertaining to faith, one should regard them as warnings to not come close to hypocrisy in faith. Yet, those actions and behavior are not disbelief and do not make someone leave the religion. (Nawawi, *Sharh*, II, 46-48)

Upon closer examination, it can be seen that all three characteristics are based on lies. This proves that lying is the common point of hypocrites. Therefore, for those who have the habit of lying there is always the danger of falling into hypocrisy or disbelief. Indeed, a prophetic saying related to this issue reads as follows:

“The slave continues to lie and a black spot grows in his heart until all his heart becomes black. Then he is written, in Allah’s sight, among the liars.” (Muwatta, Kalam, 18)

Hypocrites are often seen to call Allah as their witness for their lies even though they do not believe in Him. They do this to conceal their hypocrisy; whereas their heart is filled with enmity. (al-Baqara 2; 204)

Hypocrites always plot mischief in society. This is explained in the Qur’an as follows: **“When it is said to them: “Make not mischief on the earth,” they say: “Why, we only want to make peace!” Of a surety, they are the ones who make mischief, but they realize (it) not. When it is said to them: “Believe as the others believe” they say: “Shall we believe as the fools believe?” - Nay, of a surety they are the fools, but they do not know. When they meet those who believe, they say: “We believe;” but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: “We are really with you we (were) only jesting.”“**

In a saying of the Prophet it is stated that *“The similitude of a hypocrite is that of a sheep which roams aimlessly between two flocks.”* (Muslim, Munafiqin, 17) Hypocrites who waver between belief and disbelief sometimes act like they remember Allah. They strive to beguile Him and show-off. They stand up to pray sluggishly. (al-Nisa 4; 142-143) they swear falsely to turn people away from the path of Allah. (al-Mujadala 58; 14, 16)

Hypocrites who say **“We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey”** (al-Nur 24; 47) talk about rebellion and enmity against the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) while they are alone. (al-Mujadala 58; 9, 10) They are like devils. **“Because Satan says to man, Deny Allah: but when (man) denies Allah, (Satan) says, I am free of you: I do fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!”** (al-Hashr 59; 16) They are naturally in opposition of Allah and His Messenger (pbuh). (al-Mujadala 58; 20) But they are afraid about the revelation of verses manifesting what really is in their heart. (al-Tawbah 9; 64)

Hypocritical men and hypocritical women, who have evil thoughts about Allah, (al-Fath 48; 6) complement one another. They invite people to evil and try to turn them away from goodness. (al-Tawbah 9; 67) They want slander to spread among believers. (al-Nur 24; 19) Pointing out the hypocrisy in their hearts Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“O community of people, who believed by their tongue, and belief did not enter their hearts! Do not sadden and back-bite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him even when he is in his own house.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35; Tirmidhi, Birr, 85)

Allah the Almighty warns those who have hypocrisy in their hearts saying:

“When you look at them, their exteriors please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are as (worthless as hollow) pieces of timber propped up, (unable to stand on their own). They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemies; so beware of them. The curse of Allah be on them! How are they deluded (away from the Truth)!” (al-Muhafiqun 63; 4)

Hypocrites who will appear just before Judgment Day are described in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows: *“At the end of the days there will appear some people and they will use religion for their world. They will conceal*



themselves in lamb furs [hide their real intentions] and pretend to treat people leniently. Their tongue is sweeter than candy but their heart is the heart of a wolf.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 60)

In the following verses the Sacred Qur’an informs us that hypocrites will want the benefits of this world to continue in the Hereafter, but this will not be possible:

“One Day will the Hypocrites men and women say to the believers: Wait for us! Let us borrow (a light) from your light! It will be said: Turn you back to your rear! Then seek a light (where you can)! So a wall will be put up betwixt them, with a gate therein. Within it will be mercy through-out, and without it, all alongside, will be (wrath and) punishment! (Those without) will call out, were we not with you? (The others) will reply, true! But you led yourselves into temptation; you looked forward (to our ruin); you doubted (Allah’s Promise); and (your false) desires deceived you; un-til these issued the Command of Allah. And the Deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah.” (al-Hadid 57; 13-14)

Hypocrites whose hearts are sealed like unbelievers (al-Munafiqun 63; 3) will be separated from believers in the Hereafter and come together with the unbelievers. They will be at the lowest level of Hell because of their double-standards.

Disbelief and hypocrisy come at the head of a list of spiritual diseases, which destroy the heart. Attributes like selfishness, vanity, and arrogance, are the reasons for not being able to protect the heart from such diseases. The end of a heart with such feelings will be deprivation from the light of revelation and eventually a deep heedlessness. It is natural that in such a heart there will not be lofty attributes like love for Allah, knowledge of Allah, and fear from Allah. Instead it will be filled with doubts, fears, and concerns. And it is obvious such a heart will not be able to find peace and tranquility.

c. *Vanity*

“Pride means disdaining the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people.”

Muslim, Iman, 147

The Arabic word *takabbur* and its derivatives refer to vanity, patronizing others, excessive pride in one’s own abilities, and seeing oneself superior and



thus belittling others. In the Holy Qur'an Satan is presented as the first representative of vanity. When he was told "prostrate yourself before Adam," he was too proud and consequently became an unbeliever. (al-Baqara 2; 34) In this context Allah the Almighty states that

أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ

"...Are you too proud or are you of the high exalted?" (Sad 38; 75) and thus He expressed that Satan's refusal to prostrate has nothing to do with real loftiness but was just a vain manifestation of glory.

One can see similar manifestations of vanity from human beings. Most rebels and the deniers of the Divine commands have refused the Truth because of their excessive pride. For instance, Qarun's (Korah), Pharaoh's and Haman's rampage before the Truth was due to their arrogance. (al-Ankabut 29; 39; Yunus 10; 75) Likewise, we see in the following verse which was revealed about Walid b. Mughirah, who was one of the leading unbelievers during the Prophet's time, that arrogance is an obstacle for faith:

"For lo! He did consider; then he planned. And woe to him! How he planned! ... Then he looked round; then he frowned and he scowled; then he turned away in pride. Then said he: This is nothing but magic, derived from of old...!" (al-Muddaththir 74; 18-25)

The Holy Qur'an also declares that those who are defeated by the pride in their breasts will be deprived of Allah's and the believers' love and consequently their hearts will be sealed:

"Those who wrangle concerning the revelations of Allah without any warrant that have come unto them, it is hateful in the sight of Allah and in the sight of those who believe. Thus does Allah set a seal on every arrogant, disdainful heart." (al-Mu'min 40; 35)

It is stated in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) that *"None shall enter the Fire (of Hell) who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of faith and none shall enter Paradise who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride."* (Muslim, Iman, 148, 149) which clearly shows the contradistinction between faith and pride. The famous scholar Khattabi stated that pride men-



tioned in this saying denoted to turn away from faith in Allah and His Messenger (pbuh). (Nawawi, *Sharh*, II, 91)

In another narration Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that

"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise." A person from the Companions asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Would not a person like that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine? He (the Holy Prophet) remarked:

"Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves grace. Pride means disdainning the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people." (Muslim, Iman, 147; Tirmidhi, Birr, 61)

In this tradition the heart is mentioned as the place for pride. And this tradition also points out this bad attribute's moral side and its aspects pertaining to faith. This is why pride needs to be known by its following two sides:

1. A person's arrogance towards Allah by refusing the Truth
2. Belittling others by showing excessive pride

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned his followers frequently about the disease of vanity in various places and occasions. For instance, once he stated that every violent, cruel, and arrogant person were amongst the people of the fire. (Bukhari, Ayman, 9; Muslim, Jannah, 46) In another warning he (pbuh) said that *"He who trailed his lower garment with no other intention but pride, Allah would not look towards him on the Day of Resurrection."* (Muslim, Libas, 42) The following two narrations are also about those who were defeated by their pride:

"There was a person who walked with pride because of his (fine) mantles and well pleased with his personality. Allah made him sink in the earth and he would go on sinking in that until the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Ayman, 54; Muslim, Libas, 49, 50)

"There was a dispute between Hell and Paradise and it (Hell) said:

"The haughty and the proud shall find abode in me." And the Paradise said:

"The meek and the humble shall find their abode in me." Thereupon Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, (addressing Hell) said:

“You are the means of My punishment by which I punish those of My servants whom I wish.” (And addressing Paradise) He said:

“You are only My Mercy by means of which I shall show mercy to those whom I wish, but each one of you would be full.” (Muslim, Jannah, 34)

This type of traditions of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) is very meaningful for showing what a bad characteristic vanity is. Because when someone gets infected with the virus of arrogance, they begin to think themselves superior to others. And in time this unhealthy state controls all actions. Consequently, he cannot escape from being written into the book of oppressors. It is expressed in a prophetic saying that:

“By showing constant pride a person gets recorded with the oppressors. And thus he receives the punishment that the oppressors receive.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 61)

Even though pride is such a bad attribute, it is allowed under some circumstances. For instance, in order to scare an enemy to walk proudly before him is permitted. In fact, when the fight escalated between the two armies in the battle of Uhud, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) drew his sword, held it in his hand and called out to his Sahaba and said,

“Who is ready to take this sword from me?” Many notable Companions approached to take it. Amongst them were Ali bin Abi Talib, Al-Zubair bin Al-Awwam and Umar bin Al-Khattab. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked again:

“Who is ready to take this sword from me to fulfill its right?” This time everybody hesitated to go forward.

Abu Dujana (r.a.) stood up and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I will take it to fulfill its right.” (Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahabah, 128) Abu Dujana (r.a.) then, inquired:

“O Messenger of Allah, what is its right?” The Prophet (pbuh) said,

“It is to fight against the enemy with it until it breaks!” And so he took the sword, wrapped his red turban around his head and began to walk proudly between the lines of the Muslims and polytheists’.

When Allah’s Messenger saw his way of walking, he said:





“Such a walk that Allah the Almighty hates except in places like this.” (Ibn Hisham, III, 11-12)

Similarly when they came to Mecca for the minor pilgrimage in the year of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, he (pbuh) ordered believers to walk quickly and with arrogance in order to impress the unbelievers with their strength. (Bukhari, Hajj, 55; Muslim, Hajj, 240)

People should always control themselves and try to keep their intentions and feelings upon the straight path. They should adhere to this tendency even when showing pride is allowed because if one does not keep his inner self under constant control, spiritual diseases existing in people’s nature, like arrogance and belittling other, are always ready to surface when they find the opportunity. Then one begins to see himself as superior to others and to oppress them; and such people’s final destination will unfortunately be resurrection amongst the oppressors.

d. Heedlessness

“O Allah! Do not leave me alone with my inner self even in a twinkle of an eye.”

Ibn Hanbal, V, 42

Heedlessness, which in its literal sense carries various meanings such as to leave, not to pay attention to, to make a mistake, to neglect, distraction and carelessness, in religious terminology can be described as to disregard and forget Allah and the Truth sent by Him, and to follow the whims and desires of the inner self.

Heedlessness is mentioned in the Qur’an as the attribute of unbelievers in particular. For instance, in a verse unbelievers, who are worse than animals and whose hearts are sealed, are characterized as heedless ones. (al-A’raf 7; 179) Another verse about the people with the same character reads as follows:

“Those are they whose hearts, ears, and eyes Allah has sealed up, and they take no heed.” (al-Nahl, 16; 108)

We also see in the Qur’an that believers are warned about heedlessness through the personality of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):



وَأذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ
وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

“And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening and be not of the heedless ones.” (al-A’raf 7; 205)

In another verse remembering Allah little is expressed as the deed of hypocrites with the following statements:

“And when they stand up to prayer they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allah save a little.” (al-Nisa 4; 142)

Our Prophet (pbuh) prayed saying that:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

“O Allah! Do not leave me alone with my inner self even in a twinkle of an eye.” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 42) and thus presented an excellent example to his follower about staying away from the illness of heedlessness. Otherwise, as it is stated by our Prophet (pbuh) in his saying “*even though my eyes sleep, my heart does not sleep*” (Muslim, Musafirin, 125) he had a complete awareness in his heart.

According to the verses of the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) heedlessness is in fact the opposite of remembrance. In other words, remembrance or “remembering Allah in the heart and mentioning Him by the tongue” refers to constant thought, commemoration, and not forgetting even a moment; while heedlessness means forgetting, and following the whims and desires of the inner self. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) likens the one who celebrates the Praises of Allah with the one who does not celebrate His Praises to that of a living creature with a dead one. (Bukhari, Daawat, 66) Thus, he emphasized that the heart keeps its vitality through the remembrance of Allah and heedlessness causes its death. We also see the Divine reproach for those who are heedless in their ritual prayers, which is considered as a kind of remembrance of Allah in the following verse: “**So woe to the praying ones Who are**



heedless of their prayer.” (al-Ma’un 107; 4-5) In a prophetic tradition it is said about similar people that:

“There are many who fast obtain nothing from it but hunger and thirst. And there are many who may stand for prayer at night and receive nothing from it but sleeplessness.” (Ibn Hanbal, II, 373) The Prophet (pbuh), who advised to say supplications with a sensitive heart, expressed that the supplications of a heedless heart will not be answered saying:

“Pray to Allah in a manner believing with certainty that your prayers will be answered; for Allah does not accept prayers said with a heedless heart.” (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 65)

In another tradition of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), he expressed how people who move away from servitude and how the consciousness of congregation will be inflicted by heedlessness:

“People must cease to neglect the Friday prayer or Allah will seal their hearts and then they will be among the negligent.” (Muslim, Jum’a, 40) Let alone neglecting an obligatory act of worship like the Friday prayer, even something natural like laughing hurts the essential function and the spiritual soundness of the heart. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that: *“Do not laugh too much, for it kills the heart.”* (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 2)

Verses which consist of the warning **“if you are indeed Believers”**³³ and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) such as *“if someone commits adultery, he is not a believer at the time of committing adultery; and if he steals, he is not a believer at the time of committing theft; if he consumes alcohol, he is not a believer at the time of consuming it”* emphasize the necessity of avoiding heedlessness and staying in the light of faith.

In conclusion, we can say that believers should stay away from heedlessness which is one of the obvious characteristics of the unbelievers. In this respect, they should take lessons from the life of the Prophet (pbuh). May Allah save all believers from such spiritual diseases! Amin!

33. Two of the verses in this context are as follows: **“O you who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if you are indeed Believers.”** (al-Baqara 2; 278) **“It is only the evil one that suggests to you the fear of his votaries: be ye not afraid of them, but fear me, if you have Faith.”** (Al-i Imran 3; 175)

e. *Rage*

“When one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.”

Abu Dawud, Adab, 3

Rage refers to an intense state of anger and temper which emerges as a result of a desire to get rid of a situation that arises against and incapacitates one until its source is taken care of. This mental state, which stays hidden in the depths of a heart, is like the ember hidden underneath the ashes. The blood in the heart boils because of the smoldering fire in it. Consequently, a person’s prudence and perception will be incapacitated since his reason will not be able to work properly. This is why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said *“a judge should not issue a decision between two parties when he is angry.”* (Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 7) One may also do things about which one may later feel ashamed. This is expressed in a Turkish proverb that states: “rage comes and the eye is blinded; rage goes and face becomes blushed.” It is even said that excessive anger is “temporary madness.”

Exceeding the limits of reason and religion a state of rage may often turn into a state of aggression. One should be able to control his anger in that state and employ it in a well-balanced manner in accordance with Islamic morals. In this matter Abdullah b. Amr’s report is remarkable. He said that:

“I used to write everything which I heard from the Apostle of Allah (pbuh). I intended (by it) to memorize it but Quraysh prohibited me saying:

“Do you write everything that you hear from him while the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) is a human being who may speak in anger and when pleased?” So I stopped writing, and mentioned it to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh). 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.”
(Abu Dawud, ‘Ilm, 3)

By this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) meant that he might get angry but he could control it and his anger could not prevent him from telling the truth. In a verse about the characteristics of the pious it is stated that:





“Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good.” (Al-i Imran 3; 134)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) described the one who controls their anger as the real wrestler (Bukhari, Adab, 76) and gave the good news of the many blessings waiting in the Hereafter for those who defeat their anger. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 3)

Traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) speak about the close relationship between Satan and rage both of which were created from fire. Below are the principles which need to be followed when feelings of anger arise:

1) To take refuge in Allah: Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said to two men fighting before him: *“I know a phrase which, if repeated, could get rid of this angry feeling. They asked: What is it, Apostle of Allah? He replied: He should say: I seek refuge in Thee from the accursed devil.”* (Bukhari, Adab, 76; Abu Dawud, Adab, 3) Also the following prayer taught by the Prophet (pbuh) to Umm Salamah (r. anha) is a cure of anger: *“O Allah Who is the Lord of the Prophet Muhammad! Forgive my sins and remove the rage of my heart.”* (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 302)

2) Performing Ablution: Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) pointed out that anger can be extinguished by performing ablution saying: *“Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.”* (Abu Dawud, Adab, 3)

3) Changing the position of one’s body: Another useful thing to do when angered is to change the position of one’s body into a more relaxed one. This is stated by the Prophet (pbuh) as follows:

“Beware! Rage is a piece of fire in a human’s heart. Don’t you see the redness in the eyes and bulging veins of the neck? Whoever feels the sign of this should lie down.” (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 26) Another saying reads as follows:

“When one of you becomes angry while standing, he should sit down. If the anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise he should lie down.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 3)

4) To prefer silence: It is a well-known fact that the more two people insult each other the more their anger increases. Maybe because of this, Al-



lah's Messenger (pbuh) said that *"when one of you gets angry, he should keep quiet."* (Ibn Hanbal, I, 239) One who gets angry for simple reasons may cause unexpected results due to his nonsensical speech. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was pleased to see that Abu Bakr (r.a.) did not respond to a person who had insulted him. Later, the Prophet (pbuh) wanted to leave Abu Bakr when he decided to retaliate. And when Abu Bakr asked his opinion concerning his action, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) said that:

"When you kept your silence, there was an angel responding to that man on behalf of you. But when you began to retaliate, the angel left and Satan came to his place. And I shall not stay in places where Satan is present." (Ibn Hanbal, II, 436)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) turned his face away and did not pay attention to people to whom he got angry. Maybe this is another method to cure this spiritual illness. (Abu Dawud, Libas, 17; Ibn Hanbal, III, 14)

Getting angry to satisfy the inner self is not approved in Islamic ethics; whereas abating anger and forgiving the opponent is considered a great merit. Various methods of treatment are advised in this matter. An excessive state of anger leads to dishonor, cowardliness, weakness, sloppiness, and many other material and spiritual harms. Therefore, it is a necessary and appropriate reaction to show anger towards things that compromise Islam or abuse its sacred values. In fact, Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who never took revenge for personal reasons, (Muslim, Fadail, 79) stated that he would not forgive anybody who violated the borders drawn by Allah the Almighty even if the violator was his own daughter, Fatima. (Bukhari, Hudud, 11, 12; Ibn Majah, Hudud, 6) The characterization of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) in the sources as the Prophet of mercy and the Prophet of wars at the same time should be regarded as the manifestation of this balanced approach. (Ibn Qayyim, *Zad al-Maad*, I, 95, 96) As a result of a balanced manifestation of anger, some essential moral qualities, such as courage and bravery, will emerge and people's self-esteem will be protected. The Holy Qur'an points to that fact when describing the Prophet (pbuh) and believers as **"...humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers..."** (al-Maidah 5; 54; al-Fath 48; 29)



f. Grudges

“And place not in our hearts any rancor toward those who believe.”

(al-Hashr 59; 10)

A grudge is the feeling of enmity that dwells in someone’s heart. Especially the anger which settles in the hearts of those who cannot take their revenge and because of their weaknesses it turns into a secret feeling of enmity and grudge. Someone nurturing resentment towards another person looks for any opportunity to take revenge. In other words anger, hate, and a desire for revenge are the main sources of grudges. In a verse these negative feelings towards believers are expressed as follows:

“O you who believe! Do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people; they do not fall short of inflicting loss upon you; they love what distresses you; vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths, and what their breasts conceal (hate, enmity, and jealousy) is greater still ...” (Al-i Imran 3; 118)

Grudge is the source of many spiritual diseases. The main ones are jealousy, back-biting, breaking ties, insulting others, disclosing secrets, oppression, neglecting responsibilities, and rejoicing other people’s misfortunes. (Ghazali, III, 339) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) prayed for the protection of his followers from such inappropriate attributes saying:

“My Lord, accept my repentance, wash away my sins, answer my supplication, clearly establish my evidence, guide my heart, make true my tongue and draw out malice from my breast.” (Abu Dawud, Witr, 25; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 102)

In another tradition Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) explained how grudges and enmity destroy a person’s religious life:

“There has come to you the disease of the nations before you, jealousy and hatred. This is the ‘shaver’ (destroyer); I do not say that it shaves hair, but that it shaves (destroys) faith. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you of that which will strengthen love between you? Spread (the greeting) salaam amongst yourselves.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 57)



As it is pointed out in this prophetic saying, religious feelings will be the first to be damaged in a society that lacks love and filled with enmity and hatred. This fact is also expressed in the following Turkish proverb: “religion and hatred can never be together.” Consequently, in a society with weakened religious feelings there will be fewer people with high morals, a strong character, and respecting each other. This is why Islam opposes and prohibits hatred and why it is expressed that believer’s hearts must be cleansed from grudges.

According to the narration of Abdullah b. Amr (r.a.) the Prophet (pbuh) was asked:

“Who is the best type of person?” He (pbuh) replied:

“*A person who is truthful in his speech and Makhmum in his heart*” People asked:

“We know what truthful speech is, but what is a Makhmum heart?” The Prophet (pbuh) responded by saying:

“*It is god-conscious, pure, contains no sin, and harbors no iniquity, nor rancor, or jealousy.*” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 24)

The Holy Qur’an, too, warns believers against hatred and similar evil qualities and exhorts them to forgive others. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (r.a.) who used to provide for Mistah bin Uthatha, because of the latter’s kinship to him, swore that he would never help him again for he had slandered Aisha (r. anha). Then the following verse was revealed:

“And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way, and they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (al-Nur 24; 22; Bukhari, Tafsir, 24/6)

In another verse it is stated that the true believers pray saying:

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“And place not in our hearts any rancor toward those who believe.” (al-Hashr 59; 10)



In one of his sayings our beloved Prophet (pbuh) prohibited believers from feeling mutual hatred, jealousy, and hostility (Muslim, Birr, 32); and in another saying he (pbuh) emphasized the necessity of exchanging gifts to remove hatred and grudges saying:

“Exchange gifts amongst you, for gifts eliminate hatred and hostility in the heart.” (Tirmidhi, Hiba, 6)

On the other hand, it should not be assumed that a believer has to love everything and everybody based on the verses and prophetic sayings expressing the wrongness of holding grudges. When we take the Prophet’s (pbuh) saying of *“the best of the actions is to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah”* (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 2) as our basis, we can reach the conclusion that there will be people that a believer dislikes and even hates. No matter how warm love is and how cold hate is, there can be no difference between these two opposite feelings when they are felt for the sake of Allah and both of them will ascend to the level of the best deeds; because what makes a deed meaningful is the intention that lies behind it. (Bukhari, Iman, 1) A soul loving for the sake of Allah will love the friends of Allah and prove his love by following them. Similarly a believer who hates for the sake of Allah will hate and disapprove the acts of the sinners, the oppressors, and the impious.

g. Jealousy

“Avoid jealousy, for jealousy devours good deeds just as fire devours wood.”

(Abu Dawud, Adab, 44)

Jealousy is a mental state which makes a person to wish for other people to lose what they have. It is blameworthy characteristic of the heart.

The Qur’an emphasizes how this negative attribute will destroy the spiritual world on an individual and societal level as follows: **“Quite a number of the People of the Book wish they could turn you (people) back to infidelity after you have believed. From selfish envy, after the Truth has become manifest unto them...”** (al-Baqara 2; 109)

This verse clearly points out that jealousy was the reason that Jews wanted believers to turn away from the Islamic faith. Saying that *“jealousy and faith cannot combine in a believer’s heart”* (Nasai, Jihad, 8) Allah’s Messenger



(pbuh) attracts our attention to the fact that jealousy is a matter of heart just like faith. However, faith represents the positive drift of the heart, whereas jealousy represents the opposite direction.

There are many proofs in the sources of Islam that jealousy is prohibited. In a verse, it is stated that:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

“And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others...” (al-Nisa 4; 32) In a tradition, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) addresses his followers saying that:

“Don’t nurse grudges and don’t bid him out in order to raise the price and don’t nurse aversion or enmity and don’t enter into a transaction when the others have entered into that transaction and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim to look down on his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honor. Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.” (Muslim, Birr, 32-33)

The reason for the prohibition and disapproval of jealousy is that it is Allah the Almighty Whom the jealous person is really directing his feelings against; because, Allah is the One Who really gives His servants all kinds of blessings, ranks, status, and goodness. Therefore, feeling jealous towards the blessings bestowed upon another servant means interfering in Allah’s Will. The Prophet’s above mentioned saying refers to this fact by expressing the conflict between faith and jealousy. Jealousy harms nobody but the jealous. Faith bestows on the heart peace and tranquility, whereas jealousy causes it distress. Consequently, we can say that those who adorn their hearts with faith will be able to save themselves from this bad spiritual disease.

Allah’s Messenger’s warned believers about all kinds of moral weaknesses saying *“O servants of Allah! Be brothers”* which indicates that leaving bad attributes will have a great effect on the emergence of sincere feelings and behavior in society.



In his following tradition Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also pointed out that good deeds will be wasted if the heart gets spoiled by spiritual illnesses like jealousy:

"Avoid jealousy, for jealousy devours good deeds just as fire devours wood." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 44; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 22)

According to the following report from Anas b. Malik's (r.a.), cleansing the heart from jealousy and grudges will be a reason for salvation in the Hereafter. Anas (r.a.) said that:

"Once when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was sitting with some of his Companions, he said:

"Someone from the people of Paradise will come here now." At that moment a man from the ansar came in with his slippers in his hand and water dripping from his beard as a result of newly performed ablution. On the following day same man came in when the Prophet (pbuh) uttered the words, and a similar incident happened on the third day. After the Messenger of Allah had left, Abdullah b. Amr (r.a.) followed the man and told him:

"I had an argument with my father and swore that I would not go home for three days. Would you host me at your home during these days?" The man accepted.

Upon which Abdullah became his guest for three days, but he did not see him wake up in the middle of the night to pray. He just saw the man remembering Allah and saying His name in bed and getting up for dawn prayer when the time was up. Abdullah b. Amr continued his words:

"I never heard a bad word coming out of his mouth, but I belittled his acts of worship during these three days. I told him:

"O servant of Allah! To be honest there was nothing wrong between me and my father. However, we heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saying for three days: *"Someone from the people of Paradise will come here now."* And you came on every one of these days. This is why I wanted to see your actions and do the same. But I saw that you did not perform much. Tell me what makes you attain such a high rank?"

He responded:

“I am what you saw I am. But I have nothing fake in my heart towards believers. I never feel jealous towards the blessings of Allah the Almighty upon His servants.” Upon which Abdullah b. Amr (r.a.) said:

“This is the thing that makes you attain such a high place, which we cannot easily manage to do.” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 106)

In the works about Islamic ethics it is stated that jealousy can be cured by knowledge and practice. By means of knowledge one gathers the necessary information about the nature of this illness and by means of practice, one can force oneself to act in opposition to the causes of jealousy. Thus, one can either annihilate or reduce one’s tendency towards the feeling of jealousy. At least one can look for ways to get rid of this ailment. As it was expressed by the verses of the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) jealousy is a quality of the heart not the actions. Therefore, a believer should try not to be affected by this negative attribute and to organize his acts in accordance with the requirements of Islam.

On the other hand, there is another type of feeling which is similar to jealousy but allowed by Islam, that is envy without malice. Envy means hoping to have a blessing that somebody else has but without wishing him to lose it. This feeling is compared in the Qur’an to a race on the path of doing goodness: **“...For this let (all) those strive who strive for bliss”** (al-Mutaffifin 83; 26) In a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) believers are allowed to be envious about gaining knowledge and doing good deeds:

“Do not envy anyone except in two cases. (The first is) A person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one whom Allah has given wisdom (the Holy Qur’an) and he acts according to it and teaches it to others.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 15; Muslim, Musafirin, 268)

While being envious about gaining knowledge and striving to do good are encouraged, competing in doing evil, feeling jealousy, and selfishness are prohibited by the Prophet’s saying: *“la tanafasu, or do not get attached to this world and ask to have something only by yourselves.”* (Muslim, Birr, 31)

On the other hand, there are some measures that need to be taken for the protection from the harm of an envious person. We can enumerate some of these measures based on the verses of the Qur’an as follows:



1) To seek refuge in Allah from the mischief of the envious. This matter is stated in the verse: “[**Seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn] from the evil of the envious when he envies**” (al-Falaq 113; 5)

2) To practice patience and piousness. Allah the Almighty states that: “**If good befalls you, it grieves them, and if an evil afflicts you, they rejoice at it; and if you are patient and guard yourselves, their scheme will not injure you in any way...**” (Al-i Imran, 3; 120)

3) To give in charity as much as possible in order to be saved from the envy of the envious or at least reduce the intensity of his envy by helping them, as mentioned in the following two verses: “**...they repel evil with good and spend out of what We have given them.**” (al-Qasas 28; 54)

“**The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! He, between whom there was enmity and thee, (will become) as though he was a bosom friend.**” (Fussilat 41; 34)

Moreover, those who are given by Allah’s spiritual and worldly blessings should abstain from wastefulness and actions which may cause others to be jealous of them. This is both a religious responsibility and a courtesy towards humanity.

2. Adorning the Heart with Spiritual Beauties

**“As Allah gives life to soil through rain,
He gives life to the hearts through the light of wisdom.”**

Haythami, I, 125

Even though protecting our soul from spiritual diseases is necessary and should not be stopped during the spiritual training of our hearts, it is not enough. Spiritual training is not just an act of preventing one from distancing from one’s goal but also an act of getting closer to and achieving perfection. This is why all kinds of spiritual beauties, which may help to achieve the goal, should step (word unclear) in the training of the heart. Such beauties can be obtained by certain instruments. It is stated in a verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَ تَكْوِينُ مَوْعِظَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَشِفَاء لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“O mankind there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe Guidance and a mercy.

The “healing” character of the Qur’an is mentioned in several verses. (al-Isra 17; 82, Fussilat 41; 44) Therefore, the Word of Allah is the most trustworthy source for not just cleansing the heart from negative attributes but also adorning it with spiritual beauties.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) states that his tradition is also among the contents of Islam, which needs to be followed and no concessions should be made in obedience to the Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah. This is expressed in the following saying of the Prophet (pbuh):

“The sources of lawfulness are two: the Qur’an and the Sunnah. The best speech is that embodied in the Book of Allāh , and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is an error. Beware! Do not let your wishes and desires become too strong and make you forget your death. Otherwise your hearts will get hardened ... ” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 7)

One of the important reasons for the heart becoming hardened and inflicted with diseases like hypocrisy, heedlessness, grudges, and jealousy is to be deprived from necessary knowledge. However, it should not be forgotten that knowledge according to Islam should not be mere knowledge. On the contrary, it has to be a phenomenon changing and improving one’s life. This is why Allah the Almighty likens those who have knowledge but get no benefit from it to donkeys bearing books. (al-Jum’a 62; 5) The healing characteristic of the Qur’an and Sunnah can be attained if the requirements of their instructions are fulfilled. In other words, the gates of the soul have to be opened for Divine instructions. Then our spiritual life will be cleansed from spiritual diseases and at the same time will be adorned with good manners by turning these instructions into good deeds. It is certain that a heart with this characteristic will be raised to a position that is valued by Allah the Almighty, inspired to the angels and loved by everyone on earth and in the heavens.

However, not everybody has the means and time to learn and understand the instructions of the Qur’an and the Sunnah fully and then apply them in their lives. We believe that the best solution for such people is to join the ranks of pious and sincere scholars who have the necessary religious knowledge



and follow their path because after the completion of the institution of the prophethood the task to convey the message of Allah has been given to the religious scholars. In fact, this is stated in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) as: *“the learned are the heirs of the Prophets.”* (Abu Dawud, ‘Ilm, 1; Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 19) In this context, it was narrated by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that the prophet Luqman (A.S) gave the following advice to his son:

“O Son! Be with the learned men and try not to leave them. Listen to the words of the wise. As Allah gives life to soil through rain, He gives life to the hearts through the light of wisdom.” (Haythami, I, 125)

After this brief introduction, we may now begin to discuss the main beauties emphasized by the Qur’an and the Sunnah for the spiritual training of the heart.

a. Faith

The term *“iman”* lexically means “to trust in,” “to make or be trustworthy,” and “to reach confidence and peace.” It also means “to confirm or verify something”; because one who confirms somebody shows his confidence in him. From this perspective true believers both experience the safety and peace of their faith and give trust to others.

Regarding its terminological meaning, Muslim scholars have been given various definitions. Some scholars have defined it as “to confirm by heart;” some others have said that it is “to confirm by the heart and profess by the tongue.” Some others considered the five basic principles of Islam in their definition. (Maturidi, p. 373 et seq.) “Confirming by heart” is the common point of these definitions. As expressed in the tradition of Gabriel, it is required to believe in Allah, in that there is no god but Him, in Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, in His angels, in His books, in the Last Day, in the Divine Decree and that good and evil is from Allah the Almighty. (Bukhari, Iman, 37; Muslim, Iman, 1)

The Holy Qur’an expresses the necessity of confirmation by the heart and the insufficiency of obedience in appearance as follows: **“The desert Arabs say, “We believe.” Say, “You have no Faith; but you (only) say, ‘We have submitted our wills to Allah,’ for not yet has Faith entered your hearts...”**

(al-Hujurat 49; 14)

Faith is the state of heart that has reached complete trust. This is why there should be no doubt or supposition in the heart. Thus, real and doubt free trust in Allah and in that everything came from Him can only be achieved by fully believing in His signs. The following verse emphasizes that true faith means unshakable and doubtless confirmation:

“Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons for the Cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones.”

(al-Hujurat 49; 15)

After true faith enters a heart, it is not something to be locked in. On the contrary, after it settles, it becomes a power that stimulates the heart and leads the actions and behavior. The following verse attracts our attention to this aspect of faith:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

“They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord.” (Al-Anfal; 2)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) points to the sensitivity of the believers saying: *“There would enter Paradise people whose hearts would be like those of the hearts of birds.”* (Muslim, Jannah, 27)

On the other hand, in Islam the relationship of faith goes beyond the relationship of blood. Believers are ordered to befriend the unbelievers even if they are their relatives. (al-Tawba, 9; 23, al-Mujadalah 59; 22) Their legal responsibilities towards such people should be fulfilled but they cannot share the love of a believer’s heart. (al-Nisa 4; 135, al-Maidah 5; 8) Therefore, Islam proposes an association of consciousness rather than a relationship of blood based on the principle stated in the verse: **“The Believers are but a single Brotherhood...”** (al-Hujurat 49; 10) The order of Allah **“And lower your wing (in kindness) unto those believers who follow you”** (al-Shuara 26; 215) points out the closeness that should exist amongst believers.





This is why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) dealt with believers sensitively. Everybody who declared his faith found himself under the Prophet's safe shelter. He would avoid all negative behavior towards believers; he would not even allow any negative talk against his Companions. And he said in this regard:

"None of my Companions must tell me anything about anyone, for I like to deal with you with no ill-feelings." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 28; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63)

Once the Prophet (pbuh) told a group of his Companions who were talking man named Malik b. Dukhshum:

"Does Malik b. Dukhshum not testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah and verily I am the messenger of Allah?" They replied:

"He makes a profession of it (no doubt) but he does not do it out of sincere heart." He (the Holy Prophet) said:

"He who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that I am the messenger of Allah shall not enter Hell or its (flames) would not consume him." (Muslim, Iman, 54) Thus, he warned his followers not to be biased and to have suspicions about those who declare their faith.

In another tradition, the Prophet (pbuh) gave good tidings that everybody who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of faith will be saved from the Hell and eventually enters Paradise. (Bukhari, Iman, 33; Tawhid, 19, 36; Muslim, Iman, 302, 316)

Uthama b. Zaid (r.a.) narrates an incident related to this matter.

"In a battle we followed an enemy and as soon as he realized that he was going to be caught he said *La ilaha illallah* or there is no god but Allah." But we did not listen to him and killed him. We then informed the Prophet (pbuh) what had happened. Upon this Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

"Who is going to help you against La ilaha illallah on Judgment Day?"

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah! He had said that words for the fear of death." He said:

"Did you cut his heart open and see what was inside? Who can help you against La ilaha illallah on Judgment Day?"



Uthama continued:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) repeated these words so many times that I wished him to stop repeating it. And it wished that I had been converted to Islam after that incident.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 95)

We should not forget that faith is a kind of guidance blessed by Allah the Almighty. This is expressed in a verse as follows: **“Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him, He expands his breast for Islam...”** (al-An’am 6; 125) This is why believers know for certain that they cannot achieve any success without Allah’s help and mercy. They cannot even control their hearts, for *“Verily, the hearts of all the sons of Adam are in the hand of the Compassionate Lord.”* (Muslim, Qadr, 17) For this reason, wise servants pray to Allah for His guidance as follows:

“Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your own presence; for You are the grantor of bounties without measure.” (Al-i Imran 3; 8)

Some sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) emphasized that at the end of the world there will be no people left on earth with faith in their hearts. In others, the world will come to an end by the removal of the blessing of faith. (Muslim, Imarah, 176; Fitan, 116, 117) In order to maintain faith and to leave this world with its light, one must adorn his heart with spiritual beauties such as piety, god-fearingness, mercy, love, repentance, remembrance, and prayer. Now we can continue to examine such spiritual beauties.

b. Piety

“So fear Allah as much as ye can...”

(al-Taghabun 64; 16)

The term *taqwa* lexically means to abstain from something, to be strong, to protect the soul from frightening things. Terminologically, it means to follow strictly the religious commands, stay away from its prohibitions, and to protect the self from all kinds of sins and from the paths leading to them. In other words, *taqwa* means piety and to have the consciousness of responsibility about the orders and prohibitions of Allah the Almighty. Those who have such consciousness are called *muttaqi* (pious). Pious believers try to strengthen their piety by abstaining not just from the clear prohibitions of Allah but



also from doubtful matters. The way for the perfection of piety is stated in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows:

“Both legal and illegal things are evident but in between them there are doubtful (dubious) things and most people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these doubtful things saves his religion and his honor. And whoever indulges in these doubtful things is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the Hima (private pasture) of someone else and at any moment he is liable to go into it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.” (Bukhari, Iman, 39; Muslim, Musaqat, 107) The following statement is also along the lines of the above mentioned narration:

“Piety (*taqwa*) means to adorn one’s appearance for the people as well as to beautify his soul for Allah the Almighty.” (Razi, I, 20)

As seen in these statements, piety is based upon the sensitivity of the heart. The general characteristics of the pious are expressed in the following verse:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness - to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the way-farer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of the truth, the God-fearing.” (al-Baqara 2; 177)

This verse, in a way, defines the outlines of piety. Muslim scholars have assessed piety in three stages. The first stage is to refrain from disbelief and associating partners to Allah for the fear of eternal Hell-fire. The second stage is to avoid great sins, not to persistently commit small sins, and to continue performing religious obligations. The third stage is to stay away from everything that distracts the soul apart from the Lord Almighty and to attach the heart to Him completely. This final stage has no limits. (Baidawi, I, 48, 49; Elmalılı, I, 169)



Neither drawing outlines nor determining the stages of piety seem possible; because knowledge, practice, and feelings, which improve piety, may manifest differences from one person to another. Therefore someone's piety is in the extent of strength and consciousness of his servitude. Indeed the verse: **“So fear Allah as much as ye can...”** (al-Taghabun 64; 16) emphasizes the same point.

Those who would like to live a pious life should follow the pure life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). By saying *“I am the most righteous of you”* (Bukhari, Iman, 13; Muslim, Siyam, 74) the Prophet (pbuh) reminded us that he manifested the best exemplary manners and that he should be followed in every aspect of life.

We see a very precise measure of piety in the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh). Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who supplicated saying *“O Allah, I beg of You the right guidance, safeguard against evils, chastity and freedom from want”* (Muslim, Dhikr, 72), stated that:

“A servant cannot reach the state of the pious unless he abstains from some unobjectionable matters because of the fear of committing doubtful matters.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 19; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 24) In another prophetic saying, vice is defined as what rankles in the heart and what one disapproves of because of his worry that people should come to know of it. (Muslim, Birr, 14) Therefore a pious believer has to stay away from evil, and not just from actions but even from thoughts. Abdullah b. Umar (r. anhum) said that:

“If a servant does not leave the things that disturb his heart, he cannot achieve a state of piety.” (Bukhari, Iman, 1) Harith al-Muhasibi states that the physical manifestation of piety is submission to the Divine commands and avoidance of the Divine prohibitions; and its spiritual reflection is the cognizance of Divine questioning in the Hereafter and performing the supererogatory acts of worship just for the sake of Allah. (Muhasibi, p. 40)

Moreover, “piety” is defined in the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) as the only measure of superiority. On the one hand, the Qur'an says that:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ



“Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you...” (al-Hujurat 49; 13) On the other hand, it is stated that Allah loves (Al-i Imran 3; 76) and is always with those who restrain themselves (al-Nahl 16; 128). According to a narration of Abu Hurairah (r.a.) some people asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“O Allah’s Apostle! Who is the most honorable amongst the people (in Allah’s eyes)?” He said,

“The most righteous amongst them.” They said,

“O Messenger of Allah! That is not what we ask.” He said,

“Then the Prophet Joseph, who was the son of Allah’s Prophet (Jacob), the son of Allah’s Prophet (Isaac), the son of Allah’s Khalil (i.e. Abraham).” They said:

“O Messenger of Allah! That is not what we ask.” He said:

“Then you want to ask about the descendents of the Arabs. Those who were the best in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance will be the best in Islam provided that they comprehend religious knowledge well.” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 8, 14, 19; Muslim, Fadail, 168)

What concerns us in this tradition is the Prophet’s first response. Piety is defined as the only measure of superiority.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) probably knew what the questioner was asking, but he gave various responses in order to teach his Companions about the most important issue. The question of who is the most superior person in “honor” may come to mind next. In response to this question, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated Joseph (r.a.) whose ancestors were all Prophets and whose parable is depicted in the Qur’an as the best of narratives.

When the questioners stated that what they asked did not refer to that, the Prophet (pbuh) replied that superiority had been related to lineage and ancestry in the age of ignorance, but, in Islam, it is evaluated based upon wisdom, knowledge, and religiosity. In order to mean something, someone’s ancestry must be supported by piety.

Each one of these three answers of the Prophet (pbuh) had restraint as its central point. The Prophet Joseph’s piety, especially in the incident of Zulaiha, is well-known. It is also obvious that those who know and comprehend Islam

well are filled with fear of Allah. Therefore, piety is clearly stated as the only measure of value in the Prophet's first answer and is likewise implied in the next two answers.

In other traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) it is informed that Allah the Almighty will forgive those who fear Him and who do not associate partners with Him (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 35); that He loves His pious and righteous servants (Muslim, Zuhd, 11); and that a servant will not be able to reach piety until he calls himself to account. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 25)

The reason for attributing such significance to piety originates from the fact that calling oneself to account determines the level of a person's success. This is stated in the following verse:

“Ye shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and ye shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if ye persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs.” (Al-i Imran 3; 186)

The heart is the place of questioning and is expressed in a verse as follows: **“Surely those who lower their voices before Allah's Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for guarding (against evil)...”** (al-Hujurat 49; 3) From time to time Allah's Messenger (pbuh) pointed to his chest saying *“piety is in here”* (Muslim, Birr, 32) after which he gave advice to the believers; which clearly shows that the heart is the true place of piety. The level of piety in a person's heart is known only by Allah the Almighty; for there is no way to see what is in the heart. (Muslim, Iman, 158) This why other people cannot know whether a person is pious or not. Therefore, only Allah the Almighty knows and rewards those who restrain themselves. (Al-i Imran 3; 115, al-Najm 53; 32)

The rewards which will be bestowed upon the pious servants can be categorized as follows:

1) A Criterion to distinguish between right and wrong and the forgiving of sins

The verse in this respect is as follows: **“O you who believe if you fear Allah, he will grant you a Criterion (to judge between right and wrong), remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you, and forgive you: for**



Allah is the Lord of Grace unbounded.” (al-Anfal 8; 29) The Holy Qur’an describes itself as “guidance for those who fear Allah.” (al-Baqara 2; 2) Therefore, it is understood that one cannot benefit from the light of Divine revelation without the Criterion which is endowed as a result of piety.

2) An escape in times of hardship and blessings from an unexpected place

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) says:

“I know a verse that if people hold it as a principle, it would be sufficient for them.”

The Companions asked:

“O messenger of Allah! Which verse is that?”

He recited the following verse:

“...And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out” (al-Talaq 65; 2) (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 24)

After this verse, the significance of which is pointed out by Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), Allah the Almighty says that **“And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine...”** (al-Talaq 65; 3) and expresses that not only spiritual hardships but also the material ones will be taken care of. Thus, piety is the solution to all kind of problems in this world.

3) Spiritual closeness to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)

Muadh b. Jabal (r.a.) narrated:

“When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent me as a governor to Yemen, he came with me to the outside of Medina to bid me farewell. I was on my mount, whereas he was walking. After he gave me some advice, he said:

“O Muadh! Maybe you will not see me after this year. Maybe you will visit my mosque and my grave.” As soon as I heard these words, I started to cry out of the deep sorrow at having to leave him. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) consoled me saying:

“O Muadh! Do not cry...” Then he turned his face to Medina and continued:

“Those who are closest to me among the people are the ones who fear Allah wherever they are.” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 235; Haythami, IX, 22)

4) Eternal Salvation

Paradise will be one of the rewards for those who fear Allah. This reward is stated in the Qur’an as follows: **“And hasten to (ask) forgiveness from your Lord; and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth...”** (Al-i Imran 3; 133) A saying of the Prophet (pbuh) can be placed in the same context: *“Fear Allah; perform your five daily prayers; observe your fast during the month of Ramadan; give alms out of your possessions; obey your governors; so you can enter the Paradise of your Lord.”* (Tirmidhi, Jum’a, 80)

The solution to all our problems can be attained through piety, or a life governed by the awareness of responsibilities towards Allah. And the heart is the place for such awareness. Therefore, a peaceful life in this world and proper preparations for the Hereafter can only be realized by piety adorning our souls.

c. Fear from Allah

“But for him who fears the standing before his Lord there are two gardens.”

(al-Rahman 55; 46)

In the sacred Qur’an the terms *“hawf”* and *“khushyah”* are used interchangeably in order to express the meaning “fear from Allah,” but they are not synonymous because they have some differences in meaning.

The term *hawf* expresses the tremble in the heart because of concern and fear of possible punishment which will be given due to mistakes committed. Even though the meaning of *khushyah* is similar to *hawf*, it denotes fear mixed with reverence. Since it is based on knowledge, it has a special meaning and this is why *khushyah* is considered to be the attribute of scholars.

Another term used in this respect is *“wajal”* which denotes the feeling of fear and terror when remembering or seeing someone violent, fearful, and harsh. The intensity of the feeling of fear is what makes *wajal* different from the other terms. According to these definitions, *hawf* is attributed to common



people; *khashyah* is a characteristic of scholars; and *wajal* is an attribute of those who are close to Allah (*muqarrabun*). (Ibn Qayyim, *Madarij*, I, 549-550)

The Holy Qur'an indicates that the heart is the center of fear of Allah. Some noteworthy verses in this regard are as follows:

“For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor/tremble? in their hearts...” (al-Anfal 8; 2)

“...And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to the humble (To) those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned...” (al-Hajj 22; 34-35)

As pointed out in these verses, believers who achieve the perfection in faith are the ones whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, whereas believers who have not achieved this state are warned as follows:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ

“Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them)...” (al-Hadid 57; 16)

Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) said that:

“Since our acceptance of Islam and the revelation of this verse in which Allah is annoyed with us, there was a gap of four years.” (Muslim, *Tafsir*, 24) Therefore, Allah the Almighty asks from the believers to soften their hearts by His fear in order to attain a certain level of perfection in their faith.

On the other hand, those who own trembling hearts scrupulously fulfill orders (Nahl 16; 50), even beat because of the fear of their deeds being rejected. Aisha (r. anha) said:

“When the verse: **“And those who give what they give while their hearts are full of fear that to their Lord they must return; it is these who hasten in every good work, and they are foremost in (attaining) them.”** (al-Mu'mininun 23; 60-61) was revealed. I asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“Who are the ones mentioned in this verse? Are they fornicators, thieves, and the drunk?”

He (pbuh) replied:

“No, they are not. O daughter of Siddiq! They are the ones who perform their prayers, fast, and give alms, but are worried about whether their deeds are accepted or not.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 23; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 20)

Allah the Almighty also gives the following glad tidings: **“But for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two gardens.”** (al-Rahman 55; 46)

Even though fear seems to be conflicting with love for Allah, they are actually interrelated. Just as love is the fruit of knowing Allah, fear is also the result of properly knowing about Allah. The more someone knows and loves Allah, the more he/she fears Him. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) pointed out the close relationship between knowledge and fear saying: *“By Allah, I have the best knowledge of Allah amongst you, and fear Him most amongst you.”* (Bukhari, Adab, 72; Muslim, Fadail, 127) It is stated in the Qur’an that the true learned are the only people who think, understand, (al-Anqabut 29; 43) and truly fear Allah (al-Fatir 35; 28). According to Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā), the truly wise are the ones who know Allah is omnipotent, who do not associate any partners to Him, who accept the things declared lawful by Him as lawful and declared unlawful by Him as unlawful, who follow the orders and advices of Allah and believe with certainty that they will meet Allah and be questioned about their knowledge.” (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, III, 561)

According to the statement of the Qur’an expressing that mercy and guidance are for those who fear Allah (al-Araf 7; 154), Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him (al-Bayyinah 98; 8) When people fear something they run away from it, but those who fear Allah know that taking shelter is Him as the only cure for their fear. (Ibn Qayyim, Madarij, I, 550)

The endless God-fearingness of the Prophet (pbuh) is the best reflection of the verses related to this context in his blessed life. Aisha (r. anha) told those who had asked her about the morality of the Prophet (pbuh) that: *“His morals were the morals of the Qur’an.”* (Muslim, Musafirun, 139) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who cried on occasion and had his Companions cry (Muslim, Janaiz, 12; Abu Dawud, Janaiz, 77), stated in one of his sayings that two drops are loved by Allah the Almighty: a tear drop shed because of the fear of Allah and a blood drop shed for the sake of Allah. (Tirmidhi, Jihad, 26) In another saying, he said that: *“those who cry because of the fear of Allah will not enter Hell until the milk goes back to the udders.”* (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 8)



We see that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) became concerned before some incidents of that nature. All his concern was in fact related to his fear of Allah. According to the report from Aisha (r. anha),

“On any day when there was storm or dark cloud, its effects could be read on the face of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and he went in and out of his house and moved forward and backward in a state of anxiety. And when it rained, he became delighted and the state of restlessness would disappear. When he was asked the reason of this anxiety and he said: “I was afraid that it might be a calamity that might fall upon my Ummah just like the one fell upon the people of ‘Ad.” (Muslim, Istisqa, 14, 15, 16)

These statements should be considered as the signs of the Prophet’s careful attention as a part of his efforts to teach this to his followers.

Modern psychology also points out that fear brings about caution. That is to say that fear is a factor which increases the resolution and exertion of a person and has him/her prepare for the future. (Arthur I. Gates, *Educational Psychology*, I, p. 103) Muslim scholars described fear as the whip of Allah the Almighty. Because of fear, people turn towards knowledge and good deeds. (Ibn al-Jawzi, *Minhaj*, p. 316)

When faith enters into a heart, fear of Allah is established in it. If it is a sinner believes in the power of Allah and that one day he will be held responsible for his actions, he will tremble in fear of the Divine punishment. If he is a learned and wise person, he will feel sorry for the deeds that they could not do properly. Therefore, all those who believe in Allah will tremble when hearing His name.

While even some rocks fall down for the fear of Allah, having an unemotional and senseless heart which is worse than rocks in hardness is a sign of the deprivation of Devine mercy. (al-Baqara 2; 74) This is why our beloved Prophet (pbuh) prayed to his Lord saying:

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart that does not entertain the fear (of Allah), from the soul that does not feel contented and the supplication that is not answered.” (Muslim, Dhikr, 73)

However, we can see that fear in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was not the result of daily matters. He was matchless in brevity and fearless-

ness. We see in the sources that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked for protection from Allah the Almighty against cowardice. (Bukhari, Da'awat, 36) He was such a prophet that he could scare his enemies from a month long distance. (Bukhari, Jihad, 122) He said about himself to his Companions that: *"you will never find me a miser or a liar or a coward."* (Bukhari, Jihad, 24; Nasai, Hiba, 1)

It is stated in a Qur'anic verse that Allah the Almighty will cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers in order to help the true believers. (Al-i Imran 3; 151) And in another verse, cowardice is described as an illness of disbelievers. (al-Anfal 8; 12) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that enemies are not scared from the believers who love this world and fear death. And he also stated that such believers will be defeated by their enemies. (Abu Dawud, Malahim, 5)

Therefore, fear from Allah and cowardice are two different matters. Fear from Allah is a praised and wanted characteristic, whereas cowardice is criticized and regarded as a bad attribute.

d. Love

“On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow Love.”

(Maryam 19; 96)

Love is the purest and sincerest state of friendship. Love, the essence of life, is the emotional state of a heart which is in a state excitement and hope to see its beloved. Love can be of divine origin or come from the inner self. All kinds of love for Allah and His contentment come from the Divine and all the others are considered selfish love.

The Holy Qur'an lays great emphasis on the necessity of reserving true love just for Allah the Almighty. In fact, it is expressed through the words of Abraham (A.S.) **“...I love not those that set”** (al-An'am 6; 76) that mortal beings are not truly worthy of being loved. Falsity of loving the creation just like loving Allah is stated as follows:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ
كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ



“Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah, as equal (with Allah): they love them as they should love Allah. But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah...” (al-Baqara 2; 165)

We see the following verse emphasizing that heart is adorned by love and love is the basis of the blessing of faith:

“...but Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief, wickedness, and rebellion...” (al-Hujurat 49; 7)

Beauty and perfection in relation to the beloved and the lover is an important element for the formation of love in a heart. If a human being possesses an untainted nature, he would naturally love beauty and perfection. In other words, love will be love in places where beauty and perfection exist. Beauty is stated as the source of love in the following prophetic saying: *“Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace.”* (Muslim, Iman, 147) Allah, Who is the owner of all beauty, is also the real source of love; Because He is Wadud. (al-Buruj 85; 14) The name Wadud means not only someone who loves much but also someone who is much loved. (Razi, XXXI, 112)

It is stated in a prophetic saying how servants are made to love a servant loved by Allah:

“When Allah loves a servant, He calls Gabriel and says:

“Verily, I love so and so; you should also love him,”

And then Gabriel begins to love him. Then he makes an announcement in the heaven saying:

“Allah loves so and so and you also love him,”

And then the inhabitants of the Heaven (the Angels) also begin to love him and then honor is conferred upon him on the earth...” (Muslim, Birr, 157)

Because love is a feeling from the heart, it presents an abstract character, yet its manifestations can be tangible. Indeed, the claims of those who proclaim their love for Allah but do not obey His Messenger are not real. This reality is expressed in the Qur’an as follows:

“Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...” (Al-i Imran 3; 31)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) responded to the question of "what faith is" first as a proclamation of faith and then "to love Allah and His Messenger more than anything else." (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 11) This response is significant for showing the boundaries of love. In another saying, it is expressed that "attaining the taste of faith can only be possible by such love." (Bukhari, Iman, 9; Muslim, Iman, 67)

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported that

"A bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and asked:

"When will the Last Hour be?" Thereupon, he (the Holy Prophet) said:

"What preparation have you made for the Last Hour?" He said:

"Love for Allah and His Messenger is my only preparation."

Thereupon, he (the Holy Prophet) said:

"You will be together with the one whom you love." The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) became very happy at these words. Anas (r.a.) even said:

"Nothing pleased us more after accepting Islam than the words of Allah's Apostle: *You will be together with the one whom you love.*" And Anas (r.a.) added:

"I love Allah and His Messenger and Abu Bakr and Umar, I hope that I will be with them although I have not acted like them." (Muslim, Birr, 163)

Even though it is not required to be at the same level with the person one loves, one tries to follow the people he loves and respects. Thus, everybody shows their love through their deeds to the extent of their ability and strength. Otherwise love which does not go beyond a mere claim, cannot be the reason for one's salvation. In another verse, true love is defined as having emerged from faith and its manifestations, or good deeds:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا

"On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) the Most Gracious bestow love." (Maryam 19; 96) Ibn Abbas (r.anhuma) interpreted the words: "will (Allah) the Most Gracious bestow Love" as "Allah will love them and make other people love them." (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, III, 14)



Not being able to attain true love is the result of not knowing Allah and His blessings. The Holy Qur'an expresses that such loveless masses will be destroyed and people whose hearts are filled with love replace them:

“O you who believe if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon Allah will produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him...” (al-Maida 5; 54)

This verse clearly shows the necessity of establishing a relationship between Allah and His servant based on love. Religion is based on obedience and love is the essence of obedience. Therefore, it is a crucial part of servitude to supplicate for Allah's love. The following supplication of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) points to this necessity:

“O Allah! I ask for Your love; I ask for the love of those who love You and the deed which will take [me] to Your love. Make Your love more loveable for me than my soul, my family, and cold water.” (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 72)

In order to feel love for Allah, which is gravely needed by His servants, one first needs to love His creation, especially other human beings. The Prophet's saying: *“You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another...”* (Muslim, Iman, 93) is also important for showing the dimensions of true faith and consequently the dimensions of love.

Such love, the source of which is Allah, becomes the provision of the soul and the light of the eye. Those deprived of the capital of love can be considered the living dead; those who lose the light of love will be bewildered in the sea of darkness; the hearts of those who lack the remedy to love will be susceptible to all kinds of spiritual diseases; those who are not able to love will spend their lives in sorrow and distress; love is the soul of deeds and faith; those who lack this feeling are like soulless bodies. (Ibn Qayyim, *Madarij*, III, 6, 7)

On the one hand, because intense love is a feeling, even an intuition, peculiar to the heart, it is reckless. It turns the principles of logic upside down. It declares its independence. One eats if it says “eat”, or sees if it says “see.” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) emphasizes this side of the heart saying: *“your heart makes you blind and deaf.”* (Abu Dawud, Adab, 116). In another saying, he invites us, just like everything else, to be moderate in love: *“Be moderate in your love for your friend, because one day he may turn into an enemy; and be moderate*



in your enmity, because one day your enemy may become your friend.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 60)

On the other hand, it is natural to love other beings within the limits of the principles of Islam as long as one holds the love for Allah and His Messenger superior to them. In this context the following verse attracts our attention:

“Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world’s life; but nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (to return to).” (Al-i Imran 3; 14)

Parents’ love, especially mothers’ love, for their children is the purest type of love felt in a heart. When they look into their children’s eyes, they feel the warmth of their children’s happiness in their hearts and suffer from the pain of longing if they are far. In one of the sayings of the Prophet, this is expressed through the addressing of Allah the Almighty to His angels about someone who had lost his child: *“You took My servant’s child from him; you plucked off the fruit of his heart.”* (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 36)

In conclusion, love occupies a very important place in the relationship between Allah and the heart. It has a characteristic of easily influencing human emotions. If there is no love between Allah and His servant, there can be no meaning left in life, because servitude is the reason for creation and obedience is the essence of servitude, and love is the sole element which brings about obedience. The Holy Qur’an explains the matters in detail like how and for whom love should be. In this respect, it put great emphasis on achieving obedience. The only way to attain a pure heart, or a heart submitted to the name of Allah, is to fill it with love for Allah.

e. Mercy

**“If you show mercy to those who are on the earth,
Those in the heavens will show mercy to you.”**

Abu Dawud, Adab, 58

Marhama or *rahma* are the infinitive forms of the Arabic verb “rahima” meaning mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and tenderness.

Mercy is a divine behavior. It is the manifestation of Allah's names: **Rahman** (Most Gracious) and **Rahim** (Most Merciful). The attribute of **Rahman** is the widest circle of Divine Mercy which comprises human beings, be they believers or disbelievers, and all other creation. **Rahim**, on the other hand, denotes Allah's Mercy awaiting the believers on the Day of Judgment. (Raghib, p. 192) This is expressed in the following verse:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسَعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“...and My mercy embraces all things, therefore I shall ordain it for those who ward off (evil) and pay the poor-due, and those who believe Our revelations.” (al-A'raf 7; 156)

Allah reserving His Mercy for the believers on Judgment Day is the result of Divine Justice. It means to distinguish between right and wrong, light and darkness, Moses and Pharaoh. Otherwise **“the Best of those who show mercy”** (al-Mu'minun 23; 109) never oppresses His servants.

Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an that He will manifest His Mercy while guiding those who go astray:

“Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls. Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (al-Zumar 39; 53)

Here, remembrance of the Divine Mercy's vastness is not for the purpose to encourage committing sins. On the contrary, it aims to make even the most vehement sinners repent as soon as possible. Even though the cause of the revelation of the above-mentioned verse was the desire to convert disbelievers to Islam, there is no doubt in that it comprises of the sinners' repentance (Razi, XXVII, 5), because Allah the Almighty says that He can forgive everybody except those who die in polytheism and disbelief. (al-Nisa 4; 48)

The following narration of Umar b. Khattab (r.a.) is very remarkable in reminding about the vastness of the Divine Mercy. He reported that some prisoners were brought to Allah's Messenger (pbuh) amongst whom there was also a woman, who was searching (for someone) and when she found a child

amongst the prisoners, she took hold of it, pressed it against her chest and fed it. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

"Do you think this woman would be able to throw her child in the Fire?"
We said: By Allah, so far as it lies in her power, she would never throw the child into Fire. Thereupon, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

"Allah is more kind to His servants than this woman is to her child."
(Muslim, Tawbah, 22)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) explains that the gem of mercy given to creation is very little compared to the Mercy of Allah the Almighty saying:

"Allah created mercy in one hundred parts and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and He has sent down upon the earth one part, and it is because of this one part that there is mutual love among the creation so much so that the animal lifts up its hoof from its young, one, fearing that it might harm it." (Bukhari, Adab, 19; Muslim, Tawbah, 17)

Just like mercy is the most salient attribute of Allah, it is also the most prominent characteristic of the Messenger of Allah. He has indeed been sent to the worlds as a mercy. (al-Anbiya 21; 107) This is why Allah the Almighty called none of His prophets but the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) **rauf** (very compassionate) and **rahim** (very merciful). (Qurtubi, VII, 192) Otherwise it would not have been so easy to establish and spread Islam amongst people of the Age of Ignorance. Because compassion and mercy are attributes which soften the hearts, replace hate with love, and bring people closer to each other. All these facts are expressed through the following words of the Qur'an:

"It was by the mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if you had been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from around you..." (Al-i Imran 3; 159)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asserted that feelings of mercy in particular should be established among the people. In this respect he said:

"You see that the believers in being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resemble 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." (Bukhari, Adab, 27; Muslim, Birr, 66)



In order to attain this attribute and become a merciful person, love needs to be rooted in the heart. We see in the following narration that mercy cannot exist in places where there is no love:

A bedouin saw the Prophet (pbuh) kissing some children and said amazed:

“You (people) kiss the children! We don’t kiss them.” The Prophet said,

“I cannot put mercy in your heart after Allah has taken it away from it.”

(Bukhari, Adab, 18; Muslim, Fadail, 65)

Likewise, the Prophet (pbuh) could not stand the state of his daughter Zainab’s child taking his last breaths and shed some tears. Those who saw him crying asked him:

“O Allah’s Apostle! Are you, too, crying?” He replied:

“It is mercy which Allah has lodged in the hearts of His slaves, and Allah is merciful only to those of His slaves who are merciful (to others).” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 33; Muslim, Janaiz, 11)

Lack of mercy is the result of cold-heartedness. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) advised one of his Companions, who had been complaining about his cold-heartedness: *“If you would like to soften your heart, rub the orphan’s head.”* (Ibn Hanbal, II, 263, 387) Thus, he stressed spiritual sensitivity which can be increased by approaching the helpless and the needy with compassion.

Mercy taught by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to his followers embraces not only his relatives and believers but also the whole of humanity and even the entire creation. Some of the sayings of the Prophet reinforce this point:

“He who shows no mercy to the people, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, does not show mercy to him.” (Muslim, Fadail, 66)

“The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, those in the heavens will show mercy to you.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 58; Tirmidhi, Birr, 16)

Another prophetic saying describes that a woman, who had fallen deep into sins and immorality, had been forgiven by Allah the Almighty for her mercy because she helped a weak dog. The incident occurred as follows: “On a very hot day, the adulteress was walking in a desert and got tired because of thirst. She found a well, went down and quenched her thirst. When she went up

the well, she saw a very weak dog, which was about to die from thirst. Feeling sorry for it she went down the well and filled her shoe with water and then quenched the dog's thirst. Allah the Almighty became very pleased with her merciful deed and forgave all her previous sins. (Muslim, Salam, 152-155)

Mercy is not just a feeling of sorrow for others like some people think. It is an all-encompassing feeling which develops with love and increases with help and altruism. If there is no mercy in a heart, it is a sick heart.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who has been sent as a mercy to the worlds, became an exemplary personality not just by his actions but also by his words. Our ancestors have always carried the traces of this exemplary spiritual atmosphere. If we would like to save people from chaos and turn this world into a livable place, we need to establish mercy into our hearts. In fact, our ancestors who realized the significance of this method, began to conquer the hearts before conquering the lands when they took the light of Islam to the people in darkness.

f. Repentance and Remembrance

“And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults...”

(Al-i Imran 3; 135)

Repentance means to ask for the forgiveness of sins and mistakes from Allah the Almighty. It has a great effect upon purifying our souls. Proper repentance cleans up the rust formed on the heart by sins. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) says in this regard:

“When a believer sins, a black dot appears on his heart, and then if he repents and asks his forgiveness, his heart gets cleansed of the black spot. And when he goes back to the sin and commits it again, the spot enlarges, till it covers the entire heart. Hence, this is the stain that Allah the Almighty has mentioned in the Qur'an: [By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) that they do!] (al-Mutaffifin 83;14)” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 83; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 29)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) states the connection between repenting several times in a day and spiritual life saying:

“There is (at times) some sort of shade upon my heart, and I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day.” (Muslim, Dhikr, 41)

Feeling a shade upon his heart is reflective of his high state. He had an almost continuous spiritual connection with Allah the Almighty. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) points out that his worldly deeds, like eating, sleeping, and being together with his wives, somehow weaken this relationship. Even if we do not fully understand it, this was very important for a heart that was always with Allah the Almighty.

Through such traditions Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) teaches us how important repentance is in building our spiritual worlds.

When a repenting servant asks for forgiveness by his tongue, he should also keep his body and heart away from sins as much as possible and he should not insist on committing sins; because this is what servitude requires. This situation is expressed in the Qur’an by the following verses:

“And those who when they commit an indecency or do an injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults-- and who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done.” (Al-i Imran 3; 135)

“O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance: in the hope that your Lord will remove from you your ills and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow...” (al-Tahrim 66; 8)

Continual repentance has many material and spiritual benefits. This is mentioned in a prophetic saying as follows:

“If anyone continually asks pardon, Allah will give him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon.” (Abu Dawud, Witr, 26)

Hasan al-Basri (q.s.), one of the most prominent figures of the generation following the Companions, gave the same advice to many people who complained of famine, poverty, infertility, unproductiveness of his land, and asked his guidance: repentance. When people asked him why he had given the same advice even though the questions and questioners were different, he recited the following verses:

“... Seek pardon of your Lord. Lo! He was ever-Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance; Give you increase in wealth and sons; and bestow on you Gardens and bestow on you rivers (of flowing water).” (Nuh 71; 10-12) (Qurtubi, XVIII, 302)

There is very important information in the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) in relation to how proper repentance should be done. Thawban (r.a.) narrated:

“When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) finished his prayer, he begged forgiveness three times and said:

“Allahumma anta al-Salamu wa minka al-salamu, tabarakta ya zal jalali wa'l ikram - O Allah! You are Peace, and peace comes from You; Blessed are You, O Possessor of Glory and Honor!” Walid asked Awza'i, one of the sub-narrators of this tradition:

“How does one seek forgiveness?” He replied:

“You should say: *astaghfirullah* or I beg forgiveness from Allah, I beg forgiveness from Allah.” (Muslim, Masjid, 135)

Following the sunnah of our Prophet (pbuh) we say *“Allahumma anta al-Salamu wa minka al-salamu...”* after every prayer. However, another sunnah or saying thrice: *“astaghfirullah* or I beg forgiveness from Allah” before saying *“Allahumma anta al-Salamu...”* tends to be forgotten by our people so we should revive this sunnah. By saying *astaghfirullah*, one who finishes his prayer and leaves the presence of his Lord means “O Lord! I have not fulfilled my servitude properly, please forgive me.”

According to the narration by Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“If anyone says:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

“I ask pardon of Allah other than Whom there is no deity, the Living, the eternal, and I turn to Him in repentance,” he will be pardoned, even if he has fled in times of battle.” (Abu Dawud, Witr, 26; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 118)

Aisha (r. anha) reported that:



“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) recited often before his death: *Subhanaka wa bi hamdika astaghfiruka wa atubu ilayk - Hallowed be You, and with Your praise, I seek forgiveness from Thee and return to Thee.*” (Muslim, Salat, 218)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also advised us to recite a certain supplication called “*sayyid al-istighfar*” which captivates our attention by its rich language and meaning.

The Prophet said “*The most superior way of asking for forgiveness from Allah is to say:*

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ عَهْدِكَ
وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ
عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

“*O Allah! You are my Lord; there is no god but You, You have created me, and I am Your servant and hold to Your covenant and promise as much as I can; I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done: I acknowledge Your favor to me, and I acknowledge my sin; pardon me, for none but Your pardons sins, and dies during the daytime or during the night.*” he will go to Paradise.”

The Prophet added. “*If somebody recites this supplication during the day with firm faith in it, and dies on the same day before the evening, he will be from the people of Paradise; and if somebody recites it at night with firm faith in it, and dies before the morning, he will be from the people of Paradise.*” (Bukhari, Daawat, 2; Abu Dawud, Adab, 100-101)

Since this supplication reflects the sincerest form of a servant’s regret, it certainly has the beauty and perfection to be called “*sayyidu’l istighfar* – master of repentance.” The good news of Paradise at the end of this supplication is like a cool breeze for those who are crushed under the weight of their sins.

A believer can ask for forgiveness for his parents, relatives, and other believers just like asking forgiveness for himself. In this context, Prophet Abraham’s supplication mentioned in the Qur’an is a good example for us:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

“O our Lord! Grant me protection and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!” (Ibrahim 14; 41)

When Qur’an talks about the characteristics of the believers, it mentions their begging for forgiveness at dawn in particular. (al-Zariyat 51; 18) Therefore, we should not forget that times of dawn are the best times for the acceptance of our prayers.

In addition to asking for forgiveness, believers who wish to adorn their spiritual lives should not forget to remember Allah. *Dhikr*, which we can shortly define as remembering Allah with the heart and mentioning Him by the tongue, requires continual remembrance in the heart. The Sacred Qur’an asks from believers to remember Allah humbly in the morning and in the evening, with humility and reverence (al-A’raf 7; 205) and devote oneself to Him with complete devotion. (al-Muzzammil 73; 8) It states that the heedless ones who turn their face away from the remembrance of Allah will face all kinds of problems and worries and will be resurrected blind in the Hereafter. (Taha 20; 125)

Our Lord says in the Qur’an:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

“Therefore remember Me, I will remember you...” (al-Baqarah 2; 152) thus He expresses that He ‘s in a dialog with His servant during remembrance. In other words, when a servant says “O Allah” or “Dear Lord,” Allah the Almighty says “My servant” and meets His servant’s requests.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“The example of the one who celebrates the Praises of his Lord (Allah) in comparison to the one who does not celebrate the Praises of his Lord, is like that of a living creature compared to a dead one.” (Bukhari, Daawat, 66) Thus, he points out that a heart can only be made to come alive through the remembrance of Allah.

The Prophet (pbuh) is our perfect exemplar in in this regard (Allah do not include) of which a detailed account has been given in the first volume of this book.³⁴ Therefore, here it will be satisfactory to emphasize the principles

34. *An Excellent Exemplar*, “His remembrance of Allah and Meditation”, vol. 1, p.



established by the Prophet (pbuh) regarding the place of remembrance in disciplining the heart.

Every word of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is characterized as a remembrance of Allah insofar as it aimed to encourage goodness or draw away harm. The things he (pbuh) ordered or prohibited, the principles he established, his sayings about the names and attributes of Allah, his rulings and actions are also considered remembrances. His praises of Allah his gratitude towards Allah, his prayers, his turning towards Allah, as well as his fear of Allah are all types of remembrance. Even his silence was a remembrance. He was always with Allah the Almighty and busy with His remembrance. (Ibn Qayyim, *Zadu'l Ma'ad*, II, 365) His heart was awake even when he was sleeping. (Bukhari, Wudu, 5) In short, he was in a state of continuous remembrance – *dhikr daim*. Moreover, Aisha (r.anha) stated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was in a state of continuous remembrance. (Muslim, Hayd, 117)

Likewise the mother of the believers narrated the following:

“She was asked about which prayer the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) began with when he woke up at night.” She replied:

“You asked me about a thing which no one asked me before. When he woke up at night, he uttered: “*Allahuakbar* - Allah is Most Great” ten times, and uttered “*Alhamdulillah* - Praise be to Allah” ten times, and said “*Subhanallahi wa-bi hamdihi* - Glory be to Allah and I begin with His praise” ten times, and said: “*Subhana'l maliki'l quddus* - Glory be to the King, the Most Holy” ten times, and asked Allah’s pardon ten times, and said: “*La ilaha illallah* - There is no god but Allah” ten times, and then said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ ضِيْقِ الدُّنْيَا وَضِيْقِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

“O Allah! I seek refuge in Thee from the strait of the Day of resurrection,” ten times. He then began the prayer. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 101)

In another saying the following supplication was advised: “(There are) two words which are dear to the Beneficent (Allah) and very light (easy) on the tongue (to say), but very heavy on in the scales. They are:

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللهِ الْعَظِيْمِ

(Bukhari, Tawhid, 58)



When the Prophet's sayings about remembrance are examined, we see many similar glad tidings. They are priceless advice with which to adorn the believers' spiritual lives.

Abdullah b. Shaddad (r.a.) narrated:

"Three men from the Banu Uzra tribe came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and converted to Islam. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked:

"Who will take the care of these people?" Talha (r.a.) replied:

"I will, O Messenger of Allah!"

When they were with Talha (r.a.), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sent an expedition. One of these three men joined the expedition and became a martyr. Later another expedition was sent. The second man joined it and became a martyr, and the third one passed away in his bed a while later.

Talha (r.a.) narrated the rest of the tradition as follows:

"I saw those three men in my dream in Paradise. The one who had passed away in his bed was in front of them and the one who had become martyr first was at the end. I was puzzled and found it difficult to understand. I went to the Messenger of Allah and told him about my dream. He said:

"There is nothing to be puzzled about. There is no one more virtuous than a believer who lives his life in accordance with Islam and remembers Allah by saying praises, glorifications, and takbirs." (Ibn Hanbal, I, 163)

Moreover Allah's Messenger (pbuh) encouraged his followers to perform acts of worship at night and did not approve of them spending the entire night sleeping. In order to fill the soul with peace and happiness he asked believers to pray right before dawn.³⁵

In addition to the above mentioned acts of worship like prayer, repentance and praises, recitation of the Holy Qur'an and contemplating about its verses is another type of remembrance. In fact, **"the Reminder"** mentioned in the verse of **"We have, without doubt, sent down the Reminder; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"** (al-Hijr 15; 9) is the Holy Qur'an itself and the verse: **"Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an?"**

35. For more information about this issue see the section on the Prophet's "Worship at Night and at Dawn" in the first volume of this book. *An Excellent Exemplar*, vol. 1, p. (Sayfa numarasi 1. ciltten alinacak)



(Muhammad 47; 24) invites the believers to contemplate about the words of Allah. A believer's active life should be shaped by the Qur'an, with the five senses and the heart, which is considered the sixth sense, included in this scope. In a saying of the Prophet (pbuh), it is said:

“One who has nothing from the Qur'an in his heart is like a ruined house.” (Tirmidhi, Fadail al-Qur'an, 18) This prophetic saying eloquently points out that a heart unaware of the Qur'an is far from real peace and tranquility just like a ruin deprived of happiness and joy.

Keeping the remembrance of Allah in the heart all the time is very important in order to discipline the heart. The following saying of the Prophet (pbuh) emphasizes this fact:

“Do not forget Allah by merging into deep and unnecessary speech; because long speech without remembering Allah hardens the heart. And the farthest from Allah the Almighty is the one whose heart is hardened.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 62)

Through remembrances performed along with meditation one can avoid selfish desires and the soul can attain enlightenment. Distress and distraction get replaced by peace and focus. This state of confidence is described in the Qur'an as follows:

“Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.” (al-Ra'd 13; 28)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) advised the attendance of the congregation of remembrances for those who would like to breathe the air of Paradise in this world. One day he said to his Companions:

“When you go to the gardens of Paradise, get the most out of it.” The Companions asked:

“What do you mean by the gardens of Paradise?” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) responded:

“The circles of remembrances.” (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 82)

Those who achieve perfection by remembering Allah will be saved from all kinds of worries of this world. They will face death and the thought of life after death smiling and saying:

“O (you) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to your Lord, well pleased , and well pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among my Devotees! Enter My Heaven!” (al-Fajr 89; 27-30) They see death as the most desirable result of existence.

g. Supplication for the Betterment of the Heart

“Say (O Muhammad, unto the disbelievers): My Lord would not concern Himself with you but for your prayer...”

(al-Furqan 25; 77)

Du'a or supplication, which means appealing, calling out, and asking for help, is a servant's acknowledgement of his weakness before the Might of Allah and an appeal to His help in reverence and love. Prayer is the presentation of a servant's situation to Allah and in a way it is a conversation between the servant and his Creator. In order to realize this, Allah the Almighty has first informed His servants about His existence and servants have accepted His existence and felt the need to get in touch with this Almighty Power. Thus, prayer is the result of such necessity and its aim is to find a way not just to relieve one's needs and deficiencies but also to achieve perfection. There are many orders and advice in the verses of the Quran and in the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) confirming the purification of the soul through prayer.

Appealing to Allah for forgiveness or for one's needs and to remember Him for His blessings brings about spiritual peace and tranquility. (al-Ra'd 13; 28, al-A'la 87; 14, 15) It also purifies and elevates a person morally, and plays a constructive role in developing a personality. Getting closer to Allah through acts of worship and supplication leads to Divine love; and a pure soul emerges as a consequence of Divine love. (Bukhari, Riqaq, 38) In the following tradition, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) attracts our attention to the significance of saying prayers:

“O Allah! Wash away my sins with the water of snow and hail, and cleanse my heart from all the sins as a white garment is cleansed from the filth, and let there be a long distance between me and my sins, as You made East and West far from each other.” (Bukhari, Daawat, 39; Muslim, Dhikr, 49) Allah is the desired one and the goal. One should stay away from every other inter-



est. This is expressed in the Qur'an as "making the religion pure for Allah." (al-Mu'min 40; 14, 65)

Ghazali gave the following answer to the question "if the Divine Will does not change, then what would be the benefit of saying prayers?" "You should know that prayers preventing trouble is a part of the Divine Will. Prayers are the reason for warding off troubles and attracting the Divine mercy... Just like an arrow bounces back when it meets a shield, a prayer pushes troubles away when they meet. This is also Allah's rule and will... It is not appropriate to say that there is no need to water the seeds, since Allah is the One Who will let them grow or not grow. It is inevitable for us to resort to the cause because the One Who has created goodness has also connected it to certain causes, and the One Who has created problems has also created instruments to ward them off. Moreover, another benefit of prayer is that it keeps the heart always with Allah the Almighty, which is the highest state of worship." (Ghazali, I, 434-435)

As it is expressed by al-Ghazali, prayer is part of the Divine Will. It is a factor leading faith to establish itself in the heart. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that "*O Allah! Who changes the hearts from one state to another! Keep my heart steadfast upon Your religion.*" (Tirmidhi, Qadar, 7; Ibn Majah, Du'a, 2) Allah the Almighty both warns and guides the believers in this respect, stating the prayers of those who are steadfast in their faith:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

"Our Lord (they say), let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your own presence; for You are the grantor of bounties without measure." (Al-i Imran 3; 8)

Prayer is in fact a way of realizing and admitting a servant's weakness before Allah. As stated in the following verse, a servant will gain value through praying:

"Say (O Muhammad, unto the disbelievers): My Lord would not concern Himself with you but for your prayer..." (al-Furqan 25; 77)



Even though Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was exceptionally close to Allah the Almighty, he still prayed Him and always kept the consciousness of his servitude fresh. He did what he was supposed to do as a servant and a prophet and then prayed saying: *"O Allah! This is the best I can do. Please do not question me about things that are within Your power but beyond my ability."* (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 38) Stating that the hearts are in the hands of Allah the Almighty (Tirmidhi, Qadar, 7), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) has become an excellent exemplar for us with his following supplications:

"O Allah! I ask from You a truthful tongue and a sound heart." (Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 23; Nasai, Sahw, 61)

"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I hear, from the evil of what I see, from the evil of what I speak, from the evil of what I think, and from the evil of my semen (i.e. sexual passion)." (Abu Dawud, Witr, 32; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 28)

"O Allah! I ask from You a mercy by which You will guide my heart and protect me from all kinds of evil; and by which I will manage and improve my actions... O Master of all actions! O Curer of the hearts! Protect me from the torture of Hell like You keep the seas from mixing... Make my heart and grave lightened/illuminated???..." (Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 30)

"There is no god but You, glory be to You, O Allah, I ask Your pardon for my sin and I ask You for Your mercy. O Allah! Advance me in knowledge: do not cause my heart to deviate (from guidance) after You have guided me, and grant me mercy from yourself; verily You are the grantor." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 99)

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) also asked for help from Allah the Almighty for the guidance of those whom he wanted to be helped and guided. For the guidance of the people of Yemen, he prayed saying: *"O Allah! Turn their hearts towards us."* (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 71) Again he prayed placing his hand upon his cousin Ali's chest, who was appointed to Yemen as a judge:

"O Allah! Bestow upon his heart guidance and keep his tongue true"

Ali (r.a.) said:

"After this prayer, I never hesitated when ruling between two people." (Ibn Majah, Ahkam, 1)



All these narrations prove how important and effective a role prayer has in treating spiritual illnesses from aberration and hesitation.

D. The Prophet's (pbuh) Methods of Teaching and Training

“The reason for not being able to achieve goals is due to the lack of methodology.”

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was perfectly disciplined by his Lord Almighty as stated in the verse: **“And you most surely stand on an exalted character.”** (al-Kalam 68; 4)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was a matchless teacher and trainer with the magnificence of his morality, the sensitivity of his heart, eloquence and clarity of his speech, politeness of his warnings, his patience and wisdom even in times of anger, his utmost attention and watchfulness, the level of his intelligence and his love for and interest in people.

Our Prophet (pbuh) tried hard to convey goodness everywhere and at all times. He did everything he could to teach those who wanted to learn, and he wanted his Companions in particular to gain the necessary knowledge about Islam. Yet he would never give them hardships and force them. He always liked to facilitate things for them. Allah the Almighty remarks in the Qur'an that:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا
عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate.” (al-Tawba 9; 128)

Gatherings for conversation were the most frequent method the Prophet (pbuh) used for training his Companions. His gatherings were like gardens of Paradise and there his Companions found the best circumstances for their education. Qa'b b. Zuhair (r.a.), who came to the mosque in order to convert to Islam, personally witnessed how the Prophet's method of education was. According to Qa'b's report, Allah's Messenger sat among his Companions and

was sometimes chatted with one group and sometimes with the other. (Hakim, III, 671) This was the most significant method of teaching in the Prophet's lifetime.

The Prophet's gatherings were so exuded and special in nature that this era was referred to as the age of happiness in human history. The Companions' previously harsh souls were molded in the blessings and spiritual atmosphere of the Prophet's gatherings. Therefore, once veiled seeds of virtue and vision flourished. Through the reflexion of love and spirituality from one chest to another, unique characters developed. People of the age of ignorance, who at times were merciless and harsh enough to bury their own daughters alive, transformed into altruistic, softhearted, and sensitive Companions. In fact, the Arabic word for Companion, or *sahabi*, comes from the same verbal root as the word for gatherings of friendly conversation, or *suhbah*.

The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) paid so much attention to such gatherings that, so as not to miss the blessings of these gatherings they would alternately attend them and later exchange what they had learned. The following incident that occurred between Umar and his Medinan brother (r. anhum) is very remarkable in this respect. Umar (r.a.) narrated:

"I and an Ansari neighbor of mine from Bani Umaiya bin Zaid who used to live in Awali Al-Medina and used to visit the Prophet in turns. He used to go one day, and I would go on the following day. When I went, I would bring him the news of what had happened that day regarding the instructions and orders and when he went, he used to do the same for me." (Bukhari, Mazalim, 25)

The distinguished Companions depicted their state in the gatherings of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows: "*We used to sit down around the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as if birds were over our heads.*" (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 23-24)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) regarded the education of female Companions just as significant as that of the male Companions. He taught about matter regarding women in particular through his pure wives. He also had gatherings reserved for women. One day, some women came and asked the Prophet:

"O Messenger of Allah! Only men benefit from your gatherings. Would you arrange a day for us and teach us what you have learned from Allah the Almighty?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told them to get together on certain day and in a certain place. Women gathered on that day and the Prophet (pbuh)



taught them religious lessons and commandments from the revelations of Allah the Almighty.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 36)

Ibn Ishaq reported another narration:

“When a new revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh) he would first recite it to the men and then to the women.” (Ibn Ishaq, p. 128)

Female Companions would reprimand their children who did not visit and attend Prophet’s gatherings for a long time. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30; Ibn Hanbal, V, 391-2)

All the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) fervently attended his gatherings and benefited from them. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was similarly encouraged his Companions. Abu Waqid al-Laythi (r.a.) narrated:

“One day we were in the mosque with the Messenger of Allah. Just then three men appeared at the door. One of them left before entering and the other two went in and approached the Prophet (pbuh). One of them sat where he found a free space in the circle. The other could not find an empty spot and sat behind them not to disturb anybody. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said during his sermon:

“...Shall I tell you about these three people? One of them be-took himself to Allah, so Allah took him into His grace and mercy and accommodated him, the second felt shy of Allah, so Allah sheltered Him in His mercy (and did not punish him), while the third turned his face from Allah and went away, so Allah turned His face from him likewise.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 8)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) employed the most effective and elaborate methods of education when teaching people something. Now we would like to present these methods along with examples from the Prophet’s life.

1. Teaching through Actions

Teaching something by displaying it personally was one of the methods used by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). This is the easiest way and the most useful method to comprehend an issue. According to Amr b. Shu’aib’s report from his grandfather, a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked him how to perform ablution.

“He (the Prophet) then asked for water in a vessel and washed his hands up to the wrists thrice, then washed his face three thrice, and washed his forearms thrice. He then wiped his head and inserted both his index fingers in his ears; he wiped the back of his ears with his thumbs and the front of his ears with the index fingers. He then washed his feet three times.

Then he said:

“This is how ablution should be performed. If anyone does more or less than this, he has done wrong and transgressed.” (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 52)

Sulaiman b. Buraida narrated on the authority of his father that a person asked the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) about the time of prayer. He said:

“Pray with us these two days.” And then on the first day he performed his prayers at their earliest times and on the second day at their latest times.

He (the Holy Prophet) then said:

“Where is the man who inquired about the time of prayer?” He (the inquirer) said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Here I am.” He (the Holy Prophet) said:

“The time for your prayer is within the limits of what you have seen.” (Muslim, Masajid, 176)

Another narration about how the Prophet (pbuh) taught his Companions how to perform prayer happened as follows:

Sahl b. Sa’d (r.a.) narrated:

“And I saw the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) standing upon a pulpit glorifying Allah and the people glorified Allah after him, while he was on the pulpit. He then raised (his head from prostration) and stepped back (on his heels) till he prostrated himself at the base of pulpit, and then returned (to the former place and this movement of one or two steps continued) until the prayer was complete. He then turned towards the people and said:

“O people, I have done it `so that you should follow me and learn (my mode of) prayer.” (Bukhari, Salat, 18; Muslim, Masajid, 44)

Once again he performed the rituals of pilgrimage upon his camel so that people could see him easily. And he said:



“Learn your rituals (by seeing me performing them), for I do not know whether I will perform Hajj after this one.” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 318; Muslim, Hajj, 310)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also became an example through his actions in abstaining from prohibitions. For instance, when he taught people the prohibition for men to wear gold, he said:

“I used to wear this ring and keep its stone towards the palm of my hand.” He then threw it away and said, *“By Allah, I will never wear it (again).”* Therefore, all the people threw away their rings as well. (Bukhari, Aiman, 6)

Another positive incident occurred during the treaty of Hudaibiyah. Believers who were prevented from entering the Ka’bah were happy about the treaty and so they acted slowly in slaughtering their sacrificial animals. The Prophet’s wife, Um Salama (r. anha), told him:

“O Prophet of Allah! Do you want your order to be carried out? Go out and don’t say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and called your barber to shave your head.” So, the Prophet went out and did not talk to anyone of them till he did the above, i.e. slaughtered his sacrifice and called his barber who shaved his head. Seeing that, the Companions of the Prophet got up, slaughtered their sacrifices, and started shaving the heads of one another, and they were in such a rush that there was a danger of killing each other. (Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 326, 331; Waqidi, II, 613)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became an example through his actions in daily matters, too. Abu Sa’id al-Hudri (r.a.) narrated:

“Once the Prophet (pbuh) passed by a boy who was skinning a goat. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Leave it (so that I can show you how to do it).” He (the Prophet) inserted his hand between the skin and the flesh until it reached the armpit. He told the young man:

“This is how you can skin your animal.” He then went away ... (Ibn Majah, Zabaih, 6; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 72)

There are many more similar examples in Prophet’s life regarding teaching and training people. Since being an example is the most effective means of teaching, it is not always possible to succeed in education without an example and model. Just as the eyes are necessary for reading and learning, the same

organs are of great importance in teaching. The Companions and the righteous believers from the following generations applied the same method in their teachings as the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). When we examine the lives of the friends of Allah, we can see how they have disciplined their disciples by example, i.e. showing them personally. They fulfilled the requirements of religion more than anybody else and abstained from all kinds of violence. Today, those who are responsible for conveying the message of Allah have to apply the principle of “being an example” in their own lives.

2. Advancing From Easy to Difficult

Just as the creation of human beings occurred gradually, their education must be done in a gradual manner. Allah the Almighty states this point as follows:

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكُثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا

“And it is a Quran which We have revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have revealed it, revealing in portions.” (al-Isra 17; 106)

In fact, the revelation of the Qur’an followed a course parallel to the spiritual level of the community to which it was revealed. Even the stories of the earlier prophets and their people were first short, but the more the Muslim community’s level of contemplation strengthened, the longer and greater their size and content became.

We can enumerate the benefits of gradual revelation of the Divine Word as follows:

1. To be able to easily recite and memorize the revealed verses
2. To be able to properly understand their meanings without any difficulty
3. To be able to slowly become cleansed from false acts of worship and customs that had been rooted in the society for ages
4. To be able to easily strengthen believers’ moral virtues, such as piety, righteousness, certainty in faith, knowledge of Allah and love for Him, etc.



The Holy Qur'an also points out the principles and methods of education that the instructors have to follow while educating human beings. Allah the Almighty says:

“...Be faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the Scripture and of your constant study thereof.” (Al-i Imran 3; 79)

Imam Bukhari narrated the interpretation of Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) about this verse as “be knowledgeable and learned *rabbani* servants of Allah” and then continued saying:

“A learned *rabbani* is a scholar who teaches people the lesser sciences before teaching them the greater ones.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 10)

Here what is meant by the lesser science is the one whose issues are clear and easy to understand; and the great sciences are the ones whose issues are more complicated and difficult to understand. Just like the Prophet's method of teaching, a *rabbani* scholar teaches matters which graduate from easy to difficult, from preliminary issues to the advanced ones and from the abstract to the tangible. They put the matters in order of significance to enable their students to gain a clear understanding and embed them in their minds.

Jundab b. Abdullah (r.a.) narrated:

“We were a group of teenagers with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). We learned faith before the Qur'an. Then we learned the Qur'an and our faith increased through it.” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 9)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) taught these young men and his other Companions first the foundation of spiritual teaching or faith. And then he moved on to Qur'anic education and its principles; because without faith all the other knowledge would have no meaning. In this context, Ibn Umar (r. anhumā) said:

“I have had a long life; faith would be granted to us before anything from the Qur'an. When a chapter of the Qur'an was revealed, we would learn about that which was lawful and unlawful, as well as other things that needed to be learned from that chapter as you learn the Qur'an. Then I have seen some people who were learning parts from the Qur'an before faith. They recite chapters of the Qur'an starting from the *fatihā* to the end of that section, but they do not

know what those chapters are ordering or prohibiting and what is needed to be known from them. They distribute them like cheap date fruits.” (Haythami, I, 165)

By his reprehension, Ibn Umar (r.anhuma) shed light on a method that we should follow in acquiring knowledge and on the problems expected to happen if we do not follow that method.

Jalal al-Din Rumi (q.s.) points out the same fact when saying “we should teach our children manners before we begin to teach them the Qur’an and Sunnah.” Therefore, before teaching our children “alif – ba,”³⁶ we need to teach them the meaning of “alif,” who Allah the Almighty and His Messenger are, and how great the Qur’an is. We first need to fill their hearts with love for Allah and His Messenger and to reflect on the eloquence, grace, and all the other beauties of Islam in these pure hearts.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would not teach his Companions the entire Qur’an at once, rather, he would follow the method of gradualism in this regard, too. Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami narrates:

“There was a Companion of the Prophet teaching us the Qur’an. He told us:

“We would learn ten verses from the Messenger of Allah, and would not start to learn another ten verses, before we thoroughly learned the first ten. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would give us knowledge and practice together.” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 410; Haythami, I, 165)

It is clearly understood from this prophetic practice that acting gradually is very important in order to internalize newly acquired knowledge and knowledge without putting it into practice brings no benefit. This is why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sought refuge in Allah from knowledge which is not beneficial. (Muslim, Dhikr, 73)

In order to reach the intended success in education, we have to follow the training method of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). People have certain abilities and levels of comprehension, thus, they cannot learn everything at once and in a short time. As there are differences of meaning in knowledge, it can also be useful or harmful. Today, harmful information affects believers’ minds and souls more easily. Unnecessary and meaningless knowledge are

36. * First two letters of the Arabic alphabet.



more prevalent than the needed even essential information. Good and evil, beneficial and harmful are all intertwined with one another. It is very difficult to give a healthy education in the face of such information pollution. It is also necessary to organize our education based on the commands of Allah and His Messenger.

3. The Significance of Moderation and Avoiding Dullness

Since the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) knew people's spiritual states very well, he would treat them accordingly. He would never forego moderation. He would not always give them sermons and look for suitable times in order to keep their desire and enthusiasm for learning alive. (Bukhari, 'Ilm, 12)

In fact, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) expressed that such behavior was the method of the prophets:

"Good way, dignified good bearing and moderation are the twenty-fifth part of Prophecy." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 2)

Contents of a lesson and its teaching method must be in moderation and should not cause the student weariness. On the contrary, it must increase a student's enthusiasm. According to Abu Salama's report, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) were people that neither deviated from moderation nor showed laziness. They would sometimes recite poetry and sometimes narrate their recollection from the Age of Ignorance. (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, V, 278)

According to Abu Bakr al-Thaqafi's report, the Companions would sometimes recite from the Qur'an and sometimes from poetry. (Kattani, II, 236)

There method shows that it is necessary to animate the students by poetry, stories, or something relaxing when they begin to get tired, because when the mind and soul get tired, it becomes hard to comprehend the meaning, which likewise causes loss of attention and distraction.

When Ibn Abbas (r. anuhuma) sat with his students, for a while he would narrate from the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and then would say "Increase our appetite! Tell us some jokes, for the soul gets tired just like the body." And then he would begin to talk about Arabic proverbs. Then he would go back to his lesson and repeat this whenever it was necessary. (Kattani, II, 237)

A teacher is like a master of decoration and his students are the white surfaces ready to be decorated. Mistakes in decoration do not belong to the surface but to the decorator. Therefore, the decorator must look at his mistakes and correct himself continuously.

Therefore, programs of education should be prepared in consideration of people's spiritual states and weaknesses. Class hours, methods of presentation, break times, and vacations must be arranged in accordance with these weaknesses. Education is a process, and as such, it requires a long time, patience, and effort. Boredom and getting tired is the greatest obstacle for development. The only way to overcome these problems is to get the utmost benefit from the enlightened guidance of the Prophet (pbuh), our Excellent Exemplar.

4. Paying Attention to the Audience

Since Allah's Apostle (pbuh) looked at creation from the point of its Creator, he naturally loved and valued it. Our Prophet (pbuh) prayed day and night for the guidance of the disbelievers, just as he prayed for his followers. Even the Lord Almighty warned him from time to time:

“Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.” (al-Shuara 26; 3)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would esteem his audience, be they male or female, young or old. He addressed them with spiritually comforting sermons that increased their self confidence. Respect for the audience is the first step to winning their hearts.

As it was reported by Anas (r.a.), when Allah's Messenger (pbuh) met someone, he would chat with them and would not turn his face from that person till they left. When he shook someone's hand, he would not release his hand till that person released their's first. When he sat with his friends, his knees would be in line with his friends' knees. (Ibn Majah, Adab, 21)

Abdullah b. 'Amr (r.a.) narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was circumambulating the Ka'bah, he addressed the Ka'bah and said with regards to the believer's value in the presence of Allah:

“How pure you are! How nice your scent is! How exalted and respected you are! By Allah in Whose hand Muhammad's souls is, a believer's value in the presence of Allah is greater than yours. The honor of a believer's property



and blood is also like this. We would only have a good opinion about a believer.” (Ibn Majah, Fitan, 2)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) never addressed a believer with an insulting or belittling word. For him, a believer was estimable under any circumstances. A wonderful example of this approach is the following incident that happened to Abu Hurairah (r.a.):

“One day, Abu Huraira (r.a.) met the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) on one of the streets of Medina. As he was in a state of sexual defilement, he hid himself from the Messenger of Allah, slipped away and took a bath. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) looked for him and when he came back, the Prophet (pbuh) asked him:

“O Abu Huraira, where were you?” He replied:

“O Messenger of Allah, when we met, I was sexually impure and I did not like to sit in your company before taking a bath.” Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَا يَنْجُسُ

“Hallowed be Allah, verily a believer is never defiled.” (Bukhari, Gusl, 23; Muslim, Hayd, 115)

Therefore, a believer should know that his value would not decrease even when he was sexually impure.

Another manifestation of showing respect to his audience was that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would give them a chance to express themselves and allow them to speak about the truth. According to the Ibn Abbas’ (r. anhum) report, a person came to Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Last night I had a dream in which there was something resembling a cloud from which butter and honey were trickling and I also saw people trying to collect this rain in the palms of their hands. Some of them got more, and some of them got less. Then I saw a rope connecting the earth with the sky. You grabbed the rope and rose towards the heaven; then another person after you grabbed it and rose towards (Heaven); then another person grabbed it, but it broke then when it was reattached for him and he, too, climbed up.” Abu Bakr moved forward and said:



“O Messenger of Allah! May my father be sacrificed for you, by Allah, allow me to interpret this dream.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“Well, tell us its interpretation.” Thereupon Abu Bakr said:

“The cloud signifies the canopy of Islam and that what it trickles out of it in the form of butter and honey is the sweetness (like honey) and softness (like butter) of the Holy Qur’an and what the people caught of it in their palms implies getting more or less benefit from the Qur’an. So far as the rope joining the sky with the earth is concerned, it is the Truth by which you stood (in the worldly life) and by which Allah raises you to Heaven. Then the person after you would take hold of it and he would also climb up with the help of it. Then another person would take hold of it and climb up with the help of it. Then another person would take hold of it and it became broken; then it was reattached for him and he would climb up supported by it . O Allah’s Messenger! May my father be sacrificed for you, tell me whether I have interpreted it correctly or I have made an error. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“You have interpreted part of it correctly and you have erred in interpreting another part of it.” (Bukhari, Ta’bir, 47; Muslim, Ru’ya, 17)

As in this report, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) let Abu Bakr (r.a.) give his opinion, listen to him, and finally made the necessary remarks at the end.

It is possible to make the following classification about the principles of the Prophet (pbuh) in addressing people:

a. Paying an Interest and Paying Complements

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would treat and compliment his audience in accordance with their state and abilities. His special treatment had a very important effect upon leading his Companions and moulding their religious personality. It was narrated by ‘Amr bin Taghlib:

“Some war booty was brought to Allah’s Apostle and he immediately distributed it. He gave it to some of his Companions and ignored the others. Later, he received news that those whom he had ignored were gossiping about him. So he glorified and praised Allah and said,

“By Allah, I may give to a man and ignore another, although the one whom I ignore is more beloved to me than the one to whom I give. But I give



to some people as I feel that they have no patience and no contentment in their hearts and I leave those who are patient and self-contented with the goodness and wealth which Allah has put into their hearts and ‘Amr bin Taghlib is one of them.’ Amr added:

“By Allah! I was happier to hear those words of Allah’s Apostle than to possess the best red camels.” (Bukhari, Jum’a, 29)

Once, just like ‘Amr b. Taghlib’s compliment, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) complimented the entire people of *Ansar*. Anas b. Malik (r.a.) narrated:

“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had much war booty on the day of Hunain. He distributed these among Muhajirun and Tulaqa (or Meccans who had been forgiven and left free after the conquest of Mecca). The ansar began to complain:

“When there is a problem, we are the ones called; but the booty gets distributed amongst others.” Upon which the Prophet (pbuh) gathered the Ansar and said:

“Aren’t you pleased that the people take the worldly things and you take Allah’s Apostle with you?” They said, “Yes.” The Prophet said,

“If the people made their way through a valley or mountain pass and the ansar took another valley, I would make my way through the Ansar’s valley or mountain pass.” (Bukhari, Maghazi, 56; Muslim, Zakat, 135)

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) would compliment someone and win his heart by mentioning his good attributes. Thus, that person would either embrace Islam or hear about the beauties of Islam. He valued and showed his appreciation differently to those Companions who successfully fulfilled his orders.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) appointed Zaid b. Haritha (r.a.) as the commander of troop sent to Bani Fazarah. When the expedition was successfully completed and the troop returned to Medina, Zaid went to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) welcomed and hugged Zaid and kissed his forehead; then asked what he had done. Zaid told the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about the victory bestowed by Allah the Almighty. (Ibn Sa’d, II, 91; Waqidi, II, 565)

According to another report, when Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was performing the minor pilgrimage with his Companions, Abdullah b. Rawaha (r.a.) began to recite a poem. Umar (r.a.) told him:

"Will you keep reciting this poetry in the presence of Allah's Messenger and in this sacred place of Allah?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to Umar:

"Do not stop him. By Allah in Whose hand is my soul, his words are more effective upon Quraish than showering arrows upon them. O Ibn Rawaha! Keep reciting." Then he told Abdullah b. Rawaha (r.a.):

"Say: There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He fulfills His promises. He is the One Who helps this servant. He is the One Who strengthens His soldiers. He is the only One Who defeats the gathered tribes."

Then when Abdullah b. Rawaha said these words, believers began to repeat them with him. (Waqidi, II, 736; Ibn Sa'd, II, 122-123)

In this report, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) softly warned his Companions about being polite in their relations. He also showed his approval towards Abdullah b. Rawaha with a nice compliment and won his heart.

By showing special care and interest, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sometimes aimed to guide a certain tribe to the truth. For instance, such an incident occurred when representatives of the people of Hamdan came to Medina to embrace Islam. One of them, Malik b. Namat, who was a poet, stood up and said:

"O Messenger of Allah! These men salute you. They are the nobles of the tribe of Hamdan. They accepted the invitation of the Messenger of Allah and left the idols before which sacrifices were slaughtered. They will not break their promise as long as the mountains stay firm and gazelle young keep wandering around the site of Sal'" and then they all embraced Islam together.

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"What a wonderful tribe Hamdan is so long as they run for help and endure the hardships! Amongst them are also the righteous and pious believers of Islam." (Ibn Hisham, IV, 268-69; Ibn Sa'd, I, 341) Thus, he encouraged those men to help the needy and be patient in the face of their problems.

The incident related to the poet Labid had the same objective. Labid b. Rabia was among the delegation of Bani Kilab which came to Medina to em-



brace Islam. He was one of the prominent poets of the Arabs. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) complimented him saying:

"The truest words of the poets are those of Labid: "Certainly everything other than Allah is false and useless." Labid had quit reciting poems after his conversion to Islam. One day when Umar (r.a.) told him:

"O Abu Aqil! Recite me something from your poems" he replied:

"After Allah taught me chapters of Baqara and Al-i Imran, I would never recite a poem. Allah has changed me through this Qur'an." (Ibn Sa'd, VI, 33; Ibn Athir, *Ud al-Ghabah*, IV, 516)

Sometimes Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would ask his Companions questions in order to test their intelligence and knowledge. When they gave the correct answers, he would praise and pay his compliments to them. One such incident was reported by Ubayy b. Ka'b:

"One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said to me:

"O Abu'l Mundhir! Do you know the verse from the Book of Allah which, according to you, is the greatest?" I said:

"Allah and His Apostle (pbuh) know best." Once again he said:

"Abu'l Mundhir, do you know the verse from the Book of Allah which, according to you, is the greatest?" I said:

"Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist." (al-Baqara 2; 255) After which he struck me on my chest and said:

"May knowledge be blessed for you, O Abu'l Mundhir!" (Muslim, *Musafirun*, 258)

For the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) everybody was equal in terms of their humanity. This is why everybody received a certain level of respect from him. He treated human beings as a trust from Allah the Almighty. Thus, he valued the inner qualities more than people's outer appearances.

Those who are occupied in education and training should take the Prophet's method as a guidance for themselves. They should pay attention to those who need special treatment. Sometimes people who are disciplined by exclusive care may serve more effectively than thousands of people. So a qualified

student should be seen like a special class; and he should be raised with individual attention. However, at the same time we should not forget to show our respect to others and be cautious not to cause jealousy.

b. Paying Attention to the Level of the Audience

Allah the Almighty created human beings with different skin colours and speaking different languages, likewise he created them with different characteristics and abilities. No two people can be found in this world who are completely identical. In other words, people's level of intellect, cognizance, and sensitivity manifests great differences.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who advised his followers to pay attention to people's differences in their education, told Ibn Abbas (r.anhuma):

"O Ibn Abbas! Do not speak to people with words they do not understand; for this may cause mischief among them." (Dailami, V, 359)

This is why Ali (r.a.) said:

"Tell people what they can comprehend (and leave what they cannot). Would you like Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) to be denied?" (Bukhari, 'Ilm, 49)

Miqdam b. Ma'dikarb said that:

"When you talk to people about their Lord, do not tell them incomprehensible and difficult things." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, II, 281)

According to a narration reported by Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma), the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Should we convey to people everything we heard from you?"

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) replied:

"Yes, you should tell them everything except the things that are beyond their comprehension; because, this causes mischief among some people."

Following this advice, when Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma) explained an issue to people, he explained some parts of it through implication. (Ali al-Muttaqi, X, 307)

Ibn Mulaika said that:



“I wrote a letter to Ibn Abbas asking about some matters. He responded to me hiding some parts of his answer. Then I heard that he said about me:

“Since he is a sincere young man, I choose to explain many things and hid some of them from him.” (Muslim, Muqaddima, 7)

We have several examples showing that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) applied this principle most effectively in his educational activities. When speaking and giving sermons, he (pbuh) paid the utmost attention to the level of his audience. He would speak in accordance with everybody’s level of comprehension. He would take those who just began to learn Islam into consideration; he would not teach them such things that he taught to those advanced in Islamic knowledge. He would respond to people’s requests to the extent of their need and interest.

Abdullah b. ‘Amr (r. anhumā) reported that:

“A person came to Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) and said:

“I pledge allegiance to you after migrating and striving for the sake of Allah.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:

“*Is any one of your parents living?*” The man replied:

“Yes, of course, both are alive.” He then asked:

“*You want to seek reward from Allah, don’t you?*” He said:

“Yes, I do.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“*Go back to your parents and treat them well.*” (Bukhari, Jihad, 138; Muslim, Birr, 6)

Even though the Prophet (pbuh) valued and encouraged his followers to migrate and engage in jihad a lot, he took the questioner’s personal state into consideration and told him that being in the service of his parents would be more beneficial for him.

According to a report by Abu Huraira (r.a.), a man came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

“Give me some advice.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“*Do not become angry.*” The man repeated his question three times, and the Prophet (pbuh) gave him the same advice each time. (Bukhari, Adab, 76)

Most likely that person was known for his tendency to become angry and so the Prophet (pbuh) wanted to discipline that side of him.

The following incident which occurred between a bedouin and the Messenger of Allah is also a very good example of this context. It is reported on the authority of Abu Huraira (r.a.) that a bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Advise me of a deed by which I may be entitled to enter Paradise.” To this he (the Holy Prophet) replied:

“Worship Allah and never associate anything with Him, establish the obligatory prayer, and pay the Zakat which is incumbent upon you, and observe the fast of Ramadan.” The bedouin said:

“By Him in Whose hand is my life, I will never add anything to it, nor will I extract anything from it.” When he (the bedouin) turned his back, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“He who would be pleased to see a man from the dwellers of Paradise should catch a glimpse of him.” (Bukhari, Zakat, 1; Muslim, Iman, 15)

Here the Prophet’s approach to the bedouin and his method of education is very remarkable. He (pbuh) could have answered the bedouin’s question by saying “this is a religious matter, so you cannot say I will do this and this and will not do this and this. You should be more careful.” But instead Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) took the man’s level of understanding into account and even heralded him with the glad tidings of Paradise if he fulfills what he was told.

Uqba b. Amir (r.a.) asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Where is salvation?” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) told him (considering his psychological state and needs):

“Watch your tongue, take refuge in your home (when chaos/unrest spreads) and shed tears for your sins.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 61)

In close related to the questioners’ levels and state did the Prophet (pbuh) gave various answers to the very same question asked by different people. He told his inquirer only as much as he needed, wanted, or could handle, and sometimes he responded in accordance with the prevalent circumstances. By his prophetic sagacity and perception he could immediately and easily recog-



nize what and how much was needed and who needed it and then treated them accordingly.

c. Being Beneficent and Doing Good

Human beings are naturally prone to seeking their personal benefit, by considering their own interests first when they attempt to do something. They are always attempting to fulfill their essential and nonessential needs, and therefore greedily hold on to the things from which they expect to benefit and pursue them until they get tired. Our Lord the Almighty states this human psychological state as follows:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا. إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا.
وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

“Truly man was created very impatient; Fretful when evil touches him; And niggardly when good reaches him.” (al-Maarij 70; 19-21)

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

“And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth.” (al-Adiyat 100; 8)

In order to cure such blameworthy characteristics, Allah the Almighty ordered his servants, who are created with this nature, to do good. As the Qur’an states it:

“...but do good; for Allah loves those who do good.” (al-Baqara 2; 195)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who knew this human nature very well, would primarily pay attention to his disciples’ needs and try to take care of them. He helped and showed beneficence as much as he could to those whom he was trying to educate and purify their souls.

Our Prophet (pbuh) paid attention to the various problems of his Companions and he also encouraged those, who had the ability to do the same. Abdurrahman b. Abu Bakr (r. anhum) narrated:

“The Suffa Companions were poor people and the Prophet once said,

“Whoever has food for two persons should take a third one from them (Suffa Companions). And whosoever has food for four persons should take a fifth or even the sixth one from them” Abu Bakr (r.a.) took three men and the Prophet took ten of them.” (Bukhari, Mawaqit, 41; Muslim, Ashribah, 176, 177)

Knowing the positive effects of beneficence upon human souls, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gave his followers the following advice:

“If anyone seeks protection in Allah’s name, grant him protection; if anyone begs in Allah’s name, give him something; if anyone gives you an invitation, accept it; and if anyone does you a kindness, recompense him; but if you have not the means to do so, pray for him until you feel that you have compensated him.” (Nasai, Zakat, 72; Abu Dawud, Zakat, 38)

Being beneficent under all circumstances is both an order of our religion and a moral principle of Allah and His Messenger. When conveying the message of Islam, it is necessary for us to benefit from this principle as much as we can.

5. Approaching with Love and Compassion

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was an ocean of love, mercy and compassion. He was such a personality that he consisted of total mercy for humanity. Allah the Almighty highlights His Messenger’s mercy and compassion as follows:

“Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that you should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful.” (al-Tawba 9; 128)

Our Prophet (pbuh) was a sociable person and had the ability to recognize people’s states. Adra al-Sulami (r.a.) reported the following emotional narration:

“One night I had come to keep guard for the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Just then a man appeared reciting the Qur’an loudly. After a while Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) approached and I told him:

“O Messenger of Allah! This man is a hypocrite.”

Then the man passed away in Medina. The Companions carried out the funeral preparations. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told us:



“Treat him gently; Allah the Almighty treated him gently, since he loved Allah and His Messenger.” Then he ordered his Companions to dig the man’s grave and said:

“Keep his grave wide, for Allah has bestowed His blessings upon him bountifully.”

One of the Companions said:

“O Messenger of Allah! You have become very sad for this man’s death.” Upon this the Prophet (pbuh) told him:

“Yes, I have. Because he loved Allah and His Messenger.” (Ibn Majah, Ja-naiz, 41)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) loved all of his Companions and abstained from acts which might incite their jealousy. His love was so vast that everybody thought that the Prophet (pbuh) loved him more than anybody else. He connected people with each other through love and created a strong balance among them. Qa’b b. Ujrah (r.a.) narrated the following exemplary incident:

“One day we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in the mosque. There were groups of people from the *ansar*, *muhajir*, and *Hashim clan*. We laid a wager about whom the Prophet (pbuh) loved the most.

We, the *ansar*, said:

“We have believed in the Messenger of Allah, followed him, and fought with him against his enemies. Thus, he loves us the most.”

Then our *muhajir* brothers said:

“We migrated for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. We left our property and children behind just for this. We, too, joined the battles that you fought in. This is why Allah’s Messenger loves us the most.”

The members of the Hashim clan stated:

“We are the relatives of the Prophet. We were in all the places you had been. So the Prophet (pbuh) loves us the most.”

The the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) came to us and asked:

“What were you talking about?” So we repeated what we (the *ansar*) had said. Thereupon he said:

“You are telling the truth. Who could claim the otherwise?” Then we let him know what the muhajirs had said. He said:

“You are telling the truth. Who could claim the otherwise?” Finally we informed him about the words of Hashim clan. After he had said:

“You are telling the truth. Who could claim the otherwise?” He asked:

“Would you like me to be a judge among you?” We all replied:

“Of course, O Messenger of Allah! May our fathers and mothers be sacrificed for you.” Then he said:

“O people of Ansar! I am your brother.” Ansar said:

“Allah is the Greatest! By the Lord of Ka’bah, we won him.” The the Messenger of Allah said:

“O people of muhajirs! I am one of you.” Upon this Muhajirs said:

“Allah is the Greatest! By the Lord of Ka’bah, we won him.” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“O sons of Hashim! You are from me and you have come to me.” The members of Hashim clan stated:

“Allah is the Greatest! By the Lord of Ka’bah, we won him.” All of us were pleased. Each group was touched by Prophet’s courtesy. (Haythami, X, 14)

6. Approaching Problems Positively

Since Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) believed with certainty in Allah as the absolute Doer of all actions, he would always approach matters positively. There was no place for deadlock and hopelessness in his life. He did not believe in an ill omen, either. Allah Messenger (pbuh) turned the principle mentioned in the following sacred tradition into a rule for his life:

“I am as My servant thinks about me; if he thinks well about Me, I will treat him accordingly. If he thinks badly about Me, I will respond accordingly.” This is because the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in his every affair and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks Allah, thus there is good for him



in it, and if he finds himself in trouble and shows resignation and endures it patiently, there is a good for him in it.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 64) And thus he invited his followers to see the good side of everything.

This approach of the Prophet (pbuh) can be seen in every aspect of his life, especially in his educational activities. Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“There is no bad omen, but I only prefer (tafa’ul) to interpret a good omen.” The Companions asked:

“What does (tafa’ul) “interpreting a good omen” mean?” He (pbuh) replied:

“It means the nice and positive word.” (Bukhari, Tibb, 19; Muslim, Salam, 102)

Urwa b. Amir (r.a.) said that:

“Bad omens were talked about before the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Upon this he said:

“It is best for you to interpret things as good. Bad omens should not prevent any believer from attempting to do things. If any one of you sees something he does not like, he should pray saying:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا يَأْتِي بِالْحَسَنَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ
 السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ

“O Allah! Only You give goodness, and only You avert evil. The power to abstain from sins and perform acts of worship can be achieved only with Your help.” (Abu Dawud, Tib, 24)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) advised not to describe the acts of nature, such as wind, storm, etc, as evil. On the contrary, he encouraged people to say prayers to Allah the Almighty to be protected from their damages. (Muslim, Istisqa, 15)

Interpreting an incident as good, as advised by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is the best option that a believer can choose under such circumstances. For instance, addressing to a sick person as “You look well, how marvelous!” or calling someone who has not yet performed a pilgrimage a “pilgrim” and considering that he will perform the pilgrimage one day can be considered

tafa'ul or a favorable interpretations. When the Prophet (pbuh) saw Suhail b. Amr appointed as the representative for the negotiations of the treaty of Hudaibiyah, thinking about the meaning of Suhail's name, he said "*now things have become easy.*" (Bukhari, Shurut, 15)

Even if there is nothing done yet, *tafa'ul* gives people enthusiasm, desire, and spiritual comfort just like *Tasha'um* or inauspicious interpretation, which is prohibited by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), overwhelms and breaks someone's hope and desire to act.

Favorable interpretation is based on the principle of thinking positively about Allah the Almighty. The disapproval of the Messenger of Allah of interpreting something as a bad omen is because it means thinking badly about Allah the Almighty. This provides us with a measure. It is always better to think well of people, because one will be held responsible for bad thoughts, but one will not be questioned for positive thinking even if he is wrong about his thoughts. His only loss will only behaving made a mistake. However, we will have to answer the questions for having baseless bad thoughts about someone.

The following is another example of how the Prophet (pbuh) approached matters positively:

"Mu'awiya b. Hakam had a maid-servant who tended goats by the side of Uhud and Jawwaniya. One day a wolf stole a goat from her flock. Hearing the news, Muawiya became upset and slapped her face, after which he regreted his deed and told the Prophet (pbuh) what had happened. When the Messenger of Allah called his deed unfair, Muawiya asked him:

"O Messenger of Allah! Should I grant her freedom?" He (the Holy Prophet) said:

"Bring her to me." So Muawiya brought her to him. He said to her:

"Where is Allah?" She said:

"He is in the heaven." He said:

"Who am I?" She said:

"You are the Messenger of Allah." Then the Prophet (pbuh) said to Muawiya:

"Grant her freedom, she is a believing woman." (Muslim, Masajid, 33)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), the mercy of the universe, accepted the maid's answers given to the extent of her knowledge and described her as a believer. Consequently he asked Muawiya to free her.

The Prophet's positive approach to the matters can also be observed in his interpretation of dreams. One day Umm al-Fadl, Abbas' wife, came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

"I had a dream tonight." The Holy Prophet asked:

"What did you see in your dream?" Umm al-Fadl replied:

"It was a harsh and heavy dream." He asked again:

"Tell me, what did you see?" She said:

"I saw a piece from your flesh cut and put in my house." Upon this the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

"God willing, you have seen something nice. Fatima will deliver a boy and you will breast-feed him and your son Kusam with your milk." A while later Husain (r.a.) was born and Umm al-Fadl (r. anha) became his wet nurse. (Hakim, III, 194; Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 278-79)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned us about interpreting dreams inauspiciously saying:

"A dream has three types: one part is a glad tidings from Allah the Almighty. One are words from inner self; and one is the Devil frightening one. When one of you has a nice dream, he may tell it to others if he wishes. If he sees something bad in his dream, he should not tell it to anybody, he should get up and perform a prayer." (Ibn Majah, Tabir, 3)

Since Allah the Almighty is how His servants think about Him, in a way people's intentions and wishes constitute a type of prayer. This is why making positive interpretations not only comforts the state of human psychology but also may cause the actual positive manifestation of the events.

7. Discovering and Improving Special Talents

Allah the Almighty has created human being with various characteristics, attributes, and abilities. Everybody acts in accordance with his/her characteristics. This fact is expressed in the following verse:

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا

“Say: everyone acts according to his own disposition: but your Lord knows best who it is that is best guided on the way.” (al-Isra 17; 84)

The Arabic term *shakilah* (شَاكِلَة), which is usually translated as natural disposition, have different different but related meanings such as nature, custom, religion, ethics, intention, and temperament. In other words, every human being acts in accordance with his/her natural disposition, temperament, morals, and state. He/she performs deeds in accordant with his/her feelings.

The creation of human beings with different abilities and the wisdom behind this dissimilarity that is to maintain balance in social life are stated in another verse:

“Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others. But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass.” (al-Zuhruf 43; 32)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated that:

“You would find people like those of mine, the good amongst you in the Days of Ignorance would be like the good amongst you in the days of Islam, provided they have an understanding of it...” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 1; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 199)

As emphasized in the above mentioned verses and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), people are like mines, some are as precious as gold; others are as valuable as silver or copper or coal. Likewise, their abilities are different. An ability, which is found in one person, may not be found in another. It is not always easy to recognize who has which abilities and to improve them based on certain methods. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was the exemplary model of those who have succeeded in this. Our Prophet (pbuh) was able to see people’s mysterious worlds by means of his prophetic sagacity and perception. He could see the pearls and jewels hidden in these worlds and he knew very well how to unearth them.





The qualities and abilities of Abu Bakr and Umar, Uthman and Ali, Bilal and Mus'ab (r. anhum) were not the same. But every one of them presented star-like perfection to the extent of their abilities. Each one of them held the hands of the Messenger of Allah and ascended the steps of virtue. Abu Bakr (r.a.) became the model of submission, love and self-sacrifice in the path of Allah; Umar (r.a.) became the symbol of justice and courage; Uthman (r.a.) was the model of chastity and gentleness; Ali (r.a.) was the symbol of knowledge and bravery; while Bilal (r.a.) got the title of "the master of muadhhdhins," Mus'ab b. Umair (r.a.) revived Medina by teaching the Qur'an.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) paid special attention in educating every one of his believers and to improving their hidden skills. In this regard, the following narration is meaningful:

"A delegation of the Abdulqais clan had come to Medina. Abdullah b. Awf, the head of the delegation, took off his clothes and put on nice and clean ones before going into the presence of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Then they came to the Prophet (pbuh). He welcomed his visitors and prayed for them. Then he asked:

"Which one of you is Abdullah b. Ashaj?" Abdullah b. Awf replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! I am." Abdullah was an ugly person. When he saw that the Prophet (pbuh) was looking at him, he told the Prophet:

"O Messenger of Allah! One cannot make a water-skin from human skin and drink water from it. Only two parts of a person are valuable: the tongue and the heart."

Upon which Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told him:

"O Abdullah! You have two characteristics that Allah loves." When Abdullah enquired what they were, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Gentleness and deliberateness." Abdullah (r.a.) asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Were these qualities formed in me later or have I been created with them?" He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

"You were created with these morals." (Ibn Sa'd, I, 314; V, 557-560)

The young should be given the chance to use their abilities and their path should be cleared. The following was narrated from Ibn Umar (r. anhuma):



“We were with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in an expedition. I was riding a camel that belonged to my father Umar. I could not control the animal and I was passing in front of the others. My father was sad about the situation. From time to time he came, pulled the animal back and told me:

“Hold your animal. It should not pass before the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).” Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“O Umar! Would you sell it to me?” My father replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! It is yours” and sold the camel to him. Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to me:

“O Abdullah! It is yours. Ride it as you wish.” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 47; Hiba, 25/2)

Through this act, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) showed that the youth should not be pressured into acting in a certain way, but rather be given freedom within the limits of Islamic principles.

Uqba b. Amir (r.a.) narrated:

“Two people came and presented their case to the Messenger of Allah. He told me:

“O Uqba stand up and judge between them.” I said:

“O Messenger of Allah! For this you are more appropriate than me.” He said:

“Even so, I want you to judge between them. When you exert all your effort and reach the right decision, you will receive ten rewards; when you exert all your effort and reach the wrong decision, you will have one reward.” (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 205)

There are many aspects of social life and many tasks should be properly fulfilled in order to maintain these aspects. In order to realize this, trustworthy, capable, adept, and trained people are needed. Therefore, educational systems have to be arranged to train such people and capabilities need to be discovered at an early ages and then, based on the results, people must be directed to the proper jobs.

The Prophet’s principle of scrupulously finding and improving abilities should be one of the rules of our educational lives. This is necessary to raise qualified people and to avoid wasting human resources.



8. Employing the Question and Answer Method

There is a strong connection between the student and the teacher who is responsible for the activities of teaching and training in Islamic manners. There is a mutual enlightenment; a spiritual interchange occurs between the hearts.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would talk with his Companions and ask them questions which lead them to contemplate. When he felt that they have reached a certain level of maturity, he would tell them the things that he planned to teach them. There are many good examples of this method in the life of the Prophet (pbuh).

a. *The Prophet Responding to Questions*

The Companions were eager to increase their knowledge and solve their problems by asking the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) questions. The Prophet (pbuh) would give every one of their questions a satisfactory answer. This is a divine method which was taught to the Prophet (pbuh) by Allah the Almighty through the Archangel Gabriel. Gabriel (A.S.) employed the method of questions and answers while teaching them their religion. One of the best examples of this method is seen in the following tradition which is also known as the "tradition of Gabriel."

Umar b. al-Khattab (r.a.) narrated:

"One day when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was with his followers, a dark haired man wearing white clothes whom none of us knew came to the Messenger of Allah. He sat before him so that his knees touched the Prophet's knees, and placing his hands upon the Prophet's knees he said:

"O Prophet of Allah! Tell me what is *iman* (faith)?" He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

"That you affirm your faith in Allah, His angels, His Books, His meeting, His Messengers and that you affirm your faith in the Resurrection in the Hereafter." The man said:

"You are right," We were puzzled for he had asked a question and then confirmed the answer. Then the man asked again:

“O Messenger of Allah! Tell me what Islam is?” He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

“Islam means that you worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him and that you establish obligatory prayer and pay the obligatory poor-rate (Zakat) and you observe the fast of Ramadan.” He (the inquirer) said again:

“You are right.” And asked:

“O Messenger of Allah, what does Ihsan mean?” He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

“That you worship Allah as if you see Him, and even if you cannot see Him, He certainly sees you.” He (the inquirer) once again said:

“You are right” and then asked:

“O Messenger of Allah, when will the hour (of Doom) be?” He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

“The one who is asking about it is no better informed than the inquirer.” The man continued:

“Then tell me about its signs” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) replied:

“When the slave-girl will give birth to her master;³⁷ when the naked, barefooted shepherds compete with each other in constructing high building.” Then the man quietly turned his back and disappeared. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Bring that man back to me.” The Companions went to bring him back, but they could not find him. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah asked:

“O Umar! Do you know who that man was?” I said:

“Allah and His Messenger know best.” Then Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told us:

“He was Gabriel, who came to teach you your religion.” (Muslim, Iman, 1, 5; Bukhari, Iman, 37)

37. * Or when mothers bear children who will treat their mothers like slaves



Another version of this narration reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.) shows more clearly how the Prophet (pbuh) employed the method of questions and answers. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told us:

“Ask me questions (about matters pertaining to Islam),” but they (the Companions of the Holy Prophet) hesitated to ask questions out of profound respect for him. In the meantime a man arrived and sat near the Prophet’s knees ... (Muslim, Iman, 7)

These narrations consist of many significant aspects regarding educational methods and training activities. We can enumerate them as follows:

1. Scholars should compassionately approach their inquirers and gain their confidence. Thus, a student can ask his questions without fear.
2. One should ask his questions politely.
3. If someone who attends a scholar’s circle recognizes that people are hesitant to ask certain questions, he should bring up those issues. In this way, not only the questioner but also the entire circle will be able to benefit from the scholar’s response.
4. By asking questions and receiving answers, matters can be listened to more carefully and be better understood.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) taught many principles and rules of Islam through answers given to the enquiries of the Companions. He even encouraged his Companions to ask questions sincerely and told them:

“Asking questions is the cure for ignorance.” (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 125)

However, asking useless questions is discouraged. In fact, at that time, some people were asking questions just to ridicule with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Some others were asking question to test him and some others were asking strange questions just because of their naivety. “Who is my father?” “Where is my lost camel?” are among the examples of such questions. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12)

According to a narration, when the verse **“...pilgrimage to the House is a duty men owe to Allah, those who can afford the journey...”** (Al-i Imran 3; 97) was revealed, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Is it required for every year?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stayed quiet and did not answer the question. He was asked second time:

“O Messenger of Allah! Is it required for every year?” He said:

“No, but if I had said “yes,” it was going to be obligatory for every year.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 5/15)

The following verse was revealed about such people:

“O you who believe! Ask not of things which, if they were made known unto you, would trouble you; but if you ask of them when the Qur’an is being revealed, they will be made known unto you. Allah pardons this, for Allah is Forgiving, Clement. Some people before you did ask such questions, and on that account lost their Faith.” (al-Maidah 5; 101-102)

Out of their deep respect and love for him, the people of Medina were hesitant to ask the Prophet (pbuh) questions so much that they would sometimes wait and hope for a stranger to come and ask questions so that they could also benefit from the answer.

Nawwas b. Sam’an (r.a) reported:

“I stayed with Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) in Medina for one year. What precluded me from migrating was nothing but persistent inquiries from him about Islam. It was a common observation that when anyone of us migrated to Medina, he ceased to ask questions from Allah’s Messenger (pbuh). So I asked him about virtue and vice. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Virtue is the goodness of morality and vice is what rankles in your mind and that which you do not want to be known by the people.” (Muslim, Birr, 14-15)

Asking questions is the key to attaining scholarship and the cure for ignorance. However, questions should be asked properly and in certain manners; so that everyone can get the best out of the answers.

b. Asking Questions for Elaboration

Sometimes Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would ask questions in order to attract his Companions’ attention to a certain matter and then he would give the answer.



Abu Huraira reported:

“One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked those who were with him:

“Do you know who is poor?” They (the Companions of the Holy Prophet) said:

“A poor man amongst us is one who has neither a dirham with him nor wealth.” He (the Holy Prophet) said:

“The poor man of my ummah is the one who shall come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakat but he shall find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully consumed the wealth of others, shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of the one who suffered at his hand. If his good deeds fall short of clearing the account, then his sins will be entered in his account and he will be thrown in the Hell-Fire.” (Muslim, Birr, 59; Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 2)

Another example for the method of question and answer is narrated on the authority of Mu’adh b. Jabal (r.a.):

“I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on an ass known as ‘Ufair. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“O Mu’adh! Do you know what right Allah has over His bondsmen and what right His bondsmen have over Him?” I replied:

“Allah and His Messenger know best.” Thereupon, the Holy Prophet remarked:

“The right of Allah over His bondsmen is that they should worship Him and should not associate anything with Him, and the right of His bondsmen over Allah, the Glorious and Sublime, is that He does not punish those who do not associate anything with Him.” I said to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“Should I then give these glad tidings to the people?” He (the Holy Prophet) replied:

“Do not tell them because, they would trust in it alone and show laziness.” (Bukhari, Jihad, 46; Muslim, Iman, 48, 49)

Here, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) not only states a fact but also warns not to talk about things that may cause people to be lazy.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) would sometimes do something or smile and then would want his Companions to ask the reason for his action. And then, he would give an answer after the reason was asked. Anas b. Malik (r.a.) narrated:

“One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) smiled and said:

“Aren't you going to ask me why I smiled?” And then he continued:

“I was amazed by a servant's dispute with his Lord on the Day of Judgment.

The servant says:

“Dear Lord! Haven't You promised not to torture me?” Allah the Almighty responds:

“Yes, I have.” The servant says:

“I do not accept anybody's testimony about me except my own.” Allah the Almighty asks:

“Would not I and the angels responsible from recording deeds be enough as witnesses?” The servant first repeats his words, then his mouth becomes sealed and his limbs start to talk about their deeds. Thereupon, the servant says:

“Shame on you! Stay away from me. I am trying to defend you (but you reveal everything.)” (Hakim, IV, 644)

The Companions tried to imitate the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in every aspect of life. One day Uthman b. Affan (r.a.) asked for water and then performed ablution. He smiled and asked his friends:

“Aren't you going to ask me why I smiled?” After his friends' question, he said:

“One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked for this amount of water, performed ablution, and smiled. Then he asked us:

“Aren't you going to ask me why I smiled?” When we asked him, he remarked:



“When a servant washes his face during ablution, Allah the Almighty cleanses the sins committed by his face. The same thing happens when he washes his arms, rubs his head, and cleanses his feet.” (Haythami, I, 229)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would sometimes ask questions to encourage his Companions to perform good deeds. According to a narration reported by Abu Umamah (r.a.), one day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked those who were with him:

“Who amongst you is fasting this day?” Abu Bakr (r.a.) replied:

“I am fasting, O Messenger of Allah.” He (again) asked:

“Who amongst you has attended a funeral prayer today?” Abu Bakr said:

“I have, O Messenger of Allah.” He (the Holy Prophet) again asked:

“Who amongst you has served food to the needy?” Abu Bakr said:

“I have, O Messenger of Allah.” He (again) said:

“Who amongst you has visited the sick today?” Abu Bakr said:

“I have, O Messenger of Allah.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“The one who combines in himself all of these noble qualities and virtues shall enter Paradise.” (Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 12)

c. Guiding the Inquirer in another Direction

Sometimes the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) would ask him about a certain issue, but he would lead them in other directions for various reasons. He would explain more beneficial sides of the question. This is referred to as *“Uslub al-Hakim* in Arabic rhetoric.” It means to respond the inquirer’s question with an unexpected answer which is more suitable and beneficial. We can see an example of this in the following verse:

“They ask you concerning the new moons. Say: They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for pilgrimage ...”
(al-Baqara 2; 189)

The Companions had asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! We see the new moon as slim as a rope. Then it gets bigger and rounder. And then it goes back to its old state and become thin again. Why does it not stay the same?” After this the above mentioned verse was revealed. (Waqidi, p. 56)

The Companions’ question was about the physical state of the crescent, whereas the verse attracts our attention to its functions in people’s lives.

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) narrated:

“A man came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! When is the end of the world?” The Prophet (pbuh) asked:

“What have you prepared for it?” the man replied:

“I have not prepared many prayers, fasting, or charity for it, but I love Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) very much.” Upon which the Prophet (pbuh) told the man:

“You will be with those whom you love.” (Bukhari, Ashab al-Nabi, 6)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) saved the inquirer from looking for answers to a matter known only by Allah the Almighty and directed him to the more beneficial matter of preparing righteous deeds for the Hereafter.

On another occasion the Companions asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“Which deed is more virtuous?” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“To know Allah” they asked:

“Which deed elevates one’s rank?” He said:

“To know Allah” Then the Companions said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We ask about deeds, but you respond to us with knowledge.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told them:

“Little deeds done by knowing Allah give great benefits, whereas great deeds done without knowing Allah have no benefits.” (Munawi, IV, 688)

Certainly there are many ways to teach and educate. The question and answer method is one of the best methods that increases the spiritual interac-



tions between the teacher and his students, attracts the students' attention in the class, and helps to unearth the students' hidden skills. This method is based on mutual conversation between the teacher and his disciples. The teacher asks questions and the students respond to him. The goal is not to test the students but to improve their comprehension skills, increase their interest, and make the lesson understood as much as possible. This is why questions should be carefully selected; and they should be educating and disciplining. In order to prevent wasting time and energy, one should stay away from asking arbitrary questions.

9. Using Metaphors and Examples and Making Comparisons

When one thinks about the anecdotes from the earlier prophets and their people and the parables, which constitute the greater part of the Qur'an, one realizes that Allah the Almighty uses metaphors, examples, and comparisons when addressing to His servants. A verse describes the state of those who do not practice their knowledge as follows:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ
 الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet apply it not, is as the likeness of the ass carrying books. Wretched is the likeness of folk who deny the revelations of Allah. And Allah guides not wrong-doing folk.” (al-Jum'a 62; 5)

With this example Allah the Almighty describes the situation of those Jews who have learned the Torah but do not apply it properly in their lives.

In the Holy Qur'an there are hundreds of facts presented to human understanding through metaphors and comparisons. The wisdom behind this literary style is also explained by the Qur'an itself:

“We have put forth for men, in this Quran every kind of Parable, in order that they may receive admonition.” (al-Zumar 39; 27)



“...Such are the similitude which We propound to men, that they may reflect.” (al-Hashr 59; 21)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also used metaphors and made comparisons in order to make his audience understand better the matter in question. He gave tangible examples that people can see perceive and touch.

Abu Musa al-Ashari (r.a.) reported that that Messenger of Allah said that:

“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 was of no benefit). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and gains 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 about it and does not take Allah’s guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)”

(Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 20; Muslim, Fada’il, 15)

In that narration, our Prophet (pbuh) likens the religion that he brought from Allah the Almighty to the abundant rain falling at the most needed of times. Just like the rain revives dead soil, the truths of Islam revive dead hearts. In respect to their acceptance of spiritual truths, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) compares people to three types of soil. Through this eloquent and beautiful comparison, he explains the issues of gaining, benefiting from, and spreading the knowledge.

It was narrated by the authority of Nu’mān b. Bashir (r.a.) that the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“The example of the person who abides by Allah’s orders and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those people who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them get seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water and that inconvenienced the others, so they said,



“Let us make a hole in our part of the ship to get water and save troubling those who are above us.”

So, if the people in the upper part had allowed the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would have perished, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.” (Bukhari, Shirkat, 6; Tirmidhi, Fitn, 12)

Another reason for eternal destruction can be attributed to the lack of concern for the sins and evil committed in a society. Even if someone tries to protect himself, there will be a penalty both in this world and in the Hereafter for not fulfilling the responsibility of guiding others to the truth. New generations born into societies in which evil is widespread will not be able to protect themselves from the trends of their society. Mischief, corruption, and disorder rise and increase exponentially. This state must be stopped at some point; for “commanding the right and forbidding the wrong – *amr bi al- ma’ruf nahy an al-munkar*” is one of the most important duties of a Muslim. This fact is made more comprehensible by the above mentioned saying of Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

Below is another example about using metaphors from the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh):

Abu Razin al-Uqail (r.a.) narrated:

“One day I asked:

“O messenger of Allah! How will Allah the Almighty resurrect the Creation? To what can it compare in this world?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) replied:

“Have not you passed through a valley during the dry season? And have not you passed through that valley once again during spring when everywhere is green?” When I said:

“Of course I have” He (pbuh) added:

“This is the evidence for the recreation by Allah the Almighty. He will resurrect the dead just like this.” (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 11)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) used metaphors to explain how believers will see the face of Allah the Almighty in the Hereafter. Jarir b. Abdullah (r.a.) said that:

“We were with the Prophet on a night of the full moon. He looked at the moon and said:

“You will certainly see your Lord as you see this moon, and you will have no trouble seeing Him.” (Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 16; Muslim, Masajid, 211)

In the above tradition, our beloved Prophet (pbuh) explains, by comparison, how believers will be able to see Allah the Almighty easily. Since the Companions were worried about not seeing Allah in the Hereafter, the Prophet (pbuh) gave them an example and told them they would not have any difficulty seeing Him just like people had no difficulty seeing each other and their surroundings on a night of the full moon.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) uses the following metaphor to encourage believers to repent for their mistakes:

“Allah is more pleased with the repentance of one of you than the joy of a servant who sets out on a journey with a provision of food and drink on the back of his camel and then his camel runs away. Having lost all hope (to find his camel) he lies down in the shade of a tree and there he finds the camel standing before him. He takes hold of its nose-string and then out of boundless joy says:

“O Lord, You are my servant and I am Your Lord. He commits this mistake out of extreme delight.” (Muslim, Tawbah, 7)

This tradition presents the endless mercy of Allah the Almighty through a striking example and comforts the hearts darkened by sins with the hope of being forgiven. Statements like Allah’s pleasure, joy, or happiness mentioned in the tradition are figurative expressions. By these and other similar statements, it is expressed that Allah the Almighty is content with His servants and will grant them their requests. When someone commits a sin, he falls into the Devil’s trap. And when someone falls into the Devil’s trap, he is about to perish like the servant who lost his camel in the waterless desert. But, when he turns to Allah the Almighty and repents, he will be saved from the Devil’s hands. He earns the mercy and forgiveness of Allah the Almighty.

In a tradition narrated by Abu Musa al-Ashari (r.a.) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) portrays those who recites the Qur’an and those who do not as follows:



“The example of him (a believer) who recites the Qur’an is like that of a citrus fruit which tastes good and smells good. And he (a believer) who does not recite the Qur’an is like a date which is good in taste but has no smell. And the example of a dissolute wicked person who recites the Qur’an is like the Raihana (sweet basil) which smells good but tastes bitter. And the example of a dissolute wicked person who does not recite the Qur’an is like the colocyth which tastes bitter and has no smell.” (Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 17; Muslim, Musafirun, 243)

The effects of the Holy Qur’an upon people’s souls and feelings are eloquently described in this example. In other words, believers are the ones who derive the most benefit from the Qur’an while hypocrites are the ones who get the least. Some of them might seem to be under the effect of the Qur’an in appearance, whereas the Qur’an has no effect upon their interior. People see them reciting the Qur’an but the Qur’an has no place in their lives. Moreover, the people in this group are the ones who like boasting and show-off. On the other hand, there are some people who are the opposite of them. They do not know how to read the Qur’an but its effects can recognizably be seen in their inner world and daily lives. They show the utmost respect and sensitivity to the Qur’an and its orders. These are the believers who do not or cannot read the Qur’an but live in accordance with its principles to the extent of their knowledge. Their most important task is to learn the recitation of the Qur’an at the earliest opportunity.

Comparative presentation is another method of education employed by Allah’s Apostle (pbuh). Comparative presentation of an issue makes it easier to understand by means of the opposites, because human intelligence can most easily comprehend matters through their opposites. It would be difficult to understand light without darkness, the day without the night, goodness without evil, justice and mercy without persecution. This is why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would teach some issues by comparison.

Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma) narrated :

“A woman from the tribe of Juhaina came to the Prophet and said,

“My mother had vowed to perform pilgrimage but she died before performing it. May I perform it on my mother’s behalf?” The Prophet replied,

“Yes, perform pilgrimage on her behalf. Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay Allah’s debt as He has more of a right to be paid.” (Bukhari, Sayd, 22)

Here, the Messenger of Allah made a comparison between a worldly debt and a religious obligation. Then he stated that the religious obligation must be paid and made the inquiring Companion understand the issue and be convinced more easily.

In another saying, the Prophet (pbuh) made a comparison between a migrant and one who gives up sinning. The Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a Muhajir (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all that Allah has forbidden.” (Bukhari, Iman, 4)

Another remarkable example is the Prophet’s comparison between physical blindness and spiritual blindness. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated that the real blindness was not the blindness of the eye but the blindness of the heart and perception as follows:

“Blindness is not the one whose eyes cannot see. Real blindness is the one who has no perception.” (Bayhaqi, *Shuab al-Iman*, II, 127)

People who do not have perception see the matter but not the meaning; they are inclined to worldly things and close their eyes to the Divine facts. A similar comparison is made in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

“But those who were blind in this world, will be blind in the Hereafter, and most stray from the path.” (al-Isra 17; 72)

In short, the explanation of issues by comparisons, examples, and depiction helps people to avoid all kinds of immorality and encourages them to do their deeds just for the sake of Allah. This style beautifies the expression and makes the difficult issues easier to understand. Matters learned in this way last longer and thus strengthen people’s comprehension. Therefore, it is necessary for us to apply and gain the utmost benefit from this method which has been employed by Allah and His Messenger (pbuh).



10. Using Gestures and Facial Expressions While Talking

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) sometimes would use gestures and facial expressions in order to make his point more comprehensible. Abu Musa al-Asha'ri (r.a.) narrated:

The Prophet said,

“A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other.” While saying that, the Prophet then clasped his hands by interlacing his fingers. (Bukhari, Mazalim, 5)

Here, the Prophet's interlaced fingers represent the strong relationship and support among the believers.

As it is stated by Sahl b. Sa'd (r.a.), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said,

“I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in Paradise like this,” and he put his index and middle fingers together. (Bukhari, Adab, 24)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) exhorted his followers to take care of orphans and the needy not only by his words but also by his finger motions; and expressed that he and those who follow this advice will be together with him in Paradise. His motion made closeness to the Prophet in the Paradise more tangible.

Another interesting example in this context was reported by Jabir b. Abdullah.

“Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“In case we get wealth from Bahrain, I would give you so much and so much” and three times he indicated it with both his hands.

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) died before the war spoils from Bahrain came, and it was instead received by Abu Bakr (r.a.). He commanded the announcer to make an announcement to the effect that he to whom Allah's Apostle (pbuh) had promised or to whom he had owed any debt should come forward. I came and said:

“Allah's Apostle (pbuh) had said to me:

“In case there comes to us the wealth of Bahrain I shall give you so much, and so much.” Abu Bakr took a handful (of the coins) and gave that to me once and asked me to count them I counted them as five hundred dinars and he said:

“Here is the double for you.” (Bukhari, Hiba, 18; Kafalah, 3; Muslim, Fada’il, 60/2314)

In the same regard Ibn Mas’ud (r.a.) narrated the following incident:

“Along with eighty men from Quraish, we were with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). There was not anybody else other than the people from Quraish. By Allah, I have never seen such beautiful faces before. They started conversing about women, then Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) joined in their conversation. When I approached him, he pronounced the formula of *shahadah* and then said:

“O people of Quraish! As long as you do not rebel against Allah the Almighty, you are the experts (who administer the people.) If you disobey Allah, He will bring you someone who will peel you like peeling this branch (he was showing the branch in his hand.)”

Then the Prophet (pbuh) peeled the bark of the stick in his hand until it became completely white. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 458)

Jabir’s (r.a.) following report about the nearness of the Hereafter is very important in this regard:

When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) delivered a sermon, his eyes became red, his voice rose, and his anger increased so that he was like a commander warning against the enemy and saying “The enemy has made a morning attack on you and in the evening too.” He would also say:

“The last Hour and I have been sent like these two” and he would join his forefinger and middle finger.” (Muslim, Jumu’a, 43)

It was narrated by Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (r.a.):

“I was sitting in the company of the poor members of the emigrants. Some of them were sitting together because of a lack of clothing while a reader was reciting to us. All of a sudden the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) came along and stood beside us. When the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) stood, the reader stopped and greeted him.



He asked:

“What were you doing?” We replied:

“O Apostle of Allah! We had a reader who was reciting to us and we were listening to the Book of Allah, the Exalted.”

The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) then said:

*“Praise be to Allah Who has created my people, those with whom I have been ordered to stay and be patient.”*³⁸ The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) then sat among us so as to be like one of us, and then he drew a circle with his hand and said:

“Make a circle like this” And the congregation sat in a circle with their faces turned towards him. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) then said:

“Rejoice, O group of poor emigrants, in the announcement that you will have perfect light on the Day of Resurrection. You will enter Paradise half a day before the rich, and that is five hundred years.” (Abu Dawud, ‘Ilm, 13)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would sometimes pick something up in order to teach an issue. Ubada b. Samit (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) plucked some hair from the booty camels and showed it to the people who were present:

“I have as much as right as you do to this booty. Never take anything unjustly from the war booty, because it will be a disgrace for the one who took it. Give (do not hide) a thread, needle, and even the most worthless things...” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 330)

Here, our Prophet (pbuh) advised caution with regards to people’s rights and prohibited the slightest injustices in this matter. He explained his point tangibly with a camel’s hair.

The Companions could understand the feelings and thoughts of the Prophet (pbuh) from his gestures and facial expressions. Abu Said al-Khudri (r.a.) said:

38. With these words Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) referred to the following verse: **“And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them”** (al-Kahf 18; 28) Here, Allah commanded His Messenger (pbuh) to show patience with the poor and needy who embraced Islam in the early days and treat them sensitively.

“The Prophet was shyer than a virgin in her separate room. And if he saw a thing which he disliked, we would recognize that (feeling) in his face.” (Bukhari, Adab, 77; Manaqib, 23; Muslim, Fada’il, 67)

Therefore, it is very important to use gestures and facial expressions in education. This helps others to easily understand the issues, to keep them in mind and not to forget them.

11. Drawing Diagrams and Models to Elaborate a Matter

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would explain some matters by drawing diagrams and shapes on the ground. This was also to help explain matters that were abstract and difficult to understand. Abdullah b. Mas’ud (r.a.) narrated:

“The Prophet (pbuh) drew a square and then drew a line in the middle of it and let it extend outside the square and then drew several small lines attached to that central line, and said,

“This is the human being, and this, (the square) in his lease of life that encircles him from all sides (or has encircled him), and this (line), which is outside (the square), is his hope, and these small lines are the calamities and troubles (which may befall him), and if one misses him, another will snap (i.e. overtake) him, and if the other misses him, a third will snap (i.e. overtake) him.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 4)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) depicted human beings and their endless desires by drawing geometric shapes and explained how sometimes calamities and troubles came between someone and his desires. Thus, he encouraged his Companions and followers to be careful about worldly desires and to live always prepared for death.

Another example in this context is narrated by Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā).

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) drew four lines on the ground and asked:

“Do you know why I drew these lines?” The Companions replied:

“Allah and His Messenger know best.” Upon this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:



“The most virtuous of the women in Paradise are Khadijah bint Huwaylid, Fatima bint Muhammad, Mariam bint Imran, and the Pharaoh’s wife Asiyah bint Muzahim.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 293)

Our Prophet (pbuh) depicted the four virtuous women of Paradise with four lines that he drew on the ground.

Another example is seen in the Prophet’s description of the straight path. Jabir (r.a.) narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) drew a line on the ground in front of him and said:

“This is the straight path of Allah the Almighty.” Then he drew two more lines on the right and left side of the first line and said:

“These are the paths of the Devil.” Then he placed his hands upon the middle line and recited the following verse:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ
سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“Verily, this is my way, leading straight, follow it, follow not (other) paths, they will scatter you about from his (great) path. Thus He commands you, that you may be righteous.” (al-An’am 6; 153) (Ibn Hanbal, III, 397)

It is necessary to draw shapes and diagrams in some fields of science, such as mathematics, geometry, and physics. It is also beneficial to draw lines in other fields of science, just like the Prophet (pbuh) did. All means addressing human eyes and ears should be employed in education.

12. Attracting Attention to the Significance of Speech

In order to attract people’s attention to the significance of his speech, sometimes Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began his speech with swearing; and sometimes he repeated his words two-three times, and sometimes he changed the position in which he sat.

Allah the Almighty commands His Messenger to swear in order to confirm what he spoke about. Two of these orders are as follows:

“...say, Nay But most surely, by my Lord, it [the Hour] will come upon you...” (al-Saba’ 34; 3)

“...Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Yea, verily, by my Lord! You will be raised again ...” (al-Taghabun 64; 7)

Swearing is one of the prominent styles of the Qur’an. Explaining an issue by swearing by Allah shows the significance and greatness of the matters that will follow. Allah the Almighty expresses many Divine truths by swearing upon His Might or upon the beings that He chose. For instance, Allah the Almighty swears eleven times consecutively and states the reality of the self, and reaching salvation by purifying it or perishing by burying it into misdeeds. (al-Shams 91; 1-10)

In the ninety-fifth chapter (al-Tin) of the Qur’an, Allah the Almighty informs that He created human beings in the best stature after swearing four consecutive times. (al-Tin 95; 1-4)

Some examples from the Prophet’s teaching through swearing can be mentioned as follows:

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) observed:

“By him in Whose hand is my life, you shall not enter Paradise unless you believe so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love amongst you: (i.e.) give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying as-salamu alaikum.” (Muslim, Iman, 94)

As it is pointed out in this prophetic saying salutation is the tool to spread love and love is the sign for the perfection of faith. The Prophet (pbuh) expressed this fact by swearing by Allah the Almighty.

In another example, according to the narration of Anas (r.a.) the Prophet (pbuh) observed:

“By Him in whose Hand is my life, no bondsman (truly) believes till he likes for his brother in Islam whatever he likes for himself.” (Muslim, Iman, 72; Bukhari, Iman, 7)

One of the ways to attract the listeners’ attention is to repeat the matter a few times based on its significance. Human comprehension is weak and most



of the time an issue cannot be understood after listening to or reading it once. There are even some profound issues that cannot be understood by listening dozens of times. They take long time to settle in the heart.

The most important aim of repetition is to engrave the divine and lofty objectives effectively into the hearts and souls; because people can better assimilate the issues presented before them through repetition. Repetition has an exceptional place both in the Word of our Lord and in the practices and sermons of His Messenger (pbuh).

Important matters in the Holy Qur'an are mostly repeated by their meanings and sometimes are repeated literally. The feature of repetition in the Qur'an can especially be seen in the parables of the earlier prophets. This is not always in the actual form of repetition. In the general course of the chapter, it presents different details depending upon the context. For instance, the issue of Devil's refusal of prostration to Adam (A.S.) is repeated seven times, yet every one of them attracts our attention to a different side of the Devil's tricks and plots.

The wisdom behind these repetitions is expressed as follows:

“Thus have we sent this down an Arabic Quran and therein explained some of the warnings in detail, in order that they may fear God, or that it may cause their remembrance (of Him).” (Taha 20; 113)

We observe that some phrases and sentences are repeated in the Holy Qur'an. They sometimes have the aim of reiteration and sometimes provide a rhetorical subtlety, like expressions of surprise, horror or warning. For instance, the verse repeated thirty-one times after the statements of blessings bestowed upon humans and jinns,

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

“Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny?” (al-Rahman 55) reminds the servants to remove the curtains of heedlessness before their eyes, to admit the Divine blessings, and then to give thanks for them.

When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) talked about his message, he would state his words clearly and sometimes repeat them a few times. According to the report by Anas (r.a.), the Prophet (pbuh) would repeat his words thrice.

(Bukhari, 'Ilm, 30) For instance, when the Prophet (pbuh) advised the recitation of some surahs to some of his Companions such as Abdullah b. Hubaib, Uqba b. Amir, and Jabir b. Abdullah, he followed a good method in order to attract their attention to the significance of such. First the Prophet (pbuh) called their names and said:

“Recite.” When the Companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! What should I recite?” he repeated his order once more. And after repeating it three times and preparing them for his words, he (pbuh) said:

“Recite the chapters of Ihlas and Muawwidhatain three times day and night. These are enough for you to be protected from all kinds of harm.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 101; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 116) Other examples of the method of repetition are as follows:

According to a report on the authority of Abu Umamah, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told his Companions during the night prayer:

“Meet for the prayer tomorrow, I have some important issues to tell you.” One of the Companions told the others:

“O so and so! Tomorrow you memorize the first words of the Prophet, and you memorize his following words, and you memorize his words after that. So we will not miss anything from his speech.” After the Prophet (pbuh) performed the dawn prayer, he asked:

“Have you assembled like I ordered you yesterday?” The Companions replied in the affirmative. Upon which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) told them:

“Worship Allah and do not associate any partners with Him. Do you understand? Do you understand? Do you understand?” The Companions replied:

“Yes, we do.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) continued:

“Perform your ritual prayers and pay your alms. Perform your ritual prayers and pay your alms. Perform your ritual prayers and pay your alms. Do you understand? Do you understand? Do you understand?” Again the Companions replied affirmatively. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) then said:



“Listen to me and obey. Listen to me and obey. Listen to me and obey. Do you understand? Do you understand? Do you understand?” And the Companions said: *“Yes, we do.”* (Tabarani, VIII, 162; Haythami, I, 46)

The Companions’ sensitivity and meticulousness for learning the Prophet’s teachings is what primarily attracts our attention in the above tradition. Another point is that the Prophet (pbuh) repeated three times the basic principles of Islam such as:

1. To worship Allah
2. Not to associate any partners with Him
3. To perform prayers
4. To pay alms
5. To listen to and obey unconditionally to the Messenger of Allah.

Another incident related to our topic was narrated by Abdullah b. Amr:

“Once Allah’s Apostle remained behind us in a journey. He joined us while we were performing ablution for the Asr prayer which was over-due. We were just passing wet hands over our feet (not washing them properly) so the Prophet addressed us in a loud voice and said twice or thrice:

“Save your heels from the fire.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 30)

According to this report, it is an appropriate method of teaching someone who does not know, warning by raising the voice because of a mistake witnessed, and repeating the correction. Repetition may vary based on the students’ level of comprehension. If someone does not understand something, it is not a shame to ask it to be repeated; for repetition strengthens and confirms the previous words.

According to Abu Hurairah’s report, one day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Should I inform you who is the good and bad among you?” and repeated it three times,

Those who were present replied in the affirmative and the Prophet (pbuh) continued:

“The best one of you is the one from whom goodness is expected and from whose harm people are protected. Your worst one is the one from whom no goodness is expected and from whose harm nobody is protected.” (Tirmidhi, Fitān, 76)

Here, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) attracted the attention of the Companions by making a comparison between two opposite characters and repeating his words three times. And then he eloquently presents us who these opposite characters are.

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) would sometimes change the position in which he was sitting and then repeat his words to attract the listener’s attention. His aim again was to show the significance of the matter in question. An example of this was narrated by Nufai b. Harith (r.a.):

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) asked three times:

“Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the great sins?” We said:

“Yes, O Allah’s Apostle” The Prophet (pbuh) said,

“To associate partners with Allah and to disobey one’s parents.” and he sat up after he had been reclining and added,

“And I warn you against lying and giving a false statement.” The Prophet (pbuh) kept on saying that warning until we thought that he would not stop. (Bukhari, Adab, 6; Muslim, Iman, 143)

Here, in this tradition Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) changed the position in which he was sitting when he was going to say the third great sin after stating the first two great sins. This change is to clearly express the unlawfulness of lying and bearing false testimony. The most significant reason for their unlawfulness is the extensiveness and the greatness of the harm caused by them.

Once again the Prophet’s repetition of the statement *“Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the great sins?”* is also to express the significance of his words and thus to attract his Companions’ attention to the greatness of these sins.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would also use other methods to attract his listeners’ attention. One of them was that he would consciously hold the hand or shoulder of the person whom he was addressing. Thus, his listener’s attention would be concentrated upon the Prophet’s speech and he could understand it better. Abdullah b. Mas’ud (r.a.) narrated:



“Allah’s Apostle taught me the Tashahhud (supplication of tahiyyad) just like he was teaching me a chapter from the Quran, while my hand was between his hands.” (Bukhari, Isti’dhan, 28)

The Prophet (pbuh) would sometimes emphasize his point while touching his Companion’s shoulder. Abdullah b. Umar (r. anhumah) said that:

“One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) held my shoulder and said:

“Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 3)

In this tradition, our Prophet (pbuh) made his Companion feel his closeness and then gave him some advice to guide him to Allah the Almighty.

Another educational method applied by the Apostle of Allah was this: He would address his listener to attract his attention and repeat this a few times and then move to his real issue. For instance, (during a military expedition) he addressed Muadh b. Jabal (r.a.) three times:

“O Muadh!” and every time Muadh (r.a.) responded:

“O Messenger of Allah! Here I am at your service.” After that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) told him:

“If anyone testifies (sincerely from his heart) that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger, Allah grants him immunity from Hell.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 49; Muslim, Iman, 53)

Here, the Prophet’s address to Muadh (r.a.) three times by his name is to draw his attention to what he was about to say.

We should derive the utmost benefit from all these prophetic methods of education in order to convey to people the message of Islam more easily and more effectively.

13. Advising and Telling Anecdotes

a. Advising

Our Lord the Almighty commands us to employ effective preaching and proper methods while inviting people to Islam. This is expressed by the Qur’an as follows:

“Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly preaching ...” (al-Nahl 16; 125)

“Wisdom” and “goodly preaching” expressed in this verse are very important for the preachers of Islam. In another verse it is stated that:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers.” (al-Zariyat 51; 55)

Most of the sermons, preaches, and talks given by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) consist of such good advice and guidance. Such speech has a great effect upon the listeners and can penetrate into the hearts. It was narrated by Irbad ibn Sariyah (r.a.):

“One day the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) led us in prayer, then faced us and gave us a lengthy exhortation at which the eyes shed tears and from which the hearts were afraid. We said:

“O Apostle of Allah! It seems as if it were an exhortation of someone who was about to leave. So what advices would you give us?” He then said:

“I enjoin you to fear Allah, and to hear and obey your leader even if he be an Abyssinian slave. Those of you who live after me for a long time will witness great disagreements. You must then follow my sunnah and that of the rightly-guided caliphs. Hold on to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is an error.” (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 5; Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 16)

The Prophet’s sermons and talks were short, succinct, and attention grabbing, and because of that, memorizations and teaching among the Companions was facilitated. Another example in this regard was narrated on the authority of Abu Dharr (r.a.). He said that:

“I said to the Holy Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Will you not appoint me as a governor?” He stroked my shoulder with his hand and said:

“O Abu Dharr! You are weak and authority is a trust. And on the Day of Judgment it is a cause of humiliation and repentance except for one who



fulfills its obligations and (properly) discharges the duties attendant thereon.”
(Muslim, Ijarah, 16)

Abu Jurayy Jabir b. Salim al-Hujaymi (r.a.) narrated:

“I saw a man whose opinion was regarded by the people, and whatever he said they accepted and fulfilled it. I asked:

“Who is this man?” They said:

“This is the Apostle of Allah (pbuh).” I said two times:

“On you be peace, O Apostle of Allah.” He said:

“Do not say “On you be peace,” because the phrase “On you be peace” is a greeting for the dead, but say “Peace be upon you.”

I asked:

“Are you the Apostle of Allah (pbuh)?” He said:

“I am the Apostle of Allah Whom you call when a calamity befalls you and He removes it, when you suffer from drought and you call Him, He grows food for you; and when you are in a desolate land or in a desert and your she-camel strays and you call Him, He returns it to you.”

I said:

“Give me some advice.” He replied:

“Do not abuse anyone.” He (pbuh) said that he had not abused a freeman, or a slave, or a camel or a sheep thenceforth. Then he continued:

“Do not look down upon any good work, and when you speak to your brother, show him a cheerful face. This is a good work. Have your lower garment halfway down your shin; if you cannot do it, have it up to the ankles. Beware of trailing the lower garment, for it is conceitful and Allah does not like conceit. And if a man abuses and shames you for something which he finds in you, then do not shame him for something which you find in him; he will bear the evil consequences for it.” (Abu Dawud, Libas, 25)

The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) were affected by his sermons; their hearts trembled and their eyes shed tears. All these are the manifestations of their sincere faith, obedience, love and respect for Allah and His Messenger (pbuh). We should also take these behaviors as examples for our own lives.

b. Telling Anecdotes

Our Prophet (pbuh) taught Islam through anecdotes and exemplary parables from the peoples of the past, especially from the sons of Israel; because parables have a very significant place in people's education and in explaining the truths. This is why anecdotes from the lives of the prophets and their people occupy an extensive part in the Holy Qur'an. This is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

“We narrate to you the best of narratives, by Our revealing to you this Quran, though before this you were certainly one of those who did not know.” (Yusuf 12; 3)

“All that we relate to you of the stories of the messengers - with it We make firm your heart: in them there comes to you the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe.”
(Hud 11; 120)

According to a narration by Abdullah b. Umar (r. anhum), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) mentioned the following incident:

“While three persons who lived in the past were walking, rain began to fall and they had to enter a cave in a mountain. A big rock rolled over and blocked the entrance of the cave. They said to each other, “Invoke Allah with the best deed you have performed (so Allah might remove the rock).” One of them said,

“O Allah! My parents were old and I used to go out grazing (my animals). On my return I would milk (the animals) and take the milk in a vessel to my parents to drink. After they had drunk from it, I would give it to my children, family and wife. One day I was delayed and on my return I found my parents sleeping, and I disliked waking them. The children were crying at my feet (because of hunger). That state of affairs continued until it was dawn. Finally they woke up and drank their milk. Dear Lord! If You regard that I did this for Your sake, then please remove this rock so that we may see the sky.” So, the rock was moved slightly.

The second man said, “O Allah! You know that I was in love with a cousin of mine, like the deepest love a man may have for a woman, and she told me that I would not get my desire fulfilled unless I paid her one-hundred Dinars (gold pieces). So, I struggled for it till I gathered the desired amount, and when



I sat in between her legs, she told me to be afraid of Allah, and asked me not to deflower her except rightfully (by marriage). So, I got up and left her. O Allah! If You regard that I did it for Your sake, kindly remove this rock.” So, two-thirds of the rock was removed.

Then the third man said, “O Allah! No doubt You know that once I employed a worker for one Faraq (three Sa’s) of millet, and when I wanted to pay him, he refused to take it, so I sowed it and from its yield I bought cows and a shepherd. After a time that man came and demanded his money. I said to him: “Go to those cows and the shepherd and take them for they are for you.” He asked me whether I was joking with him. I told him that I was not joking with him, and all that belonged to him. O Allah! If You regard that I did it sincerely for Your sake, then please remove the rock.” So, the rock was removed completely from the mouth of the cave.” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 98; Muslim, Dhikr, 100)

This narration emphasizes the significance to serve parents, to control the baser desires, and to regard other people’s rights by means of a parable from the times of past people. Another similar tradition was reported by Abu Huraira (r.a.).

“The Prophet (pbuh) told us a parable of a man from the sons of Israel:

“An Israeli man asked his friend to lend him one thousand Dinars. The second man required witnesses. The former replied,

“Allah is sufficient as a witness.” The second said,

“I want a guarantee.” The former replied,

“Allah is sufficient as a guarantee.” The second said,

“You are right,” and lent him the money for a certain period of time. The debtor went across the sea. When he finished his job, he searched for a transport so that he might reach in time for the repayment of the debt, but he could not find any. So, he took a piece of wood and made a hole in it, inserted in it one thousand Dinars and a letter to the lender and then sealed the hole tightly. He took the piece of wood to the sea and said:

“O Allah! You know well that I took a loan of one thousand Dinars from so-and-so. He demanded a surety from me but I told him that Allah’s guarantee was sufficient and he accepted Your guarantee. He then asked for a witness and I told him that Allah was sufficient as a Witness, and he accepted You as a



Witness. No doubt, I tried hard to find a means of transport so that I could repay his money but could find none, so I hand over this money to You.” Saying that, he threw the piece of wood into the sea until it went out far, and then he went away. Meanwhile, he started searching for transport in order to reach the creditor’s country.

One day the lender came out of his house to see whether a ship had arrived bringing his money, and all of a sudden he saw the piece of wood in which his money had been deposited. He took it home to use it as firewood, but when he sawed through it, he found his money and the letter inside. Shortly after that, the debtor came bringing one thousand Dinars to him and said,

“By Allah, I had been trying hard to find a boat in which to travel so that I could bring you your money, but failed to get one before this one.” The lender asked,

“Did you send something to me?” The debtor replied,

“I told you I could not find a boat other than the one I have just come by.” The lender said,

“Allah has delivered on your behalf the money you sent in the piece of wood. So, you may keep your one thousand Dinars and depart guided on the right path.”” (Bukhari, Kafalah, 1)

By means of this story, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) taught his Companions some significant matters in a tangible and dramatic way, such as trust in Allah, keeping one’s promise, the ethics of trade.

14. Using *Targhib* (Encouragement) and *Tarhib* (Fear) Simultaneously

Targhib means to encourage someone to do something. *Tarhib*, on the contrary, means to discourage someone to do something by frightening him about the consequences. Both encouragement and fear have a significant effect upon guiding people to the good deeds and making them abstain from the bad ones. Because of this characteristic of human psychology, Allah the Almighty employed *targhib* and *tarhib* (encouragement and fear) in the Qur’an and His Messenger (pbuh) used them prudently in the Sunnah.

Mathani is one of the attributes of the Qur’an. Along with its other meanings, *mathani* refers to “something which carries meanings in pairs.” In other



words the Qur'an deals with the issues from two angles like from its negative and positive sides or presents the issues with their opposites. The subject can be better understood by means of some examples.

Allah's attribute of **"Mercy and Compassion"** is stated and the servants' hopes are increased in the second verse of the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an, while in the third verse there is a warning that Allah **"is the Owner and Master of the Day of Judgment,"** and thus servants are prevented from negligence. Likewise, in the same chapter, first believers ask for guidance for the straight path and then take refuge in Allah for protection from going astray and from being among those who are subject to Divine anger.

In the first five verses of the second chapter (al-Baqarah) of the Qur'an, the prominent features of the righteous believers are mentioned after the statement that the Qur'an is guidance for them. Then the following two verses deal with the disbelievers' situation and the great penalty waiting for them in the Hereafter. In the twenty-fourth verse of the same chapter disbelievers are threatened by fire whose fuel is of men and of stones; whereas in the twenty-fifth verse believers are promised unbelievable blessings and gardens underneath which rivers flow.

We usually see that the styles of *targhib* and *tarhib* are used together in the Holy Qur'an. Allah's Mercy, contentment, and blessings from Paradise are used for encouragement; while Allah's punishment, Hell, and His various tortures are used as a means of discouragement.

In the chapter of Hijr, Hell is described as follows after the narration of the story between Adam and Satan:

"For over my servants no authority shall you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you. And verily, Hell is the promised abode for them all. To it are seven gates: for each of those gates is a (special) class (of sinners) assigned." (al-Hijr 15; 42-44)

Right after these verses the Qur'an begins to describe Paradise:

"The righteous (will be) amid Gardens and fountains (of clear-flowing water). (Their greeting will be): enter ye here in peace and security. And we shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury: (they will be) brothers (joyfully) facing each other on thrones (of dignity).

There, no sense of fatigue shall touch them, nor shall they (ever) be asked to leave.” (al-Hijr 15; 45-48)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also employed the method of encouragement and fear in his speeches. He encouraged the doing of good deeds by reminding of their spiritual rewards and discouraged the committing of sins by mentioning their punishment and explaining their harms. According to the narration of Bilal b. Harith al-Muzani, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

A servant says something pleasing to Allah the Almighty, but he does not think that he will gain Allah’s contentment by means of it; whereas, because of that word, Allah the Almighty becomes content with that servant until Judgment Day when they will meet.

Again another servant says something attracting the wrath of Allah the Almighty, but he does not think he will get punished because of that word; whereas Allah becomes angry with that servant until Judgment Day when they will meet.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 12; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 12)

This tradition teaches us one of the most important principles in manners, or being cautious about what we say, by means of the method of encouragement and fear. It articulately demonstrates that a simple word uttered carelessly may lead to very important results. It was narrated by Haritha bin Wahb (r.a.):

“I heard the Prophet saying,

“Shall I inform you who the people of Paradise are? They are very humble, obscure and unimportant looking people, to whom people do not pay attention, but if they take an Oath that such and such a thing will happen, Allah will fulfill his oath (by doing that thing).

Shall I inform you who the people of the Fire are? They comprise every cruel, violent, proud and conceited person.” (Bukhari, Ayman, 9; Adab, 61)

In this hadith, by defining both the people of Paradise and the people of Hell at the same time, the Messenger of Allah encouraged us to perform the necessary actions and be among the people of Paradise and warned us to stay away from blameworthy actions and behaviors which shall be punished.

Another good example for the usage of the method of encouragement and fear is as follows: Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated that:



“The wailing and lamentations of two people of Hell will intensify. Allah the Almighty will order:

“Take them out of here” and ask them:

“Why are you crying?” They will reply:

“We have done this to obtain Your mercy.” The Absolute Truth the Almighty will tell them:

“My mercy to you is in the form of throwing yourselves into the Fire.” They will leave. One of them will throw himself into the Fire and Allah will turn the fire into coldness and he will be saved. The other one will stand up but will not be able to throw himself into the Fire.

Allah the Almighty will ask:

“Why didn’t you throw yourself into the Fire like your friend did?” the man will reply:

“Dear Lord! I was hoping that You would not send me back into the fire after You had saved me from it.” Upon this Allah the Almighty will state:

“I have given you what you hoped for” so both of them will enter Paradise by Allah’s mercy.” (Tirmidhi, Jahannam, 10)

Human nature is prone to indifference towards monotone teachings. This is why preachers of Islam should abstain from monotony in their teachings. Along with others, they also need to use the method of encouragement and fear evenly. They should neither frighten people continuously nor give them constant hope. The emphasis upon frightening might even be a little stronger, for it is a fact that warnings and threats are more effective upon human psychology than encouragement.

15. The Place of Writing in Teaching and Training

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was an illiterate prophet who was born into a society where reading and writing were not widespread. As the Qur’an puts it, he had neither read a book nor written a sentence. (al-Ankabut 29; 48) However, when his mission began, the verses like **“Read: In the name of your Lord who created.”**(al-Alaq 96; 1) **“He Who taught (the use of) the Pen.”** (al-Alaq 96; 4) **“Nun. By the pen and that which they write (therewith)”** (al-Qalam 68; 1)



drew attention to the significance of learning and knowledge, and so a reading and writing campaign spread quickly among the Muslim community.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) first had the revealed verses written. Even if there were no other use for writing in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), it was indispensable to spread and to protect the Holy Qur'an. This is why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) took all the precautions needed to spread writing. In fact, the number of those who were known as the writers of revelation was over forty.

Our Prophet (pbuh) used writing in many ways. Political letters played a significant role in his dealings with other leaders. There are close to three hundred documents sent by the Prophet (pbuh) in Muhammad Hamidullah's *al-Wasaiq al-Siyasiyyah*.

The Prophet (pbuh) also benefited from writing in his educational activities. Because of the danger of being confused with the Qur'an, he had not let his sayings to be written down in the early years; but in the following years of Islam he encouraged them to be written. Abdullah b. Amr b. al-As (r.a.) narrated:

"I used to write everything I heard from the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) and I intended to memorize it. Quraish prohibited me saying:

"Do you write everything that you hear from him while the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) is a human being: he speaks in anger and happiness?" So I stopped writing and later I mentioned the incident to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh). He pointed with his finger to his mouth and said:

"Write! By Him in Whose hand my soul lies, only right comes from it."
(Abu Dawud, 'Ilm, 3)

A man from the people of Ansar liked to sit with the Messenger of Allah and listen to his sayings, but he was not able to memorize them. He complained about his situation to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah's Messenger (pbuh) pointed at the writing and told him:

"Ask help from your right hand." (Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 12)

According to the narration of Abu Huraira (r.a.), another instance in this context happened as follows:



“When Allah granted victory to His Apostle over the people of Mecca, Allah’s Apostle stood up among the people and after glorifying Allah said,

“Allah has prohibited fighting in Mecca and has given authority over it to His Apostle and to the believers, so fighting was illegal for anyone before me, and was made legal for me for part of a day, and it will not be legal for anyone after me. Its game should not be chased, its thorny bushes should not be uprooted, and picking up lost things found there is not allowed except for one who finds and makes a public announcement for it, and he whose relative is murdered has the option either to accept compensation or to retaliate.”

Abbas (r.a.) said, “Let the Idhkhir plant be an exception, for we use it in our graves and houses.”

Allah’s Apostle said,

“Except Al-Idhkhir.” Abu Shah, a Yemenite, stood up and said,

“O Allah’s Apostle! Would you get it written for me?” Allah’s Apostle said,

“Write it for Abu Shah.” (Bukhari, Luqata, 7)

As it can be seen in the above mentioned examples, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) regarded writing as important and took precautions to encourage its spread in society. The Holy Qur’an was carefully written down from beginning to end by tens of revelation writers. Some of the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) were also written down by some Companions during the Prophet’s lifetime.

Our Prophet (pbuh) sent letters to the rulers of the neighboring countries. Through some of those letters he invited the rulers to Islam; and with others he aimed to teach the principles of Islam to the Muslims living in the country to which they were sent.

The Companions and the members of the following generation (*tabiun*) followed the Prophet’s path in conveying the message of Islam. They continued to preach Islam both by writing the prophetic sayings down and by sending special letters.³⁹

39. Below is the letter written by Hasan al-Basri (q.s.), one of the prominent members of the second generation of Islam, to Umar b. Abdulaziz, the caliph of the time:

“Know that contemplation calls people to do goodness and to regret and thus stay away

Letters have always been a significant means of preaching Islam. The books titled *Maktubat* (letters) written by prominent figures of Islam such as Imam Rabbani, Khalid al-Baghdadi, Muhammad Asad Erbili, are the compilation of an author's letters conveying the message of Islam. Believers should also find new methods which are required because of the changing conditions of the world and employ them to reach their goal.



from bad deeds. No matter how many temporary things there are, they cannot be equal to the Eternal One. Do not be deceived by this world, which sets traps by embellished tricks, kills people by turning them into slaves of their worldly ambitions, appears to be an adorned bride, steals people's hearts and confuses their minds. Do not be deceived by this world for its hopes are false and its ambitions are empty. The life in this world is hard and filled with pain and distress. Blessings of this world are temporary, while its pain is continuous and its calamities are painful. For Allah the Almighty, this world has worth less than a mosquito wing. This is why He has taken its love from the hearts of the prophets, saints, and those whom He loves. Those who are deceived by this world suppose that this world and everything in it are divine presents from Allah the Almighty and they forget that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not attach any value to it. From whom are you afraid as long as Allah the Almighty is with you? Do not forget death! And know that the End of the days is near." (Abu Nuaym, II, 134-40; Attar, p. 37)



IV. THE PROPHET'S METHOD OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

Allah the Almighty has created human beings as the most honorable and the zenith of all creation. Even with this perfection of his creation, people have many spiritual and material weaknesses. These are blameworthy characteristics, such as hastiness, greed, jealousy, desire for eternity, fondness for one's interests, etc. Such characteristics increase the possibility of making mistakes. We observe the first instance of this in the life of humanity's father Adam (peace be upon him).

Allah the Almighty created Adam and Eve and placed them in Paradise. He allowed them to benefit from all kinds of blessings in the Paradise except getting close to a certain tree. Satan tried all kinds of tricks to deceive Adam and Eve. This is stated in verses of the Qur'an as follows:

“Then Satan whispered to them that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame, and he said: Your Lord forbade you from this tree only lest you should become angels or become of the immortals. And he swore unto them (saying): Lo! I am a sincere adviser unto you. Thus did he lead them on with guile. And when they tasted of the tree their shame was manifest to them and they began to hide (by heaping) on themselves some of the leaves of the Garden. And their Lord called them, (saying): Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you: Lo! Satan is an open enemy to you?” (al-A'raf 7; 20-22)

“We had already, beforehand, taken the Covenant of Adam, but he forgot: and we found on his part no firm resolve.” (Taha 20; 115)

It is said that the word “*insan* or human being” has come from two different roots. The first one is “*nisyan*” meaning forgetfulness. As it is expressed in the verse, Adam (PBUH) forgot his covenant with Allah. The second root is “*unsiyah*” or familiarity and being on friendly terms with someone; because human beings can easily establish friendship and get accustomed to their



surroundings. Both qualities increase the possibility of making mistakes and committing sins.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who knew the characteristics of human beings very well, treated his audience within very sensitive measures and tried to correct them by using the best methods. The Prophet's sole aim was to guide people to the straight path. This is why he did everything he could to reach everybody. He did not cast anybody away because of his mistakes; on the contrary, he educated him using prophetic methods of education.

Below we will enumerate the Prophet's principal methods for correcting people's mistakes:

A. Gentleness and Mildness

Gentleness and mildness are among the good morals praised and encouraged by Allah and His Messenger. This is expressed in the following verses:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ.
وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

“Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then he between whom he and you was hatred will become as if he were your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.” (Fussilat 41; 34-35)

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا
عَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

“It was by the mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if you had been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about you.” (Al-i Imran 3; 159)



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) advised his followers to apply gentleness and mildness in their preaching and to adorn themselves with these good qualities by saying:

"Verily Allah is kind and He loves kindness and confers upon kindness which he does not confer upon severity and does not confer upon anything else besides it (kindness)." (Bukhari, Adab, 35; Muslim, Birr, 77)

In another tradition, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) said that:

"If gentleness is found in anything, it beautifies it and when it is taken out of anything it damages it." (Muslim, Birr, 78; Abu Dawud, Adab, 10)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) always showed kindness to the improper actions and behaviors of bedouins, who had not yet been adorned with the beauties of Islam. He would not respond to their harshness with harshness; on the contrary, he would treat them mildly in order to attract their hearts to Islam. There are many beautiful examples of this in the life of the Prophet (pbuh). For example, it was narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.) that:

"A Bedouin entered the mosque where the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was sitting, and said,

"O Allah! Forgive me and Muhammad, and do not forgive anyone else." The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) smiled and said,

"You are narrowing something vast." Then the Bedouin went away to the furthest part of the mosque and began to urinate and the people approached him in order to reprimand him. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to them:

"Leave him alone," and called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine. And then he said:

"You have been sent to make things easy for people, not to make things hard." (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 136)

Bedouins did not usually have the opportunity to learn Islam for they lived away from the Messenger of Allah. This was why they sometimes behaved inappropriately. The Prophet of mercy (pbuh) never exaggerated their actions, nor did he become angry with them or hurt their feelings. He also asked his Companions to do the same. His tolerance towards people who did not know the religion made him loved by them. It also resulted in his teachings

being more widely adopted. After learning more, the Bedouin (from the above mentioned tradition) talked about the incident as follows:

“May my mother and my father be sacrificed for him, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not rebuke me or insult me. He just said:

“We do not urinate in this mosque; it was built only for the remembrance of Allah and for prayer.” Then he called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine. (Ibn Majah, Taharah, 78)

Another incident was stated by Mu’awiya b. al-Hakam. He said that:

“While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), a man in our company sneezed and I said:

“May Allah have mercy on you!” Then people stared at me disapprovingly, 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 saw them urging me to observe silence, I became angry but I kept my silence.

May my father and mother be sacrificed for the Messenger of Allah! I believe that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than he. I swear that he did not scold, beat or revile me; but he just said to me after he had finished leading the prayer:

“This act of worship is called ritual prayer. Talking to people is not appropriate during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring His Greatness and reciting the Qur’an (or words to that effect).” (Muslim, Masajid, 33)

Abdullah b. Ikrash (r.a.) reported the following incident from his father:

“My people, Murra b. Abid clan, sent their alms with me to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). When I reached Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting amidst the people of Ansar and Muhajirun. He held my hand and took me to the house of Umm Salama (r. anha). Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“Is there anything to eat?” A tray of food filled with meat was brought to us. We approached to eat. I was eating from all sides of the tray, but the Prophet (pbuh) was eating only in front of him. For a moment he held my right hand by his left hand and said:

“O Ikrash! Eat in front of you, because all sides of the plate are the same.”





Then a plate with dry and fresh dates was brought to us. This time I began to eat in front of me, whereas Prophet's hands were moving all sides of the plate. And he said to me:

“O Ikrash! Eat from wherever you want, for the dates in the plate are of various kinds.” (Tirmidhi, At'imah, 41; Ibn Majah, At'imah, 11)

In this incident Allah's Apostle (pbuh) held Ikrash's hands gently and taught him table manners. Holding his Companion's hand not only increased his respect and closeness to the Prophet but also ensured that he would not forget what he was advised.

The following examples about the Prophet's correcting mistakes by kindness and mildness are also remarkable.

Abbad b. Shurahbil narrated:

“Once I was poor. My land suffered from drought; so I entered a garden in Medina, and rubbed an ear of corn. I both ate some and put some in my bag. Then the owner of the garden came. He beat me and took my bag. He came to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) who said to him:

“You did not teach him when he was ignorant; and you did not feed him when he was hungry.” He ordered him, so he returned my bag to me, and gave me one or half a wasq (sixty or thirty sa's⁴⁰) of corn. (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 85; Nasai, Qudat, 21)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would even talk kindly to the people whom he disliked and approved their actions in order to avoid being harmed by them. The following narration of Aisha (r.anha) demonstrates this well:

Aisha reported that a person sought permission from Allah's Apostle (pbuh) to see him. He said:

“Grant him permission (and also added) he is the worst member of his tribe.”

When he came in, the Prophet (pbuh) used kind words for him. (When the man left) I said:

“O Allah's Messenger! You said about him what you had to say and then you treated him with kindness. He said:

40. Sa' is a weight measure which is equal to 2120 grams.



“O Aisha, verily in Allah’s eyes, the worst amongst the people in rank on the Day of Resurrection is one whom the people abandon or desert out of the fear of indecency.” (Muslim, Birr, 73)

Just like the Prophet (pbuh) treated people with kindness, he also commanded his Companions whom he appointed as instructors to do the same. We observe an example of this in the following report:

When Amr b. Murra (r.a.) heard that the Prophet (pbuh) was inviting people to Islam, he travelled to Medina. He recited the following poem before the Messenger of Allah:

I bore witness that Allah is the Truth,

I am the first one who abandoned the stone made idols,

I prepared to be an immigrant,

I overcame obstacles and passed rugged paths

In order to become a Companion to someone personally and genealogically is the best

O Messenger of the people’s King beyond the heavens

Upon this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) welcomed Amr. Amr said:

“May my mother and father be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! Send me to my people. As Allah has bestowed me by means of you; hopefully He may bestow upon them by means of me.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sent him to his people and advised him:

عَلَيْكَ بِالرَّفْقِ وَالْقَوْلِ السَّدِيدِ وَلَا تَكُنْ فَظًّا وَلَا مُتَكَبِّرًا وَلَا حَسُودًا

“O Amr! Be kind and say the truth! Do not be harsh and unjust! Stay away from pride and jealousy!” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, III, 16-17)

People’s psychology does not like harshness and impoliteness. Even if they were harsh people themselves, everybody likes to be treated with kindness. This is because one should treat people kindly especially while teaching them their religion. This is the requirement of friendliness and familiarity.



A true believer treats a sinner mercifully like a bird that has a broken wing. He sees the sinner as someone who needs close attention. He feels in his heart concern for comforting the sinner and finding a way to help him recover; because showing mercy and respect to Creation because of their Creator is the most effective tool to achieve a believer's virtue and perfection.

B. Showing Patience and Forbearance towards Mistakes

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would show great patience and forbearance towards those who made mistakes as well as treating them kindly. He would never act impulsively, and was the embodiment of patience and forbearing. There were people who converted to Islam just because of these qualities of the Prophet (pbuh). The wealthy Jewish scholar Zaid b. Sa'na was one of them. He narrated the Prophet's patience in the face of people's faults as follows:

"When I looked at the Prophet's face, I saw in him all the prophetic characteristics except two of them. Did his patience and kindness exceed the ignorance and harshness he faced or not? Did the most ignorant and the harshest of behavior he faced increase his patience or not? I did not have any clue about the answers to these two questions. I thought I could learn the answers if I stayed with him for a while.

One day, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went out of his house together with Ali b. Talib (r.a.). At that moment, a bedouin appeared and said:

"O Messenger of Allah! Sons of so and so from village residents embraced Islam. I had told them that "when they became Muslims, they were going to obtain wealth and abundance. On the contrary they are suffering with drought and famine. O Messenger of Allah! I am worried that they will leave Islam which they had embraced hoping to receive some worldly blessings. It would be good if you could help them."

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) first looked at the bedouin and then turned to Ali (r.a.). Ali (r.a.) told him:

"O Messenger of Allah! There is nothing left to give them."

Thereupon, I intervened and told the Prophet (pbuh):

"O Muhammad! Can't you sell me some dates from the garden of the sons of so and so provided that you deliver them so much time later?"

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) replied:

"No, I can't. But I can sell you a certain amount of dates at such a later date." He did not mention the name of the garden. I accepted his offer. After the sale, I gave him eighty misqal gold pieces in return for a certain amount of dates which were going to be delivered at such a later date. The Prophet (pbuh) took the gold pieces and gave them to the bedouin. Then he said:

"Distribute these fairly among those people and help them with these."

Two or three days before the debt's due date, I went to the Messenger of Allah and held from the collars of his shirt. I looked sullenly at his face and said:

"O Muhammad! Aren't you going to give me my right yet? By Allah! O sons of Abdul Muttalib! I did not know that you were unfair and prolonged your payments. Staying with you has taught me who you really are." When I looked at Umar's face, I saw his eyes were whirling from anger. Then he turned to me and said:

"O enemy of Allah! How dare you to talk to the Messenger of Allah like this? By Allah Who has sent the true religion and book with him, if I were not afraid of him, I would certainly cut your head off with my sword." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) smiled calmly and looked at Umar (r.a.) saying:

"O Umar! I and he would have hoped you to behave differently. You should have advised me to pay my debt justly and advised him to ask for his loan back nicely. O Umar! Go and pay his right and give him twenty sa' extra." I asked:

"O Umar! Why am I getting the extra part?" Umar (r.a.) said:

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) ordered me to pay extra because of my harsh behavior towards you." I asked Umar:

"O Umar! Do you remember me?" He said:

"No, I did not. Who are you?" I said:

"I am Zaid b. Sa'na" Umar (r.a.) asked again:

"Are you the scholar of the Jews?" I said:

"The Jewish scholar" Umar asked:



“Then why did you behave like that?” I told him:

“O Umar! When I looked at the face of Muhammad (pbuh), I understood that he had all the prophetic signs except two. Does his patience overcome the harshness and impoliteness he faces? And does ignorant and harsh treatment increase his patience or not? I had not confirmed these features yet. This was why I treated him like I did and then I realized that he also possesses these attributes. O Umar! Be my witness that I have accepted Allah as my Lord, Islam as my religion, and Muhammad (pbuh) as my prophet. And also be my witness that I give half of my belongings in charity to Muhammad’s ummah, for I am wealthier than them.” Umar advised me:

“Say to some of the ummah, for you cannot find enough wealth for all of them.” And I said:

“To some of them” When Zaid b. Sa’na came to the Prophet (pbuh), he embraced Islam saying:

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I also bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.” (Hakim, III, 700-701)

Allah the Almighty has created a cure for every suffering in this world. There is no cure more effective than patience in order to overcome spiritual problems. Thoughts and psychological states vary greatly from one person to other. It is very hard to know about people’s intentions and the inner worlds, and then to act accordingly. This is a divine secret. Therefore, it is the safest and the most useful way to follow the path of patience like the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did.

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported another incident regarding the Prophet’s patience in the face of faulty actions:

“I was walking with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and he had worn a mantle of Najran with a thick border. A bedouin met him and pulled the mantle so violently that I saw the marks of the border of the mantle left by the intensity of the pull on the skin of the neck of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). And the bedouin said:

“O Muhammad! Issue an order for these two camels of mine to be loaded the goods of Allah that are at your disposal, for you do not give me anything from your wealth or from your father’s wealth.” The Messenger of Allah

(pbuh) turned his attention to him and smiled. And then he called someone and ordered:

“Load one of these camels with barley and the other one with wheat.”

(Muslim, Zakat, 128; Abu Dawud, Adab, 1)

Jubair bin Mut'im (r.a.) narrated another example as follows:

“I was in the company of Allah's Apostle with the people returning from Hunain, some people (bedouins) caught hold of the Prophet (pbuh) and started begging that the war booty be distributed so much that they pushed him under a kind of thorny tree (i.e. Samurah) and his cloak was snatched away. The Prophet (pbuh) stopped and said:

“Give me my cloak. If I had as many camels as these thorny trees, I would have distributed them amongst you and you will never find me to be a miser or a liar or a coward.” (Bukhari, Jihad, 24)

As it is seen in these reports, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) always responded to people's rude and ignorant treatment kindly and patiently. He educated them without offending them.

C. Not offending sinners in front of others

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would not directly address to a person who made a mistake but he would use general expressions encompassing the entire community. Thus he would correct mistakes without offending the faulty person in front of the society.

It was narrated by Aisha (r. anha), Umm al-Mu'minin:

“When the Prophet (pbuh) was informed of anything about a certain man, he would not say: *“What is the matter with so and so?”* Rather, he would say:

“What is the matter with the people that they say such and such?” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 5/4788)

And when the Prophet (pbuh) sometimes saw something committed that he did not approve of, he would say:

“What is it that I saw you ... ” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Muslim, Salat, 119) in order to state his disapproval.



In human relations, it is very important not to offend people, to address them with general statements so as not to cause them to feel ashamed. This is the common characteristic of those who comprehend the reality of Islam; because Allah's path does not lead to broken hearts but to mended ones. In fact, many of those who are looked upon and excluded from the community because of their faults might be gained back to the blessed atmosphere of Islam by means of such a considerate approach.

Here is another exemplary scene from the life of our beloved Prophet (pbuh) in this context:

Narrated on the authority of Ya'la b. Umayya (r.a.):

“The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) saw a man washing in a public place without a lower garment. So he mounted the pulpit, praised and extolled Allah and said:

“Allah is characterized by modesty and concealment. So when any of you washes, he should conceal himself.” (Abu Dawud, Hammam, 2; Nasai, Ghusl, 7)

As a reminder of Allah's attribute as the Veiler of sins (*Sattar*), the Prophet (pbuh) ordered that the servants should cover themselves. In other words, fulfilling the requirements of this command means adorning oneself with the morals that Allah laid down in the Qur'an and the teachings of his Prophet (pbuh). In this respect, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) encouraged his followers to be modest and to cover themselves without offending them.

People who are naturally prone to commit sins do not like to be openly reproached because of their faults. Even though people forgive others' mistakes with difficulty, they want their own mistakes to be forgiven and do not like them to be known. Because of this, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would never tell people's faults to their faces; on the contrary, he would find a way to guide them to the correct path without breaking their feelings.

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) narrated:

The Prophet (pbuh) once saw a man with yellow dye covering his body that he (the Prophet) disapproved of. When the man stood up to leave, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told his Companions:

“*Tell this man to wash the yellow dye off his body.*” Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) corrected inappropriate behavior without offending the man. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 133)

One of the names of Allah the Almighty is “*Sattar al-Uyub.*” This name refers to the One Who veils the defects and sins. A believer should adorn himself with this Divine name and with the exemplary manners of Allah’s Messenger and his Companions; and he should try to veil the mistakes of others as much as possible. At least one should abstain from offending and looking someone down in front of others. He should know that such an approach would not prevent, but encourage, the committing of sins.

D. Convincing the Spoken Person by Rational and Logical Explanations

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would not just convey his message but also convince his audience through logical and rational explanations. By this means, he was able to purify the heart of a sinner who thought that he was acting correctly. Jabir (r.a.) narrated:

“One day Umar b. al-Khattab (r.a.) anxiously came and told the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Apostle of Allah! I have done a bad deed; I kissed (my wife) while I was fasting.” He said:

“*What do you think if you rinse your mouth with water while you are fasting? (Would this break you fast?)*” Umar said:

“There is nothing wrong with it.” Upon this the Messenger of Allah told him:

“*Then why (are you worried about kissing?)*” (Abu Dawud, Sawm, 33)

Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) taught Umar (r.a), who had been thinking that he was doing something wrong, by making comparison between something he did not know and that which he already knew. In his context another incident was narrated by Abu Umama al-Bahili (r.a.):

“A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:



“O Messenger of Allah! Give me permission to commit adultery.” Those people who were present attempted to attack the young man and reproached him; but the Prophet (pbuh) asked him to come closer. The young man came and sat next to the Prophet. The Mercy to the universe told the young man:

“Would you like to see your mother to commit adultery?” The young man replied:

“May Allah have me sacrificed to your path; by Allah I would not like to see that.” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Neither would other people like to see their mothers doing this.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) repeated the same question about the young man’s daughter, sister, and aunts. And each time the young man gave the same response. After that, the Prophet (pbuh) placed his hands on the young man’s chest and prayed for him saying:

“O Allah! Forgive this man’s sins, purify his heart, and protect him (his private parts) from adultery.” From that time on, the young man never approached such sins again.” (Ibn Hanbal, V, 256)

Even though his Companions became upset, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) approached the matter calmly, and gave the young man a seat next to himself, listened to him, and then logically explained the matter; thus he cleansed the young man’s heart from such unlawful thoughts. And in return the young man was never tempted to make such a request again. It is very important for preachers and instructors of Islam to control their anger and give logical and rational explanations to their listeners. Logical and rational explanations gain special significance in the contemporary world which is dominated by rationalism and in which there is little place for submission and in which everything is evaluated from a logical perspective.

E. Presenting Alternatives

People may sometimes make mistakes since they do not know how to behave. One of the safest ways prevent them from committing such mistakes is to show them alternatives. This method is especially important in educating and disciplining children, drawn by their curiosity about the things they hear and see, they immediately want to imitate such things without knowing whether they are right or wrong. In order to keep them away from such arbitrary

tendencies, one should not just say “don’t do this or don’t do that” instead it would be more effective to give them alternatives by telling them something like “do not do this but do that,” “do not eat this but eat that,” or “Don’t play with this but play with that.” This trait continues in many people in later age. They, too, may give up performing wrong deeds because of alternatives.

One of the best examples of this method was narrated by Rafi b. Amr (r.a.).

“When I was a child, I used to throw stones at the Ansar’s date trees. They caught me and took me to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He asked me:

“My dear child! Why did you stone the date trees?” I said:

“O Messenger of Allah! (I was hungry) I threw stones to get some dates to eat.” He said rubbing my head:

“Next time do not throw stones but eat from the ones that have fallen on the ground.” and then he prayed for me saying:

“O Allah! Satisfy his hunger.” (Ibn Majah, Tijarat, 67)

As we see in this report, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not just prohibit the child from a wrong deed but also showed him an alternative.

Anas (r.a.) narrated:

“At the time when the prophet (pbuh) came to Medina, he saw that people had two days in which to celebrate. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“What are (the meaning and significant of) these two days?” People replied:

“We used to celebrate these two day during the age of ignorance.” Our Prophet (pbuh) then said:

“Allah the Almighty replaced these two holidays with better ones: the day of fitr (after the month of Ramadan) and the day of sacrifice (in the pilgrimage season).” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 239; Nasai, I’dain, 1)

Another report about showing alternatives is as follows. During the battle of Uhud, Abu Uqba Rushaid al- Farisi, the freed slave of the sons of Muawiyah, met a polytheist armored from head to toe. He was shouting:



“I am Ibn Uwaif.” Just then Khatib’s freed slave Sa’d hit and cut Ibn Uwayf into two pieces. Ibn Rusaid said:

“Here, take this one from a Persian slave” and hit him and separated his shoulder from his body. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) heard him and saw what he had done. He said to Rushaid:

“Would not it be better if you say from an Ansari instead of from a Persian slave?” Just then Ibn Uwaif’s brother came and said:

“I, too, am Ibn Uwaif.” Rushaid immediately said:

“Take this from an Ansari slave” and beheaded Ibn Uwaif with one sword blow. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) smiled and told him:

“O Abdullah! You did well.” (Waqidi, I, 261; Ibn Abdi’lbarr, II, 496)

Because the phrase “from a Persian slave” implied racial pride, it damaged the warrior’s sincerity. Whereas the phrase “from an *Ansari*”, had a religious meaning and since it was an Islamic term, using it meant that they were fighting in the name of Islam. In that report, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) saved his Companion from a wrong action and directed him to a good one. And he realized this by changing only a word.

One day the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“Beware! Avoid sitting on the roads (ways).” The people said,

“There is no way to avoid this as these are our sitting places when we have talks.” The Prophet said,

“If you must sit there, then observe the rights of the way.” They asked,

“What are the rights of the way?” He said,

“They are the lowering of your gazes (on seeing what is illegal to look at), refraining from harming people, returning greetings, advocating good and forbidding evil.” (Bukhari, Mazalim, 22; Muslim, Libas, 114)

What is essential in Islamic education is to teach people what is right and prepare the circumstances for them to live in accordance with Islam. Moreover, it is to change the wrong knowledge, opinions, and practices with the correct ones. And one of the most effective methods to correct the long estab-

lished mistakes in a society is not just criticizing people but at the same time providing alternative solutions for them.

F. Reproaching when Necessary

Our Prophet (pbuh), who was sent as a mercy to the universe, was very compassionate, merciful, patient, and forbearing. He would many a time not want to see the mistakes of others and also forgive most of them. But there were some mistakes that would distress him and could not forgive. In fact, it was necessary for him to get upset in the face of such mistakes and to reproach the sinner in order to correct them.

Abu Huraira said,

“The Prophet saw a man driving a Badana (sacrificial camel). The Prophet (pbuh) said (to him),

“*Ride on it.*” He replied,

“It is a sacrificial camel.” The Prophet again said,

“*Shame on you! Ride on it!*” (Bukhari, Hajj, 103)

A prophet is the most knowledgeable about what is right and what is wrong in Allah’s religion. In view of this fact, believers should not try to appear more righteous than the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet’s response to such extreme behavior was always severe and intense.

Aisha (r. anha) reported that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did an act, and held it to be valid. When news reach that Prophet that some people amongst his Companions did not approve of his (pbuh) action and disregarded it, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stood to deliver an address:

“*What has happened to the people to whom there was conveyed on my behalf a matter for which I granted permission and they disapproved of it and avoided it? By Allah, I possess the best knowledge of Allah amongst them, and I fear Him most amongst them.*” (Bukhari, Adab, 72; Muslim, Fadail, 127)

It is not acceptable to avoid the Prophet’s practice, to show extreme religiosity and to act based on personal whims. Such approaches makes a person diverge from following the Prophet’s footsteps in religious matters. This is why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) presented a severe and intolerable response



against such actions. In another version of the above mentioned narration, it is reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was annoyed so much that the signs of anger appeared on his face. (Muslim, Fadail, 128)

The following report is very remarkable in that it shows how the Prophet's reaction was against those who issue opinions about Islam without having the necessary knowledge and who harm people because of these opinions. Jabir (r.a.) narrated:

"A man was injured during the lifetime of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh); he then had a wet dream, and he asked the people with him:

"Am I allowed to perform dry ablution?" And he was told that he could use water and thus he was advised to wash. Then he took a bath and died as a result. When this was reported to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) he said:

"They killed him; may Allah kill them! Why did not they ask? Since they did not know why did not they ask? Isn't inquiry the cure to ignorance? It would be enough for the man to wrap his injury with a piece of cloth and then perform dry ablution over the wrap and wash the rest of his body." (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 125; Ibn Majah, Taharah, 93)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) became very upset because of those who issued an opinion in a religious matter and caused someone's death. He was so angry that he damned them and informed us that such people committed a sin as great as murder.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would like his followers to be clean, tidy, and delicate and would never approve disorder. Jabir (r.a.) reported:

"The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) paid us a visit, and saw a disheveled man whose hair was untidy. He said:

"Could this man not find something with which to make his hair lie down?" He saw another man wearing dirty clothes and said:

"Could this man not find something with which to wash his garments?" (Abu Dawud, Libas, 14)

Believers should know how to act based on the circumstances of their time just as much as paying attention to their inner and outer purification. One should balance their actions and words and act moderately. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) educated his Companions in this respect and when they exceeded the

limits, he sometimes got upset. One of the things that he did not approve of was to ask unnecessary and meaningless questions. Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported an incident from memory as follows:

“The people asked Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) until he was hard pressed. He went out one day and occupied the pulpit and said:

“Ask me and I shall leave none of your questions unanswered,” and when the people heard about it they were overawed, as if something tragic was going to happen. Anas (r.a.) said:

“I began to look to my right and left and found that every person was weeping with his head buried in a cloth. Then a person in the mosque broke the ice, he whom they used to dispute with him by attributing his relation to a man other than his own father. He said:

“Allah’s Apostle, who is my father?” He said:

“*Your father is Hudhafa.*” Then Umar b. Khattab (r.a.) dared say something and said:

“We are well pleased with Allah as our Lord, with Islam as our code of life and with Muhammad as our Messenger, seeking refuge with Allah from the evil of Turmoil.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“*Never did I see good and evil as today. Paradise and Hell were given a visible shape before me (in this worldly life) and I saw both of them near this well.*” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12; Muslim, Fadail, 134-138)

Other people’s rights came at the top of matters about which Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was concerned; because these are such sins that cannot be forgiven unless the owner of the right forgives. Our Prophet (pbuh) would not like to see any member of his ummah to present himself before Allah the Almighty with sins. Abdullah b. Amr (r.anhuma) narrated:

“When the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) gained booty he ordered Bilal to make a public announcement. He made a public announcement, and when the people brought their booty, he took a fifth and divided it. Thereafter, a man brought a halter of hair and said:

“O Apostle of Allah! This is a part of our booty. He asked:



“Have you heard Bilal making an announcement three times?” He replied:

“Yes, I have.” He asked:

“What prevented you from bringing it?” He made some excuse, to which he said:

“Be (as you are), you may bring it on the Day of Judgment, for I shall not accept it from you.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 134)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not accept the piece of the booty returned after its due time had passed. For all soldiers have right in the booty and after people had departed, it became impossible to deliver it to its rightful owners.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also reacted severely against those who killed a person unjustly. He responded to Uthama b. Zaid (Bukhari, Diyat, 2) and Khalid b. Walid (r. anhum) who killed a man after he said “la ilaha illallah – there is no god but Allah.” so hard that they regretted what they had done. The Prophet (pbuh) even said:

“O Allah! I am not responsible for what Khalid bin Al-Walid has done,” and repeated it twice. (Bukhari, Ahkam, 35)

G. Forgiving the Mistakes

**Be at peace, look to nobody’s faults
So that Allah may forgive your error**

Forgiveness means pardoning sins and mistakes, not punishing a crime, and not criticizing the sinner.

“*Al-Afuw*” is one of the attributes of Allah the Almighty. It means the One Who is most-Forgiving, the One Who cleanses the sins, forgives the repenting, and does not punish the sinners.

“*Al-Ghafur*” is another attribute of our Lord the Almighty. This attribute means the One Who does not make His servants feel ashamed in this world and in the Hereafter; the One Who conceals, covers, and forgives the mistakes of His servants, and the One Who does not punish His servants for their sins. Since *Al-Ghafur* and *al-Ghaffar* are among the names in the intensive forms,

it is not appropriate to name people after them; they are exclusive to Allah the Almighty.

Believers should try to forgive each other, just as Allah the Almighty forgives His sinful servants; because hate and grudges towards others are not among the traits of a true believer. Some of the verses, which invite and encourage the Prophet (pbuh) and the believers to be forgiving, are as follows:

حُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.” (al-A’raf 7; 199)

فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ

“...So forgive, (O Muhammad), with a gracious forgiveness.” (al-Hijr 15; 85)

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported one of the sayings of the Prophet that encourages forgiveness:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was sitting with us when we saw him smiling so much that his molar teeth could be seen. Umar (r.a.) asked:

“May my mother and father be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! What is it that makes you smile so much?” Allah’s Messenger said:

“Two men from my followers sat on their knees before our Lord Almighty.

One of the said:

“Dear Lord! Take my right from my brother.” Allah the Almighty told him:

“How am I going to take your right from your brother, for he does not have any rewards left?” The man said:

“Then take some of my sins and load them upon him.” Just then Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began to shed tears and said:

“Judgment Day is such a day that people need to load their own sins upon others.” And then he continued:



“Allah the Almighty says to the one who asks for his right:

“Raise your head and look at the heavens.” The man raised his head and said:

“O Lord! I see cities made of gold and palaces made and adorned with gold and pearls. For which prophets and righteous servants have they been built?” Allah the Almighty told him:

“If you would like, you may have them.” The man asked:

“How?” Allah the Almighty replied:

“By forgiving your brother” The man said:

“O Lord! I have forgiven my brother.” Upon this Allah the Almighty told him:

“Hold your brother’s hand and take him to Paradise.” After narrating this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

Be pious towards Allah and try to reconcile your relations. (As you see) Allah the Almighty reconciles between believers.” (Hakim, IV, 620)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) presented examples of forgiveness under very hard times. As a result of these lofty moral characteristics, he attracted people’s hearts and souls; and they embraced Islam in crowds. It has been narrated on the authority of Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (pbuh), who said to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Has there come upon you a day more terrible than the day of Uhud?” He said:

“I have experienced it from your people. And the hardest treatment from them was that which I received from them on the day of Aqaba. I betook myself to Ibn Abd Yalil b. Abd Kulal with the purpose of inviting him to Islam, but he did not respond to me as I desired. So I departed with signs of deep distress on my face. I did not recover until I reached Qarn al-Tha’alib. Where I raised my head, lo! Near me was a cloud which had cast its shadow upon me. I looked and lo! There was in it the Angel Gabriel who called out to me and said:

“Allah the Honored and Glorious, has heard what your people have said to you, and how they have reacted to your call. And He has sent to you the angel in charge of the mountains so that you may order him what you wish (him

to do) with regard to them. The angel in charge of the mountains then called out to me, greeted me and said:

“O Muhammad, Allah has listened to what your people have said to you. I am the angel in charge of the mountains and your Lord has sent me to you so that you may order me what you wish. If you wish that I should bring together the two mountains that stand opposite to each other at the extremities of Mecca to crush them in between, (I shall do that).” But I said to him:

“Rather, I hope that Allah will produce from their descendants such persons as will worship Allah, the One, and will not ascribe partners to Him. (Bukhari, Bad’ul Khalq, 7; Muslim, Jihad, 111)

Even when his body was in pain and his heart was broken, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not accept the Angel’s offer. Thus, he showed that forgiveness is the praiseworthy response to the bad treatment and mistakes of harsh and ignorant people. His mission was not to satisfy his own self and to gain comfort by punishing those who treated him badly. His only object was to save people by guiding them to the straight path and lead them to happiness not just in this world, but also in the Hereafter. And most importantly, he tried to increase the number of people who accepted Allah’s Oneness and obey Him.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) forgave even the ones who had come to kill him. It has been narrated on the authority of Anas b. Malik (r.a.) that eighty people from the inhabitants of Mecca came down upon the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) from the mountain of Tan’im. They were armed and wanted to kill the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions unawares. Yet he (the Holy Prophet), captured them and spared their lives.” (Muslim, Jihad, 133)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) faced many traps and tricks from the hypocrites, but he forgave them. Even though he knew their names, he did not tell them to any one of his Companions except Hudaifa b. Yamani. Thus, he generally continued his social relations with them. He even wanted to pray for their forgiveness despite their open enmities and lies. Zaid b. Arqam reported:

“We set out on a journey along with Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) in which we faced many hardships. Abdullah b. Ubayy said to his friends:

“Do not give what you have in your possession to those who are with Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) so that they desert him. And in this case when we return to Medina the honorable ones shall drive out the meaner ones.”



I came to Allah's Apostle (pbuh) and informed him about that and he sent someone to Abdullah b. Ubayy and he asked him whether he had said that or not. He took an oath to the fact that he had not done that and informed me that it was Zaid who had stated a lie to Allah's Messenger (pbuh). Zaid said:

I was much perturbed because of this until the following verse was revealed attesting to my veracity:

“When the hypocrites come unto you (O Muhammad), they say: We bear witness that you are indeed Allah’s Messenger. And Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are speaking falsely.” (al-Munafiqun 63; 1).

Zaid said that:

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) then called them in order to seek forgiveness for them, but they turned on their heads and left. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 63/1-2; Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqun, 1)

In this tradition, it is stated how hard the Prophet (pbuh) worked for the forgiveness of the hypocrites and how heedless they were.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sometimes forgave serious faults committed by his Companions. The most obvious example in this regard is the incident that Hatib b. Abi Balta’a sent a letter to the Meccans to warn them about the Muslim troops coming for the conquest of Mecca. When the letter was captured, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) called him and said:

“O Hatib, what is this?” He said:

“O Allah’s Messenger, do not be hasty in judging my intention. I am a person attached to Quraish while those who are with you amongst the emigrants are their blood relations and thus they would protect their families. I wished that when I had no blood-relationship with them I should find some supporters from (amongst them) who would help my family. I have not done this because of any unbelief or apostasy and I have no liking for unbelief after I have embraced Islam.” Thereupon Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) said:

“You have told the truth.” Umar (r.a.) said:

“O Allah’s Messenger, permit me to strike the neck of this hypocrite. But he (the Holy Prophet) said:

*“He was a participant in Badr and you little know that Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, revealed about the people of Badr: **“Do what you like for there is forgiveness for you.”**”* (Bukhari, Maghazi, 9; Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 161)

When Mecca was conquered and believers entered the Ka’bah, the people of Quraish, who had tortured Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and the believers for years, gathered in the mosque and sat around the Ka’bah. They were waiting to see what the Prophet (pbuh) was going to do with them. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“O People of Quraish! O Meccans! What do you say? How do you think I am going to do with you?” People of Quraish replied:

“We are hoping for goodness from you. You are a generous and good brother and the son of a generous and good brother. Now you have the power so treat us nicely.” Thereupon, Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) told them:

“The situation between you and me will be like the situation between Joseph (A.S.) and his people. Just as Joseph (A.S.) said to his brothers, I tell you:

لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَعْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

“...this day let no reproach be (cast) on you; Allah will forgive you, and he is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.” (Yusuf 12; 92) *Go! You are free.”*

Even though the people of Quraish were captured and submitted, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) forgave them and set them free. This is why in Islamic sources the Meccans are called *“Tulaqa* or the freed slaves.” (Ibn Hisham, IV, 32; Waqidi, II, 835; Ibn Sa’d, II, 142-143)

The Companions, who witnessed the examples of forgiveness in the life of the Prophet (pbuh), followed in his footsteps and manifested examples of forgiveness. One of the examples of forgiveness from the life of Umar (r.a.) happened as follows:

“Uyaina b. Hisn b. Hudhaifa, who was known for his impolite behavior towards the Messenger of Allah, came and stayed with his nephew Al-Hurr bin Qais. Al-Hurr bin Qais was a learned person whom Umar (r.a.) respected very much.



Uyaina said to his nephew,

“O son of my brother! You are a respected person in the presence of the caliph, so get me permission to see him.” Al-Hurr said,

“I will get permission for you to see him.” So Al-Hurr asked permission for Uyaina and Umar admitted him. When Uyaina entered, he said,

“Beware! O the son of Al-Khattab! By Allah, you neither give us sufficient provision nor judge among us with justice.” Thereupon Umar became so furious that he intended to harm him, but Al-Hurr said,

“O leader of the believers! Allah said to His Prophet:

“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; and leave (don’t punish) the foolish.” (a:-Araf 7; 199) and this (i.e. Uyaina) is one of the foolish.” By Allah, Umar did not overlook that verse when Al-Hurr recited it before him; he observed (the orders of) the Book of Allah strictly.” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 7/5; I’tisam, 2; Ibn Abd al-Barr, III, 1250-1251; Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, I, 471-472; IV, 331)

Among the best attitudes is to not lower oneself to the level of the ignorant, since the highest level of virtue is to visit someone who does not pay visits, to give someone who does not give and to forgive someone who does injustice. It is said that:

Do not be upset by the words of the ignorant
For if he knew, he would only say (that which is) good.

H. Correcting Significant Mistakes Immediately

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not give the same reaction towards different types of behavior. He acted in accordance with the sources and conditions of an action. There were some matters that he did not tolerate, on the contrary he would immediately interfere. These were usually related to matters of faith, acts of worship, and prohibitions.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) showed most concern about the issue of Divine Unity. His first requirement from the newly converted tribes was to destroy their idols. The following incident that happened during the conversion of the tribe of Thaqif is very remarkable in this context:

“After signing an agreement, the representatives of the tribe of Thaqif asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) his permission not to destroy their idol, Rabba (Lat), and to keep it for three more years. The Prophet (pbuh) did not accept their request. They said:

“Then postpone its destruction for two more years.” He did not accept the second request, either.

They reduced it to one year, but Prophet’s response was the same.

They said:

“Postpone it for a month until our arrival at Ta’if.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not let them appoint a time for the destruction of their idol.

The reason for the insistence of the representatives was due to their concern about the reaction of the conservative members of their tribe. They thought that it would not be the right thing to destroy their tribal idol until everybody in their tribe had converted. Finally, when they saw that there was no other choice, they asked for permission to not destroy it themselves.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) told them:

“Okay! I will tell my Companions to knock it down. I give you my permission because of the destruction it causes.” (Ibn Hisham, IV, 197; Waqidi, III, 967-968)

In that incident, the Prophet (pbuh) was before a newly converted tribe. There was even the possibility for them to return to their old faith because of the Prophet’s response to their request, but accepting and submitting oneself to the Divine Unity was the first condition of Islamic faith. This was why Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not make any concessions in the face of the persistent requests by the tribe of Thaqif.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was so scrupulous in this matter that he even changed the names that contradicted the Islamic faith. According to the Hani b. Yazid’s (r.a.) report, a group of people came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He heard that they were calling one of them as “abd al-hajar – servant of stone.” The Prophet (pbuh) asked the man his name. When he said:

“Abd al-hajar – servant of stone,” he (the Prophet) changed it:

“No you are Abdullah – Servant of Allah.” (Bukhari, Adab al-Mufrad, no: 812)



Allah's Apostle (pbuh) would not tolerate serious mistakes in acts of worship either; for they are the reflections of faith.

Rifaa b. Rafi' (r.a.) narrated:

"When we were in the mosque, a bedouin came. He turned in the direction of the Qiblah and performed his prayer very quickly. Then he finished his prayer and greeted (said *salaam* to) the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He responded:

"Peace be upon you! Go back and perform your prayer again. You did not perform your prayer."

The man went back, prayed again, and then approached and greeted the Messenger of Allah. He responded:

"Go back and perform your prayer again. You did not perform your prayer." People began to worry and they found it difficult to understand. The man finally said:

"I am a human being. I sometimes make mistakes and sometimes do the right thing. Show me my mistakes, and teach me the right thing." Allah's Messenger (pbuh) showed him how to perform a prayer saying:

"The prayer of anyone is not perfect unless he performs ablution perfectly; he should then utter the takbir, and praise Allah, the Exalted, and admire Him; he should then recite the Qur'an as much as he desires. He should then say: "Allah is the Greatest". Next he should bow so that all his joints return to their proper places. Then he should say: "Allah listens to the one who praises Him", and stand erect. He should then say: "Allah is most great," and should prostrate himself so that all his joints are completely at rest. Then he should say: "Allah is the Greatest"; he should raise his head (at the end of prostration) till he sits erect. Then he should say: "Allah is the Greatest"; then he should prostrate himself until all his joints return to their proper places. Then he should raise his head and say the takbir. When he does so, then his prayer is complete; otherwise your prayer is incomplete."

The narrator of this tradition added: "The Prophet's (pbuh) final words in that hadith were very consoling for the Companions. They were easier and more comforting than his former words: *"Go back and perform your prayer again. You did not perform your prayer."* Because performing a prayer and

skipping some parts mentioned in this narration just made the prayer incomplete not totally invalid. (Tirmidhi, Salat, 110; Abu Dawud, Salat, 143-144)

In this incident, the issue was ritual prayer. Prayer is the pillar of Islam. A person's strength and measure of faith depends upon the quality of the prayers he performs. Compromises shown in prayer lead to compromises in other religious matters. This is why the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) immediately warned the person who had shortcomings in his prayer.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) showed similar sensitivity in performing ablution. According to a report, Umar b. Khattab (r.a.) narrated that:

"A person performed ablution and left a small part equal to the space of a nail unwashed. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) noticed and told him:

"Go back and perform ablution well."

The man then went back, performed his ablution again, and offered the prayer. (Muslim, Tharah, 31; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 67)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) never approved of his followers giving as charity disliked, cheap, and inferior parts of their property. It was narrated by Awf b. Malik (r.a.):

"One day, the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) entered upon us in the mosque, and he had a stick in his hand. A man hung a bunch of hashaf (spoiled dates) in the mosque (as his charity for the needy). Allah's Messenger (pbuh) struck the bunch with the stick, and said:

"I wish the owner of this charity had given a better one. The owner of this charity will surely eat spoiled dates on the Day of Judgment." (Abu Dawud, Zakat, 17; Nasai, Zakat, 27)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would never show tolerance in matters prohibited by Allah the Almighty and warned his followers against them just as he warned against Hell-fire. According to a narration of Abdullah b. Abbas (r. anhumā), Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saw a person wearing a gold signet ring on his hand. He (the Holy Prophet) pulled it off and threw it away, saying:

"One of you wishes for live coal from Hell and is putting it on his hand." It was said to the person after Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had left:

“Take your ring and derive benefit out of it in some other way.” Yet the man said:

“No, by Allah, I shall never take what Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) has thrown away.” (Muslim, Libas, 52)

I. Saying Supplications for the Purification and Good Manners of the Companions

All his life, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) campaigned for the purification, education and discipline of his ummah. He spent his days and nights for their guidance and he never abstained from saying supplications for their goodness.

Supplication, one of the most significant aspects of servitude, is a servant’s most effective weapon and support. There is no curtain between Allah the Almighty and sincere supplications. Our Lord, the Most Merciful and the All-Compassionate, declares in the Qur’an:

أُدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

“...Pray unto Me and I will answer your prayer...” (al-Mu’min 40; 60)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) lived his life filled with prayers in order to show the significance of this divine glad tiding and encourage his followers to follow it. He said both general and specific supplications for the welfare and guidance of his followers. Aisha (r. anha) narrates:

“Once Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) made the following supplication:

“O Allah! Strengthen Islam especially by Umar b. al-Khattab.” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11)

Indeed as a result of this prayer, Umar (r.a.) was honored with conversion to Islam and Islam, in return, was reinforced by his conversion. Believers were able to begin to perform their worship openly.

Abu Bakr (r.a.) asked from the Prophet (pbuh) to pray for the guidance of his mother Umm al-Khair Salma saying:

“O Messenger of Allah! My mother is very caring towards her children. And you are a blessed person. Would you pray to Allah for her and invite her



to Islam? Maybe Allah shall save her from the Hell-fire for your sake.” Upon which, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) prayed for her and invited her to embrace Islam. And soon after his supplication, she converted to Islam. (Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, VII, 326)

Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported that his mother had refused his many invitations to Islam. However, she later was blessed with guidance as a result of the Prophet’s prayers for her. (Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 158)

Tufail bin Amr of the tribe of Daws used to invite his tribe to Islam, but they did not accept. So he came to Mecca to the Prophet (pbuh) and said,

“O Prophet of Allah! The people of Daws have prevailed over me as they disobeyed and refused to accept Islam. So invoke Allah against them.” But the Prophet said,

“O Allah! Give guidance to the people of Daws and bring them (to Islam!)” and then he turned to Tufail and said:

“Go back to your people and continue to invite them to Islam. And treat them leniently.” Tufail went back to his tribe. He continued to invite them to Islam by the time of Prophet’s migration to Medina.” (Bukhari, *Maghazi*, 75; Ibn Hanbal, II, 243; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 239)

Once again, one of the Companions asked the Messenger of Allah to curse the people of Thaqif, who had given heavy losses to the believers during the siege of Taif; but, the Prophet of mercy turned to Allah and prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ ثَقِيفًا وَأْتِ بِهِمْ

“O Allah! Bestow guidance upon Thaqif and bring them to us.”

And as a result of this prophetic supplication, not long passed before the people of Thaqif came to the Messenger of Allah to declare their conversion. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 134)

In the Qur’an Allah the Almighty commands His Messenger to pray saying:

وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ



“...pray on their behalf. Verily your prayers are a source of security for them...” (al-Tawbah 9; 103)

In his long supplication during the farewell pilgrimage Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) asked from Allah forgiveness and mercy for his ummah.

Our Lord Almighty said:

“I have forgiven your ummah except those who oppress others and take their rights. I will take the rights of the oppressed from the oppressors.” Then the Prophet (pbuh) prayed saying:

“Dear Lord! If You want, You can forgive the oppressor and give Paradise to the oppressed because of the oppression he suffered.” The latter supplication was not accepted though. Upon which he said:

“O people! Today, Allah the Almighty has bestowed his blessings upon you and forgiven you - except the unjust amongst you.” (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 14; Ibn Majah, Manasik, 56; Haythami, III, 256)

According to a report, the Najashi’s envoy came, conveyed his greetings to the Prophet (pbuh), and told him that the Najashi had been asking for his prayers. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) performed ablution and then said thrice:

“O Allah! Forgive the Najashi.” And the believers said Ameen to his prayers. (Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 312-313)

From time to time Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said special prayers for his Companions for their goodness and high spiritual ranks. One of the best examples of these prayers is about Ukkasha (r.a.). It is reported on the authority of Imran b. Husain (r.a.) that:

“The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) said:

“Seventy thousand people of my Ummah would be admitted into Paradise without facing any questioning.” They (the Companions) said:

“Who shall those (fortunate persons) be?” He (the Holy Prophet) said:

“Those who do not cauterize, practice sorcery, and believe in bad luck, but repose their trust in their Lord,” Ukkasha (r.a.) then stood up and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Supplicate to Allah that He should make me one of them.” He (the Holy Prophet) told him:

“You are one among them.” (Muslim, Iman, 371)

We see in the sources that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said some of his prayers in order to cleanse his Companions from spiritual illnesses. In one of his sermons, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“O People! If there is anybody who fears from himself, stand up so I can say my prayers for him.” Upon which a man stood up and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I am stingy coward, and I sleep too much. Pray to Allah to cure my (spiritual) illnesses.” The Prophet (pbuh) prayed for him. Another man stood up and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I am a liar, I say dirty things and do wrong things. I also sleep too much.” Allah’s Messenger prayed for him saying:

“O Allah! Bestow on him truthfulness and maturity of faith. Take his desire to sleep away from him whenever he wants to sleep.” Then a woman stood up:

“I have such and such an illnesses. Pray for Allah to cleanse them from me.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told her:

“Go to Aisha’s house.” And then he descended the pulpit. When he went to Aisha’s house, he placed his staff on the woman’s head and prayed for her. (Ibn Sa’d, II, 255)

The Prophet (pbuh) said many supplications for his Companions and his ummah for their purification and education. We have tried to present some of them.





CHAPTER THREE

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN DEALING WITH THE PEOPLE

- I. THE WAY THE PROPHET DEALT WITH HIS FAMILY
- II. THE PROPHET'S DEALINGS WITH HIS SERVANTS
- III. PROPHET'S DEALING WITH HIS RELATIVES
- IV. THE PROPHET'S DEALING WITH HIS NEIGHBORS
- V. THE PROPHET'S TREATMENT OF HIS GUESTS
- VI. THE PROPHET'S TREATMENT OF SOME MISTREATED PEOPLE
- VII. THE PROPHET'S TREATMENT OF ANIMALS





“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.”
(al-A’raf 7; 199)

AN EXCELLENT EXEMPLAR: IN DEALING WITH THE PEOPLE

I. THE WAY THE PROPHET DEALT WITH HIS FAMILY

The institution of the family, which was created by Allah the Almighty as the reason for the continuance of humanity, started with the first human being Adam (A.S.) and reached its perfect state with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

Allah the Absolute Ruler has created everything based on a deep and delicate wisdom. Beginning with the natural characteristics of men and women, their ability to complete each other, their feelings and relation to each other, and their ways of satisfying these feelings are all created for a reason. When these features are used in accordance with the object of their creation, human beings will be in harmony with the universe and will not experience spiritual disorder. This world and the afterlife will become a heaven for them. But when they begin to use these features against the Divine commands, their misery will increase as they think that their momentary desires will bring real happiness. They will find themselves in the middle of a crisis in this world.

As a part of the Divine order of the universe, men and women are equipped with feelings, desires and natural tendencies towards each other. (Al- Imran 3; 14) Allah the Almighty has not only given these feelings to human beings but also defined some limits to satisfy them. These limits can be best described as the marriages performed in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). Marriages which are against the principles of Islam are deemed unlawful and prohibited. Such relations are considered fruitless and will end in disappointment. In this matter Allah, the Absolute Ruler, the Creator, is the only One Who has the final say, and He is the One Who is going to question His servants about their deeds. Those who go beyond the Divine limits lose the possibility of taking the right steps.



On the other hand, humans are social beings by nature. They need to live in a society. It is required in order to fulfil their needs and weaknesses. Family is one of the most important ways of doing this. Since men and women are created to need each other, they will not be able to satisfy their nature and attain peace and tranquility without establishing a family. Women are apt in raising the children and are superior in modesty to men. They are also more attached to their family. They are skilful in housework and more obedient, whereas men usually have more experience and are more arduous and braver in protecting their family. This is why men and women need each other and one cannot maintain his/her life fully without the other's support. This is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

"...They are your garments and you are their garments..." (al-Baqara 2; 187)

"And We have created you in pairs" (al-Naba' 78; 8)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) wanted his followers to grow in number and thus encouraged them to get married saying:

النِّكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ
 مِنِّي وَتَزَوَّجُوا فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ وَمَنْ كَانَ ذَا طَوْلٍ
 فَلْيَنْكِحْ وَمَنْ لَمْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّيَامِ فَإِنَّ الصَّوْمَ لَهُ وَجَاءَ

"Marriage is of my sunnah. Marriage is a sunnah of mine. So, whosoever does not act upon my Sunnah has no relation with me. Get married; for I shall be proud that you have outnumber the other ummahs. Whoever has the means should get married and whoever does not have the means should fast; for fasting is a shield for him ..." (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 1)

A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

"I have found a woman of rank and beauty, but she does not give birth to children. Should I marry her?" The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"No." The man came again, but the Prophet (pbuh) did not give him permission. He came to him for the third time, and he (the Prophet) said:

*“Marry women who are loving and can reproduce, for I shall outnumber the other ummahs by you.”*⁴¹ (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 3; Nasai, Nikah, 11)

Allah the Almighty had given a different secret: miracles, blessings, virtues, and protection in marriage. One who puts his life in order through marriage can save himself from illicit things and protect his chastity. Love between a man and a woman gains a different dimension and meaning through marriage. Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) said that:

“There is nothing more effective in strengthening the love between those who love each other than marriage.” (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 1)

Marriage also protects society just as it protects individuals; for a society will also become chaste and virtuous when it is made up of chaste individuals. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) pointed out this fact as follows:

“If someone whose religiosity and morals are pleasing to you, comes and asks for your daughter’s hand in marriage, let him marry her. Otherwise mischief and disorder will emerge in the world.” (Tirmidhi, Nikah, 3)

In Islam the object and wisdom behind marriage is to achieve peace and tranquility, to maintain the human race and protect it from sins. Sexual pleasure is in a way a partial compensation bestowed by Allah the Almighty for the fulfillment of the true objective. Since Allah the Almighty has created men and women to be attracted to each other, they can attain serenity only by coming together. As the Holy Qur’an puts it:

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.” (al-Rum 30; 21)

Jalal al-Din Rumi (q.s.)⁴² states these facts as follows:

41. What is meant by this prophetic saying is to encourage his followers to have children. Otherwise, he does not prohibit the marrying of infertile or divorced women. Such women are usually in psychological pain and hardship. Taking care of their troubles and appeasing their pains is among the believers’ social responsibilities. This was why all of the marriages of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) were with divorced women or widows except for Aisha (r. anha).



“Since love (of desired things, women, etc. (Al-i Imran 3; 14)) is decked out for men (made attractive to them): how can they escape from women who are created beautifully and adorned by Allah?

Inasmuch as He created her (the woman) that he (man) might take comfort in her, how can Adam be parted from Eve?

Even if he (the husband) be Rustam son of Zāl and greater than Hamza (in valor), as regards authority he is his old woman’s (his wife’s) captive.”
(Mathnawi, I, verses: 2425-2427)

Home is the most ideal place for teaching Islam. The best education and discipline, too, can be given in the warmth of the home. Fear of Allah, love for Him, and love for His Messenger can be inoculated into young hearts in such homes. Religion, language, culture, and understanding can be transferred to the new generations through such an institution. Nations grow by means of such and are destroyed by its decadence. Because of its significance, believers who love Islam and humanity are concerned with strengthening it, while the enemies of goodness try to destroy its roots.

Islam is a religion revealed in such a way as to be compatible with human nature. In other words, Islam is “human’s life map.” It organizes and explains every aspect of life. It is the essential guidance to achieve Paradise and to see the Face of Allah. Its principles were manifested in the Prophet’s life in the most perfect sense. Therefore, in order to reach eternal salvation one should pay attention to establishing his family in accordance with the principles of Islam as in the practice of the Prophet (pbuh).

A. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) as Head of the Family

“The best of you are the ones who are morally best towards their wives.”

Tirmidhi, Rada, 11

As it is stated in the Qur’an, the prophets of Allah got married and had children in order to be an example for their followers:

“And certainly We sent messengers before you and gave them wives and children ...” (al-Ra’d 13; 38)

Just as earlier prophets, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) got married and lived an exemplary family life. He manifested the best examples for how one should treat his wife, children, maids, and other family members. He established the best rules for the rights and responsibilities of family members. The following general principle of the Prophet (pbuh) is enough for us to establish not just a strong and peaceful family but also a virtuous society:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ

“The most perfect believer in respect of faith is the one who is best of them in manners. And the best of you are the ones who are the best towards their wives.” (Tirmidhi, Rada’, 11; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 15)

It was narrated by Mu’awiyah al-Qushayri that

“I asked the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Apostle of Allah! What rights do our wives have over us?” He replied:

“You should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not strike her on the face, do not revile her or separate yourself from her; but if you have to (separate yourself), do it in the house.” (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 40-41; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 3)

Being the head of a family is both rewarding and a big responsibility. If it is not fulfilled properly, it causes unjust treatment of the spouse and the children. It is not usually possible to bring up the children of broken families with ease in today’s society. This is why we need to examine and find examples from the Prophet’s life related to being at the head of a family. In the following section we will summarize what we have found in this context:

1. His Love for His Wives

“Two things are made beloved to me: Fragrance and women. And the light of my eyes is the ritual prayer.”

Nasai, Ishrat al-Nisa, 1

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) complemented women by calling them “*Allah’s handmaidens*” (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 42) to show their value in the presence



of Allah. Thus, he presented women as the trusts of Allah the Almighty to the men. Moreover by stating that:

*“Two things are made beloved to me: Fragrance and women. And the light of my eyes is the ritual prayer.”*⁴² (Nasai, Ishrat al-Nisa, 1) the Prophet (pbuh) expressed that his love for women originated from Allah the Almighty

The following report is enough to show the Prophet’s love for our mother Khadijah (r. anha) who played a very important role in his life and suffered a lot during the emergence of Islam:

It was narrated by Aisha (r. anha):

“Never did I feel jealous of the wives of Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) except in Khadija’s case, although I did not have the privilege to see her. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would remember her very much. Whenever he (pbuh) slaughtered a sheep, he would send parts of it to Khadija’s friends. One day I made the Prophet (pbuh) very upset saying:

“It is only Khadija who is always on your mind. As if there is nobody else in this world.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“(Has there been anybody like her?) She was like so and so ... And I had my children with her. Her love had been nurtured in my heart by Allah Himself.” Aisha (r.anha) continued saying:

“From that time on I promised myself not to speak badly about Khadijah anymore.” (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20; Nikah, 108; Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 73, 78)

Another tradition narrated by Aisha (r. anha) is as follows:

“Once Hala bint Khuwailid, Khadija’s sister, asked the Prophet’s permission to enter. After which, the Prophet remembered the way Khadija used to ask permission, and became emotional. He said,

“O Allah! This is Hala daughter of Huwailid!” So I became jealous and said,

“What makes you remember an old woman of Quraish who had a toothless mouth and died long ago, and in whose place Allah has given you somebody better?” (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20)

42. Some scholars interpreted this tradition saying that women were loved by the Prophet (pbuh) because of “their role in spreading Islam.”

Our mother Aisha (r. anha) was referring to herself by saying “somebody better.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told her:

“No, Allah the Almighty has not bestowed upon me anybody better than her. She believed in me when nobody had. She accepted that I was telling the truth, when everybody called me a liar. She supported me with her property, when nobody gave me anything and Allah the Almighty has bestowed upon me children from her.” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118)

Our mother Khadijah was a source of tranquility, a loyal adviser, and a shoulder to cry on. Her death and the death of the Prophet’s uncle Abu Talib caused so much pain to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that he said:

“I do not know for which of these two calamities I should feel more sorrow.” (Ya’qubi, II, 35; Tabari, *Tarikh*, II, 229)

Allah’s Messenger did not treat and love Aisha (r.anha) less than Khadijah (r. anha). The report narrated by Shuraih b. Hani emphasises this point.

One day Shuraikh asked Aisha (r. anha):

“Can a woman eat with her husband during her period?” Aisha (r. anha) replied:

“Yes, she can.” And then she continued:

“When I had my period, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) used to call me and I would have a meal with him. He would take a piece of meat, offer it to me, and swear me to begin first. I would take it and have a bite and then give it back to him. He would place his mouth to the place I bit and begin to eat. Sometimes he would ask for something to drink and swear for me to drink it first. So I would take the cup, drink some from it, and then leave the cup. This time Allah’s Messenger would pick it up, place his mouth on and drink from the place where I had drunk.” (Nasai, *Taharah*, 177)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) regarded the actions which would increase the love between him and his wives as very important. The following mirthful incident is a good example in this regard.

“One day when Abu Bakr (r.a.) asked the the Prophet’s (pbuh) permission to enter, he heard his daughter Aisha speaking in a loud voice. So when he entered, he caught hold of her in order to slap her, and said:



“How could you raise your voice to the Apostle of Allah?” The Prophet (pbuh) prevented him and Abu Bakr left them angrily. The Prophet (pbuh) said to Aisha when Abu Bakr had left:

“You see, I rescued you from your father.”

Abu Bakr waited for some days then asked the Apostle of Allah’s (pbuh) permission to enter, and found that they had reconciled with each other. He said to them:

“Bring me into your peace as you brought me into your war.”

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“We have done so: we have done so.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 84)

From time to time Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had a race with Aisha (r. anha). At first our mother Aisha (r. anha) was winning the race but later Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began to pass her and he told his beloved wife:

“This is for that earlier outstripping.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 61; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 50)

The following reports also show how much the Prophet (pbuh) loved his wives, treated them with compassion and empathy, and even endured some of their inappropriate behavior.

Anas (r.a.) said that:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was with one of his wives. Another wife of his had sent him a plate of food. The wife who was with the Messenger of Allah got jealous and hit the plate and broke it. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said while he was cleaning up the broken plate and food on the ground:

“Your mother got jealous. Let’s eat here.” Those who were present ate the food. Allah’s Messenger held the pieces of the broken plate until his wife brought a new plate and compensated for it. Then he left the broken pieces to her.” (Nasai, Ishrat al-Nisa, 4)

Jalal al-Din Rumi (q.s.) mentioned in the following eloquent words how women should be approached with love and leniency:

“The water is superior to the fire. It attacks and prevails over the fire by its dreaded onset, (but) the fire makes it seethe when it (the water) is placed

in the cauldron. When a cauldron comes between (them), O king, it (the fire) annihilates the water and converts it into air.

If outwardly you are dominating your wife, like the fire-quickening water, (yet) inwardly you are dominated and are seeking your wife's love. This is characteristic of Man (alone): to the (other) animals love is wanting, and that (lack of love) arises from (their) inferiority (to Man).

The Prophet said that woman prevails exceedingly over the wise and intelligent, (While), on the other hand, ignorant men prevail over woman, for in them the fierceness of the animal is imprisoned.

They lack tenderness, kindness, and affection, because the animal characteristic predominates over their (human) nature. Love and tenderness are human qualities; anger and lust are animal qualities.” (Mathnawi, I, verses: 2429-2436)

Safiyah (r. anha) narrated:

On a journey I was with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). I began to snooze. He touched me with one of his hand while saying:

“Hey! O daughter of Huyay! O Safiyah!” (Ibn Hajar, al-Matalib, II, 417)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) always treated his wives nicely and made jokes with them. Qasim b. Muhammad narrated one of the jokes that the Prophet (pbuh) made about the end of his life:

“Aisha (r. anha) once got sick and said, “O my head!” Allah's Apostle said,

“If that (i.e., your death) should happen while I am still alive, I would ask Allah to forgive you and would invoke Allah for you.”

Aisha said, “O my life which is going to be lost! By Allah, I think that you wish for my death, and if that should happen then you would be busy enjoying the company of one of your (other) wives during your last days.” The Prophet changed the subject saying:

“But I am the one who should say, “O my head!”...” (Bukhari, Ahkam, 51; Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahabah, 11)

The following words of the Prophet (pbuh) also give us an opinion about how much he loved his wives:



“I asked my Lord to let every woman that I got married to enter Paradise with me. And He accepted my supplication.” (Hakim, III, 148; Haythami, X, 17)

In short, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) loved his wives very much and tolerated some of their offences, so he provided a peaceful private environment for them.

2. His Respect for His Wives

Allah the Almighty warns men in the nineteenth verse of the fourth chapter of the Qur’an saying **“consort with them in kindness”** (al-Nisa 4; 19) and orders them to cherish their women. In the life of the Prophet (pbuh) women reached such a level of respect and standing in their society that they had not enjoyed. The report narrated by Umar (r.a.) is one of the best witnesses of this truth:

“We were such people among Quraish that we dominated our women, and as we reached Medina we found there people who were dominated by their women, and our women began to learn the customs of their women. He further said:

“And my house was situated in the suburb of Aledina of the tribe of Banu Umayya b. Zaid. One day I became angry with my wife and she retorted. I did not like that she should retort. She said:

“You disapprove of my retorting. By Allah, the wives of Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) retort, and one of them refuses to see him for the day until the night.” So I went out and visited Hafsa and said:

“Do you respond Allah’s Messenger (pbuh)?” She said:

“Yes.” I said. Does any one of you refuse to see him from the day to the night?” She said:

“Yes.” I continued by saying:

“She who did like it amongst you in fact failed and lost out. Does nobody amongst you fear the wrath of Allah upon her due to the anger of His Messenger (pbuh), and (as a result thereof) she may perish? So do not retort against Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and do not ask him for anything, but ask me that which you desire” (Muslim, Talaq, 34)



Because Allah's Messenger (pbuh) valued his wives and recognized their right to talk out, other believing women also benefited from this right and began to enjoy the honor of freedom of speech.

It is the exemplary way of the Prophet's manifestation of his love and esteem for his wives to tell them how virtuous they were, to show his love for them, to take them on his mount, to offer his knee to help them step on it to get on their mounts, and to wipe their tears away and console them.

While women who were menstruating were inhumanely treated during the age of ignorance, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) tried to do away with this understanding. He had the following conversation with his wife who was unwilling to get him a prayer rug:

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Get me the mat from the mosque" His wife answered saying:

"I am menstruating." Upon which he remarked:

"Your menstruation is not in your hands." (Muslim, Hayd, 11) Thus, he rationally explained his wife's situation. Moreover, in order to show his esteem to his wives the Prophet (pbuh) used to lean on his wife's lap and even recite the Qur'an while she was in menses. (Bukhari, Hayd, 2, 13)

The Prophet's way of making his wives feel valued was not something temporary and momentary but the traces of a rooted life-style. The following application of the Prophet (pbuh) also clearly supports this point:

Everyday Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would visit his wives twice and check on their state, one after the dawn prayer and one after the late afternoon prayer. (Bukhari, Talaq, 8; Muslim, Talaq, 20) He did not neglect this practice even on the day he got married with Zainab bint Jahsh (r. anha). He visited all his wives starting with Aisha and said:

"Peace and Allah's Mercy be on you, O the people of the house!" They replied,

"The peace and the mercy of Allah be on you too. How did you find your wife?" and congratulated him saying

"May Allah bless you." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 33/8)



The following narration of Aisha (r. anha) also shows the extent of Prophet's sensitivity towards his wives:

“After offering the Sunna of the Dawn prayer, the Prophet (pbuh) used to talk to me, if I happen to be awake; otherwise he would lie down until the Iqama call was proclaimed (for the Dawn prayer).” (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 24; Muslim, Musafirun, 133)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) personally helped his wives watch holiday entertainments. Aisha (r. anha) narrated:

“It was a holiday. The Black people were playing with shields and spears; so either I requested the Prophet (pbuh) or he asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then the Prophet (pbuh) made me stand behind him and my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying,

“*Carry on! O Bani Arfida,*” until I got tired. The Prophet (pbuh) asked me,

“*Are you satisfied (Is that sufficient for you)?*” After I replied in the affirmative, he told me to leave.” (Bukhari, I'dain, 3; Muslim, I'dain, 19)

It is impossible to witness an oppressive instance in the life of Allah's Messenger (pbuh). He would listen to his family and help them as much as he can. He did not like to see them in distress and would use every opportunity to make them happy. Sometimes he would ask his wives to recite poems and sometimes he himself would tell them stories or listen to theirs.⁴³ For instance he had listened to Aisha (r. anha) recounting the narration of Umm Zar' about eleven women talking about the characteristics of their husbands. The related part of the narration reads as follows:

“The eleventh one said,

43. One night Allah's Messenger (pbuh) narrated a story to his wives. One of them said: “O Messenger of Allah! This story is like the ones narrated by Hurafa.” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“*Do you know who Hurafa was? Hurafa was a man from the people of Uzra. During the days of ignorance, jinns captured him. He stayed with them for a long time. Then he was sent back to the world of humans. He used to tell the people the extraordinary things that he had seen among the jinns. This is why people have began to use the phrase “like the Hurafa's words” (for the extraordinary things they heard)*” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 157) In another saying, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: “*May Allah have mercy on Hurafa! He was a righteous man.*” (Suyuti, II, 19)

“My husband is Abu Zar’ and what should I tell you about him? He has given me many ornaments and my ears are heavily loaded with them and my arms have become fat (i.e., I have become fat). And he has pleased me, and I have become so happy that I feel proud of myself. He found me with my family who were mere sheep owners and living in poverty, and brought me to a respected family having horses and camels and threshing and purifying grain. Whatever I say, he does not rebuke or insult me. When I sleep, I sleep until late in the morning, and when I drink water (or milk), I drink my fill. The mother of Abu Zar’ and what may one say in praise of the mother of Abu Zar’? Her saddle bags were always full of provision and her house was spacious. As for the son of Abu Zar’, what may one say of the son of Abu Zar’? His bed is as narrow as an unsheathed sword and an arm of a kid (of four months) satisfies his hunger. As for the daughter of Abu Zar’, she is obedient to her father and to her mother. She has a fat well-built body and that arouses the jealousy of her husband’s other wife. As for the (maid) slave girl of Abu Zar’, what may one say of the (maid) slave girl of Abu Zar’? She does not uncover our family secrets but keeps them to herself, and does not waste our provisions and does not leave the rubbish scattered everywhere in our house.” Then the eleventh lady added, “One day it so happened that Abu Zar’ went out at the time when the milk was being milked from the animals, and he saw a woman on his way ... (On seeing her) he divorced me and married her. Thereafter, I married a noble man who used to ride a fast tireless horse and keep a spear in his hand and bring home many cows and camels in the evening. He gave me many things, and also a pair of every kind of livestock he brought and said,

“O Um Zar’, Eat, drink, and give provision to your relatives.” She added, “Yet, all those things which my second husband gave me could not fill the smallest utensil of Abu Zar’.”

Aisha then said:

“Allah’s Apostle said to me,

“O Aisha! I am to you just like Abu Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”
(Bukhari, Nikah, 82; Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahabah, 92)

The following narration is also remarkable in showing how much the Prophet (pbuh) knew and cherished his family:

It was narrated by Aisha (r.anha) that



“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) told me,

“I know when you are pleased with me or angry with me.” I said,

“How do you know that?” He said,

“When you are pleased with me, you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Muhammad,’ but when you are angry with me, then you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Abraham.’” Thereupon I told him,

“Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Allah’s Apostle, when I am angry I leave nothing except mentioning your name.” (Bukhari, Nikah, 108; Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahabah, 80)

According to a narration of Anas (r.a.) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated his love for Khadijah (r. anha) as follows:

“The most superior women on earth are these: Mary the daughter of Imran, Khadijah the daughter of Huwaylid, Fatima the daughter of Muhammad, and Asiyah the Pharaoh’s wife.” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 61)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) displayed his love for Aisha as follows:

“And no doubt, the superiority of Aisha to other women is like the superiority of Tharid (i.e. a meat and bread dish) to other meals.” (Bukhari, Fada’il al-Ashab, 30; Anbiya, 45)

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) warned his Companions who were hurtful and offensive to their families, commanded them to avoid such behavior, and taught them how to treat their families. Hudahifa (r.a.) narrated:

“I was a little harsh when talking to my family, but I was polite towards other people. When I presented my situation to the Messenger of Allah, he said to me:

“What is the situation with regards to repenting? Repent seventy times a day for the forgiveness of your offence.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 57)

3. His Education to His Wives

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) taught Islam and gave Islamic education first in his home to his wives; for a well-educated wife can be a sincere friend to her

husband, a good mother for her children and a guarantee for them to get better Islamic education.

When talking about education, both religious education and the knowledge of the basic principles of Islam must be the first thing coming into a believer's mind. Then the other fields of education can be considered. This is because the former is the means to earn eternal salvation, whereas the latter helps to continue with life in this temporary world. Here is how Allah the Almighty attracts our attention to the significance of a strong education for the family:

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ
رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

“And enjoin prayer on your family, and steadily adhere to it; We do not ask you for subsistence; We do give you subsistence, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil).” (Taha 20; 132)

This verse points out the significance of not just religious education in general but also of the education of prayer in particular. Families which pay attention to this matter will be bestowed with abundant blessings, they will live a pious life and consequently, their end will be happiness.

The Prophet (pbuh) followed the order of Allah the Almighty and paid attention to his family's education. For instance he would perform the sunnah of the dawn prayer at home, wake his family up for the prayer, and then go to the mosque to perform the rest of the prayer in congregation. (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 236) He would usually perform the supererogatory prayers at home and order his Companions to do the same. Qa'b b. Ujra (r.a.) narrated:

“Allah's Apostle (pbuh) performed the evening (*mahgrib*) prayer at the mosque of Abd al-Ashhal clan. People began to perform the supererogatory prayers after the obligatory cycles. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“This is the prayer of the homes.” (Abu Dawud, Tatawwu', 15; Nasai, Qiyam al-Layl, 1)

Allah's Messenger also praised married couples who encourage each other to wake up before dawn for *tahajjud* prayer:



“May Allah have mercy on a man who gets up at night and prays, and awakens his wife; if she refuses, he should sprinkle water on her face. May Allah have mercy on a woman who gets up at night and prays, and awakens her husband; if he refuses, she should sprinkle water on his face.” (Abu Dawud, Tatawwu, 18)

However it should not be forgotten that in order to follow the Prophet’s advise, one should establish a family based on love; so that the spouse would be able to smile and wake up when the other spouse sprinkles water on their face.

People’s protection from Hell fire depends on good education received in the family. Our Lord, the most Merciful, says in the Qur’an:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...” (al-Tahrim 66; 6)

Ali (r.a.) explains this verse as follows:

“The order to save yourselves and your families from Hellfire means to teach goodness, knowledge, and manners to yourselves and your families.”

Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) interprets this verse saying:

“Get your family members accustomed to obedience to Allah and warn them about sins. Command your family to remember Allah so that Allah may save you from Hell-fire.” (Tabari, XXVIII, 211-212)

Similarly Zaid b. Aslam (r.a.) said about the exegesis of this verse:

“When this verse was revealed, the Companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! We might be able to protect ourselves but how are we going to save our families?”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that: *“Command them to be a servant to Allah the Almighty, to obey and to worship Him. Prohibit them from disobeying Allah and from committing sins. This is how you will be able to save them.”* (Alusi, XXVIII, 156)

The Messenger of Allah often preferred the method of preaching about his families’ education and discipline. Preaching was the most important prophetic method in educating his Companions and family members. Based on this, the righteous believers of Allah meticulously applied this method in their

lives. Shah Naqshiband (q.s.) even said that “طريق ما در صحبتست” “our way depends upon preaching/friendly conversation.”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sometimes had private conversations with one of his wives and sometimes gathered them and talked to them as a group. He followed this custom during his entire life. He continued to visit his wives every day after performing the dawn prayer and after performing the late afternoon prayer. (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 38; Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 85) At night, his wives used to gather in the house where the Prophet (pbuh) would spend the night. (Muslim, Rada’, 46; Ibn Hanbal, VI, 107, 157)

Because educating people was the most important task of the Prophet (pbuh), his life passed by conveying the message of Islam. Before anybody else, he warned his family against mischief and encouraged them to be prepared for the Hereafter. Umm Salama (r. anha) narrated:

“One night Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) got up and said,

“Subhan Allah! How many afflictions have been descended tonight and how many treasures have been disclosed! O people of my family! Wake up! Many a well-dressed (soul) in this world will be naked in the Hereafter.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 40)

The Prophet (pbuh) once warned Aisha (r.a.) with the following remarkable words:

يَا عَائِشَةُ! إِيَّاكَ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الْأَعْمَالِ فَإِنَّ لَهَا مِنْ اللَّهِ طَالِبًا

“O Aisha! Be careful about belittled actions (sins which are seen as little matters); for there is an angel of Allah who is recording them.” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 29; Darimi, Riqaq, 17)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was especially sensitive about matters related to faith. It was narrated by Aisha (r.a.):

“I had bought a pillow with pictures upon it. Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) returned from a journey and stopped at the door and did not enter. I said:

“If I made a mistake, I can repent.” He asked:

“What is this pillow?” I said:



“I bought it for you to sit and lean on.” He tore it and said,

“The people who will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be the makers of these pictures. They will be asked to give life to their pictures. Angels do not enter the houses where there are pictures.” (Bukhari, Libas, 92)⁴⁴

Here are some more examples for the Prophet’s warnings to his wives: Umm Salama (r. anha) narrated:

“The Prophet (pbuh) came to me while my brother Abdullah was having a chat with an effeminate man. I heard him (i.e. the effeminate man) saying to brother,

“O Abdullah! See if Allah should make you conquer Ta’if tomorrow, then take the daughter of Ghailan (in marriage)” and then began to talk about her feminine characteristics. Upon this the Prophet (pbuh) then said,

“These (men like this effeminate one) should never enter your abode.” From that day on effeminate men were not allowed to enter the houses of the mothers of the believers. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 56; Muslim, Salam, 32)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) once ordered his wives to hide behind the curtains when one of his blind Companions came to visit him. (Abu Dawud, Libas, 34; Tirmidhi, Adab, 29)

Aisha the wife of Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) reported that

“One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) left my apartment during the night and I felt jealous. Then he came and he saw in what agitated state of mind I was. He said:

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44. The wisdom behind Prophet’s prohibition of pictures and using items with pictures was that at that time the Polytheists were worshipping pictures and portraits. And he did not want followers to remember the old days and return to their old faith. He never allowed the Islamic faith to get mixed with polytheistic practices. The reports which strongly prohibit pictures belong the early days of Islam. But later, when Islam triumphed over false beliefs, using pictures has been allowed as long as they do not lead to extreme respect. (Kamil Miras, II, 316-318; VI, 414-421) This fact is expressed by the 39th maxim of Majalla “It is an accepted fact that the terms of law vary with the change of times.” It should not be forgotten that it is certain that pictures against Islamic manners and ethics are still forbidden.

“O Aisha, what has happened to you? Do you feel jealous?” Thereupon, I said:

“How could a woman like me not feel jealous about a husband like you?” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“It was your devil who came to you,” and she said:

“O Messenger of Allah, is there a devil with me?” He said:

“Yes, there is.” I said:

“Is there a devil with everyone?” He said:

“Yes, there is.” I told him again:

“O Allah’s Messenger, is there a devil with you, too? He said:

“Yes, but my Lord has helped me fight against him so that I am absolutely safe from his mischief.” (Muslim, Munafiqun, 70; Nasai, Ishrat al-Nisa, 4)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) not only taught his family that jealousy is a devilish attribute but also warned them to always be careful about the Devil’s tricks.

When Hafsa (r. anha) hurt our mother Safiyyah (r. anha), Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) consoled Safiyyah and reproached Hafsa for her incorrect behaviour. Anas (r.a.) narrated this incident as follows:

“Safiyyah (r. anha) began to cry when Hafsa (r. anha) looked down on her saying “daughter of a Jew.” Just then the Prophet (pbuh) entered and asked:

“Why are you crying?” Safiyyah replied:

“Hafsa called me the daughter of a Jew.” Allah’s Messenger consoled her saying:

“You are a prophet’s daughter and your uncle was also a prophet,⁴⁵ and you are also a prophet’s wife. Then by which characteristic of hers was she bragging about?” and then he turned to Hafsa:

“O Hafsa! Fear Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63)

45. Describing our mother Safiyyah as “a daughter of a prophet” was a reference that she came from Aaron’s lineage. Thus, Moses (A.S.) is the one meant by her uncle. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) reacted patiently and leniently towards his wives' annoying behavior like jealousy, disobedience, and worldly ambition. Even when his wives did something inappropriate, he did not say anything which would hurt their feelings and break their hearts. He just showed his disapproval by his facial expressions. Even during the infamous incident of 'Ila⁴⁶ he did not say anything hurtful, but just did not go to their apartments for a month. (Muslim, Talak, 29, 34-35; Ibn Hanbal, I, 34)

Here is another example of the Prophet educating his wives:

It was narrated by Aisha (r. anha):

"Safiyah's camel got injured during a journey. Zainab had an extra mount with her. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked Zainab:

"Why do not you give one of your mounts to Safiyah?" When she refused to give it saying:

"Am I going to give it to this Jewess?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) became very angry and he did not go to her apartment for the moths of Dhilhijjah, Muharram, and part of Safar. (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 3; Ibn Hanbal, VI, 261)

The Prophet's anger was to teach his followers the wrongness of belittling a person because of an accidental attribute such as race, lineage, tribe, or country. He also taught and warned about the wrongness of showing indifference in the care of the needy.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also educated his wives about charity. One day a type of lizard was brought to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as a present. Because he did not like to eat lizards, Aisha (r. anha) asked permission to give it to a poor person that passed by the door. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) told her:

"Do not give to the needy the things that you do not eat yourself." (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 105, 123)

Aisha (r.anha) narrated that:

"I said to the Prophet (pbuh):

46. 'Ila: means a conditional or unconditional oath made by a husband not to have sex with his wife for a certain or uncertain period of time. Because of some inappropriate actions of his wives Allah's Messenger (pbuh) swore not to sleep with them for a month. (Bukhari, Sawm, 11, Talaq, 21; Nasai, Talaq, 32; Ibn Majah, Talaq, 24) See for detailed information *An Excellent Exemplar*, vol. 1, p.

“It is enough for you that Safiyah is such and such.”⁴⁷ He replied:

“You have said a word which would spoil the sea if it were mixed in it.”
She continued:

“Another day I imitated a man before him (out of disgrace).” He said:

“I would not like to imitate anyone even if I were given the most precious things in the world.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35; Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 51)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not approve of his wives insulting each other and taught them the appropriate behavior till the end of his life when the mothers of the believers gathered around the Prophet’s death bed. Safiyah (r. anha) said:

“O Messenger of Allah! By Allah I want to have the same hardship that you have.” The Prophet’s other wives tried to insult her by using facial expressions. Even though the Prophet (pbuh) did not see what they had done, he said:

“Go and wash your mouths.” They asked surprisedly:

“Why should we wash our mouths?” He said:

“For insulting Safiyah by your eyes and eye brows ... By Allah she is a sincere person.” (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 348)

Below is another example of the guidance of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) to his family and relatives:

Aisha (r. anha) was sitting with her sister Asma. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) entered. Asma was wearing thin and loose Damascene dress. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) left the room as soon as he saw Asma. Aisha (r. anha) told her sister:

“Leave! The Prophet (pbuh) saw something with you that he does not like.” When Asma left, the Prophet (pbuh) came back. Aisha (r. anha) asked him the reason for his behavior:

“Don’t you see? A believing woman is not allowed to show her body more than this.” Then he pulled the sleeves of his shirt and covered up to his fingers. And he covered his temples with his finger and left his face uncovered. (Haythami, V, 137)

47. Another narrator of this tradition said that what Aisha (r. anha) meant by these words is that Safiyah (r. anha) was short-statured.



Thus, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) personally described and showed Aisha (r. anha) without leaving any doubt how a believing lady should cover herself.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also changed the names which were not compatible with the Islamic faith as part of his education.⁴⁸ Indeed some of the names of believers' mothers, i.e. Juwairiyah, Zainab bint Jahsh, and Maimunah, are the result of this prophetic sensitivity. (Muslim, Adab, 14-19; Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 118, 138)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh), who regarded praying as very important in every aspect of life, taught his family several prayers. For instance, Aisha (r. anha) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) advised her to say the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ
 أَعْلَمْ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ
 أَعْلَمْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا سَأَلَكَ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ
 مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَادَ بِهِ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ
 إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ
 أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَأَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ كُلَّ قَضَاءٍ قَضَيْتَهُ لِي خَيْرًا

“O Allah! I ask from You all kinds of goodness, the immediate ones and the delayed ones, the ones that I know and the ones that I do not know. I seek refuge in You from all kinds of harm, the immediate ones and the delayed ones, the ones that I know and the ones that I do not know. O Allah! I ask from You the goodness that was asked by Your servant and Your Prophet. And I seek refuge in You from the harm which Your servant and Your Prophet sought refuge in You. O Allah! I ask from You the Paradise and the word and deed that get

48. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) changed the repugnant personal and place names not only reminding polytheism but he even changed the names causing vanity. For instance when he heard that Barra was boasting by her name meaning all kinds of goodness, he changed it to Zainab. (Muslim, Adab, 15-18)



closer to Paradise. I seek refuge in You from the Hell and the word and deed that get closer to the Hell. I ask from You to turn every judgment that You give about me into goodness for me.” (Ibn Majah, Dua’, 4; Ibn Hanbal, VI, 134)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked for help from some of the well-educated women Companions for the education of his wives. It was narrated by Shifa’ bint Abdullah:

“The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) entered when I was with Hafsa, and he said to me:

“Why don’t you teach her the spell for skin eruptions as you taught her writing?” (Abu Dawud, Tibb, 18)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) educated his family members about faith, worship, and manners, so they became ready for not only the life in this world but also the life in the Hereafter. And thus they have become very talented teachers showing the straight path to the followers of the Prophet (pbuh).

4. His Consultation of His Wives

“Those who consult do not regret.”

Haythami, II, 280

The Arabic word *istashara* which literally means to get honey from a hive, denotes to ask or seek advice, to consult, to take counsel with.

Establishing an opinion by benefiting from various minds and experiences is similar to making honey by gathering pollen from various flowers and offering it to people. Allah the Almighty addresses His Messenger (pbuh) in the Qur’an:

“And take counsel with them in (your) affairs; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust.” (Al-i Imran 3; 159) and thus Allah the Almighty expresses the significance of counseling and shows us its method.

When Allah the Almighty mentions the characteristics of believers in the Qur’an, He states **“...and their affair is to take counsel among themselves...”** (al-Shura 42; 38) after counting the qualities of faith, trust in Allah, abstaining from committing sins, controlling anger and forgiveness. Therefore counseling is stated among the necessary qualities of the believers.

In the following saying, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) expressed how counseling comforts one's soul and reduces mistakes to the minimum:

“Those who perform istahara⁴⁹ will not be disappointed and those who counsel will not regret and those who spend moderately will not become poor.” (Haythami, II, 280)

However, one should be careful about choosing the people from whom one takes one's counsel. In this respect, Umm Salama (r. anha) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

الْمُسْتَشَارُ مُؤْتَمَنٌ

“One whose advice is sought must be someone trustworthy.” (Tirmidhi, Adab, 57)

Consulting occupied a very important place in the life of Allah's Messenger (pbuh). Abu Hurairah (r.a.) said that:

“I have not seen anybody who seeks counsel from his friends more than the Messenger of Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Jihad, 35)

Allah's Messenger especially advised to consult with women regarding their personal affairs:

“Take counsel with women in their affairs.” (Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, IV, 15)

“A woman without a husband (or divorced or a widow) must not be married until she is consulted, and a virgin must not be married until her permission is sought.” (Muslim, Nikah, 64)

Likewise, he (pbuh) said:

“Consult women about (the marriage of) their daughters.” (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 22-23) and thus advised not to wed girls without consulting their mothers first.

The Holy Qur'an expresses the necessity of consultation between spouses as follows:

49. * To lie down to sleep after performing duties of worship and saying a special supplication in the hope that Allah will show the best by a dream.



“...If they desire to wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, it is no sin for them...” (al-Baqara 2; 233)

As it is pointed out in this verse, when spouses seek each other’s opinion and agree upon something, they make fewer mistakes. Because of acting based on due diligence, at least they will not be held responsible even if they do not reach the right decision.

When we examine the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), we see that he sought his wives’ advice in every aspect of life, even though he did not need anybody’s advice; because he received revelations from Allah the Almighty and spoke with Gabriel. However, he became an example for his followers and showed them the significance of counseling. He personally applied in his family what he ordered his followers to do.

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) considered his wives’ suggestions seriously and did not oppose them unless they were against the principles of Islam. In fact, his daughter Zainab’s marriage with Abu al-As was conducted as a result of his wife Khadijah’s proposal. The narrator of this incident said that:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would not oppose Khadijah (r. anha).” (Haythami, IX, 213)

During the days when he was given the prophetic mission, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) revealed his situation first to Khadijah and took her counsel. She comforted him and took him to her cousin Waraqa (Bukhari, Shahadat, 16)

Regarding this, Aisha (r. anha) said that:

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) asked Zainab bint Jahsh about me saying,

“O Zainab! What do you know and what did you see?” She replied:

“O Allah’s Apostle! I refrain from claiming to have heard and seen what I have not heard or seen. By Allah, I know nothing except goodness about Aisha.” Aisha further added:

“Zainab competed with me in her beauty and in some other qualities, yet Allah protected her from being malicious, because of her piety and righteousness.” (Bukhari, Shahadat, 15, 30; Muslim, Tawbah, 56)

After the Hudaibiyah treaty, the believers manifested their discontent with its articles. Allah’s Messenger had ordered them saying *“Slaughter your*



animals, shave your heads and exit your ihram” but they acted slowly when fulfilling this order. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) angrily went to Umm Salamah’s tent. When our mother asked him:

“O Messenger of Allah! What is wrong?” he told her:

“O Umm Salama! What a strange incident! I told people several times to slaughter their animals, shave their heads and so exit their ihrams. Even though they heard what I said, not a single one of them followed my order.” Thereupon, Umm Salama (r. anha) said to him:

“O Prophet of Allah! Do you want your order to be carried out? Go out and don’t say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and call your barber to shave your head. Then they will certainly follow your orders.” So, the Prophet went out and did not talk to anyone of them till he did that, i.e. slaughtered the sacrifice and called his barber who shaved his head. Seeing that, the Companions of the Prophet got up, slaughtered their sacrifices, and started shaving the heads of one another, and there they were in such a rush that there was a danger of killing each other. (Bukhari, Shurut, 15; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 326, 331; Waqidi, II, 613)

Good manners need to be applied even under the most difficult of circumstances and should not be easily given up in the face of hardships. Our excellent exemplar, the Prophet (pbuh), did not give up his excellent morals even at the end of his life. He closed his eyes to this world still committed to his best morals. Even during the severest times of his illness, he consulted his wives’ opinions and manifested the most excellent example of the concept of justice. One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gathered all his wives and asked their permission to allow him to stay in Aisha’s house. He told them:

“Where am I going to be tomorrow?” They replied his question. Some of them said:

“Obviously Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) wants to stay at the apartment of Abu Bakr’s daughter.” So they accepted his request saying:

“O messenger of Allah! We are like sisters so we accept that you stay with her.” Allah’s Apostle dressed in his upper shirt and came out with the help of his relatives and went towards Aisha’s apartment.

Aisha narrates this incident as follows:

“When the health of Allah’s Apostle deteriorated and his condition became serious, he asked all his wives’ permission to allow himself to be treated in my house, and they allowed him. He came out, supported by two men and his legs were dragging on the ground between Abbas and another man. (Bukhari, Tibb, 22; Ibn Hanbal, VI, 34, 38; Balazuri, *Ansab*, I, 545)

The love of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) for Aisha (r. anha) must be because of her smartness, gift of knowledge, and her deep understanding the Book of Allah.

5. Helping His Wives

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was a human being. He used to sew his clothes, milk his sheep, and do his work by himself.”

Ibn Hanbal, VI, 256

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) tells us that we will be rewarded for our services to all living beings (Bukhari, Shurb, 9) and he himself manifested the best examples of serving the creation. This is why it is not hard to understand how compassionate and kind he was towards his family. He saw women as the trusts from Allah and treated them with the utmost sensitivity and kindness. Even though his wives showed great attention to him and interest in serving him, he tried to do his own work; he cleaned his clothes, milked his animals, mended his clothes and shoes, swept his house, fed his animals, and carried things he had bought from the market. He did not like to be a burden upon others.

Aisha (r. anha) was asked about the Prophet’s life at home at various times, she gave the following responses:

“Like you do, he would mend his shoes and sew his clothes.” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 106)

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was a human being. He used to sew his clothes, milk his sheep, and do his work by himself.” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 256)

“He used to work for his family, and when he heard the Adhan (call for prayer), he would go out.” (Bukhari, Adhaan, 44, Nafaqat, 8; Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 45)

There are many reports about the Prophet helping his wives and their appreciation for his help. Some of them are as follows:

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) folded a cloak and placed it on the hump of the camel behind him so as to make a comfortable place for Safiya to sit. He knelt beside his camel so that Safiya could put her feet on his knee in order to mount the camel. (Bukhari, Jihad, 102; Muslim, Nikah, 464)

Likewise, when her camel knelt down making our mother Safiya fall off during a pilgrimage journey. She began to cry and the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) wiped her tears. (Muhibbuddin al-Tabari, *al-Samtu al-Thamin*, p. 143)

Aisha (r. anha) narrated another incident about the Messenger (pbuh) helping her in the kitchen as follows:

"I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) at home. My father Abu Bakr gave us some lambs' feet as a gift. We cut them up in the darkness. Someone who was listening to her asked:

"Did not you have a lamp?" Aisha (r. anha) replied:

"Had we had some oil to put it in our lamp, we would certainly have mixed it in our meal and ate it." (See Ahmad, VI, 217; Ibn Sa'd, I, 405)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also helped to look after his children. One day when he was in his daughter Fatima's home, first Hasan and then Husain asked for water. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) got up and gave water first to Hasan and then to Husain. He then said to Fatima who interpreted the Prophet's action as him loving Hasan more:

"No. Hasan asked first" and then added:

"Treat your children equally in your gifts and donations. If I held some of them superior to the others, I would hold girls superior." (Ibn Hajar, *al-Matalib al-Aliya*, IV, 69; Haythami, IV, 153)

In this context Ali (r.a.) narrated the following incident:

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had come to us. Husain had asked something to drink. The Prophet (pbuh) stood up and went to our sheep and milked her. Just then Hasan came to the Messenger of Allah and wanted to drink the milk, but the Prophet (pbuh) gave it first to Husain. Fatima said:

"O Messenger of Allah! It seems that you love Husain more." He said:

“No, I do not, but he asked first.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 101)

One day our Prophet (pbuh) called his granddaughter Umama. When he saw that she had some dirt next to her eyes, he cleaned them. (Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 233)

Aisha (r. anha) narrated:

“Uthama b. Zaid tripped on the door step and fell down. His face got injured and began to bleed. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became concerned and told me:

“Would you clean the child’s face?” I hesitated a little. Upon which he got up and cleaned the blood off and washed Uthama’s face. Then he told me:

“If Uthama had been a girl, I would embellish her with jewelry, put nice dresses on her, and make her attractive.” (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 49; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 61-62)

Uthama, the son of Prophet’s freed-slave Zaid b. Haritha, was a Companion blessed by the Prophet’s love and known as “Hibb al-Nabi or the one who was loved by the Prophet most.” All his life he fought as the commander of the Muslim army to spread Islam. One reason for the Prophet’s deep love for Uthama was that our Prophet (pbuh) was like a father to him; because his father Zaid (r.a.) had been martyred. Thus, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) embraced and protected the orphaned son of his Companion as if he were his own son.

Even though Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) helped his family in every aspect of life, today believers do not appropriately follow this prophetic custom. Those who think that helping their family is contrary to their manhood should know that this is not something to be ashamed of. On the contrary, it is the practice of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). In other words, the more we help our family the more we follow in the Prophet’s path. Attitudes that are contrary to this do not represent how a believer’s behavior should be. However, it should also be noted that a believer cannot obey and fulfill his wife’s unislamic requests.

6. Taking care of His Family’s Needs

One of the most important duties of the head of a family is to earn his family’s provision and to satisfy its needs. Allah the Almighty has charged the men with this responsibility. This is expressed in a verse as follows:



الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ
عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means.” (al-Nisa 4; 34)

The word “*qawwam*,” which is mentioned as an attribute of men in this verse, is interpreted as “the men who provide for women’s needs, protect them from all kinds of harms, and do the hard work outside of the house.” It is also understood as “the men who teach and discipline their wives, follow their actions, and hold their hands in matters required to be done for the sake of Allah and in matters they need to do in this world.” In another verse, Allah the Almighty says:

“...The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child...” (al-Baqarah 2; 233)

In order to provide his family’s provision Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) worked as much as needed. He emphasized that such efforts will be counted as acts of worship and charity saying:

“Of the dinar you spend as a contribution in Allah’s path, or to set free a slave, or as a sadaqa given to a needy person, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family.” (Muslim, Zakat, 39)

In a lengthy narration reported by Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (r.a.), the Prophet (pbuh) addressed him saying:

“You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allah’s sake even if it were a morsel which you put in your wife’s mouth.” (Bukhari, Iman, 41; Muslim, Vasiyyah, 5)

In other words one will even be rewarded for the money he spends and for his efforts to provide for his family’s needs. Then he will be able to consume his lawfully provided food in the happiness of his home with his family. To be able to put a morsel in one’s wife’s mouth, as it was expressed in the above mentioned prophetic saying, he needs to act with happiness, sincerity,

and moral maturity in his home. One should treat his wife just as the Prophet (pbuh) treated his wives so that he could win her heart and make jokes with each other; for the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was extremely tactful, polite, and tolerant towards his family.

Our mother Aisha (r. anha) says that:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would be the most jolly and gentle of people when he was alone with his family.” (Ali al-Muttaqi, VII, 222)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) took every measure to provide for his family’s needs and did not leave them in privation. He advised his followers that it is better to leave their families rich than to leave them poor, begging from people. (Bukhari, Janaiz, 36; Muslim, Wasiyya, 5)

In the following report Anas b. Malik (r.a.) expressed how much the Prophet (pbuh) attached significance to provide for his family’s needs.

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) borrowed some barley from a Jewish man and left his armor as surety. Just then I heard that the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“The household of Muhammad did not possess even a single Sa⁵⁰ of wheat or food grains for the evening meal, although he has nine wives to look after.” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 14)

The Prophet used to sell the dates of the garden of Bani An-Nadir and store enough food for his family to cover their needs for a whole year. He would leave the rest to the state treasury. He maintained this custom all his life. (Bukhari, Nafaqat, 3; Muslim, Jihad, 49)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) obtained some camels to provide a living for his family. Every other day this camel herd used to be grazed on the pastures of Uhud and al-Jamma. When the camels returned from the pastures, they would be milked and their milk first would be offered to the guests. And Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would share the rest of the milk with his wives. Umm Salama (r. anha) also reported that the Prophet (pbuh) reserved a special camel for each one of his wives and he, himself, owned the most productive milk camel. She also stated that they had mostly provided for their provision from camels and sheep. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 494-96)

50. Sa’ is a weight measure which is equal to 2120 gr.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) built a humble but separate apartment for every one of his wives and thus he also fulfilled their needs of residence. Our Prophet (pbuh) stated that a head of a family could not gain tranquility without providing a nice residence for his family saying:

"There are three things that make a person happy: a pious woman, a nice house, and a nice mount. And the three things that make a person unhappy are an evil wife, a shabby house, and a bad mount." (Ibn Hanbal, I, 168)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) not only provided for his family's needs when he was alive but also thought about what would happen to them after his death saying: *"thinking about your situation is one of the things that makes me sad."* (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 25)

When the Prophet's wives had been given to choose either life in this world or life in the Hereafter, they chose the latter. This was why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not leave them a great amount of wealth; however, he did not forget to allocate 80 wasq⁵¹ of dates and 20 wasq of wheat for each one of his wives. (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 56, 69, 127)

The head of a family should satisfy his family's every need. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned those who neglected this duty because of being occupied with other acts of piety or for another reason saying:

"It is sin enough for a man that he withholds the subsistence from one whose master he is." (Muslim, Zakat, 40; Abu Dawud, Zakat, 45)

Uthman b. Ma'dhun's wife Hawla bint Hakim was a lady who used to wear nice clothes. One day she came to Aisha (r.anha) in a shabby dress. Our mother asked her:

"What happened to you?" She said:

"My husband prays at nights and fasts during the days." Just then the Prophet (pbuh) entered the room. Aisha (r. anha) told him everything. After which Allah's Messenger talked to Uthman saying:

"Uthman we are not commanded with priesthood. Am I not an excellent exemplar for you? By Allah! I am the most God-fearing among you and I am the most careful one among you about Allah's boundaries." (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226; Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isaba*, IV, 291)

51. One wasq is about 200 kg.

Allah the Almighty bestowed great blessings on and rewarded their efforts to provide for their families' living as an act of worship and spending on them as an act of charity. Because of this, people should accept working for their families' needs with the same good heartedness with which they accept the acts of worship. However, one should not exaggerate and forget the Hereafter while working for this life. Actions required for the Hereafter must be meticulously fulfilled. One should wisely spend the limited time given to him in order to ensure his wellbeing both in this world and in the Hereafter.

7. The Wisdom behind the Prophet's Polygamy

Polygamy is as old as human history. It is a part of human nature and a requirement of the struction of certain societies. It can be attributed to various causes such as society's life style, balancing the population, local circumstances. Studies have shown that polygamy is experienced in every region and in every nation of the world. Polygamy is approved by Eastern religions like Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism and it is not prohibited by Judaism and Christianity. In fact it is stated in the Old Testament that Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and many other prophets (peace be upon them) had multiple wives. However, people in the following ages prohibited polygamy and, following their selfish desires, they committed sins and destroyed their societies. People who criticize Islam due to its permitting polygamy are not aware that they are blinded by contemporaray bias. For many of those people have more than one relationship at the same time even though they are formally married to one person. What is worse is that they are not afraid to have such relationships openly and so they, day by day, cause corruption of the society in which they live.

Even though Islam permits polygyny, it encourages monogomy. Those who have more than one wife are confined by certain conditions and the number of marriages is limited by four. Allah the Almighty expresses in the Qur'an:

“And if you fear that you will not deal fairly with the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if you fear that you cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess. Thus it is more likely that you will not do injustice.” (al-Nisa 4; 3)



When this verse was revealed, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) ordered his Companions who had more than four wives to choose four of their wives and to divorce the rest. (Timmidhi, Nikah, 33; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 40)

Polygamy is expressed in the Qur'an within the context of healing social wounds and inviting believers to self-sacrifice. Polygamy may become obligatory during the times of war when the male population decreases significantly. During extraordinary circumstances when the male population diminishes because of war or some other reason and leaves many widows and orphans behind, polygamy becomes an important responsibility in order to secure the future of the society. This is an undeniable fact which may repeatedly occur in every era.

It is a proven fact that the female birth rate is more than the male birth rate. The Divine Will inclines towards a higher number of women, who play the essential role in the continuation of the generations. When all these are considered, there is nothing more understandable than the permission given by Islam for polygamy, which has presented a world view, which will survive until the end of the world. This is a manifestation of Islam's universality and the understanding of its eternity.

On the other hand it should not be forgotten that polygyny is not "a command" but just a "permission." Polygyny can be done for various reasons like war, sickness, disability, long-term separation, and protection in order to save families from separating and to not leave women without protection. For instance a man who married a sterile woman can get married to another woman without divorcing his first wife and thus harming her. If there is a necessity, he can marry up to four times. By this means, Islam minimizes the material and spiritual harms caused by breaking families up.

Marriage is encouraged for the continuation of human lineage, for the establishment of a strong society, for the protection of morality and chastity, for obtaining closeness to Allah the Almighty, and for increasing the number of the believers. And when there is a necessity, polygyny is the most appropriate institution to realize these goals.

Islam considers all aspects and conditions of life; so when all these requirements are examined, the reasons why Islam permitted polygamy can be understood. It has become not just the religion of healthy human beings but also the old and weak. It has become not just a religion for comfortable times

but also for hard times. It has become not just the religion of men but also the religion of women by giving them their rights and protecting their needs. It is the only religion which thinks about the needs of the individual and the society and which does not permit children to be left in misery and hardships by breaking families up with no reason.

The following are the requirements asked by Islam from those who want to practice polygyny:

1. To deal with all wives justly
2. To have enough financial means.

In respect to fair treatment among wives Allah the Almighty says that:

“You are never able to be fair and just between women, even if it is your ardent desire: but turn not away (from a woman) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If you come to a friendly understanding, and practice self restraint, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (al-Nisa 4; 129)

The fairness mentioned in this verse is the kind felt in the heart. Indeed it is very hard for people to control their feelings; for heart has no will-power. In other aspects of life requirements of justice should be met. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) emphasizes this point by saying:

“If a man has two wives and does not treat them justly, he will be resurrected with one of his sides paralyzed on the Day of Judgment.” (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 47)

On the other hand, because of its drawbacks, polygyny is not completely welcomed in Islam. The difficulty ensuring equal treatment of all wives, jealousy and its possible destructive outcomes for the family show that monogamy is a healthier choice. In the above mentioned verse, Allah the Almighty also advises this and tells us that monogamy is the best way to ensure fairness. It is also understood from some reports that the Prophet (pbuh) got pledges from his son-in-laws Abu al-As and Ali (r. anhum) not to marry another woman after his daughters. (Bukhari, Ashab al-Nabi, 16; Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 96)

This shows that the Prophet (pbuh) was inclined towards monogamy. He had been married with one wife until he was fifty-five years old; however, there were some reasons and some wisdom behind him practicing polygamous



marriage in the final years of his life. It is possible to enumerate some of these reasons as follows:

The Muslim state that emerged in Medina needed to establish good and sincere relations with neighboring nomadic tribes and states in order to gain strength and spread around the world. Conveying the message of Islam among women also called for women Companions close to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who was the protector of his followers, also needed to be prepared to help the needy. Because of these and other reasons, the Prophet (pbuh) got married with a number of women. Allah the Almighty gave special permission to His Messenger in this matter. Allah the Almighty even ordered His Messenger to marry Zainab bint Jahsh (r. anha). (al-Ahzab 33; 37)⁵² He did not put a limit to the number of His Messenger's marriages. (al-Ahzab 33; 50)

Moreover, believers were allowed to marry other believers' divorced wives; but Prophet's wives, who are considered to be the mothers of the believers, were not allowed to marry another man after the Prophet (pbuh). Because of this prohibition, they would most likely fall into hardship, if they were to be divorced by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). And because of this, when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had to get married for some religious or political reasons, he did not divorce his wives exceeding the limit of four.⁵³ It is stated in a verse:

“...that is better; that they may be comforted and not grieve, and may all be pleased with what you gave them. Allah knows what is in your hearts (O men) and Allah is Forgiving, Clement.” (al-Ahzab 33; 51)

52. One of the reports about the wisdom in Prophet's marriages was narrated by Aisha (r. anha):
“Allah's Apostle (pbuh) said to me: *“You have been shown to me three nights in my dreams. An angel was carrying you in a silken cloth and said to me, “This is your wife.” I uncovered it, and behold, it was you. I said to myself: “If this dream is from Allah, He will surely make it to come true.”*” (Bukhari, Nikah, 9, 35; Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 79)
53. Some of the Prophet's (pbuh) personal behavior and actions was not an example for his ummah. He has a special place because of his qualities of being the founder, the first representative, the first executive of a religion and the Messenger of Allah. For instance, he was ordered to perform prayer in the middle of the night (*tahajjud*); he fasted consecutively without a break; and he and his family were not allowed to accept alms. Similarly, Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed that marrying more than four wives was a rule particular to the Prophet (pbuh) cannot be followed by the believers.

When he was twenty five years old, he got married with Khadijah⁵⁴, who was fifteen years older than him, and they had a happy marriage for twenty five years. Having the rest of his marriages in the Medinan period shows that his marriages were mostly related to his prophetic mission.

Islam holds men and women equal in their responsibilities except in matters related to women. Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who trained hundreds of scholars and teachers, was assisted by his wives when it came to educating his female Companions. He educated his male Companions in one part of his mosque, while educating his wives as the instructors of female Companions at his blessed home. The Prophet's wives played a very important role in learning the Islamic rules and practices related to family life and transmitting them to the entire believers.

It was not possible for the Prophet (pbuh) to teach and describe everything directly to his female Companions. Similarly, female members of the Muslim community could not always easily ask questions to the Prophet (pbuh) about Islamic regulations. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sometimes had conversations with them, but these were not as often as the ones with his male Companions. This was why the female Companions had the Prophet's wives be their messengers for their private matters. Moreover, sometimes when the Prophet (pbuh) gave allegorical answers to their questions, his wives were the ones who explained what the Prophet (pbuh) had really meant. (Bukhari, Hayd, 13, 14; Muslim, Hayd, 60; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 107, Darimi, Wudu, 75; Nasai, Gusl, 21; *Muwatta*, Taharah, 105)

Some people came to Umm Salama (r. anha) and said:

"Tell us about the secrets of the Prophet (pbuh)" She told them:

"He has no secrets." Then she became sad for she thought that she had revealed a private matter about the Prophet's family. She regretfully narrated the incident to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He told her:

"You said the right thing." (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 309)

Thus, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) let his wives reveal to the believers all his actions and behavior related to his life, no matter how subtle they were.

54. Hz. Hatice, Resûlullah -sallallahu aleyhi ve sellem-'in hanımları arasında onu hem peygamber hem de peygamberliğinden önce sadece şerefli bir insan ve çok iyi bir eş olarak gören tek hanımıdır.



Whereas he prohibited other people making public their family secrets in society, he permitted, even wanted, everything about his life to be known. Of course, this is a very difficult choice. Nobody could be so sure about himself as to give such permission, because people make many mistakes in their lives and letting them known may result in unfavorable consequences. However, Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who lived by perfect morals in every aspect of his life, was able to give such permission in relation to his own life; for he was always under the Divine protection and he explained the Holy Qur'an to humanity by living it in his life. This is why his life had to be transmitted to his followers with all its details. Only by this means, family matters that would not be otherwise known by the people could be presented for the knowledge of the Muslims.

In this regard, Aisha was the most active one among the Prophet's wives. She was a young, intelligent, perceptive, and smart person. When we consider that Aisha (r. anha) narrated 2210 sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), we may easily say that: "If she had not been a part of the Prophet's life, we would not have learned many important aspects of the Prophet's life. Aisha (r. anha), who also knew and recited many poems by heart (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 73) was one of the most important assistants of the Prophet (pbuh) in his mission.

Aisha (r. anha) knew the Qur'an, the lawful and the unlawful, Islamic law, medicine, poetry, Arab tales, and genealogy very well. Whenever the Companions disagreed about an issue, they would ask her opinion. Even the prominent members of the Companions would consult her. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, IV, 360) In this respect Abu Musa (r.a.) said that:

"If we saw a problem in a narration, we would ask it to Aisha and we would certainly get an explanation from her." (Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 62)

There are even collections of the Companions about narrations corrected by Aisha (r. anha). Abu Mansur al-Baghdadi, Imam Zarkashi, and Suyuti are among the scholars who wrote on this topic. According to these books Aisha (r. anha) even warned and corrected the mistakes and misunderstandings of the prominent Companions, such as Umar b. al-Khattab, Ali, Abu Hurairah, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Ibn Mas'ud, Abu Said al-Khudri, Abu al-Darda, Bara b. Azib, Jabir b. Abdillah. She then narrated and taught them the correct tradition.⁵⁵

55. See Suyuti, *Ain al-Isaba fi istidraki Aisha 'ala al-Sahaba*, ed. Abdullah Muhammad Darwish, Maktabat al-'Ilm, al-Qahira, 1988



The famous scholar Zuhri says that:

“If the knowledge of all people and the knowledge of the other wives of the Prophet had come together, Aisha’s knowledge would have dominated.” (Hakim, IV, 12)

Whenever Aisha (r. anha) heard anything which she did not understand, she would search and ask the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) until she understood it completely. Once the Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“Whoever will be called to account (about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection) will surely be punished.” I said,

“Doesn’t Allah say: **“Then whoso is given his account in his right hand he truly will receive an easy reckoning.”** (al-Inshiqaq 84; 7-8)

The Prophet (pbuh) replied,

“This means only the presentation of the accounts but whoever will be questioned about his account will certainly be ruined.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 35)

Umm Salama (r. anha) was, too, known by her knowledge, perception, eloquence, and virtue. When Muslims acted slowly in obeying the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) at Hudaibiyah, she gave him sound advice. Her words to Umar during the incident of *I’la* were also evidence of her knowledge and perception. She narrated 378 sayings from the Prophet (pbuh) (Zahabi, II, 203, 210). She comes after Aisha among the mothers of the believers in her amount of knowledge. This is why she played a very important role in conveying the message of Islam with the Prophet (pbuh).

The following conversation between the Messenger of Allah and Hafsa (r. anha) another wife of the Prophet (pbuh), shows us how important the Prophet’s marriages were in spreading the message of Islam:

Umm Mubashshir reported that she heard Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) saying in Hafsa’s presence:

“God willing, those from the people of the Tree who pledged allegiance under it would never enter the fire of Hell.” Then Hafsa asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Allah the Almighty has said **“And there is not one of you but shall come to it; this is an unavoidable decree of your**



Lord.” (Maryam 19; 72) How will this happen?” Thereupon, Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) recited the following verse saying:

“Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has said: **“Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evil-doers crouching there.”** (Maryam 19; 72) And then he explained that **coming to the Hell-fire** meant crossing over the Sirat Bridge and passing by Hell; but it did not mean entering it (Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahabah, 163).

We should not conclude from all these reports that the Messenger of Allah conveyed the message of Islam only with the help of his wives. He merely benefited from the help of his spouses, relatives and friends on his difficult and painful path.

One of the reasons for the Prophet’s marriages was to reform some wrong beliefs that had become established in the society. Allah the Almighty had His Messenger abolish the false beliefs and customs and approve the correct ones during his lifetime; for only a Prophet who is supported by Divine revelation could change such deeply rooted beliefs. By marrying his aunt’s daughter Zainab bint Jahsh (r. anha) at the age of thirty five, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) ended many unlawful practices related to marriage, adoption, divorce, inheritance, family secrets, and the like. At that time people were adopting children and accepting them like their real children. And they were arranging their marriage and inheritance regulations based on this. By wedding His Messenger to Zainab bint Jahsh, after being divorced by Prophet’s adopted son Zaid, Allah the Almighty corrected this false belief. This is stated in a verse as follows:

“...Zaid had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them; and Allah’s command shall be performed.” (al-Ahzab 33; 37)

One of the points that Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) paid attention to in his marriages was the political relations. With the relationships established through marriages, he gained the friendship of several tribes and by this way a lot of people converted to Islam. For instance, the Prophet’s marriage with Juwairiyah (r. anha) saved seven hundred prisoners of war from the Mustaliq clan with no charge and because of this hundreds of people converted to Islam.

Juwairiyah (r. anha) was the daughter of Harith b. Abi Dirar, the leader of the Mustaliq clan. When the Prophet (pbuh) heard that this clan was getting ready to attack the believers on the fifth year of emigration, he acted more quickly and vanquished them. Juwairiyah (r. anha) was among the prisoners of war. Hoping to warm these people's hearts to Islam, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) benefited from an Arabic custom and proposed to Juwairiyah. She accepted his offer and was granted the honor of being a mother of the believers. When the believers heard about the Prophet's marriage with Juwairiyah, they released all the prisoners of war on the justification that they had become the relatives of the Prophet (pbuh).

Aisha (r. anha) said:

"We have not seen anybody who was more beneficial to her clan than Juwairiyah. Because of her, members of one hundred households were freed." (Abu Dawud, Itq, 2)

Soon after that, members of the clan of Mustaliq converted to Islam.

The marriage of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) with Safiyya bint Huyay, the daughter of a prominent Jew, improved the relationship between the believers and the Jews of Haibar. Allah's Messenger performed this marriage in order to reduce the tension and strengthen the friendship between the believers and the Jews. Safiyyah (r. anha) maintained such a close relationship with the Jews that it attracted attention and raised complaints. She became like their representative in the Prophet's house. One day, Safiyyah's female-slave complained to Umar (r.a.) saying:

"O commander of the believers! Safiyyah likes Saturdays and maintains her relationship with the Jews."

Upon hearing this, Umar (r.a.) sent someone to check this matter. The mother of the believers replied:

"You ask me about Saturday. I do not like that day since Allah granted me Friday. As for your question about the Jews, I have relatives among them and I just keep a close connection with them."⁵⁶ (Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isabah*, IV, 347)

56. Then Safiyya (r. anha) turned to her slave and asked her the reason for her slander. She said: "I just gave into my temptations." Safiyya's response was a good manifestation of how strongly she had embraced Islam: "Go! I emancipated you." (Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isabah*, IV, 347)



The marriage of Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) with Meccan leader Abu Sufyan’s daughter Umm Habiba softened first, Abu Sufyan’s then the whole of the Meccans’ hearts towards Islam. When Abu Sufyan heard of their marriage, even though he had still been an unbeliever, he praised Islam:

هُوَ الْفَحْلُ لَا يُدْعَى أَنْفُهُ

“He is a generous person whom cannot be lead.” It is said that the following verse was revealed following this incident:

“It may be that Allah will grant love and friendship between you and those whom you (now) hold as enemies. For Allah has power over all things; and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (al-Mumtahina 60; 7) (Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isabah*, IV, 306; Wahidi, p. 443) When the Hudaibiyah treaty had been violated, Abu Sufyan came to Medina. Nobody talked to him so he went to his daughter or to the Prophet’s house. However, Umm Habibah took away the Prophet’s cushion from under her father and did not esteem him so much for he was a polytheist. (Ibn Hisham, II, 12-13; Waqidi, II, 791-793)

All these prove how successful was Prophet’s policy was.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) used the marriage institution to establish relations not just with the unbelievers but also with a number of believers. Thus, he succeeded in establishing a strongly connected society. When we examine the lives of leading figures from the early Muslim society, we can observe the strong connection among them based on the institution of marriage. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) got married with the daughters of Abu Bakr and Umar and wedded his daughters to Uthman and Ali (r. anhum). Thus, he established a strong relationship with his prominent Companions.⁵⁷

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) got married to Maimunah (r. anha) on his way back from the minor pilgrimage. Maimunah was thirty six at the time and had

57. A wise man was asked:
“Which one of his caliphs did the Prophet (pbuh) love most?” he replied eloquently:

مَنْ بَنَتْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ

This Arabic sentence can be understood based on the referring places of the pronouns either as “the one who has the Prophet’s daughter in his house” or “the one whose daughter is in the Prophet’s house.” Thus, it highlights that all the four caliphs were equally in the circle of Prophet’s love.



been married twice before. She had eight sisters and all of who were married with the prominent members of different tribes. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) became a relative with a lot of people through this marriage. He wanted to soften the hearts of the Meccans and efface the enmity with them. Hence, he wanted to organize a wedding fest, but the Meccans did not allow him to do that after the three-day-period passed. Consequently, he performed the wedding ceremony in a place called Sarif ten miles away from Mecca. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 43; Tirmidhi, Hajj, 24; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 412-13; Zahabi, II, 240, 245)

One of the reasons for the Prophet's marriages was his endless mercy, compassion, and loyalty towards his ummah. When his blessed life is examined, we can see he felt himself closer towards the needy, suffering people, and those who work for Islam. He was always thankful and loyal to them. When those altruistic people were helpless and in need, he (pbuh) ran for their help as much as he could and rescued them. When his help was not enough for the female Companions, he wedded them to one of his Companions or he, himself, married them. Sawdah, Umm Salama, Zainab bint Huzaimah, and Umm Habibah can be stated among these women.

Sawdah (r. anha) was married with Sakran b. Amr. When believers had been persecuted during the Meccan period, they migrated to Abyssinia. Soon after that, Sakran passed away there. There are also reports that he passed away after he returned to Mecca. Sawdah's altruism and faithful attitude towards Islam attracted the Prophet's praise and in order to help he married her. Sawdah was also a very merciful and compassionate person. She looked after Prophet's little daughters and raised them compassionately.

Umm Salama (r. anha) was one of the first migrants to Abyssinia, two where she migrated twice and after which she migrated to Medina. Her husband and her had to endure many hardships for they were among the earliest believers. When they were about to move from Mecca to Medina, their relatives prevented her from going with her husband. Because of that, she stayed far from her husband and from her children for about a year. During this period she frequently went to a place called Abtah and cried all day. Finally her relatives showed mercy and let her go. Some time later her husband died because of his wounds he had gotten at Uhud.⁵⁸ Allah's Messenger proposed to her in order

58. Abu Salama (r.a.) was one of the intelligent and prominent Companions and who helped the Prophet (pbuh) most. When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) left Medina for the battle of Dhu'l Ashira, he appointed Abu Salamah as the deputy governor of Medina. (Ibn Sa'd,

to bring her under his protection. She had four orphans named Zainab, Salama, Umar, and Durra. They were raised and educated by the Prophet (pbuh). They narrated a lot of sayings from the Prophet (pbuh). Following the footsteps of Aisha, Zainab later became a well-known jurist.

The Prophet's wife Zainab bint Huzaimah (r. anha) had been the wife of Abdullah b. Jahsh, one of the earliest immigrants. (Zahabi, II, 218) Zainab, whose husband got martyred at Uhud, fell in need and thus the Prophet (pbuh) took her under his protection. She passed away two or three months after she had married him (pbuh). (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 115-16)

Umm Habibah (r. anha) was also among the earliest believers. She and her husband fled from the polytheists' persecution and immigrated to Abyssinia. She bore her daughter Habiba there. Unfortunately Ubaidullah converted to Christianity in Abyssinia. He even forced Umm Habiba to convert out of Islam, too. Umm Habiba strongly refused this offer. Shortly after this her husband died. When Umm Habiba (r. anha) left alone and desperate in a foreign country, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) sent her a message and proposed to her. She became very happy at receiving this offer. In the sixth year of hijrah they got wedded by the Abyssinian ruler Ashama and gave her four thousand silver pieces as dowry. Then he sent her and her daughter Habiba to the Prophet (pbuh) with Surahbil b. Hasana. (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 27-28; Nasai, Nikah, 66) Umm Habiba, who narrated sixty five sayings from the Prophet (pbuh), passed away in the 44 year of Hijra in Medina.

Because of her belief Umar's daughter Hafsa (r. anhum) was, too, among those who had to immigrate to Abyssinia. When her husband Hunais passed away because of his wounds from the battles of Badr and Uhud, Hafsa was only twenty years old. By marrying her, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) not only made Umar (r.a.) very happy, but also rewarded a pious lady who was in need.

With the permission and order of Allah, His Messenger (pbuh) made a number of marriages for these and other similar political, religious, moral, and social reasons and especially the need for qualified and experienced women instructors in matters related to women.

II, 9) Again he sent a hundred-and-fifty soldier expedition to a water belonged to the clan of Asad b. Huzainah in Qatan under Abu Salama's command. (Ibn Sa'd, II, 50) By marrying Umm Salama, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) got this dear Companion's trusts under his protection.

In some legal matters one woman's opinion would not be enough. Islam's views regarding women and family life might not be transmitted through the ages. Beside, there was no guarantee that these women would outlive the Prophet (pbuh), which would mean that the regulations of Islamic law could not come into existence.

If Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had married for lust, there were many beautiful girls in Medina, and their fathers would have considered it an honor to give their daughter's hand in marriage to the Prophet. Medinan girls would, too, feel honored at getting married with him and joining the mothers of the believers. But the Prophet (pbuh) did not resort to this path.

It is also remarkable that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not marry any women from Medina for political reasons,⁵⁹ because emigrant women were among the first to endure the pains and they were more in need than the Medinan women.

In short, the Prophet's marriages were the result of his foresight and performed to realize many lofty goals. When we examine the results of his marriages, we can see how successful and to the point his policy was.

B. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) as a Father

One of the main objectives of marriage is to raise children and to ensure the continuation of the human generation. And this primarily depends on the father. The more careful and arduous a father is in raising his children, the more disciplined his children will be and the more peaceful the society will be.

A peaceful family environment is required to raise spiritually and physically healthy children. Fathers have a great responsibility in this matter. One should carefully examine the Prophet's life as a father and deduce the right methods of raising children.

1. His Love and Affection to His Children and Grandchildren

Even though Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who has been sent as a mercy to the worlds, loved and showed mercy to his ummah and even to the entire Cre-

59. In a verse Allah the Almighty described the women whom the Prophet (pbuh) could marry as **"who emigrated with you"** (al-Ahzab 33; 50) Ibn Abbas (r. anhuma) said that: "the Prophet's marriage with other than the women from the emigrant was prohibited." (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33/17-18)



ation, he especially loved children. Children of the age of ignorance, unloved and who had experienced no compassion, turned into the pupils of the society by means of the Prophet's efforts and commitment towards them. Those little hearts, who had not been accustomed to hearing even a few nice words, to be loved and kissed during the age of ignorance, began to receive compassionate and loving care with the arrival of the Prophet (pbuh). Wherever the children saw him, they used to run to him and encircle him. He, in return, would care for each one of them, ask after their well-being, and play with them.⁶⁰

Below are some of the scenes which demonstrate the Prophet's love for children:

When Umm Gulsum, the daughter of Allah's Messenger (pbuh), passed away, he personally led the funeral prayer. Then he sat on her grave, and could not hold his tears back due to his profound love for his daughter. (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 38-39; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 489) When the Prophet's other daughter Ruqiyyah died, he again sat by her grave. Fatimah (r. anha) came to him crying and sat next to him. Allah Apostle (pbuh) wiped her tears with the edge of his cloak and consoled her. (Ibn Hanbal, I, 335)⁶¹

When Fatima (r. anha) came to visit her father, he would rise to welcome her, hold her hands, kiss her and make her sit by him; and when he went to visit her, similarly, she would get up to welcome him, hold his hands, and kiss him. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 143-144) When the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) went on a journey, the last member of his family he saw was Fatimah, and the first he visited on his return was Fatimah. (Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 21)

Umm Salama (r. anha) narrated:

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) called Fatima (r. anha) in the year of Mecca's conquest and they had a private conversation. Fatima cried and then they had another conversation. This time, she smiled. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) passed away, I asked her why she cried and smiled on that day. She said:

60. For further information see the section about "the Prophet's Treatment of Children"
61. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) suffered from all the kinds of pains that a person may suffer from. He lost six of his children during his lifetime. Three of his children and some of his grandchildren passed away at a very young age. Even though he loved his children very much, he did not show any disappointment in his fate, but rather accepted it with patience.



“First the Prophet (pbuh) told me when he was going to die and I cried. The second time he told me that I was going to be the patron of the women along with Maryam bint Imran in Paradise, at which I smiled.” (Tirmidhi, Man-aqib, 60)

After the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) came back from an expedition, he was always welcomed by his children and he would also ask for his children who were not present at the time and followed closely their well-being. Ruqiyya (r. anha) had immigrated to Abyssinia with her husband Uthman (r.a.). For a while nothing was heard about them. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) went outside the city limits and asked people if they had any news about his daughter and her husband. A woman from the Quraish tribe came from Abyssinia. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked her, too.

The woman said:

“O Abu al-Qasim! I saw them.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked her:

“How were they?” She said:

“Uthman had Ruqiya mounted on a donkey and he was walking behind.” At this news Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) became very happy and prayed to Allah for their well-being. (Ali al-Muttaqi, XIII, 63)

When his son Ibrahim was born, Allah’s Messenger was very happy, hugged him and took him to Aisha. He showed his happiness saying:

“Look at him. Does he look like me?” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 137) He gave a slave as a present to Abu Rafi who had brought him the news about his son. (Ibn Abdilberr, I, 54) On the seventh day of his birth, he slaughtered a ram as Aqiqah,⁶² had his hair cut, and gave in charity the equivalent in the value of gold as the amount equal to the weight of his child’s hair that was cut. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 135; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, I, 49)

62. The “*aqiqah*” is the term used for an animal sacrificed for a new born child on the seventh day after the birth. After the aqiqah the child was given a name and had his hair cut. (Tirmidhi, Adahi, 21) It is recommended for the one who can afford it, to sacrifice an animal permitted to eat like a sheep or goat on the seventh day after the child is born. The aqiqah can be sacrificed on the fourteenth or twenty-first day after the birth. As the aqiqah is being slaughtered, it is said: “In the name of Allah! By Allah! O Allah! This is an aqiqah slaughtered for Your sake.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked a leg to be sent to child’s midwife, and to cook he rest without breaking the bones. Then he advised people to eat from it and have others eat from it. (Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 302)

Anas b. Malik reported:

“I have never seen anyone kinder to one’s family than Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), and Ibrahim was sent to the suburb of Medina for suckling. He used to go there and we accompanied him. He entered the house, and it was filled with smoke as his foster-father was a bricksmith. He took his son Ibrahim and kissed him and then came back...” (Muslim, Fada’il, 63)

In his last visit to his son Ibrahim, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was with Abdurrahman b. Awf. They went with Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) to the house of the blacksmith Abu Saif, who was the husband of Ibrahim’s wetnurse. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) hugged, smelled and kissed Ibrahim. Just then, Ibrahim took his last breath. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) began to shed tears.

Abdurrahman b. Awf (r.a.) asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Are you crying? Haven’t you forbid that?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

“O Ibn Awf! These tears are out of mercy.”

Then he wept more and said,

إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ تَدْمَعُ وَالْقَلْبَ يَحْزَنُ وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يَرْضَى
 رَبُّنَا وَإِنَّا بِفِرَاقِكَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَمَحْزُونُونَ

“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.” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 44; Ibn Sa’d, I, 138)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) ordered a rock to be brought to Ibrahim’s grave and placed it upon his grave. Thus, Ibrahim’s grave was distinguished by a sign. His grave was also the first one upon which water was sprinkled. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 144; Ibn Abdilber, I, 59)

How deep the love of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), mercy to the worlds, was towards his son was! He showed all the necessary care, fulfilled his duties as a father, and could do nothing but shed tears out of mercy when his son passed away. He did not lose control and say inappropriate things. Even under such hard circumstances, he taught his Companions exemplary principles such as

love for children, mercy, and how one should behave during such difficult times.

We observe in the Prophet's life a similar love for his grandchildren. Of course, through his actions Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gave a fundamental message to a society which showed no obvious love for their children. Hawla bint Hakim (r. anha) reported:

"One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went out of the house holding one of Fatima's two sons. He was saying:

"Because of you, your parents have become stingy, cowardly, and ignorant. And you are the nice fragrance from Allah." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 11; Ibn Majah, Adab, 3)

Bara (r.a.) said:

"I saw the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He was carrying Hasan (r.a.) on his shoulders and saying:

"O Allah, behold, I love him. You too love him and love one who loves him." (Bukhari, Fada'il al-Ashab, 22; Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahabah, 58, 59)

Ibn Abbas (r. anhumah) transmitted the following pleasant incident:

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was carrying his grandson Husain on his shoulders. A man said:

"O my son! What a nice ride you have!" Allah's Apostle (pbuh) told the man:

"What a nice rider he is!" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30)

This tradition shows not only the Prophet's love but also his esteem for his grandchildren. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was also pointing out the place they were going to occupy in the future.

Our Prophet's love and compassion for his children was at an exemplary level for his ummah. He sometimes took them on his shoulders and sometimes placed them on his stomach and thus entertained them. (Haythami, IX, 181) They sometimes climbed on the Prophet's shoulders and back while he was leading a prayer in the mosque, but he did not stop them. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated the following:



“We were performing the night (*‘isha*) prayer with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). When the Prophet (pbuh) prostrated, Hasan and Husain (r. anhum) climbed up on his back. When the Prophet (pbuh) raised his head, he took gently and put them down on the ground. When he went down for second prostration, they climbed up again. This continued until the end of the prayer. After the prayer, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had his grandchildren sit on his knees. I went to him and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! If you would like, I can take them home.” Suddenly, a (miraculous) light shone. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told them:

“Go to your mother!” The light continued to shine until they went into their house. (Ibn Hanbal, II, 513)

This way, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) taught his Companions love for their children.

Anas (r.a.) narrated:

“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was asked:

“Which one of your family do you like the most?” He replied:

“Hasan and Husain”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) used to command Fatima (r. anha):

“Bring me my sons” when they were brought, he would hug and smell them. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30)

One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was going to an invitation with his Companions. Husain was playing with his friends. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) moved forward and passed his Companions. He opened his arms and tried to catch Husain. Husain began to run and the Prophet (pbuh) tried to catch him. Eventually, he caught his beloved grandchild, held his head and kissed him. Then he said:

“Husain is from me and I am from Husain. Allah love the one who loves Husain ...” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 172)

Abu Huraira (r.a.) narrated the following incident about the Prophet’s loving character:

“I was with Allah’s Apostle in one of the Markets of Medina. He left the market and so did I. Then he asked thrice,

“Where is the little one? Call me Hasan!”

So when Hasan came, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) opened his arms and Al-Hasan did the same. The Prophet embraced and kissed him and said,

“O Allah! I love him, so please love him and love those who love him.”
 Since Allah’s Apostle said that nothing has been dearer to me than Al-Hasan.”
 (Bukhari, Libas, 60)

Allah’s Messenger’s love could be seen when he performed the most serious works. For instance, once while the Prophet (pbuh) was giving a sermon, his grandson tripped and fell down entering the mosque. He stopped his sermon, went down the pulpit, and picked his grandson up. He then let his grandson sit on the pulpit and continued his sermon. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30) Similarly, even during a big event like the conquest of Mecca, he let his grandson Ali, son of Zainab, sit with him on his mount and they entered the city together. (Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, IV, 126)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was also the most tolerant person towards the children’s misbehavior. This was the result of Prophet’s love for his children. The following narration reported by Anas b. Malik (r.a.) demonstrates this well:

“One day the angel of rain came to the Prophet (pbuh) with the permission of Allah the Almighty. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told his wife:

“O Umm Salama! Shut the door behind us and do not let anybody in.”

Just then, Husain came running. Umm Salama (r. anha) did not want to let him in. But he pushed the door and went in. And then he sat on the Prophet’s lap. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) put him on his shoulder, kissed and rubbed his head. (Ibn Hanbal, III, 242; Haythami, IX, 187)

Once, Umm Fadl, the wet-nurse of either Hasan or Husain, appeared in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and left the boy on the Prophet’s lap. Just then, the boy relieved himself and because of this Umm Fadl hit the boy. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) warned her saying:

“You hurt my boy, may Allah have mercy on you!” and showed that one should be tolerant towards children. (Ibn Majah, Tabir, 10)



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) loved not just Hasan and Husain but also his other grandchildren. In fact Abu Qatada (r.a.) said that:

“I saw Allah's Messenger (pbuh) leading prayers while his granddaughter Umama, the daughter of Zainab, was on his shoulders. When he bowed, he put her down, and when he got up after prostration, he lifted her again.” (Bukhari, Salat, 106; Muslim, Masajid, 41)

One day a rooster pecked at six-year old Abdullah's face, Uthman's son and the beloved grandson of the Prophet (pbuh). His face swelled up and he became very sick. He did not recover and later passed away. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) led his funeral prayer and Uthman (r.a.) placed him in the grave. Just then the Prophet (pbuh) while shedding tears said:

“Allah the Almighty shows His mercy to His servants who are merciful and soft-hearted.” (Ibn Sa'd, III, 53-54, VIII, 36; Baladhuri, Ansab, I, 401)

There are many reports about the love and concern that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) showed towards his children and grandchildren. This concern was not just because of the blood kinship among them but also a manifestation of the requirement of his mission towards all humanity. Our children are the trusts of Allah the Almighty to us. We should follow in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (pbuh) and pay more attention to our children's education and discipline, and raise them with love in the service of humanity.

2. His Attention to Their Discipline

“Teach your children first the phrase

“La ilaha illa Allah or there is no god but Allah.”

(Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, IV, 398)

The family is the first door to a child's education and discipline. The things that children see in their family stay alive in their minds and shape their personality for their whole lives. Imam Ghazali said:

“Children are trusts to their parents. Their hearts are pure and rough jewels. They are ready to accept everything given to them. If the right things and good manners are given to them, they grow up with such feelings, and make their parents happy both in this world and in the Hereafter. If they are not controlled and bad manners are taught to them, they become a trouble and burden on others. The sin for such a bad end is upon their parents.”

As a father Allah's Messenger (pbuh) paid the utmost attention to his children's discipline. He advised his followers to be concerned primarily with the discipline of their family members and said to the envoys that came to him:

“Go back to your families and teach them what you have learned here.”
(Bukhari, Adhan, 18)

Parents should not neglect to pray for the goodness of their children. Their education needs to begin by prayer. Abraham's (A.S.) following prayer for his children highlights this matter:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا
وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنْكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Our Lord! And make us both submissive to You and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to You, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely You are the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.” (al-Baqara 2; 128)

In another verse Allah the Almighty teaches the believers the following supplication:

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

“Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the Grace) to lead the righteous.” (al-Furqan 25; 74)

Giving a child a proper name is also among the important matters related to his education. Because a nice name repeated for the entire life will cause conscience awakening and develop a strong character. This is why it is said that “the name attracts the named.” In fact, someone's character develops around the meaning of his/her name. Therefore, we need to give our children names which include the Divine names of Allah the Almighty, or the blessed names of our Prophet, or something that is a reminder of goodness and has a good meaning. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:



“*The names dearest to Allah are Abdullah and Abd al-Rahman.*” (Muslim, Adab, 2)

Ali (r.a.) said that:

“I used to love fights and battles, so I named my son *Harb*, or battle. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came and asked:

“*Show me my son! Which name have you given to him?*” I said:

“I named him *Harb*.” He said:

“*No, but he is Hasan.*” When Husain was born, I named him *Harb*, too. Allah’s Apostle came and said:

“*Show me my son! Which name have you given to him?*” I said:

“I named him *Harb*.” He said:

“*No, but he is Husain.*” When I had my third son, I named him *Harb* again. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came and asked:

“*Show me my son! Which name have you given to him?*” I said:

“I named him *Harb*.” He said:

“*No, but he is Muhassin. I named my grandsons with the names of Aaron’s sons: Shabbar, Shubair, and Mushabbir.*”⁶³ (Ibn Hanbal, I, 98; Haythami, XIII, 52)

Another principle which affects the children’s spiritual development is to say a call for prayer into their ears before giving them names. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) recited a call for prayers into Hasan’s ear when he was born. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 106-107; Tirmidhi, Adahi, 16) This way, the first words that the child hears become the statements of the unity of Allah.

In the early years of their lives, children’s character and morality reach a certain level. Thus, family should be very careful during these years. Parents must not forget that every word they say leaves a deep impact on their children. Because of that, parents should always endeavor to teach their children good things. When children began to talk, parents may also begin to teach them prayers and other necessary information. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), in

63. These Aramaic names are the equivalent in meaning to Hasan, Husain, and Muhassin. (Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri*, p. 669-670)



fact, recited the following verse seven times taught to a child from the sons of Abdulmuttalib who began to talk:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ الذَّلِّ وَكَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

“Say: praise be to Allah, who begets no son, and has no partner in (his) dominion: nor (needs) he any to protect him from humiliation: yea, magnify him for his greatness and glory.” (al-Isra 17; 111) (Abdurrazzaq, IV, 334; Ibn Abi Shaybah, I, 348)

Following the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) we first need to teach our children about Allah the Almighty and give them proper education in accordance with the above mentioned verse. In other words, we should teach them that Allah is not like human beings, He has no helper and partner in creating and ruling over the creation. We also need to teach them that human beings should thank Him for His blessings.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated in one of his sayings that:

“Teach your children to say as their first words ” لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ “ (There is no god but Allah)” (Baihaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, VI, 398)

It is really difficult to teach children matters related to faith. Because the Islamic articles of faith, which consist of belief in Allah, angels, books, prophets, the Last Hour, and predestination, present a characteristic of believing in something unseen and unknown; whereas children want to learn such difficult matters through simple questions. They ask very simple but difficult questions that one needs to spend serious effort to get down to their level of understanding. Therefore, teaching such issues requires attention and cooperation with those who are competent.

After teaching our children *kalimat al-tawhid* (statement of the unity of Allah), we need to sew the love for Allah in their fresh and pure minds. For instance, issues like Allah’s love for their creation, His blessings, His ever-forgiveness, can be taught to them. As carried out today in some methods of teaching, children must not be scared of Allah. One should carefully avoid using statements like “Allah will punish you” or “you will be burned in the fire



of Hell,” because such statements place in a child’s mind the idea of an angry God towards His servants.

After giving our children the love for Allah, we should place in them the love for our Prophet (pbuh). In order to achieve this we may follow methods like telling them about the life and morals of the Prophet (pbuh); have them memorize his sayings and give them rewards for every saying they learn. In this respect it will be useful to tell our children frequently about him and about his love for children.

While raising our children, our Prophet’s educational priorities have to be our priorities, too. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would especially teach children the ritual prayer along with other matters related to faith. When Hasan (r.a.) was asked what he had remembered about the Prophet (pbuh), he stated the Prophet had warned him not to eat the dates of almsgiving and then added:

“I remember about him: the five daily prayers.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 200)

Similarly, Hasan (r.a.) said that his blessed grandfather (pbuh) taught him the following supplication to recite during *witr* prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ
وَبَارِكْ لِي فِي مَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى
عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

“O Allah! Guide me among those whom You have guided, pardon me among those whom You have pardoned, turn to me in friendship among those on whom You have turned in friendship, and bless me in what You have bestowed, and save me from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree after You; and he has not humiliated whom You have befriended, nor has he honored who is Your enemy. Blessed are You, O Lord, and Exalted.” (Tirmidhi, Witr, 10)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) leniently corrected the children’s mistakes that they made while performing prayer. (Tirmidhi, Juma’, 60)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) advises us to be more stringent when educating children about prayer and separating children’s beds when they reached ten

years of age. (Abu Dawud, Salat, 26) Therefore, ten is the age that children need to begin performing their prayers and their beds should be arranged separately. Even if children are the same sex, they have to sleep in separate beds. It is also necessary to have girls and boys sleep in different rooms. The instruction necessary for the age of puberty should be given in an appropriate manner.

Qur'anic education in early ages should not be neglected. Children's ears need to be accustomed to the sound of Qur'an and their heart to the world of the Qur'an. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

"Whoever learns the Qur'an in his early years, the Qur'an penetrates into his flesh and blood." (Ali al-Muttaqi, I, 532)

After religious education, we should give our children vocational education, too. The Prophet's freed slave Rafi' stated that:

"I asked the Prophet (pbuh):

"O Messenger of Allah! Do our children have any rights upon us like we have upon them?" He said:

"A child's right upon his father is to teach him how to write, swim, shoot, and not to feed him with anything but lawful food." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, VI, 401; Ali al-Muttaqi, XVI, 443)

The Prophet's other related sayings are as follow:

"A child's right upon his father is to give him a good name, to wed him when he reaches puberty, and to teach him how to write." (Ali al-Muttaqi, XVI, 417)

"... to bring him up in a respectful place in society and to teach him good manners." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, VI, 401-402)

"Teach your boys how to swim and shoot arrows and to your girls how to spin yarn." (Suyuti, II, 52)

In his (pbuh) other saying, Allah's Messenger warns those who do not properly discipline their children about the questioning on the Day of Judgment:

"O the Day of Judgment, the servant will be brought and Allah the Almighty will ask him:



“O My servant! Did I not give you eyes, ears, property, and offspring? Did I not honor you and make you the chief and provide you the spouse and subdue for you horses, camels, and afforded you an opportunity to rule over your subjects?”

The servant shall say:

“Yes, You did.” And then Allah shall say:

“Did you not think that you would meet Me today?” And he shall say:

“No, I did not.” Thereupon, He (Allah) shall say:

“Well, We now forget you as you have forgotten Me.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 16; Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 6; Ibn Hanbal, II, 492)

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that religious and moral discipline is the most useful legacy one can leave their children. This task is much more important than the others.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“A father cannot give his children anything better than good morals.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 33)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who paid attention to shaping a child’s character in the early ages, expressed in another saying:

“For a Muslim to teach good manners to his children is better than giving one sa’ in charity.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 33)

Good morals are the best provision prepared for the Hereafter.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would carefully follow his children’s actions and be meticulous about their discipline. After he raised his daughters, he even followed their progress after their marriage. From time to time he gave them advise and warnings about peace and tranquility in their homes. Once Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came to his daughter Ruqiyah’s home. Ruqiyah was washing her husband Uthman’s head. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“My beloved daughter! Be nice to Uthman and treat him well; for morally he is the one among my Companions who most resembles me.” (Haythami, IX, 81)

We see in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that he was closely concerned with his grandchildren’s education. As known, it was forbidden for

the Prophet's family to eat from the property of almsgiving. In relation to this, here is a conversation that took place between him and his grandson Hasan (r.a.):

“Hasan (r.a.) took a date from the treasury and put it in his mouth. Allah's Apostle looked at him and took it out from his mouth and said,

“Don't you know that Muhammad's offspring do not eat from what is given in almsgiving?” (Bukhari, Zakat, 57)

Hasan (r.a.) narrates from his memory as follows:

“I took a date from a pile given as alms and as I was chewing it, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) took it out of my mouth and threw it back into the pile. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was told:

“What could happen to you from the single date taken by this little boy?”

Allah's Apostle replied:

“We are the family of Muhammad. We are not allowed to eat from what is given as alms.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 200)

Here, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not confine himself to telling his grandson “do not eat the date” but he also took it and threw back into the pile. He then explained why he had done so. This is another important part of a child's education. Children are usually prone to wonder the reasons for prohibitions. If the reasons are explained to them, they become satisfied. Children need to be treated like adults. When this is done, their characters will develop more healthily. Another significant point is that one should not see children as kids and treat them in a way that they will restrict their learning later. When they make a mistake, it should be corrected immediately in a proper manner. For instance, when Allah's Messenger (pbuh), saw his stepson Umar b. Salama eating from different parts of his plate, he (pbuh) told him nicely:

“O my son! Mention the Name of Allah and eat from the dish with your right hand from where is nearer to you.” (Bukhari, At'imah, 2)

In other versions of this narration, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) begins his words by saying:

“O my son! Come closer to the table” which is the best manifestation of mercy and compassion in education.



Preparing children for a settled family life is closely related to the exemplary way of upbringing. One should teach one's children to be attached to their homes, be considerate about the times of entering and leaving their home, and have their meals at home with their family. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was concerned with what time his children returned and left their homes. For instance, he liked them to go back to their houses before the midday heat. According to a narration by Fatima (r.anha), one day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) came and asked:

"Where are my boys?" She said:

"Ali took them out." The Prophet (pbuh) went out and found them playing in a place called Mashruba. They had some dates in front of them. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told Ali (r.a.):

"O Ali! Will you not take my sons home before the midday heat?" (Hakim, III, 181)

He also asked his followers to keep their children at home when night fell. (Bukhari, Bad'ul Khalq, 11; Muslim, Ashriba, 96)

Children who were raised under the Prophet's care became excellent examples of manners and morals. They manifested the best manners all their lives. Hasan's (r.a.) uniting approach regarding the issue of the caliphate, Husain's (r.a.) martyrdom for the straight path and his noble behavior during that incident, Fatima's (r. anha) chastity and modesty are the peak examples of good morals.

Here it would suffice to give an example from Fatima's (r. anha) life:

"When she was on her death bed, she said to Asma bint Umais (r. anha):

"O Asma! I do not like the things done to women during their funerals. People place a cloth which does not hide woman's body form." Asma said:

"O daughter of the Messenger of Allah! Would you mind if I describe to you something that I witnessed in Abyssinia?" Then she asked for some palm branches, curved them like bows and covered them with a piece of sheet. (In a way she built a simple coffin.) Content with this, Fatima asked to be buried similarly. (Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, VII, 226)

In short, when we examine the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as a father, we can see everything that we need to raise our children.

3. Preparing them for the Eternal Life

“O people of the House! Wake up for prayer “Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, and to purify you with a thorough purifying.”

(Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33)

The primary responsibility of a believer is to make preparations for the questioning of the Hereafter in the presence of Allah. This responsibility is not limited to the individual himself but also encompasses his family and relatives, too. Therefore, the head of a family should do everything he can to protect his family from all kinds of problems and to prepare them for the Hereafter. We observe this preoccupation in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). For instance, when the following verses of thirty third chapter of the Qur’an were revealed,

“O wives of the Prophet! you are not like any other of the women. If you will be on your guard, then be not soft in(your) speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a good word. And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.” (al-Ahzab 33; 32-33) He stopped by Fatima’s house on his way to the mosque for a period of six months and told them:

“O people of the House! Wake up for prayer “Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, and to purify you with a thorough purifying.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33)

During some of the nights before dawn, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would go to Ali and Fatima’s house and wake them up for *tahajjud* prayer saying:

“Aren’t you going to get up for the prayer?” (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5)

In this respect, Ali (r.a.) narrated the following striking incident:

“Fatima was the most beloved one for the Prophet (pbuh) among his family. Due to using a grinder, she would get blisters in her hands; due to carrying water in water-skins, she would have wounds on her neck; and due to sweep-



ing her house, she would have dust all over her. Once when some slaves were brought to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), I told Fatima:

“Why do not you go and ask for a slave from your father?”

She went. When she arrived, she saw that the Prophet (pbuh) was conversing with some people and she turned back. The following day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came to Fatima and asked:

“*My dear daughter! What was your need?*” Fatima kept quiet and did not answer. I stepped in and said:

“Let me tell you O Messenger of Allah.” And I explained the situation to him:

“Fatima got blisters in her hands from grinding and wounds on her shoulders from carrying water in water-skins. When slave came, I told her to go and request a servant from you to get some rest.” Following my explanation, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“*O Fatima! Fear Allah, perform your acts of worship and do your family’s housework. When you go to bed, say subhanallah thirty three times, Alhamdulillah thirty three times, and allahuakbar thirty four times. Which makes a hundred in total. This is much better for you than a servant.*” Thereupon Fatima (r. anha) said:

“I am content with Allah and His Messenger.” And the Prophet (pbuh) did not give her a servant. (Abu Dawud, Haraj, 19-20)

In another narration, it is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) also added:

“*By Allah I cannot give you a servant while my Companions of suffa tie rocks to their bellies because of hunger and I have nothing to give them. I will sell these slaves and spend the revenue on them.*” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 106)

It is really meaningful that the Prophet advised things that are provisions for the Hereafter to his daughter, who had asked for a worldly thing. Since righteous deeds will be the only thing left for the Hereafter, the Prophet’s guidance for his daughter in that direction is a very significant example for his followers as a method of preparing one’s household for the Hereafter.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) warned his relatives including his daughter Fatima by saying:

“Buy yourselves from Allah. You can request from my property as much as you like but I cannot defend you before Allah.” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 13-14; Muslim, Iman, 348-353)

One day, when the Prophet (pbuh) came home, he saw that Fatima (r.anha) had a gold chain given to her by Ali (r.a.) as a present. He told her:

“O Fatima! Would you be happy to hear people saying that “the daughter of the Messenger of Allah had a chain made from fire?” And he left without saying anything else.

After which Fatima (r. anha) had the chain sold in the market. She bought a slave with her money and freed him. When the Prophet (pbuh) was informed of this he said:

“All thanks are due to Allah Who has saved Fatima from the Fire.” (Nasai, Zinah, 39)

Even if they are lawful things, worldly possessions may cause someone to go astray. And because of its heavy responsibility, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) preferred a pious life in poverty and he valued the afterlife more than the life in this world. A good example of this is as follows:

It was narrated by the freed slave of Thawban (r.a.):

“When the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) went on a journey, the last member of his family he saw was Fatimah, and the first he visited on his return was Fatimah. Once when he returned from an expedition, she had hung up a curtain on her door, and adorned Hasan and Husayn with silver bracelets. So when the Prophet (pbuh) arrived, he did not enter. Thinking that he had been prevented from entering by what he had seen, she tore down the curtain, unfastened the bracelets from the boys and cut them off.

They went weeping to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh), and when he had taken the bracelets from them, he said:

“O Thawban take this to so and so’s family. Hasan and Husain are my family, and I did not like them to finish up the good things in the present life that Allah the Almighty has bestowed upon them. O Thawban! Buy Fatimah a necklace made from bones and two ivory bracelets (for the children).” (Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 21)



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) not liking his daughter and grandsons to be occupied with worldly adornments took the silver from his grandsons and gave it in charity for Allah's sake, and bought a cheaper necklace for their mother. Fatima (r.anha) understood her father's thinking and did whatever was necessary and appropriate for the daughter of the Prophet.

Another day, the Prophet (pbuh) did not enter Fatima's house. When he was asked the reason, he said that he had not entered because of the ornamented curtains that hung at the door. When he was asked, what should be done, he replied:

"Send it to the family of so and so who are in need." (Bukhari, Hiba, 27)

One day Allah's Messenger (pbuh) ran into Fatima (r. anha) on his way. He asked her:

"O Fatima! What made you leave your house?" Fatima (r. anha) said:

"I came to this funeral parlour. I was saddened by what happened to them and offered my condolences to them." The Prophet (pbuh) asked:

"Have you gone to their graves?" She replied:

"I fear Allah and I take refuge in Allah to go there after what you had commanded in this respect."

Then Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

"If you had gone to the grave with them, you would not have seen Paradise." (Nasai, Janaiz, 27)

This way, he asked his daughter to abstain from inappropriate behaviors and to take every step in her life thinking of the Hereafter.

As known, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had forbidden visits to the cemetery in the early years of his mission; but after faith in the unity of Allah settled in people's hearts, he permitted it. However, women's cemetery visits are not deemed very appropriate according to Islam; and they are only allowed conditionally. Provided that they do not wail, tear out their hair, show too much respect to the graves, and if there is not fear of mischief, their visits are permitted.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would also check and warn his children about their cloths, too. (Ibn Majah, Libas, 13)

Certainly praying is one of the best ways to get ready for the Hereafter. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) from time to time taught his children some supplications. Below is one of those supplications that he taught to his daughter Fatima (r.a.), which guides people who are preoccupied with the eternal life to take refuge in Allah:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ، أَصْلِحْ لِيْ
شَأْنِيْ كُلَّهُ وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ إِلَى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

“O Allah, the Ever Living and the Self-Existing One! With Your mercy I take refuge in You and ask for Your help. Correct all my actions and do not leave me with my inner self even for a single moment.” (Hakim, I, 730)

Raising a child in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) and teaching him/her good manners is happiness not only for him/her but also for his/her parents. As informed by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“A servant's rank will be raised after his death.

The servant will say:

“Dear Lord! Why have I got this reward?”

Allah the Almighty will tell him:

“The righteous and good child (whom you left behind) has prayed and asked forgiveness for you.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 1; Ibn Hanbal, II, 509)

Every soul will certainly taste death. As it is stated in a verse: **“Truly you will die (one day), and truly they (too) will die (one day).”** (al-Zumar 39; 30) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) too left this world and went to the Hereafter. In this mortal world every believer has to hold on to the deeds that will save him in the Hereafter. By personally performing righteous deeds our beloved Prophet (pbuh) not only prepared himself for the Hereafter but also guided everybody around him to the straight path. Sometimes he checked whether his family members were performing *tahajjud* prayers and sometimes he checked the length of their clothes, warned them about worldly possessions, and directed them to the acts of worship, expressed care about the lawfulness of their food and drinks, in short, he did everything to keep them on the the right path to Allah.



We should not forget about death and the Hereafter by falling into the temporary desires of this world and we will prepare both ourselves and our family for the eternal life. How eloquently Muhammad Asad Erbili states this in one of his poems:

Câhınla sakın Hâlık-ı âgâhı unutma
Bağla kemer-i hizmeti Allah'ı unutma
Aldanma şu tahta sonraki çâhı unutma
Ey gâfil uyan rıhlet-i nâ-gâhı unutma
Yol korkuludur korkusu çok râhı unutma

“Do not forget the Almighty Creator by getting drawn into the ambition of rank and position

Put the belt of service on and do not forget Allah

Do not be deceived by the life of this world and forget the hole (grave) at the end of it

O Headless! Come to your senses and do not forget the immediate migration or suddenly approaching death

The path or death and what is after are frightening, do not forget this scary road!”



II. THE PROPHET'S DEALINGS WITH HIS SERVANTS

“Someone’s spending upon his family, his children, and his maids are all charity.”

(Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 1)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) saw the people in his service like everybody else as the servants of Allah and treated them nicely. For him, there was no difference between a master and a servant in respect to being humans. He first corrected inappropriate references to servants. (Bukhari, Itq, 17) He stated in one of his traditions:

“Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) as saying:

“None of you should say: My bondman and my slave-girl, for all of you are the bondsmen of Allah, and all your women are the slave-girls of Allah; but say: My servant, my girl, and my young man and my young girl.” (Muslim, Alfaz, 15)

Prophet’s order of addressing servants as “my servant,” “my girl,” and “my young son or my young girl” was a compliment unheard of and unimaginable for many at the time.

We can find in the age of happiness how some servants changed their lives as a result of the Prophet’s guidance. The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) made their servants eat from what they ate, and wear from what they themselves wore; they would not ask them to carry loads that were too heavy, or ask them to do hard tasks, and consider them like their real brothers and sisters. (Bukhari, Iman, 22) Because of their example, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) gave them the following advice:

“When your servant brings your food to you, if you do not ask him to join you, then at least ask him to take one or two handfuls, for he has suffered

from its heat (while cooking it) and has taken pains to cook it nicely.” (Bukhari, At’imah, 55; Tirmidhi, At’imah, 44)

“Someone’s spending on his family, his children, and his maids are all charity.” (Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 1)

By means of the Messenger of Allah servants became like the brothers or sisters of their masters. Their feelings and thoughts which had no value previously, started to be respected. Ma’rur b. Suwaid said:

“We went to Abu Dharr (Ghifari) in Rabadha and he had a precious mantle over him, and his slave was wearing one just like it.” (Muslim, Aiman, 40)

In one of reports about the Prophet’s treatment of him, Anas (r.a.), who had been in the Prophet’s service for a long time, said that:

“I never touched silk or velvet softer than the hand of Allah’s Apostle and never smelled musk or perfumed smoke more pleasant than the smell of Allah’s Apostle. I served the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) for ten years, and, by Allah, he never said to me any harsh word, and he never questioned me as to why I had done that and as to why I had not done that.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 53; Muslim, Fada’il, 52, 82)

Aisha (r. anha) reported that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) never beat anyone with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, but only, in the case when he had been fighting for the cause of Allah. (Muslim, Fada’il, 79)

As a manifestation of his mercy, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) prohibited cursing servants and said:

“Your curse may coincide with a time of acceptance of wishes and Allah may accept it.” (Abu Dawud, Witr, 27)

Every human being may make mistakes. What is important is to recognize them and repent. Allah the Almighty forgives His servants’ all kind of mistakes as long as they feel regret and ask for forgiveness. Human beings should also adorn themselves with the Divine attribute of Ghaffar (the Forgiving) and try to forgive other people’s mistakes. Thus, they may attain a state deserving to be forgiven. Considering these facts, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) always advised his followers to forgive the people in their service, since he wanted to guide them to goodness. When a man asked “how many times he

might forgive his servant,” first he gave no reply. So the man repeated his question, but he still kept silent. When he asked for a third time, he replied:

“Forgive him seventy times a day.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 123-124)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) not only forgave his servants but also gave them presents. The following related anecdote reported by the Prophet’s servant Abu Faris is significant :

“I used to spend the nights with the Messenger of Allah. I would bring him water for ablution and fulfill his other services. Once he told me in return for my services:

“Make your wish.” And I said:

“I would like to be with you in Paradise.” Allah’s Apostle asked again:

“Would you not ask something else?” I replied:

“This is my only wish.” He then added:

“Then help me yourself by performing prayers and prostrations.” (Muslim, Salat, 226)

Another time the Prophet (pbuh) wanted to give something to Anas (r.a.) from whose service he was very content and so he prayed for him. The narrator of this incident, Abu al-‘Aliyah, stated the blessings of the Prophet’s prayer saying:

“Anas (r.a.) had a garden which was producing crops biannually. In his garden he also had a sweet basil spreading its fragrance all over the garden.” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 45)

The following report is more remarkable in showing the Prophet’s contentedness with his servants:

Safina (r.a.) narrated:

“I used to be Ummu Salama’s slave. One day she said:

“I am emancipating you provided that you serve the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) for your entire life.” I said:





“Even if you did not stipulate this condition, I would not leave the Prophet (pbuh). So she freed me on that condition.” (Abu Dawud, Itq, 3/3932; Ibn Majah, Itq, 6; Hakim, II, 232/ 2849)

By these words, Safina (r.a.) pointed out that serving the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was not slavery but real liberty.

The Companions (r. anhum) who were educated by the Prophet (pbuh) tried to make their lives resemble his life and to a great extent they succeeded in this. Mu’awiya b. Suwaid (r.a.) reported:

“I slapped a freed slave belonging to us and then ran away. I came back just before noon and offered a prayer behind my father. He called the freed slave and me and said:

“Do as he has done to you.” But he pardoned me. (Muslim, Aiman, 31; Tirmidhi, Nudhur, 15, Abu Dawud, Adab, 123-124)

This Islamic approach has resulted in the emergence of many scholars from the servants and slaves. The Companions had them educated and so become a light for people until the end of the world. For instance Ikrima, Nafi, Mujahid, Hasan al-Basri, and Ibn Sirin (may Allah have mercy upon them all) were among the best known scholars of the succeeding generation of the Companions.

What we should do, like the Messenger of Allah, is to perform our own works; and if we need somebody else’s help, we have to observe the guidance of the Prophet, for he always told the truth and gave orders that were compatible with human nature.



III. PROPHET'S DEALING WITH HIS RELATIVES

“Whoever is pleased that he be granted more wealth and that his lease of life be prolonged, then he should keep good relations with his kith and kin.”

(Bukhari, *Adab*, 12)

In Islamic literature the phrase “*silat al-rahm*” is employed to denote the observance of the requirements of kinship. In Arabic *sila* means ties while *rahm* (which literally means womb) means kinship. Referring to kinship with the word *rahm* is closely related to the fact that people come from the same mother. If people who have kinship ties search for the roots of their kinship, they will eventually see that it ends at the same womb. In other words, the womb provides the kinship. The word *rahm* is also a word derived from the same root with the Divine names of *Rahman* (Most Gracious) and *Rahim* (Most Merciful). The creation of living beings and the continuance of their lives is the manifestation of Allah’s Mercy. If this issue is approached from this angle, it would be much easier to understand why the first place where human beings are created and reside is named *rahm*.

In Islam it is important to keep human relations strong. Visiting relatives beginning with the parents and supporting them is an extremely important Islamic principle.

It is ordered in a verse to serve only Allah the Almighty first, not to ascribe any partners to Him and then to show kindness to parents and other relatives (al-Nisa 4: 36), while in another verse it is stated that:

“O mankind! ... Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and to the ties of relationship. Lo! Allah has been a Watcher over you.” (al-Nisa 4; 1)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor” (Bukhari, Adab, 85) and gave similar advice and orders to many people who recently embraced Islam.

We see the example of this approach in the lengthy narration reported by Amr b. Abasa (r.a.). He said that:

“I, in the age of Ignorance (before embracing Islam), used to think that the people were in error and they were not on anything (which may be called the right path) and worshipped the idols. In the meanwhile I heard of a man in Mecca who was giving good tidings (on the basis of his prophetic knowledge); so I sat on my mount and went to him. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was at that time hiding for his people had made life hard for him. I adopted a friendly attitude (towards the Meccans and thus managed) to enter Mecca and go to him (the Holy Prophet) and I said to him:

“Who are you?” He said:

“I am a Prophet (of Allah).” I again said:

“Who is a Prophet?” He said:

“(I am a Prophet in the sense that) I have been sent by Allah.” I said:

“What is that which you have been sent with?” He said:

“I have been sent to join the ties of relationship (with kindness and affection), to break the Idols, and to proclaim the oneness of Allah (in a manner that) nothing is to be associated with Him.” (Muslim, Musafirun, 294)

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (r.a.) that a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

“Direct me to a deed which draws me near to Paradise and takes me away from the Fire of Hell.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) responded:

“You worship Allah and never associate any partners with Him, establish prayer, and pay alms, and show kindness to your kin.”

When the man turned his back to leave, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) remarked:

“If he adheres to what he has been ordered to do, he shall enter Paradise.” (Muslim, Iman, 14)

In Islam maintaining good kinship ties is considered a means to earn Paradise, whereas breaking these ties and not observing the rights of relatives cause one to become distant from Allah’s Mercy. It was narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.) that the Prophet (pbuh) had said:

“Allah created the creation, and when He finished it, Rahm, i.e. the womb, said:

“(O Allah) at this place I seek refuge with You from all those who sever me (i.e. sever the ties of Kith and kin).” Allah said,

“Yes, won’t you be pleased that I will keep good relations with the one who will keep good relations with you, and I will sever the relation with the one who will sever the relations with you.” It said,

“Yes, O my Lord.” Allah said,

“Then this right is given to you” (Bukhari, Adab, 13; Muslim, Birr, 16)

Another sacred saying of a similar meaning is as follows:

“Allah the Almighty said:

“I am *Rahman*. I have derived the word *rahm* (kinship ties) as a name from My names. I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, (womb, i.e. kith and kin) and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you, (womb, i.e. kith and kin). (Bukhari, Adab, 14; Abu Dawud, Zakat, 45)

Another narration reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.) expresses the piteous end of those who break their kinship ties:

“Every Friday night people’s deeds are presented to Allah the Almighty. The deeds of those who break their ties of kinship are not accepted.” (Ibn Hanbal, II, 484)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) emphasized that the punishment of the oppressors, those who violate the rights and break the ties of kinship, that will be



given in this world. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 43; Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 57) He also expressed the worldly fruits of keeping good relations with relatives saying:

“Whoever is pleased that he be granted more wealth and that his lease of life be prolonged, then he should keep good relations with his kith and kin.” (Bukhari, Adab, 12; Muslim, Birr, 20, 21)

One should keep good relations with his relatives even if they do not show one kindness. It should not be forgotten that those who are treated with kindness by their relatives but do not respond to it are under a grave responsibility. According to a narration reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.), a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I have relatives with whom I try to have a close relationship, but they sever this relation. I treat them well, but they treat me badly. I am sweet to them but they are harsh towards me.” Upon this the Holy Prophet said:

“If it is as you say, then you in fact feed them hot ashes and there shall always remain with you on behalf of Allah an Angel to support you who shall keep you dominant over them so long as you adhere to this path of righteousness.” (Muslim, Birr, 22)

The phrase “you in fact feed them hot ashes” is a metaphor. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) compared the painful state of those who eat hot ashes to the state of those who show kindness to their relatives but do not receive the same treatment from them.

Similarly in the following saying Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) commands his servants to continue having good relations with their relatives, even if they do not respond back in kindness:

“Al-Wasil is not the one who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives, but Al-Wasil is the one who keeps good relations with those relatives who had severed the bond of kinship with him.” (Bukhari, Adab, 15)

It should not be forgotten that one should maintain certain ties with one’s relatives even if they are not Muslims. In a verse believers are ordered not to obey their non-Muslim parents who force them to reject faith, but right after this it is also commanded to “... **keep company with them in this world kindly...**” (Loqman 31; 15)

Abu Bakr's daughter Asma (r. anhumā) said that:

"My mother, who was a disbeliever at the time, came to my home. In order to get his opinion, I asked the Prophet (pbuh)

"O Messenger of Allah, my mother who missed me has come to visit me. May I treat her well?" He said:

"Yes, you may." (Bukhari, Hiba, 30; Muslim, Zakat, 50)

It needs to be known that helping needy relatives is more rewarding than helping others. In this respect Allah's Messenger (pbuh) says that:

"Charity given to the needy has one reward while helping relatives who are in need has two rewards: one reward for charity and one for observing the rights of relatives." (Tirmidhi, Zakat, 26)

Another narration about helping relatives first was reported by Anas (r.a.):

"Abu Talha had the most gardens of date among the Medinan believers (Ansar). For him the garden named Bairuha was the most beloved one among his property, and it was situated opposite the mosque of the Prophet. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) used to enter it and drink from its sweet water.

When the following Divine verse was revealed: **"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love..."** (Al-i Imran 3; 92), Abu Talha got up before Allah's Apostle (pbuh) and said,

"O Messenger of Allah! Allah says in His Book, **"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love..."** and verily, the most beloved to me of my property is Bairuha, so I give it in charity and hope for its reward from Allah. O Allah's Apostle! Spend it wherever you like." Allah's Apostle appreciated that and said,

"That is a profitable wealth; that is profitable wealth. I have heard what you have said; I suggest you to distribute it among your relatives." Abu Talha said,

"I will do so, O Allah's Apostle." So, Abu Talha distributed it among his relatives and cousins." (Bukhari, Wakalah, 14; Muslim, Zakat, 42)

It is not of benefit for a mature believer to talk about goodness and charity when he is poor but forgets everything when he becomes rich. One should



always help his relatives under any circumstances. The Holy Qur'an criticizes such people as follows:

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

“Would you then, if you were put in authority, that you will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are the men whom Allah has cursed. He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.”

(Muhammad 47; 22-23)

How one should keep good relations with his relatives varies depending upon his social status. For instance, it is necessary to talk to relatives nicely, to smile and greet them, to ask after their health, to share both their sadness and happiness as much as possible, to exchange gifts, and to help them financially when it is needed.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) not only emphasized in his sayings the significance of keeping good relations with relatives but also showed it in his life. As it is known, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) lost his father before he was even born and his mother passed away when he was only six. He was raised first by his grandfather and then by his uncle Abu Talib. Abu Talib's wife Fatima did not treat him differently from her own children. When this believing lady passed away in Medina, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) became so sad that he said that *“my mother passed away.”* He shrouded her with his own shirt and even laid down in her grave for a while.

The Companions said:

“O messenger of Allah! You have not done for anybody else what you did for Fatima.” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) replied:

“After Abu Talib there has been nobody else who treated me so well. I put my shirt on her so that she would wear garments of Paradise. And I laid down in her grave to make her state in the grave easy.” (Yaqubi, II, 14; Ibn Abdi'l Barr, IV, 1891)

When the Prophet (pbuh) was on his way to the minor pilgrimage in Mecca, he stopped by a place named Abwa and visited his mother's grave. He

tidied the grave while he was crying. When he was asked why he was crying, he said:

“I just remembered my mother’s mercy and compassion towards me. This is why I cried.” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 116, 117)

In Abwa, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would from time to time visit his mother’s midwife Umm Aiman from Abyssinia, who had witnessed his mother’s death, and say about her:

“She is my mother after my real mother.” (Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, VII, 303)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) wanted his uncle Abu Talib to embrace Islam very much. He said to his uncle at the time of his death:

“Witness that there is no god but Allah and I will bear testimony (of your being a Muslim) on the Day of Judgment.” But he (Abu Talib) refused to do so. Then Allah revealed this verse:

“Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases, and He knows best the followers of the right way.” (Qasas 28; 56) (Muslim, Iman, 41, 42)

The following report about his other uncle, Abbas (r.a.) is also remarkable.

“One day Abbas (r.a.) angrily came to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah’s Messenger (pbuh):

“What makes you so angry?” Abbas (r.a.) replied:

“What does Quraish want from us? They smile at each other but frown at us.” Then Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also got upset. His anger was so severe that his face became red and he said:

“By Allah in Whose hand my life is, faith will not enter in your hearts so long as you do not love for the sake of Allah and His Messenger.” Then he continued:

“O People! Whoever oppresses my uncle is surely oppressing me, for someone’s uncle is like his father.” (Tirmidhi, Fitana, 28)

Ibn Abbas (r. anhum) narrated:

“One day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told (my father) Abbas (r.a.):



“O uncle! You and your son come to me on Monday morning so that I will pray for you. May Allah bestow goodness upon you and your son because of my prayer.”

We went to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He made us wear some clothes and then prayed for us saying:

“O Allah! Please show Your mercy, encompassing all their sins, upon Abbas and his son. O Allah! Protect him because of his son.” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 28)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also treated his foster mother Halimah well. He would become very happy when she came to visit him, and place his upper shirt, on the ground for her to sit on. Then he addressed her saying, *“My mother! My mother!”* (Ibn Sa’d, I, 113, 114)

A similar incident was narrated by Amir b. Wasila (r.a.):

“I saw the Prophet (pbuh) distributing meat at a place named Jiranaḥ, when I was a boy carrying the bones of slaughtered camels. And just then a woman approached the Prophet (pbuh), he spread out his cloak for her, and she sat on it. I asked:

“Who is she?” The people said:

“She is his foster-mother.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 119, 120)

According to another report, during the Meccan period the Prophet’s foster mother Halimah came to visit him. And she complained about famine and drought. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gave her forty sheep and a camel loaded with food with which to take back to her town. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 108, 109)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) showed similar kindness to Suwaibah who had breastfed him for a few days when he was born. In Mecca both the Prophet (pbuh) and Khadijah (r. anḥa) would help her. After immigrating to Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) sent food and clothes to her and kept in contact with her until she died. He even searched for her relatives after her death, and found out that she had nobody. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 108, 109)

After the battle of Taif, the believers obtained many captives from the Hawazin tribe. Because of his foster aunts among the captives Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) freed first all the slaves of his share and then the ones of the shares of the Abdulmuttalib clan. Then the Companions followed the Prophet’s (pbuh)

example and freed the captives of their share without taking any ransom money. (Ibn Hisham, IV, 135)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) kept good relations even with his most distant relatives. In his sayings he emphasized its importance in human relations. Abu Dharr (r.a.) reported Allah's Messenger (pbuh) as saying:

"You would soon conquer Egypt and that is a land which is known as the land of measure called al-qirat. So when you conquer it, I want you to treat its inhabitants well. For you have a treaty with them and they have the right of kinship upon you." (Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahabah, 226)

In another version of this tradition Allah's Messenger (pbuh) says that:

"...there lies upon you the responsibility of protection upon them because of blood-ties or relationships of marriage with them." (Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 227)

As is known, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was descended from Ishmael (A.S.). Because Ishmael's mother Hajar was an Egyptian, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) accepted Egyptians as his relatives. This is why he asked his Companions to sign protection agreements with Egyptians and advised them to treat the people kindly.

Another connection between the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and Egyptians was his blood-tie with them. In the seventh year of immigration, Allah's Messenger had sent some letters to the neighboring countries inviting them to Islam. One of these letters was sent to the ruler of Iskandariya. Even though the ruler did not embrace Islam, he sent some gifts to the Prophet (pbuh). Among the gifts, there was a slave-girl named Mariyah and the product of their union was the Prophet's son Ibrahim. NOTE: The Prophet married Mariyah after she gave birth to Ibrahim and from which the ruling of 'umm al-walad' was derived, i.e. a concubine who gave birth to her master's child was no longer under the status of a normal slave but of 'umm al-walad' and the child was free. Thus, Allah's Apostle had a blood-tie with the Egyptians.

In short, according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) believers are advised and even encouraged to maintain good relations with their relatives. Unfortunately, today we have forgotten our relatives that go a few generations back. For example, when it is said "son of our grandfather's uncle" or "the daughter of our grandmother's sister" we think that we have no need to main-



tain a relationship with them. We can observe the danger to the complete lose of family relations among people who live in urban areas in particular. Modern life styles and a distancing from spiritual values are the most important reasons for this lost. Whereas in Islamic culture, meeting with relatives provides an environment where one has the opportunity to maintain and improves one's relations. These ties are like beads aligned on a thread. Similar to the inappropriateness of breaking that thread, breaking those ties is also inappropriate. It is a requirement of a being a Muslim.



IV. THE PROPHET'S DEALING WITH HIS NEIGHBORS

“He who sleeps full while his next door neighbors sleep hungry is not a real believer of my message.”

(Hakim, II, 15)

After family, our neighbors constitute the closest social environment. We live side by side with them for a long period that can even extend to our entire lives. They are the first ones to whom we run for help when we need it. We share our sadness and happiness with them. This is why Islam regards good relations with neighbors as very important. In the Holy Qur'an Allah the Almighty orders keeping good relations with relatives and neighbors, near and far, right after the commands of faith in Allah and the prohibition for ascribing partners to Allah the Almighty. (al-Nisa 4; 36)

Prophetic sayings present to us the essential principles for neighborly relations and the rights of neighbors. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) says that:

“Gabriel kept on advising me to treat neighbors kindly and politely so much so that I thought he would order me to make them as my heirs.” (Bukhari, Adab, 28; Muslim, Birr, 140, 141)

In this statement Allah's Apostle (pbuh) points out that the rights of neighbors are almost as significant as the rights of the heirs. Therefore, there should be good relations between neighbors just like relations between relatives. In this respect, a neighbor's religion does not make any difference. According to a narration there are three types of neighbors based on their rights upon us:

Non-Muslim neighbors: They only have rights as a neighbor.

Muslim neighbors: they have right as a neighbor and as a brother/sister in religion.

Neighbors who are both Muslims and relatives: they have rights based on being neighbors, brothers/sisters in religion and kin. (Haythami, VIII, 164)

Our Prophet (pbuh) would always warn his Companions about neighborhood relations and teach them neighborly manners in detail. Abu Dharr (r.a.) reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) commanded:

"Whenever you prepare a broth, add water to it, and keep in mind the members of the household of your neighbors and then give them from it with courtesy." (Muslim, Birr, 143)

In this tradition broth, which is the simplest of dishes, is a metaphorical example. In other words, this saying advises us that even if we prepare nothing but a simple soup, we need to share it with our neighbors. And especially those who are wealthy should offer their neighbors from the foods they have in abundance but of which their neighbors have none.

On the other hand, there is another subtlety in the advice to add some water in the soup. When water is added to soup, it mostly loses its good taste. In a way, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) tells us that it would not be appropriate behavior for a believer to desire good tasting food while people around him are hungry. He reminds us that we are believers and that we should take care of the hungry and needy. In one of his sayings, the Prophet (pbuh) says in this regard:

لَيْسَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي يَبِيتُ شَبَعَانًا وَجَارُهُ جَائِعٌ إِلَى جَنْبِهِ

"He who sleeps full while his next door neighbors sleep hungry is not a real believer of my message." (Hakim, II, 15)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) addressed the female Companions about offering even something simple to their neighbors, saying:

"O Muslim ladies! None of you should consider even a sheep's trotter too insignificant to give to her neighbor." (Bukhari, Adab, 30; Muslim, Zakat, 90)

In this saying Allah's Messenger (pbuh) advised the Muslim ladies that even if their offering is somewhat small, they should not think that it is not suitable as a gift; for it is said in an Arabic proverb: "al-jud min al-mawjud" which means that generosity is done from what is possessed. The Turkish proverb "Çam sakızı, çoban armağanı" which means pine gum is a shepherd's gift also expresses the same point.

Those who receive a gift from their neighbors should not look down on it and consider it insignificant, but they should gratefully accept it. It should not be forgotten that such simple behavior is a feature of worship. One should remember the Prophet's orders and advice about good treatment to the neighbors and then amend his intentions accordingly. In fact his Companions tried to live in accordance with this principle.

Abdullah b. Amr (r.a.) slaughtered a sheep. He told his family:

“Have you presented a gift from it to my Jewish neighbor? Have you presented a gift from it to my Jewish neighbor? For I heard the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) saying:

“Gabriel kept on commending the neighbor to me so that I thought he would make him an heir?” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 122, 123; Tirmidhi, Birr, 28)

In another narration it was reported that a sheep head was given to a Companion as a gift, and he said:

“My neighbor has more needs than I do” and he sent it to his neighbor. His neighbor did the same and sent it to another neighbor. Finally, after going to seven houses the sheep head came back to the first Companion.” (Hakim, II, 526)

It was narrated by Aisha (r. anha):

“I said:

“O Allah's Apostle! I have two neighbors! To whom shall I send my gifts?” He replied,

“To the one whose gate is nearer to you.” (Bukhari, Adab, 32)

The reason for beginning from the nearer house when exchanging gifts is because neighbors who live nearer know their needs better. They are the first ones who smell what is cooking in each other's house. Therefore, next door neighbors' rights have a special meaning.

People satisfy some of their needs on their own while they get help from their neighbors in taking care of some other needs. In this context, the Turkish proverb: “neighbors are in need of the ashes of their neighbors” is very sig-



nificant. Allah the Almighty reproaches those who abstain from helping their neighbors saying: “**So Woe to...**” (al-Ma’un 107; 4-7)⁶⁴ (Razi, XXXII, 108)

In a saying of the Prophet (pbuh), the essential principles of neighborhood relations are enumerated as follows:

1. To give, when they ask to borrow something
2. To run to their help when they need it
3. To help them when they have financial problems
4. To share their sadness and happiness
5. To offer some home-cooked meals if smelt by the neighbors
6. Not to carry out any construction without obtaining their consent first.
7. To visit them when they are sick
8. To attend to their funeral when they pass away. (Haythami, VIII, 165)

Even though Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) draws a very comprehensive framework about the rights of neighbors through these principles, it does not aim to list the entire rights but just enumerate the most important ones. In this respect, maintaining good relations with his neighbors without making any discrimination based on religion, culture, or place is an Islamic requirement upon a believer. He should act in accordance with the Islamic principles of helping each other, cooperate, not to give any harm to others, and not to stay angry for a long time.

According to a narration reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.), a man asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) the following:

64. The importance of informing a neighbor when borrowing something from him/her should be known. One cannot pass the borrowed item into one’s ownership and therefore one should not forget to return it. Any action contrary to this is against both the Divine command “**O you who believe eat not your property up among yourselves in vanities...**” (al-Nisa 4; 29) and the actions of the Prophet (pbuh). Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) compensated a plate that he had borrowed from his neighbor. (Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 23) If a borrowed item is lost or broken, its owner may choose to forgive the borrower and not to force him to compensate for it. Nevertheless, borrowed items need to be used carefully, returned on time, and compensated if anything happens to them. Complying with these principles helps to establish good neighborhood relations whereas acting contrary to them can cause many adverse effects.

“O Messenger of Allah! People talk about a lady who performs many supererogatory prayers, gives charity in abundance, and fasts for many days, but she also hurts her neighbors with her tongue (i.e. is spiteful). What can you say about her?” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“She will be among the residents of Hell.” The man asked again:

“O Messenger of Allah! People also talk about another lady who performs less prayer, gives little in charity, gives charity only from things of a low value, like a kind of cheese, but she does not hurt her neighbors with her tongue (what can you say about her)?”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“She will be in Paradise.” (Ibn Hanbal, II, 440)

Having good relations with neighbors and not hurting them with words and actions are the requirements of the Islamic faith. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbor with kindness.” (Muslim, Iman, 74)

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day does not harm his neighbor.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 23; Muslim, Iman, 75)

According to a narration reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.), one day the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!” It was said,

“Who is that, O Allah’s Apostle?” He said,

“The one whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil.” (Bukhari, Adab, 29)

In another tradition, Our Prophet (pbuh) said that:

“He whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct will not enter Paradise.” (Muslim, Iman, 73)

A believer must be spiritually and materially in cooperation with his neighbors and give them confidence as a requirement of his faith. However, today there are people who live in the same building but do not greet or even know each other’s names let alone maintain good relations; whereas believers



should try to know their neighbors as much as possible. At least they have to avoid negative actions. For instance, Muslims should avoid actions like talking loudly at home, turning up television's or radio's volume too high and disturbing their neighbors.

A true Muslim not only avoids causing damages to his neighbor's house, garden, and property but also needs to know how to hide his secrets and flaws. Coveting a neighbor's wife or daughters is something that cannot even be imagined for a true believer.

In short, having good neighborhood relations is every believer's responsibility. Regarding those people who do not, who may behave irresponsibly towards their neighbors and disturb them, it is necessary to show patience, to warn them in an appropriate way, even to treat them with kindness, and to pray for their improvement. In this way one may gain new friendship. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) advised Uqba b. Amir, who asked about meritorious acts:

“Do not cut your relations with those who cut their relations with you. Give to those who do not give you. Forgive those who treat you badly.” (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 148)



V. THE PROPHET' TREATMENT OF HIS GUESTS

“Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously”

(Bukhari, Adab, 85)

Treating guests nicely is one of the moral principles of Islam. The Holy Qur'an speaks about Abraham's treatment to his guests and gives him as an example for us in the following verse:

“Has the story reached you, of the honored guests of Abraham? When they came in unto him and said: Peace! He answered, Peace! And thought: Folk unknown to me. Then he turned quickly to his household and brought a fatted (roasted) calf; and placed it before them, He said, Will you not eat?” (al-Zariyat 51; 24-27)

According to a narration reported by Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā), Abraham's guests were Gabriel, Israfil,⁶⁵ and the Angel Michael. (Qurtubi, XVII, 44) Abraham at first did not recognize that his guests, who came in the form of young men, were angels. He invited his guests in and with his wife Sarah's help roasted a calf for them. In the verses that follow we learn that Abraham became suspicious when he saw that his guests had not been eating anything, and finally they let Abraham know their real identity.

Abraham's behavior teaches us how to treat our guests. His response to his guests' greetings, quietly preparing the best food in his house for them, and offering it to them are some of the principles which we can take as examples and apply in our own lives. Our Prophet (pbuh) who ordered:

وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ

65. * The angel of death who will blow the last trumpet.

“Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously” (Bukhari, Adab, 85; Muslim, Iman, 74) and informed us that goodness and blessings would swiftly reach those who treat their guests nicely. (Ibn Majah, At’imah, 55) He warns those who abstain from hosting guests, even when they have the means, by saying:

“There is no goodness in those who do not want to host guests.” (Ibn Hanbal, IV, 155)

In a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) a guest’s supplication is stated among the prayers which will certainly be accepted. (Abu Dawud, Witr, 29; Tirmidhi, Daawat, 47)

It should not be forgotten that a prayer can be for or against another. In other words, a guest who is away from his home and whose heart is tender may pray for or against his host depending upon the treatment he receives. Therefore, one needs to please his guest and treat him nicely. Similarly, a guest should not be stingy and should say good prayers for his host for nice treatment.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who encouraged his Companions to host guests through his traditions, became an example for them with his actions. Consequently, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would spend some of his days hungry. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 409) On the other hand, when he had nothing to offer his guests, he would ask his Companions to host them.

It was narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.):

“A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

“I am hungry.” The Prophet sent a messenger to his wives to bring something for the man to eat but they said:

“By the name of the One Who sent you as His Messenger, we have nothing except water.” Then Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) said:

“Who will take this (person) to host him as a guest?” A believer from Medina said,

“I will” So he took him to his home and said to his wife,

“Entertain the guest of Allah’s Apostle generously” She said,

“We have got nothing except the meals of my children.” He said,

“Prepare your meal, light your lamp and let your children sleep if they ask for supper.” So she prepared her meal, lighted her lamp and made her children sleep, and then stood up pretending to mend her lamp, but she extinguished it. Then both of them pretended to eat, but they really went to bed hungry. In the morning the Ansari went to Allah’s Apostle who said, “*Tonight Allah the Almighty was pleased with your action.*” (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 10, Tafsir, 59/6; Muslim, Ashriba, 172)

Hosting guests and pleasing them especially during the times of scarcity requires elegance and courtesy. The hospitable Medinan husband and wife, who had just enough food for their children, extinguished their lamp and pretended to eat in order to give their guest the impression that they had enough food and so make him feel comfortable. They could have done the opposite and tell their guest the truth or at least make him aware of their situation. This would not only have made their guest very uncomfortable thinking that he was eating somebody else’s food, but more importantly, it would also have not pleased Allah the Almighty, but their sincere action gained His pleasure and the following verse was revealed about them:

“...but they give them [their Muslim brothers] preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)...” (al-Hashr 59; 9)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also presented us with some principles about being a guest. According to the narration of Huwailid b. Amr (r.a.) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told his Companions:

“Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his neighbor generously, and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously by giving him his reward.” It was asked.

“What is his reward, O Allah’s Apostle?” He said,

“(To be entertained generously) for a day and a night with high quality food and the guest has the right to be entertained for three days (with ordinary food) and if he stays longer, what he will be provided with will be regarded as Sadaqa (a charitable gift).” (Bukhari, Adab, 31, 85; Muslim, Luqata, 14)⁶⁶

66. In his book “*Eski Türk Seciye ve Ahlâkı*” İsmail Hâmi Danişmend presents the following quote about the Ottoman manner of hosting guests and travellers from the travel book of the famous French voyager Du Loir:
“Finally let me summarize the principle characteristics of the Turkish customs and traditions:



“The reward” mentioned in this narration means to host a guest meticulously for one day and night and for the second and third day to offer him from the usual meals of the house and not to spend extra effort for hosting. If the guest stays longer than three days, he will not be considered as a guest and whatever is offered to him will be accepted by Allah the Almighty as charity by the host. Bidding the guest farewell at the door is also a Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). (Ibn Majah, At’imah, 55)

Just as it is the host’s responsibility to show hospitality to his guest, it is the guest’s responsibility to accept what the host offers happily and to not despise it; because guests should be satisfied with what is given to them and should not wait to get what they expect.

If the host’s financial situation is not very good, the guest should try to keep his stay short in order to not put the host in a difficult position. In this regard, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“It is not permissible for a Muslim to stay with his brother until the guest makes the host sinful.”

The Companions said:

“O Messenger of Allah, how does he make him sinful?” The Holy Prophet said:

“He stays with him so long that he has nothing left to offer.” (Muslim, Luqata, 15, 16)

What we observe in both the Prophet’s sayings and practices is that hospitality and nice treatment of guests are very important moral principles. Be-

Their goodness and generosity embraces not only humans but also animals.

There are guest houses called “*imarat*” all around the Ottoman land. In these places, regardless of religious belief, those who are in need are helped in accordance with the conditions of the endower. All travelers can stay at an imarat for three days and they are offered a plate of rice for every meal during their stay.

In cities there are also public buildings on the side of the roads, called Caravanserai, whose doors are open to everybody.

Some Turkish people build fountains on the roads for thirsty travellers. In cities some others found buildings for free water distribution called *sebilhane* for the pass-byers. In these buildings there are employees responsible for the distribution of water.

Affluent members of the society visit the jailhouses and help those who are there with unpaid debts. People quietly and sensitively help those who are in need but could not openly express their needs due to their modesty.”

cause of this understanding, Muslims in Turkey call their guests “*Tanrı Misafiri* or *the guest of God*” due to their respect and devotion to the principles of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).





VI. THE PROPHET'S TREATMENT OF SOME MISTREATED PEOPLE

“Take good care of your weak and needy people, for you are provided means of subsistence and helped through your weaklings.”

(Abu Dawud, Jihad, 69)

The worldly and spiritual status of individuals that form a society varies greatly. Social structure is formed from different groups such as the wealthy, poor, young, and old. In every society there are people who need support and special attention. Allah the Almighty clearly attracts our attention to such people in various verse of the Qur'an (al-Nisa 4; 36, al-Insan 76; 8, al-Duha 93; 9-10, al-Maun 107; 1-3)

Our Prophet (pbuh), sent as a mercy to the worlds, met with people from all levels of society without discriminating between them, but he was especially concerned with helping those who were in need. In fact, the old, the poor, the disabled, slaves, children who needed to receive a good education, and oppressed and exploited women achieve respectable living standards. The Prophet's advices about such people and his dealing with them present a good example for the Muslims of the modern world.

A. The Prophet's Treatment of Children

“Treat your children nicely and discipline them well.”

Ibn Majah, Adab, 3

Islam gives the responsibility of protecting children's natural purity to their parents. Disciplining children who are families' joy, societies' perpetuity, and tomorrows' hope requires special attention. The Prophet's saying: *“All*



of you are shepherds and responsible for your herds...” (Bukhari, Wasaya, 9) expresses the same fact. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) praises women who are compassionately and lovingly devoted to their children (Bukhari, Nikah, 12).

According to Islam, raising pious and good children is not only a source of joy in this world but also a continuous source of spiritual reward in the afterlife. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated that “...*the pious child, who prays for him (for the deceased)*” are among the three things that keep a servant’s records of good deeds open. (Muslim, Wasiyyah, 14; Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 36)

The Holy Qur’an which advises all Muslims to pray and ask for wives and offspring, the joy of their eyes, (al-Furqan 25; 74) tells us that some prophets and righteous servants asked for Allah to grant them especially pious and pure offspring. (al-Baqara 2; 128, Al-i Imran 3; 35, Ibrahim 14; 35, 40)

Islam’s approach to children is based on love, compassion, and tolerance. Children come to this world as sinless and pure beings. They are not religiously responsible for their actions till they reach puberty. New born babies need and depend on their parents’ help until they reach a certain age. Therefore, a child develops a strong personality to the extent to which his parents pay attention to him. Due to this, the Prophet’s approach to children and advice about raising them are very important for us.

As in many other religions, Islam also recommends the performance of some ceremonies for new-born babies.

When a new-born was brought to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), he chewed a date and put it in the child’s mouth (Abu Dawud, Adab, 106, 107). Because having something from the Prophet’s mouth was a blessing and a source of spirituality.

Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr (r. anhuma), who gave birth to ‘Abdullah at a place called Quba during the immigration from Mecca to Medina, said that:

“When my son was born, I took him to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) took hold of him (the child) and he placed him on his lap and then called for dates. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked for a date fruit, chewed it and then he put it in the child’s mouth. The first thing that entered his stomach was the date chewed by Allah’s Messenger (pbuh). He then prayed for him



to have a nice and long life and named him Abdullah.” (Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 45; Muslim, *Adab*, 26)

Other customs of the Prophet (pbuh) are recitation of the call to prayer into a child’s ear, offering a sacrificial animal (*aqiqa*), and birth shaving his head seven days after being born and giving in charity the amount of weight as that of the hair cut from his head. (Abu Dawud, *Adab*, 106, 107; Tirmidhi, *Adahi*, 19) Moreover, giving the child a nice and meaningful name is also among the matters noted by the Prophet (pbuh). In one of his sayings, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father’s names, so give yourselves good names” (Abu Dawud, *Adab*, 61) and he even changed some inappropriate names himself. (Muslim, *Adab*, 14; Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Istiab*, II, 837; III, 871, 1006)

Having the male children circumcised before the age of puberty is also among the prophetic practices. (Bukhari, *Libas*, 63, 64)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) bore a deep love and compassion towards children of all ages; he took them seriously and listened to them intently. He solved their problems and guided them to the right path. In a tradition, Allah’s Apostle said:

“Whoever has a child should behave playfully with him/her.” (Dailami, III, 513). One day Allah’s Apostle kissed Hasan b. Ali (r. anhumah), while Al-Aqra’ b. Habis At-Tamim was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra said,

“I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them,” Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) looked at him and said:

“Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.” (Bukhari, *Adab*, 18; Muslim, *Fada’il*, 65)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) even tolerated children’s behavior during prayer, which he regarded as very important and called “the light of his eyes.” One night Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had brought his grandson to the mosque. When he was leading the prayer his grandson climbed on his back during prostration, and so he prolonged his prostration. When the Companion finished performing their prayers, they asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! You extended your prostration; so we thought something happened or you had received a revelation.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told them:

“No, nothing happened; my grandson had just climbed on my back. In order to please him, I did not want to hurry.” (Nasai, Tatbik, 82)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would greet children, ask after their health, visit them when they got sick, joke with them, and give them lessons while entertaining them.

Muhammad b. Rabi’ said that:

“When I was a boy of five, I remember, the Prophet took water from a bucket (used for getting water out of a well) with his mouth and spayed it on my face.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 18; Muslim, Masajid, 265)

Anas (r.a.) stated that:

“The Prophet was surpassed by none in character. I had a brother called Abu Umair, who, I think, had been newly weaned. Whenever he was brought to the Prophet the Prophet used to say,

“O Abu Umair! What did Al-Nughair (the nightingale) do?”

Al-Nughair was a nightingale with which my brother used to play. Sometimes the time of the Prayer became due while the Prophet was in our house. He would order that the carpet underneath him be swept and sprayed with water, and then he would stand up for the prayer and we would line up behind him, and he would lead us in prayer. (Bukhari, Adab, 112)⁶⁷

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated:

“I heard and saw that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would hold Hasan or Husain’s hands and then place the child’s two feet upon his own foot and tell him:

“Climb up.”

The child would climb up until he stepped on the Prophet’s chest. Then the Prophet (pbuh) would kiss him and say:

67. Probably this prayer was one of the supererogatory prayers performed before the time of the obligatory prayer. It is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) sometimes observed supererogatory prayers in congregation. (Muslim, Masajid, 266-271)



“O Allah! Love him for I love him.” (Bukhari, *Adab al-Mufrad*, hadith no: 249)

Anas (r.a.) said that:

“There was a young Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet. When he became sick, the Prophet went to visit him. He sat near his head and asked him

“*Embrace Islam*” The boy looked at his father, who was sitting there; the latter told him:

“Obey Abu al-Qasim” and the boy embraced Islam. The Prophet came out saying:

“*Praises be to Allah Who has saved the boy from Hell-fire.*” (Bukhari, *Janaiz*, 80)

When Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was about to dismount in front of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari’s house, young girls from the Najjar clan came out and recited poems with tambourines:

نَحْنُ جَوَارٍ مِنْ بَنِي النَّجَّارِ يَا حَبْدًا مُحَمَّدٌ مِنْ جَارِ

“We are the girls of the sons of Najjar

How nice the neighborhood of Muhammad is.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked them:

“Do you love me?” and they replied:

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah, we do.” Allah’s Apostle told them:

“By Allah! I love you too. By Allah! I love you too. By Allah! I love you too.” (Ibn Majah, *Nikah*, 21; *Biyarbekri*, I, 341)

It was narrated by Ibn Abbas (r. anhumah):

“When the Prophet arrived at Mecca, the children of the Abd al-Muttalib clan met him. He then mounted one of them in front of him and the other behind him.” (Bukhari, *Umra* 13; *Libas*, 99)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would encourage his Companions by giving gifts to the children and he would himself be an example for them in this respect.

In a tradition reported by Anas (r.a.) Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Treat your children nicely and discipline them well.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 3)

Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was given the first fruit of the season and he said:

“O Allah, shower blessings upon us in our city, and in our fruits, in our measures, blessings upon blessings,” and he would then give that fruit to the youngest of the children present there. (Muslim, Hajj, 474)

It was narrated by Aisha, Ummul Mu’minin, (r.anha):

“The Prophet (pbuh) received some ornaments presented by the Negus as a gift to him. Among the gifts was a gold ring with an Abyssinian stone. Turning his attention from it, the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) lifted it up with a stick or with his finger, then called Umamah, the daughter of Abu al-‘As and the daughter of his daughter Zaynab, and said:

“Wear it, my dear daughter.” (Abu Dawud, Khatam, 8)

There were even times that the Prophet (pbuh) treated children like his peers and revealed some of his secrets to them.

Anas (r.a.) narrated:

“One day after I finished serving Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), I went to meet my friends thinking that he (pbuh) was having his afternoon nap. While I was watching the kids playing, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) approached. He greeted the kids and then he called and sent me somewhere. I did as he requested. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) sat in the shade until I returned. It was late when I returned to my mother. When I arrived, she asked:

“Why were you late?” I said:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) had sent me for something.” My mother asked again:

“What was it?” I told her:

“It is the Prophet’s secret.” She said:

“Then protect his secret.” The narrator of this saying, Thabit said:

“Anas (r.a.) told me that: “O Thabit! If I had told this secret to anybody, I would have told it to you.” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 195)



Abdullah b. Ja'far (r.a.) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) one day made me mount behind him and he confided to me something secret which I should not disclose to anybody.” (Muslim, Haid, 79)

The Prophet (pbuh) considered a child's habit of playing as among their natural needs. For instance, once he tolerated the actions of Anas (r.a.), whom he had sent for a job but he did not go. He had indulged in playing with his friends and forgot the Prophet's orders. Anas (r.a.) narrated this incident as follows:

“Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was unsurpassed in his good disposition. He sent me on an errand one day, and I said:

“By Allah, I shall not go.” I had, however, this idea in my mind that I would do as Allah's Apostle (pbuh) had commanded me to do. I went out until I happened to come across children who had been playing in the street. In the meanwhile, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) approached and grabbed me from behind by the back of my neck. As I looked up at him, I saw him smiling and he said:

“O Unais (Little Anas)! Did you go where I commanded you to go?” I said:

“O Allah's Messenger, yes, I am going right away.” (Muslim, Fada'il, 54)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) once came across some children playing with the earth. When a Companion wished to stop them, the Prophet (pbuh) told him:

“Let them be. Earth is children's spring.” (Haythami, VIII, 159)

Moreover, it is reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) personally played with his grandsons, Hasan and Husain, put them on his back and walked around with them. He also organized races among the sons of his uncle Abbas.

Abdullah b. Hairth (r.a.) said that:

“Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would gather Abbas's sons Abdullah, Ubaid-ullah, and Kathir (r. anhum) and tell them:

“Whoever runs and reaches me (first) will get such and such a prize.” The children would come running and try to climb all over the Prophet (pbuh). He would hug and kiss them in return.” (Ibn Hanabal, I, 214)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) discouraged letting children go outside after nightfall saying:

“When night falls (or when it is evening), stop your children from going out.” (Bukhari, Ashriba, 22; Muslim, Ashriba, 97)

Allah’s Apostle also warned adults about not making promises to children that they could not fulfill. Thus, he asked them to be examples for their children in keeping their promises.

It was narrated by Abdullah b. Amir (r.a.):

“My mother called me one day when the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) was sitting in our house. She said:

“Come here and I shall give you something. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) asked her:

“What did you intend to give him?” She replied:

“I intended to give him some dates.” The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) said:

“If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 80; Ibn Hanbal, III, 447)

According to a tradition reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a.), Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Whoever tells a child: “Come here and I will give you something” and then does not give them anything, a sin of lying is recorded for him.” (Ibn Hanbal, II, 452)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) advised to take every precaution not to leave children in financial deprivation after their fathers’ death. When Sa’d b. Malik (r.a.) attempted to donate all his property for the sake of Allah, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not approve of it and asked him what he had left for his children. When Sa’d said that he had left nothing, Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) told him to leave nine tenth of his estate for his children, but Sa’d insisted on donating more of his inheritance. Finally, the Prophet (pbuh) permitted him to



donate one third of it but he added that he even regarded this amount as more than necessary. (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 6)

Furthermore, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not approve of children's employment in places like the battlefield which was not appropriate for their ages. Ibn Umar (r. anhuma) said:

"When I was fourteen years old, I was brought to the Prophet (pbuh) for him to accept me in his army; but he refused. When I became fifteen years of age, I was presented to him again and this time he accepted. (Tirmidhi, Jihad, 32)

Sa'd b. Waqqas (r.a.) narrated:

"On the day of the battle of Badr, I saw my brother Umair hiding before the Prophet's inspection of us. I asked Umair:

"What is wrong?" He replied:

"I fear that the Prophet (pbuh) will not accept me for the battle, thinking that I am too young to fight. But I want to join the fight. I wish that Allah the Almighty to bless me with martyrdom." When this was told to the Prophet (pbuh), he did not accept Umair joining the battle saying that he was too young to fight. However, as a result of Umair's crying and insistence, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) let him join the army." (Ibn Sa'd, III, 149, 150)

At the time Umair was beyond the age of childhood. In fact, it was reported that he became a martyr at Badr at the age of sixteen. (Ibn Sa'd, III, 149)

It is also reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not accept some young Companions, like Zaid b. Haritha, Bara b. Azib, Zaid b. Arkam, Abu Sa'd al-Khudri, and Jabir b. Abdullah, to join the army saying that they were too young to fight. (Hakim, II, 67)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) ordered and advised parents to treat their children equally. In this regard there is no difference between boys and girls, young and old, biological and foster children. Therefore, parents need to be fair among their children not only in matters of giving gifts, bequests, and inheritance but also in showing love, interest, and compassion.

Nu'man b. Bashir (r.a.) reported:

"My father donated one of his slaves to me. My mother Amra bint Rawaha said:

“I shall not be pleased with your donation until you make Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) a witness to it. My father went to Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) in order to make him the witness of the donation given to me. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said to him:

“Have you done the same with every son of yours?” He said:

“No, I haven’t.” Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said:

“Then take your gift back.” According to another version transmitted by Muslim, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Fear Allah, and observe equity in case of your children.” My father returned and took back the gift. (Muslim, Hibat, 13)

Anas (r.a.) narrated:

When a man was with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), his son came in. The man kissed his son and let him sit on his lap. Then the man’s daughter came in. He let her daughter sit in front of him without kissing her. After which, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“Why have not you treated them equally?” (Haythami, VIII, 156)

The girls who were despised, treated as second class citizens compared to boys, and sometimes even buried alive in the age of ignorance have gained their place as respected family members. They have gained a fair status in society especially by committing to their education and excelling at it. Some of the sayings of the Prophet which encourage women’s education are as follows:

“If anyone has a female child, and does not bury her alive, or slight her, or prefer his children (i.e. the male ones) to her, Allah will bring him into Paradise.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 121)

Malik reported Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) as saying:

“He, who raises two girls properly until they grow up, he and I shall come (together) (very closely) on the Day of Resurrection, and he shall interlace his fingers [with mine] (explaining the point of nearness between him and that person).” (Muslim, Birr, 149)

In the traditions of the Prophet it is expressed that children who die before the age of puberty will be a reason for the salvation of their parents. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:



“A Muslim whose three children die before the age of puberty will be granted Paradise by Allah due to His mercy for them.” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 6)

In one of his lessons to women, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“No woman amongst you shall send her three children as her forerunners (in the Hereafter) but that they would serve him as a protection against Hell-Fire.”

One of the women asked:

“What about if two of them die?” Upon this Allah’s Messenger (pbuh):

“Yes, this is true Even if they are two.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 36; Muslim, Birr, 152)

Another remarkable saying of the Prophet in this context is as follows:

“When a servant loses his child, Allah the Almighty tells His angels:

“Have you taken the soul of My servant’s child?” The angels reply:

“O Lord! Yes, we have.” Allah the Almighty asks:

“Have you picked up the fruit of My servant’s spirit?” They reply:

“O Lord! Yes, we have.” Allah the Almighty asks again:

“What did My servant say?” They say:

“He first said his thanks to You and then took refuge only in You saying “we exist for Allah and we will surely return to Him” Thereupon, Allah the Almighty says:

“Build a house in Paradise for My servant and name it Bait al-Hamd (the House of Gratitude).” (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 36)

The following report about a female Companion who lost her child and fell into a deep sorrow is also very moving. Umm Qais bint Muhsan (r. anha) narrated:

“My son had passed away and I was deeply saddened. I told the person who was washing my son’s body for his funeral:

“Do not wash my son with cold water. You will kill him.” Upon hearing this Ukkasha b. Misan (r.a.) came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and informed him what the woman had said. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) smiled and stated:

“Did she say this? Then her life-span has been prolonged.” Ukkasha (r.a.) said:

“We do not know anybody who lived as long as that lady.” (Nasai, Janaiz, 29)

Just as raising our children well, in accordance with Islamic principles and saying prayers for their well-being is very important, we should also be patient and tolerate their childish behaviour, and not curse them when under the influence of anger. We observe this in the sayings and the practice of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He once said:

“Don’t curse your own selves, nor your children, nor your belongings. There is the possibility that your curse may happen at the same time Allah is about to confer upon you what you demand, and thus your prayer may be readily responded to.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 74)

Mus’ab b. Abdullah (r.a.) narrated:

“Abdullah b. Sa’laba was born four year prior to the Emmigration. In the year of the conquest of Mecca, he was taken to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He rubbed his hand on the child’s face and prayed for him to have a blessed life. When the Prophet (pbuh) passed away, this child was fourteen years old.” (Hakim, III, 315)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) once stopped by Abdullah b. Ja’far (r.a.). Even though Ja’far was a kid, he was engaged in transactions. Allah’s Apostle prayed for him saying:

“O Allah! Bless his transactions.” (Haythami, IX, 286)

Abdullah b. Ja’far said that:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) rubbed my head three times and prayed for me saying:

“O Allah! Bless Abdullah with a child.” (Hakim, I, 528)

Ibn Abbas (r. anhum), who had the honor to meet the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) many times when he (Ibn Abbas) was a child, narrated one of his memoirs as follows:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was in the apartment of his wife (my aunt) Maimunah. I had prepared water for his ablution. My aunt told the Prophet (pbuh),



“Abdullah prepared ablution water for you.” For which he prayed for me saying:

“O Allah! Give him perception in religion, make him comprehend, and teach him the interpretation (commentary of the Qur’an).” (Hakim, III, 610)

Anas (r.a.) narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came to our house. My mother brought some date fruits and oil to offer him. Allah’s Apostle said that:

“Place your butter in its container and the dates in their pot, for I am fasting.” Then he stood up and performed supererogatory prayer in a corner. After that he prayed for my mother Umm Sulaim and our family. Umm Sulaim said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I have a *huwaisa*⁶⁸ (pray for it, too).”

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“What is a huwaisa?” Umm Sulaim replied:

“It is your servant Anas.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said a prayer for me which comprised of everything in this world and in the Hereafter:

“O Allah! Bestow upon him property and children and make them good and make them blessing for him.” Because of this prayer I am one of the wealthiest among the Medinan believers. My daughter Umaina told me that more than one hundred and twenty people from my offspring were buried when Hajjaj came to Basra.” (Bukhari, Sawm, 61; Ibn Hanbal, III, 108)

Walid b. Uqba said that:

“When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) conquered Mecca, Meccans took their children to him and he rubbed their heads and prayed for them.” (Ibn Hanabl, IV, 32)

When we examine the lives of these Companions who had been honored by the Prophet’s prayers, we see that they had very blessed lives. Some of them were blessed by wealth; some had knowledge, while others combined the two.

68. The word *huwaisa*, which is the diminutive form of the word *hassa*, means the little thing reserved for the service.

May Allah the Almighty bless all Muslims with proper knowledge about our Prophet (pbuh) and make them take him as an example in every aspect of their lives! Amin!

B. The Prophet's Treatment of the Old

“Those who do not show mercy to their youngsters nor respect their elders, are not one of us.”

Tirmidhi, Birr, 15

Old age is one of the natural laws of Allah the Almighty and it is the last step of life journey. Old age is inevitable, everyone must experience it after passing through childhood, adolescence and maturity. In the final chapter of life, weakness replaces strength; ugliness replaces the beauty; regress supercedes progress; illnesses take the place of health. The Holy Qur'an notes this fact as follows:

“He it is Who created you from dust, then from a drop (of seed), then from a clot, then brings you forth as a child, then (ordains) that you attain full strength and afterward that you become old men - though some among you die before - and that you reach an appointed term, that haply you may understand.” (al-Mu'min 40; 67)

“And Allah has created you, then He causes you to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything; surely Allah is Knowing, Powerful.” (al-Nahl 16; 70)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) took refuge in Allah the Almighty from the hardships of old ages praying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَالْبُخْلِ

“O Allah, I seek refuge in Thee from incapacity, from indolence, from cowardice, from senility, from miserliness...” (Muslim, Dhikr, 50)

“O Allah! ... I seek refuge in You from being brought back to a bad stage in old life...” (Bukhari, Jihad, 25)



In fact, throughout human history many doctors and scientists studying the human anatomy have sought every means to solve the problem of old age or at least to find a way to slow it down, however, they were not able to succeed. Today even though some alterations and improvements can be made in people's appearance through plastic surgery, decadence of the body and drying of the tree of life cannot be stopped. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) emphasized this reality as follows:

"Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease except old-age without appointing a remedy for it." (Abu Dawud, Tibb, 1; Tirmidhi, Tibb, 2)

Since everybody who has a life-span will get old, one should use his life wisely and do good and righteous deeds before reaching old-age. As stated in the following saying of the Prophet (pbuh), those who have been given a long life but did not use it wisely until the end of their lives will have no excuse:

The Prophet said, "Allah will not accept the excuse of any person whose instance of death is delayed until he is sixty years of age." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 5)

Even though people's body grows old, their wish for eternity is always alive. In the nature of the inner self there is a rebellion against mortality. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that: *"The heart of an old person is young for two things: for long life and love for wealth."* (Muslim, Zakat, 113, 114) The Devil also abused humans' natural desire for eternal life and deceived Adam (A.S.), which is stated in the following verse: **"But the Devil whispered to him, saying: O Adam! Shall I show you the tree of immortality and power that wastes not away?"** (Taha 20; 120)

When human beings get old, like all the other feelings, their desire for an eternal life and love for the world are supposed to recede. Yet on the contrary, their reaching old age is closely related to the natural inclination to desire eternity. For those who are ready for the eternal life of the Hereafter, death means the soul's escape from the cage of the body and its rescue from the problems of the world. Old-age are the last step before this meeting.

When we think about the social status of the old with an Islamic sensitivity, we need to show them more care than we show for children. One should not offend them due to their weakness; one should tolerate their behavior which is caused by old age and get their prayers. One should not forget that existence of

the elderly causes an increase in Allah's blessings and becomes a shield in the face of calamities and troubles. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) noted that:

"Take good care of your weak and needy people, for you are provided means of subsistence and are helped through your weaklings." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 69)

"Calamities and torments would fall upon you if there were not the helplessly old, the nursing babies, and the grazing animals." (Haythami, X, 227)

This is why there is no place in Islamic morals for a lack of tolerance towards the old, their abhorrence, and wishing their speedy death. Therefore, it cannot be imagined that a true Muslim place his elders especially his parents in a nursing home or leave them in homeless shelters. On the contrary, he should do his best to ensure that they spend the rest of their lives happily and comfortably. Today's young men, if Allah gives them time, will become the elders and will see the fruits of their services. The Prophet (pbuh) stated:

"Allah the Almighty will bestow upon the young people who serve their elders, folks who will serve them in their old-ages." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 75)

In a prophetic saying, it is expressed that showing respect to the old comes from the respect and reverence felt for Allah the Almighty. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 20)

Moreover the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) advised to make things related to this world and the Hereafter easier for the old people. Old people are referred in one of the prophetic traditions as the Prophet (pbuh) was warning an imam who extended the prayer:

"So whoever leads the people in prayer should shorten it because among them there are the sick, the weak, the old, and the needy (having some jobs to do)." (Bukhari, 'Ilm, 28)

In another saying narrated by Anas b. Malik (r.a.), one day an old man who wanted to meet with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) came. People dawdled to give him a passage. Upon this Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned them saying:

"Those who do not show mercy to their youngsters and respect their elders are not one of us." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 15)



During the conquest of Mecca when Abu Bakr (r.a.) brought his old father, Abu Kuhafa, to the Prophet (pbuh) to proclaim his faith in Islam, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

“Why did you exhaust and bring this old man to us? I would go and visit him.” However Abu Bakr responded saying:

“O Messenger of Allah! It was more appropriate for him to come to you.”
(Ibn Hisham, IV, 25)

Here we should know that the polite treatment of our Prophet (pbuh) to Abu Kuhafa was not just because his courtesy to Abu Bakr but also for his respect towards the old people.

Moreover when the Prophet (pbuh) was giving orders to the soldier of his army, he told them not to touch the old along with women and children. (Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 758)

How happy are those old people who know themselves and meet their Creator in their hearts! And how happy are those who know the value of their elders and show them love and respect!

C. Prophet's Treatment to Women

“O Allah! I sternly warn everybody about violating two weak persons' rights: women's and orphans””

Ibn Majah, Adab, 6

Even though some women of the noble families had certain rights in Arab society, the situation of women was usually very bad before the emergence of Islam. Women, who were considered the war booty in the endless wars among the Arab tribes, were treated badly. For instance, they were sold as concubines or they were forced into prostitution. When her husband died, a woman had no security. If her deceased husband's brother caught her before she could take shelter at her parents' house, she would be his brother-in-law's property. Men could marry as many wives as they desired and women had no rights in inheritance.

In such a society, having female children was regarded as an unbearable burden. This was why sometimes new born girls who were seen as a shame for the family were buried alive by their own families.

In short, in the Arab society prior to Islam women were more prone to being sexually abused and being deprived of their financial and social rights.

With the emergence of Islam, the condition of women has significantly changed. In addition to the precautions taken to prevent adultery and prostitution, Islam has proclaimed the honor and immunity of women's lives, property and chastity. Thus, it has taken women under its protection. Women can no longer be forced to act in such a way that will damage their life, mind and property and Islamic law prevents false accusations being levied against her (al-Nur 24; 23, 33).

Despising female children and burying them alive is strongly prohibited. (al-An'am 6; 151, al-Nahl 16; 59, al-Takwir 81; 8) According to the rules of the new religion, there was no difference between men and women in terms of humanity and in being subject to certain rights and responsibilities. People can achieve superiority only through the degree of his/her consciousness of servitude towards Allah. Some of the verses related to this issue are as follows:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (He Who is) the most righteous of you...” (al-Hujurat 49; 13)

“...That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female...” (Al-i Imran 3; 195)

“Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.” (al-Nahl 16; 97)

Even though women and men are equal with regards to being the servants of Allah, they have different physiological and psychological characteristics. This is a requirement of life and nature and it does not regard one being superior to the other; for it is expressed in a verse:



“And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask Allah of His grace; surely Allah knows all things.” (al-Nisa 4; 32)

Therefore it should not be forgotten that men and women are not rivals but the supporters of each other throughout the journey of life. In fact, the Holy Qur’an, on the one hand, notes that **“...they are your garments and you are their garments...”** (al-Baqara 2; 187) on the other hand, this situation is stated among the proofs of the existence of Allah:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; ...” (al-Rum 30; 21)

The Holy Qur’an approaches women as mothers, treating parents with kindness after the command about serving Allah, and prohibited everything hurtful, even to say them “fie,” which would hurt them. (al-Isra 17; 23)

The Qur’an’s approach to women and the Prophet’s sayings and actions are naturally consistent with each other. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) complemented women when saying:

“The Paradise is under mothers’ feet.” (Suyuti, *al-Jami al-Saghir*, I, 125)⁶⁹

Women found a friend and a shelter in the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), who showed mercy and compassion towards them; became an arbiter in their disputes with their husbands; protected their rights and advised their husbands

69. Another similar tradition is as follows: “A Companion named Jahima came to the Messenger of Allah and said:
“O Messenger of Allah! I would like to join the army and I have come to consult you. The Prophet (pbuh) asked:
“Is your mother alive?” He said:
“Yes, she is.” Then the Prophet (pbuh) told him:
“Then serve your mother for Paradise is under the feet of mothers.” (Nasai, Jihad, 6; Ahmad, III, 429)

to treat them with kindness; who became a living example for them by his actions.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) regarded women, who were despised and sometimes even beaten, like orphans and said:

"O Allah! I sternly warn everybody about violating two weak persons' rights: women's and orphans'" (Ibn Majah, Adab, 6)

Those who believe in Islam and are adorned with its morals must behave towards women in a just manner, especially towards their wives. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) gave the male members of his ummah the following advice:

"The best of the believers with regards to faith is the one who has the best morals. And the best of you are the ones who manifest the best treatment towards their women." (Tirmidhi, Rada', 11)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) noted this measure in another tradition as follows:

"The best of you are the ones who show the best treatment towards their family members. And I am the one who shows the best treatment towards his family." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 50)

On various occasions the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) warned those who beat their wives and always stated his disapproval of such people. One time, women who had been beaten by their husbands came to the Prophet (pbuh) to complain about them. Upon hearing this, Allah's Apostle said:

"Those who beat their wives are not the best among you." (Abu Dawud, Nikah, 42; Ibn Majah, Nikah, 51)

On another occasion, when the Prophet (pbuh) was giving a sermon, he addressed men saying:

"There is amongst you he who beats his woman like he beats his slave-girl and then will probably comfort his bed with her help at the end of the day." (Muslim, Jannah, 49)

In another tradition Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

"A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he should be pleased with another." (Muslim, Rada', 61)



Both men and women have some things which they are good at and others which they are not so good at. Sometimes they may make mistakes. This is an unavoidable fact of human nature. For that reason is necessary to evaluate people based on their qualities and abilities. One should gently try to solve the problems. This is the method of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). In fact in one of his sayings he addressed those who maintained their customs from the era of ignorance:

“...Treat women nicely, for women are created from a rib, and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So treat women nicely.” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 1; Muslim, Rada’, 60)

In a similar tradition it was noted that:

“When you attempt to straighten it, you will break it. And if you leave her alone you would benefit from her, and the crookedness will remain in her.” (Bukhari, Nikah, 79; Muslim, Rada’, 65)

These prophetic sayings do not intend to give us biological information, but they metaphorically depict how one should deal with women.

Some scholars interpreted the part of the hadith *“the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion”* as being the most problematic part of women, which is their tongue. (Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, IX, 253) The following prophetic saying, which notes that women will suffer in Hell because of their tongues, seems to support this interpretation:

“You curse a lot and are ungrateful to your husbands.” (Bukhari, Hayd, 6)

The tool for cursing and saying unkind words is the tongue. A woman who talks behind people’s backs and a woman who wants everything her neighbors’ possess without considering her husband’s financial means uses her tongue in doing so.

On the other hand, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) noted that a qualified woman who has internalized Islamic morals would be a heaven-sent blessing:

“The whole world is a provision, and the world’s best object of benefit is the pious woman.” (Muslim, Rada’, 64)

This is expressed in another saying of the Prophet (pbuh) as follows:

“There are three things that make a human being happy: a pious woman, a good abode, and a nice mount. And the three things that make a person unhappy are: an evil woman, a bad abode, and a bad mount.” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 168)

Amr b. al-Ahwas (r.a.) narrated that he heard the Prophet (pbuh) say in his farewell address on the eve of his Last Pilgrimage, after he had glorified and praised Allah, he cautioned his followers:

“Listen! O my Companions! I advise you to treat women kindly. Hold on to my will. They are placed under your management and protection. Unless they commit apparent immorality that you know of, you have no right to punish them. Should they be guilty of flagrant misbehavior, you may remove them from your beds, and beat them but do not inflict upon them any severe punishment. Then if they obey you, you do not have recourse to anything else against them.

Listen! You should know that you have rights upon your wives and they have rights upon you.

Your rights upon them are that they shall not allow anyone you dislike, to trample your bed and shall not permit those whom you dislike to enter your home.

Their rights upon you are that you should provide them well as regards food and clothing.” (Tirmidhi, Rada’, 11; Ibn Majah, Nikah, Nikah, 3)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) draws our attention to the necessity of punishing women without exceeding the limits when they manifest immoral behavior which risks destroy the family unit. This command is also stated similarly in the Holy Qur’an. (al-Nisa 4; 34) However, one should not forget that this could be the last resort. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) beat neither his servants nor his wives during his entire life. This fact is narrated by his wife of fifteen years, Aisha (r. anha) (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 51)

However, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) sometimes sternly reproached his wives because of their misbehaviors.

Jabir (r.a.) narrated:

“I performed prayer with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on the festival day. He commenced with the prayer before the sermon without Adhan and Iqama. He then stood up by leaning on Bilal, commanded the audience to fear



Allah, and exhorted (them) to obey Him, and he preached to the people (and reminded them about death, the Hereafter, Hell and Paradise). Then he walked on until he came to the section for women. He preached to them likewise and admonished them, and ordered them to:

“Give in charity for the sake of Allah, because most of you are the fuel for Hell.” One of the respected women whose cheeks were reddened stood up and said:

“Why is it so, O Messenger of Allah?” He said:

“For you complain often and show ingratitude to your spouse.” After which they began to give alms out of their ornaments such as their earrings and rings ...” (Muslim, I’dain, 4)

We also need to mention the effects of the Prophet’s compassionate treatment towards women upon his Companions. Abdullah b. Omar (r.a.) said that:

“During the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh) we used to avoid chatting leisurely and freely with our wives lest some Divine revelation might be sent concerning us. But after the Prophet had passed away, we started chatting leisurely and freely (with them).” (Bukhari, Nikah, 80)

Ordered to convey the message of Islam to the whole of humanity, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) did not make any discrimination and tried to teach Islamic principles to everybody, men and women, who embraced Islam. In addition to his general sermons, he also had private sermons for women. The above mentioned tradition is an example of such private sermons. We also see in the records that women requested from the Prophet (pbuh) such private sermons arguing that only men were benefiting from his sermons. According to a report narrated by Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (r.a.) a woman came to Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) and said:

“O Messenger of Allah, only men receive and benefit from your instructions. Would you kindly allocate at your convenience a day for us, too, on which we can come to you and you can teach us what Allah has taught you.” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Okay then! You assemble on such and such a day.” They assembled and Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came to them and taught them what Allah had taught him ...” (Bukhari, I’tisam, 9; Muslim, Birr, 152)

Female Companions, on the one hand, learned the principles of Islam by means of the sermons and speeches of the Prophet (pbuh) and on the other hand they had the chance to ask their question to him. Allah's Apostle (pbuh) always regarded their questions as important and was concerned with their problems. (Muslim, Fadail, 76; Abu Dawud, Adab, 12)

Some women Companions would not feel shy to ask the Prophet (pbuh) questions about their most private problems. The mother of Anas b. Malik Umm Sulaim (r. anhum), for instance, asked whether it was necessary for a woman to take a bath after she had a wet dream (sexual discharge while sleeping). (Bukhari, 'Ilm, 50) Another female Companion named Asma bint Shakal asked the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) about washing after menstruation. Aisha (r.a.), who was astonished by Asma's courage, said:

“How good the women of Ansar (helpers) are that their modesty does not prevent them from learning religion!” (Muslim, Haid, 61)

Umm Umara (r. anha) once told the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! I see everything is for men. I observe that nothing addresses women.” Thereupon, the following verse was revealed:

“Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember - Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.” (al-Ahzab 33; 35) (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 33/14)

Beginning with the mother of the believers, many female Companions excelled in narrating the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh).⁷⁰ Aisha (r. anha) was even accepted as one of the seven *muksirun* or those who narrated the most tra-

70. In addition to Aisha (r. anha) some of the women Companions who are famous by hadith narration are: Fatima, Umm Salama, Umm Habiba, Asma bint Abi Bakr, Sawda bint Zam'a, Zainab bint Jahsh, Umm Haram, Fatima bint Qais, Umm Farwa, Safiyya bint Abdilmuttalib (r. anhum). (Okic, Tayyib, *Islamiyette Kadın Öğretimi*, p. 24)



ditions from the Prophet (pbuh). (Iraqi, p. 350) She was also an expert in Islamic law, poetry, genealogy, and medicine. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, IV, 360)

Even though the number of literate people was very low during the age of ignorance, it can be observed that some female Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) knew how to read and write. For instance it is reported that Shifa bint Abdullah, who was a literate person, had taught the Prophet's wife Hafsa (r. anha) reading, writing, and some other things. (Abu Dawud, Tib, 18; Kattani, I, 49, 50)

Mosques occupied a very important place in women's educational and religious lives during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh). In fact, with the order of the Prophet (pbuh) one of the gates in his mosque was reserved for women (Abu Dawud, Salat, 17, 53) and men were ordered not to prevent women from going to the mosque day and night. Some of the relevant prophetic sayings are as follows:

"When your women seek your permission for going to the mosque, grant them (permission)." (Muslim, Salat, 134, 135)

"Do not prevent women from going to the mosque at night." (Muslim, Salat, 138)

"Do not prevent the maid-servants of Allah from going to the mosque." (Muslim, Salat, 136)

Even though, in principle, women were allowed to come to the mosque during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), they were also warned not to do anything that attracted attention and created mischief when they went to the mosque. This is why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked that women going to the mosque not use perfume. (Muslim, Salat, 141-145) Aisha (r. anha), who observed the misbehavior of women going to the mosques after the time of Prophet's death, said that:

"If the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had seen what new things women have introduced (in their way of life) he would have definitely prevented them from going to the mosque, as the women of the sons of Israel had been prevented." (Muslim, Salat, 144)

When the above mentioned traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) which permitted women to go to the mosques and some other of his sayings such as *"Women's best prayer is the one they observe at their homes"* (Ibn Hanbal, VI,

301) are considered together, we can conclude that the latter supports the requirement of being careful about their behavior on the way to the mosques.

Takine into consideration the physical and psychological differences between men and women, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) also advised women to take care of their homes. For instance, in one of his sayings, he stated that:

"I recommend you your homes because your jihad (struggle) is in your homes." (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 68). Once again the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) drew attention to a woman's responsibility in her home as follows: *"...and a lady is a guardian in the house of her husband and is responsible for her charge..."* (Bukhari, Wasaya, 9; Muslim, Imarah, 20)

When sharing the jobs, we see that the Prophet (pbuh) advised his daughter Fatima (r. anha) to take care of housekeeping and his son-in-law Ali (r.a.) to fulfill the tasks outside the house. (Kasani, *Badai*, IV, 24)

Even though housework was deemed more appropriate for women, some women in the early days of Islam were engaged in business outside of their homes. A female Companion named Qayla bint Umm Anmar (r. anha) narrated:

"During a minor pilgrimage I told the Prophet (pbuh) at Marwa:

"O Messenger of Allah! I am a woman who does transactions in the market. When I want to buy something, I make her an offer lower than I planned. And then I increase it to its regular price. When I want to sell something, I ask more and then I reduce it to the regular price." Thereupon Allah's Messenger told me:

"O Qayla! Do not do this. When you want to buy something, offer its regular price. You might be able to buy it or not. When you want to sell something, again ask its normal price. You might be able to sell it or not." (Ibn Majah, *Tijarah*, 29)

Hawla bint Tuwait (r. anha), who had become famous as Hawla bint At-tarah during the time of the Prophet, was known as a woman selling perfumes. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 278)

Another example is that Abu Bakr's daughter Asma looked after her husband's horse and helped to carry the harvest along with doing the housework. (Bukhari, *Nikah*, 107)



It is reported that a female companion named Samra bint Nuhaik was walking around the market and commanding right and forbidding wrong with a whip in her hand. In a way she was working as a city policewoman. (Haythami, IX, 264) It is reported that Shifa bint Abdullah (r.a.), who knew how to write and read, was appointed with a similar job in one of the markets of Medina during the caliphate of Omar (r.a.). (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 341)

As regards, the battles of the early years of Islam, men were the fighting force in them. In other words, joining the army was not among the essential tasks of women. In fact, Aisha once asked permission to join a battle and the Prophet (pbuh) told her:

“Your (women’s) jihad is pilgrimage” (Bukhari, Jihad, 62) and thus he refused her request.

We see however, that women took responsibilities in serving the army and sometimes even in the actual fighting during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh). According to Anas b. Malik’s report, when Umm Sulaim (r. anha) asked to join the army, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told her that fight was not obligatory upon women. She said that she could treat the injured, make eye medicine, and carry water for the fighters. Upon this the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Then how nice it is for you to join the army.” (Haythami, V, 324)

Based on Prophet’s permission, some women Companions treated the injured, mended the clothes, carried water, cooked, and even fought in the battlefield. (Bukhari, Jihad, 65-68; Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 425; Ibn Majah, Jihad, 37; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 396) Umm Umarah is one of the women who attended the battle of Uhud and fought with her arrow and bow. Allah’s Apostle (pbuh), who had returned to Medina after the battle, said that:

“When I turned and looked at my right and left, I saw Umm Umara fighting.” (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, IV, 479)

All these reports prove that the Prophet (pbuh) raised women, who had little value in the age of ignorance, to their rightful state in the society. Muslim women even had arguments with the prominent members of the Muslim state. The following incident which took place right after the Prophet’s death clearly manifests this point.

Masruq narrated:

“Omar b. Khattab (r.a.) once went up the pulpit and said:

“I do not know anytime when a dowry exceeded 400 silver pieces.” And then he went down the pulpit. A woman from Quraish objected:

“O commander of the believers! Have you banned people to accept dowry more than 400 silver pieces?” Omar (r.a.) replied:

“Yes, I have.” In answer the woman said:

“Have you not heard the verse:

“...And ye have given unto one of them a sum of money (however great), take nothing from it...” (al-Nisa 4; 20) Omar said that

“O Allah! Forgive me. Everybody is more knowledgeable than Omar” and then went up the pulpit again:

“O people! I had banned for you to give and accept dowry more than 400 silver pieces. You may give and accept as much dowry as you like.” (Ibn Hajar, *Matalib*, II, 4, 5)

Even though women were allowed to go out for their necessities, there are certain rules about how they should act and what they should wear in public. In one of his sayings Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“On Judgment Day the similitude of a woman who adorns herself and walks seductively among foreign people (people outside her family) is the darkness. There is no light for her.” (Tirmidhi, Rada’, 13) Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) stated his disapproval of women adorning themselves and drawing foreign (non-mahram) men’s attention to themselves outside of their homes.

D. The Prophet’s Treatment to the Poor

“If you do not help the poor and weak today, how are you going to answer Allah on the Day of Judgment? Show mercy to the needy with the blessings in your hand.”

Muhammad Esad Efendi

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) would protect the poor and help them in every way even before his prophethood. In fact when Khadijah (r. anha) comforted



him after the first revelation, she emphasized this characteristic. (Bukhari, Bad'ul Wahy, 3; Muslim, Iman, 252)

This pre-prophethood characteristic of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh), which was combined with the Divine orders and advices, became the perfect exemplary for the whole of humankind. During the Meccan period and the years after the immigration believers who had the financial means always helped those who were in need. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) even established a brotherhood between Meccan immigrants and the believers of Medina. Thus, the wealthy believers of Medina manifested the virtue of sharing everything they had with their brothers who had been forced to emigrate from Mecca. Moreover, Islamic acts of worship like financial atonements, alms given in lieu of ritual fasting, almsgiving, charity, and supports given to the needy out of state treasury, are among the measures taken by our religion to protect the poor.

There are many sayings of the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) about protecting and finding solutions for the misfortunate people in Muslim society. Some of them are as follows:

"...the wealth of this world is sweet and attractive. And it is a good companion for a Muslim who gives out of it to the needy, to the orphan, to the wayfarer..." (Muslim, Zakat, 122; Ibn Hanbal, III, 21)

"The worst kind of food is the wedding feast to which the rich are invited and the poor are ignored." (Muslim, Nikah, 107)

The Prophet said, "The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a mujahid (warrior) who fights for Allah's Cause, or like him who performs prayers all night and fasts all day." (Bukhari, Nafaqat, 1)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh), who invited and encouraged us to help the poor by his words like the above mentioned ones, he also manifested the best practice for facilitating unfortunate people. He liked to be with the widows and the poor; he would always empathise with their hardships. (Nasai, Juma, 31) Because of this, there were many days that he spent in hunger. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) expressed this matter as follows:

"The multitude of poor and hungry people around the Prophet (pbuh) was the reason why he spent his days in hunger. Since the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would never have a meal without sharing it with some guests from among his Companions or the needy people of his mosque. Even though peo-

ple began to feel some comfort after Allah the Almighty bestowed on the Muslims the victory at Haibar, they still had some financial hardships.” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 409)⁷¹

The Companions of Suffa constituted the majority of the people who were mentioned by Abu Huraira (r.a.) as the needy of the Prophet’s mosque. After they had embraced Islam, those Companions devoted themselves to knowledge and conveying the message of Islam. Abu Huraira (r.a.) was one of those people. He narrated one of his memoirs as follows:

“By Allah, except Whom none has the right to be worshipped, sometimes I used to lay on the ground on my abdomen because of hunger, and sometimes I used to bind a stone over my belly because of hunger. One day I sat by the place from where they (the Prophet and his Companions) used to come out. When Abu Bakr passed by, I asked him about a Verse from Allah’s Book and I asked him only that he might satisfy my hunger, but he passed by and did not do so. Then Umar passed by me and I asked him about a Verse from Allah’s Book, and I asked him only that he might satisfy my hunger, but he passed by without doing so. Finally Abu-l-Qasim (the Prophet (pbuh)) passed by me and smiled when he saw me, for he knew what was in my heart and on my face. He said,

“*O Aba Hirr (Abu Huraira)!*” I replied,

“*Labbaik, O Allah’s Apostle!*” He said to me,

71. Reporting the accounts about the poverty of the early days of Islam, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) narrated many remarkable examples for us.

For instance, Khabbab b. Arat (r.a.) said that:

“We emigrated with the Prophet (pbuh) in Allah’s cause, and so our reward was then surely incumbent on Allah. Some of us died and did not take anything from their rewards in this world, and amongst them was Mus’ab bin Umair (r.a.); and the others were those who got their rewards. Mus’ab bin Umair was martyred on the day of the Battle of Uhud and we could get nothing except his mantle to shroud him in. And when we covered his head his feet became bare and vice versa. So the Prophet ordered us to cover his head only and to put an *idhkkhir* (a kind of shrub) over his feet.” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 27; Muslim, Janaiz, 44)

Another example was narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.):

“I saw seventy of the Companions of Suffa and none of them had a Rida (a garment covering the upper part of the body). They had either Izars (a garment covering the lower part of the body) (only) or sheets which they tied round their necks. Some of these sheets reached the middle of their legs and some reached their heels and they used to gather them with their hands lest their private parts should become visible.” (Bukhari, Salat, 58)



“Follow me.” He left and I followed him.

Then he entered the house and I asked permission to enter and was admitted. He found milk in a bowl and said,

“From where is this milk?” They said,

“It has been presented to you by such-and-such man (or by such and such woman).” He said,

“O Aba Hurr!” I said,

“Labbaik, O Allah’s Apostle!” He said,

“Go and call the people of Suffa to me.” These people of Suffa were the guests of Islam who had no families, nor money, nor anybody to depend upon, and whenever an object of charity was brought to the Prophet, he would send it to them and would not take anything from it, and whenever any present was given to him, he used to send some for them and take some of it for himself. The order of the Prophet upset me, and I said to myself,

“How will this little milk be enough for the people of As-Suffa?” I thought that I was more entitled to drink from that milk in order to strengthen myself, but behold! The Prophet came to order me to give that milk to them. I wondered what would remain of that milk for me. Yet, I could not but obey Allah and His Apostle so I went to the people of Suffa and called them, and they came and asked the Prophet’s permission to enter. They were admitted and took their seats in the house.

The Prophet said,

“O Aba-Hurr!” I said,

“Labbaik, O Allah’s Apostle!” He said,

“Take it and give it to them.” So I took the bowl (of milk) and started giving it to one man who would drink his fill and return it to me. Whereupon I would give it to another man who, in his turn, would drink his fill and return it to me, and I would then offer it to another man who would drink his fill and return it to me. Finally, after the whole group had drunk their fill, I reached the Prophet who took the bowl and put it on the palm of his hand, looked at me, smiled and said.

“O Aba Hurr!” I replied,

“Labbaik, O Allah’s Apostle!” He said,

“*There remain you and I.*” I said,

“You have said the truth, O Allah’s Apostle!” He said,

“*Sit down and drink.*” I sat down and drank. He said,

“*Drink,*” and I drank. He kept on telling me repeatedly to drink, till I said,

“*No. by Allah Who sent you with the Truth, I have no more space for it (in my stomach).*” He said,

“Hand it over to me.” When I gave him the bowl, he praised Allah, pronounced Allah’s name and drank the remaining milk. (Bukhari, Riqaa, 17)

In this tradition we see not only the extent of the Prophet’s care for the needy but also one of his miracles, for he (pbuh) was able to satisfy the hunger of all Companions of Suffa by milk that was enough only for one person. Such miracles were among the signs of his prophethood.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also encouraged his Companions to help the needy. Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (r.a.) reported:

“While we were with the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) on a journey, a person came upon his camel. He began to look to his right and left hoping to receive help. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“*He who has an extra mount should give that to the one who has no mount, and he who has a surplus of provisions should give them to he who has no provisions,*” and he made mention of so many kinds of wealth until we were of the opinion that none of us has any right over the surplus. (Muslim, Luqata, 18)

Mundhir b. Jarir (r.a.) reported on the authority of his father:

“While we were in the company of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in the early hours of the morning, there came some people who were barefooted, naked, wearing striped woolen clothes, or cloaks, with their swords hung around their necks. Most of them, nay, all of them, belonged to the tribe of Mudar. The color of the face of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) changed when he saw them in poverty. He then entered his house and came out and commanded Bilal to pronounce the Adhan (the call for prayer). He pronounced the Adhan and



Iqama, and the Holy Prophet observed prayer along with his Companions and then addressed them reciting verses from the Holy Qur'an:

“O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you.” (al-Nisa 4; 1) (He then recited) a verse of Sura Hashr:” **“O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for tomorrow...”** (al-Hashr 59; 18)

(Then the audience began to vie with one another in giving charity.) Some donated a dinar, others a dirham, still others clothes, some donated a sa' of wheat, some a sa' of dates; until he (the Holy Prophet) said: (Bring it) even if it is half a date.

Then, a person from among the Ansar came there with a money bag which his hands could scarcely lift; in fact, he could not (lift). Then the people followed continuously, till I saw two heaps of edibles and clothes, and I saw the face of the Messenger (pbuh) glistening, like gold (on account of his joy). The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this act of goodness and also the reward of those who subsequently followed this act of goodness (or acted in accordance with it), without any deduction from his rewards; and he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of those who acted upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burden.” (Muslim, Zakat, 69)

In addition to giving charity to the needy, Allah's Apostle (pbuh) also encouraged the giving of loans. The Prophet (pbuh) even stated that Allah the Almighty will forgive the sins of those who forgive the debts of those who are not able to repay it.

According to a report narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“There was a person who gave loans to the people. He used to say to his men:

“When an insolvent person comes to you show him leniency so that hopefully Allah may overlook our faults. Finally he died and met Allah the Almighty and Allah overlooked his faults (forgave him).” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 54; Muslim, MUSAQAT, 31)

Below is another tradition related to this effect:

“A person from people who lived before you was called to account by Allah on the Day of Judgment and no good was found in his account except this that He had been a rich man and had financial dealings with people. He had commanded his servants to show leniency to those in financial straits. Thereupon, Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, said: We have more right to forgive, so overlook (his faults).” (Muslim, MUSAQAT, 31)

One should not despise and offend the less fortunate members of the Muslim society. One should especially not prefer rich and respected non-Muslims over them.⁷² The Holy Qur’an on the one hand commands not to drive the beggars away (al-Duha 93; 10) and on the other hand, when speaking about the characteristics of disbelievers, states: **“Have you seen the one who denies the Judgment (to come)? That is the one who treats the orphan with harshness, and does not urge (others) to feed the poor.”** (al-Ma’un 107; 1-3)

According to a narration, a prominent member of the polytheist Quraish told the Prophet (pbuh):

“If you want us to believe in you, drive those poor people away from you. We do not want to see them when we come to you. Meet with them at some other time.”

After which, Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse:

72. In the early years of Islamic history, an unknown person used to leave a sack of food in front of the needy people in Medina. One morning, when the poor people woke up, they could not see the food sack before their doors. While they were wondering the reason, they heard the muezzin’s call for a funeral. Medina was shaking by the death of Ali’s grandson, Zainal Abidin (r. anhum). Everybody began to mourn. People meticulously did their last duties towards the Prophet’s grandson. When it came to washing the body, people was astonished to find blisters on the back of this blessed man. They could not figure them out. When his relatives were asked the reason, someone who knew this secret said:
- “Every day early in the morning Zainal Abidin (r.a.) used to prepare sacks of food, take them one by one on his back to the needy people’s doors, and leave without letting anybody to see him. People would not know who had left these sacks. The blisters on his back happened because of carrying these sacks.



“And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening...” (al-An’am 6; 52) In another verse, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), together with the poor and the needy, encouraged patience in the face of life’s hardships and the significance of treating them nicely is noted as follows:

“And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them...” (al-Kahf 18; 28) (Razi, XII, 193, XXI, 98)

According to a narration reported by Aiz b. Amr al-Muzani (r.a.) one day Abu Sufyan, who was one of the prominent members of Quraish and a disbeliever at the time, passed by a group of Muslims including Salman al-Farisi, Suhaib-i Rumi, and Bilal al-Habashi (r. anhum). When Muslims saw him, they said:

“By Allah, the sword of Allah did not reach the neck of the enemy of Allah as it should have.” Thereupon, Abu Bakr said:

“Do you say this to the old man of Quraish and their chief?” Then he came to Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) and informed him of this. Thereupon, he (the Holy Prophet) said:

“Abu Bakr, you have perhaps annoyed them and if you annoyed them you have in fact annoyed your Lord.” So Abu Bakr came to them and asked:

“O my brothers, have I annoyed you?” They said:

“No, our brother, may Allah forgive you.” (Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 170)

In other sayings, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated the spiritual stations of the poor and expressed that they were going to constitute the majority of those who achieved eternal salvation in the Hereafter. Some of these sayings are as follows:

“Shall I inform you who the people of Paradise are? They are very humble, obscure and unimportant looking people, to whom people do not pay attention, but if they take an Oath that such and such a thing will happen, Allah will fulfill his oath (by doing that thing). Shall I inform you who the people of the Fire are? They comprise every cruel, violent, proud and conceited person.” (Bukhari, Aiman, 9; Muslim, Jannah, 47)

“I stood at the gate of Paradise and saw that the majority of the people who had entered it were poor people, while the rich were forbidden (to enter along with the poor, because they were waiting the reckoning of their accounts), but the people of the Fire had been ordered to be driven to the Fire. And I stood at the gate of the Fire and found that the majority of the people entering it were women.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Muslim, Dhikr, 93)

“The poor enter Paradise half a day, that is (according to measures of this world) five hundred years, before the wealthy.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 37)

This is great news for the needy, but they do not mean that poverty is superior to wealth in the absolute sense. The poor who do not follow the Divine orders have no value in Islam. What makes them valuable is their thankfulness for what Allah has bestowed upon them and their patience towards their state.

The reason that the rich enter Paradise after the poor is due to their being questioned about how and where they earned their wealth. After this questioning, those who pass it will enter Paradise and those who do not will go to Hell to receive their punishment.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also strongly criticized those who do not show patience and rebel by using poverty as an excuse. He warned that poverty might lead a person to ingratitude and then eventually to disbelief. In one of his sayings, he expressed the necessity to abstain from poverty which causes forgetfulness (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 3) and in another saying he gave the following advice:

“Seek refuge in Allah from poverty, famine, abasement, persecution and being persecuted.” (Nasai, Istiadha, 14)

When the Prophet (pbuh) once prayed saying *“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from disbelief, poverty and the torment of the grave”*, one of his Companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Do you equate poverty to disbelief?” Upon this the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Yes, I do.” (Nasai, Istiadha, 29)

We observe the following appeals in the supplications of the Prophet (pbuh):





"...O Allah! I am weak, please give me strength; I am pitiful, please give me honor; I am poor, give me blessings." (Hakim, I, 708)

"I seek refuge in Allah from the harm of poverty." (Nasai, Istiadha, 17)

The Prophet (pbuh) also gives the following advice to the needy about abstaining from begging and earning their livelihoods by their own hands:

"Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned working with one's own hands." (Bukhari, Buyu', 15)

"There are three characteristics that I can swear by them. Know them well. A servant's possessions do not decrease by giving them in charity. Allah increases the honor of those who show patience towards the injustice they face. Allah opens the door of poverty for those who open the door of begging..." (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 17)

"A miskin is not the one who is dismissed with one or two dates, and with one morsel or two morsels. (In fact) a miskin is the one who does not get enough to satisfy himself (his basic needs), and because his poverty is not known of by anybody and he does not beg for anything from the people." (Muslim, Zakat, 102)

"By Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is better for anyone of you to take a rope and cut wood from the forest and carry it over his back and sell it as a means of earning his living rather than to ask a person for something and that person may give it to him or not." (Bukhari, Zakat, 50)

"The upper hand is better than the lower hand (i.e. he who gives in charity is better than him who takes it)." (Muslim, Zakat, 106)

While inviting them to be modest and honorable, our Prophet (pbuh) also warned the poor not fall into vanity by using their poverty as an excuse. Some of his sayings relating to this matter are as follows:

"Three are people with whom Allah would neither speak, nor would He absolve them on the Day of Resurrection and there is grievous torment for them: They are the aged adulterer, the liar king and the proud destitute." (Muslim, Iman, 172)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also consoled the needy people who were complaining to him by looking at the material and spiritual state of the rich.



Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported:

“The poor amongst the emigrants came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said:

“The possessors of great wealth have obtained the highest ranks and lasting bliss.” He (the Holy Prophet) said:

“*How is that?*” They said:

“*They pray as we pray, and they observe the fast as we observe the fast, and they give charity but we do not give charity, and they set slaves free but we do not set slaves free.*” Upon which, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“*Shall I not teach you something by which you will catch up to those who have preceded you, and get ahead of those who come after you, only those who do as you do being more excellent than you?*” They said:

“Yes, Messenger of Allah.” He (the Holy Prophet) said:

“*Extol Allah, declare His Greatness, and Praise Him thirty-three times after every prayer.*” A few days later those poor emigrants returned to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying:

“Our brethren, the possessors, of property have heard what we have done and now they have to do the same.” So the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

“*This is Allah’s Grace which He gives to whom He wishes.*” (Muslim, Masajid, 142)

Likewise, Umar’s (r.a.) comment in this regard is excellent:

“Both richness and poverty are mounts. I do not care about which one I will ride on.”

In other words wealth and poverty look like a disobedient and hard-to-ride horse. Both of them require the mastery of riding. What is important is to try to be a good rider. It is stated in a Qur’anic verse:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ

“Verily your Lord doth provide sustenance in abundance for whom he pleases, and he provides in a just measure...” (Isra 17; 30, Ra’d 13; 26) Allah



the Almighty is the One Who gives wealth and poverty to whom He wishes. Everybody goes through a test in this world. The important thing is not the type of test but its result. Ultimately we should try to pass this test.

E. The Prophet's Treatment of Orphans and the Families of the Martyrs

“If you want your heart softened, feed the poor and caress the orphan's head.”

Ibn Hanbal, II, 263, 387

The boys and girls who lose their parents before the age of puberty are called orphans according to Islamic principles. It is stated in a saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that *“There is no orphan after puberty...”* (Abu Dawud, Wasaya, 9) and so it was expressed that being an orphan is something related to the period of childhood.

Due to the constant battles and the easiness of divorce, the number of orphans and divorcees in Arab society were very high during the age of ignorance. At that time, orphans were despised and their rights were violated. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was himself raised as an orphan and personally experienced his peoples' behaviors towards the orphans. In fact, Allah the Almighty expresses in the Qur'an that He protected His Messenger during his childhood as an orphan:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى

“Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?” (al-Duha 93; 6) And by the following Divine decree, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was ordered to protect the orphans and appease their needs like Allah the Almighty had done for him:

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

“Therefore, as for the orphan, do not oppress (him).” (al-Duha 93; 9)

The Prophet's concern with the orphans and making regulations for their rights began in the early days of his prophethood. The leader of the immigrants

to Abyssinia, Ja'far b. Abi Talib (r.a.), said in his speech defending Islam and the believers before the Negus that in the age of ignorance the powerful people had been oppressing the weak, but the Prophet (pbuh) had always been with the weak and protected their rights. He also added that the Messenger of Allah had been forbidden anyone "to consume the orphans' property." (Ibn Hisham, I, 359)

In one of the verses of the Qur'an, it is eloquently expressed how those who try to consume orphans property and violate their rights will be disappointed both in this world and in the Hereafter:

"(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire." (al-Nisa 4; 10)

As it can be seen, those who somehow try to unrightfully consume or waste an orphan's rights will actually destroy themselves before the orphan. Because of this, there is no way for a believer other than to obey and follow the contents of the following verse:

"And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner..." (al-An'am 6; 152) In fact, because of this intensive Islamic sensitivity about orphans, the Prophet's Companions hesitated to be near the orphans lest they were to unknowingly violate their rights. When this situation was presented to the Prophet (pbuh), the following verse was revealed:

"...And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: the best thing to do is what is for their good, and if you become co-partners with them, they are your brethren; and Allah knows the mischief-maker and the pace-maker..." (al-Baqara 2; 220) (Tirmidhi, Wasaya, 11)

By this verse Allah the Almighty emphasized that He knows very well who means good and who means mischief for the orphans. Therefore, one should not abstain from taking responsibilities and should treat the orphans like their brothers.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh), who stated that consuming an orphan's wealth is among the most destructive of sins (Bukhari, Wasaya, 23), invites us to be protectors of the orphans in every aspects of life. For instance, in one of his sayings the Prophet (pbuh) says that:



“The best home among the believers is the one in which there is an orphan who is cared for. The worst home among the believers is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 6)

According to this saying, it is not enough to shelter an orphan at home, but one is also required to treat them nicely. If an orphan is treated badly both spiritually and physically, while his food, shelter, and clothing are provided, such kindnesses may turn into a kind of oppression for him.

In one of his sayings Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) notes how one can earn Paradise by treating orphans well:

“If one takes an orphan to his home to feed him, Allah the Almighty will put him into His Paradise unless he commits an unforgivable misdeed.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 14)

The phrase “unforgivable misdeed” brings to one’s mind two great sins: one is assigning partners to Allah the Almighty or to accept the existence of gods other than Allah; and the other one is to violate other peoples’ rights.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also informs us that he will be a neighbor in Paradise to those who raise an orphan by bearing all his material and spiritual problems. One of the reports, in this context, is as follows:

“Whoever raises three orphans gets rewarded like a worshipper who prays all night long, and fasts during the day while unsheathing his sword for the sake of Allah. And I will be with him in Heaven like two brothers as these two fingers.” And then he pointed to his forefinger and his middle finger. (Ibn Majah, Adab, 6)

Being able to enter Heaven certainly is a great joy. What is greater than to be one of the neighbors of the Messenger of Allah in Heaven. Allah the Almighty Who created Heaven and reserved all the high ranks to those who do good deeds has reserved the happiness of being a neighbor to His Messenger (pbuh) to those who protect the orphans. This is expressed in another tradition of the Prophet (pbuh):

“Abu Huraira reported that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“One who looks after the orphan whether he is his relative or not, I and he shall be together in Paradise like this,” and Malik b. Anas, the narrator of

this tradition, explained it with the gesture by drawing his index finger and middle finger close together. (Muslim, Zuhd, 42)

As it is stated in this tradition, orphans are of two types: orphans who are related and other peoples' orphans. Someone's grandchildren, brother's or sister's children, full or half brothers, and someone's own children can be counted among orphans who are related.

An orphan may have some property left from his/her parents. In this case, believers should look after them and their property until they reach puberty and prevent their property being lost. If they do not have any possessions, protecting them means to look after them and not to make them feel their parents' absence. In every society, there are countless orphans. Many of them are being oppressed and forced into bad situations for not having someone to protect and guide them.

The protectors of the orphans fill a gap and wrap a wound in their society. They shoulder the responsibility of being a human. Those who prevent someone from being crushed under the burdens of life will feel an endless joy and will enjoy the infinite rewards informed by the following tradition:

"If someone caresses an orphan's head for the sake of Allah, there will be a reward for every single hair that his hand touched..." (Ibn Hanbal, V, 250)

What a great reward! Therefore, one who embraces and loves an orphan with compassion and tries to make him forget his loneliness and his state will be purified under a shower of Divine blessings.

If an orphan smiles, it is because of the compassionate hand which caressed his head. When an orphan smiles the whole of society will smile. It should not be forgotten that treating an orphan nicely in this world is also a means for peace of mind. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gave the following advice to one of his Companion who complained about the hardness of his heart:

"If you want your heart to be softened, feed the poor, and caress the orphan." (Ibn Hanbal, II, 263, 387)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) has become an example for us not just with his words but also with his actions. When there is a matter related to the orphans, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would always care and observe them. For instance, the land chosen for the building of the Prophet's mosque belonged to two



orphan boys called Sahl and Suhail who were under the guardianship of Medinan believer Asad b. Zurara. These two orphans wanted to donate the land for the mosque construction but the Prophet (pbuh) did not accept it and paid its price. (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45)

We also see some orphans under the personal guardianship of the Prophet (pbuh). According to Ibn Sa'd's report, before his death, Abu Umamah (r.a.) left his three little daughter named Kabsha, Habiba, and Faria, to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah's Messenger (pbuh) showed these three girls the utmost care and raised them under his personal care. (Ibn Sa'd, III, 610)

Abu Juhafa (r.a.), who was an orphan, narrates an incident about the civil servants who were responsible for the collection and distribution of alms:

“One of the Prophet's officers, who was responsible for alms, came to us. He took the alms from the rich and gave them to the needy. I was an orphan, so he gave me a camel, too.” (Tirmidhi, Zakat, 21)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also warned his companions who did not have the capacity and the adequate financial means to not take on such a heavy responsibility. He advised Abu Dhar al-Ghifari (r.a.) by saying:

“O Aba Dhar! I see you weak. I want for you the things that I want for myself. Do not be a commander even for two people and do not take on the responsibility of an orphan's property.” (Nasai, Wasaya, 10)

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) showed special attention to the orphans and families of the martyrs. He helped them to the best of his ability and means. Sometimes, he personally undertook the responsibility of such people and joined in their sorrow and tears, while other times he reminded the high ranks of the martyrs and thus tried to comfort them.

Bashir b. Aqraba says that:

“When my father Aqraba was martyred in the battle of Uhud, I came to the Messenger of Allah crying. He told me:

“O Beloved! Why are you crying? Don't cry and Wipe your tears. Would you be contended if I become your father, and Aisha becomes your mother?” I replied:

“May mother and father be sacrificed for you O Messenger of Allah! Of course I would be content at that.” Thereupon, he caressed my head. Now my

hair has turned white but the part that the Prophet (pbuh) touched remains black.” (Bukhari, *al-Tarikh al-Kabir*, II, 78; Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz*, XIII, 298)

We observe another example of Prophet’s kindness to the families of the martyrs in a narration by Umm Haritha, whose son was martyred in the Battle of Badr.

Haritha has been martyred on the day of Badr with an arrow shot by an unidentified person. Thereupon, Umm Haritha came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said,

“O Apostle of Allah! Will you tell me about Haritha?” She added, “If he is in Paradise, I will be patient; otherwise, I will weep bitterly for him.” He said,

“O mother of Haritha! There are Gardens in Paradise and your son has reached the Firdaws al-ala (i.e. the best place in Paradise).” (Bukhari, Jihad, 14; Ibn Hanbal, III, 272)

Another example is that the Prophet (pbuh) first placed Umama the daughter of his uncle Hamza, who had been martyred in the Battle of Uhud, under the guardianship of Ja’far b. Abi Talib and then married her to Umm Salama’s son Salama (r. anhum). (Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 159-160)

When the Prophet (pbuh) heard about Ja’far b. Abi Talib’s martyrdom in the Battle of Muthah, he rushed to the martyr’s house, hugged his children, and ordered the people around to prepare some food for the martyr’s grieving family. (Ibn Hisham, III, 436)

We also see in the records that the Prophet (pbuh) looked after this martyr’s family closely in the days that followed. Abdullah son of Ja’far (r.a.) narrates the following incident about the Prophet’s care for them:

“I remember very well that one day I and Abbas’s two sons, Kusam and Ubaidullah, were playing outside. Riding a camel Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) came to us. Pointing at me, he said:

“Hold this boy up to me.” And let me sit in front of him. Then he indicated to Kusam and said:

“Hold this one up to me.” And let Kusam sit behind him. Even though Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) knew that his uncle Abbas loved Ubaidullah more than Kusam, he let Kusam ride with him. He, then, caressed Kusam’s head three times and he prayed:



“O Allah! Protect Ja’far’s children!” (Ibn Hanbal, I, 205; Hakim, III, 655)⁷³

Similarly, one day Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stopped by Abdullah b. Ja’far, who was selling something to children in the market. The Prophet (pbuh) prayed for him saying:

“O Allah! Bless this boy’s transactions.” (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, II, 289)

Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) also made the following general supplication about the martyr’s families:

“O Allah! Take the sadness out of their heart and the hardships out of their lives. Make those whom the martyr left behind favorable to him.” (Waqidi, I, 316)

F. The Prophet’s Treatment of the Disabled

“Allah the Almighty said, ‘If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (i.e., his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.’”

Bukhari, Marda, 7

Disabled people are also among the unjustly treated groups in a society. When we consider the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), we can examine the disabled people in two groups: those who are mentally disabled and those who are physically disabled. Blind people occupy a considerable place among the prophetic sayings about physically disabled people, although the Holy Qur’an usually talks about spiritual blindness when it refers to blindness. The eightieth chapter of the Qur’an expresses the rights of disabled in general and the rights of the blind in particular. It also invites the believers to be careful about the disabled as follows:

“He frowned and turned (his) back, because there came to him the blind man. And what would make you know that he would purify himself, or take heed and so the reminder might avail him? As for him who

73. One of the narrators of this tradition says that: I told Abdullah b/ Ja’far: “What happened to Kusam then?” He said: “He became a martyr.” Therupon I said: “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Abdullah agreed: “Yes, they do.”

considers himself free from need of you, to him do you address yourself? And no blame is on you if he would not purify himself. And as to him who comes to you striving hard, and he fears, from him will you divert yourself.” (Abasa 80; 1-10)

The following incident is reported as the reason for the revelation of these verses:

One day, Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was chatting with prominent members of Quraish, including Utba b. Rabia, Abu Jahl, and Umayya b. Halaf. He was hoping to convert them to Islam and doing his best to achieve this. Just then, Abdullah b. Ummi Maktum (r.a.), a blind Companion, approached the Prophet (pbuh):

“O Messenger of Allah! Teach me from what Allah has taught you.” He even repeated this request for a few times for he could not see the Prophet’s guests.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), who was annoyed by the interruption, manifested his displeasure and turned his face away from the blind man. Then he continued to talk with his guests, because these respected people expected to receive special treatment. When the Prophet (pbuh) was about to leave, the above mentioned verses were revealed. After that he (pbuh) asked Ummi Maktum (r.a.) about his health and complemented him. And from time to time Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) addressed him saying:

“O man, because of whom my Lord reproached me!” (Razi, XXXI, 50)

The Prophet (pbuh) sent this Companion, who was one of the early Muslims, to Medina to teach the Qur’an to the new converts. The Medinan Bara’ b. Aiz (r.a.) said:

“The first believers who emigrated to our town were Mus’ab b. Umair and Ibn Ummi Maktum (r. anhum). There they taught the Holy Qur’an to the public.” (Bukhari, Manakib al-Ansar, 46)

Abdullah b. Ummi Maktum, who also served as the Prophet’s muezzin along with Bilal al-Habashi (r.a.) (Ibn Sa’d, IV, 207), presented his blindness, the distance of his house from the mosque, and the lack of anyone to take him to the mosque as an excuse to the Prophet (pbuh). He then asked permission from Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) to conduct his prayers in his house. He (the Holy



Prophet) granted him permission. Then, when Ummi Maktum turned away the Prophet (pbuh) called to him and asked:

“Do you hear the call to prayer?” He said:

“Yes, I do.” He (the Holy Prophet then) said:

“Respond to it and come to the congregation.” (Muslim, Masajid, 255; Abu Dawud, Salat, 46)

Beside its emphasis on performing prayers in congregation, this tradition also shows how the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) tried to keep a blind person in congregation and did not let him isolate himself from society.

When the Prophet (pbuh) left Medina for certain reasons, he sometimes appointed Ibn Ummi Maktum (r.a.) to lead the prayers on his behalf. There are reports that this took place thirteen times. (Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, IV, 264)

Islam does not hold disabled people responsible from what they cannot do. It does not require, for instance, for them to join the army. When the verse **“Those of the believers who sit still and are not on an equality with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives...”** (al-Nisa 4; 95) was revealed, Ibn Ummi Maktum went to the Prophet (pbuh) and explained that he could not fight because of his blindness. As a result of which, the following part of the verse was revealed: **“Those of the believers who sit still, other than those who have a (disabling) hurt ...”** (al-Nisa 4; 95) (Bukhari, Tafsir, (4) 18)

Thus, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) exempted the disabled from joining the army but let those who insisted to come. For instance, Amr b. Jamuh (r.a.), the leader of the Salama clan, was crippled but he wanted to attend to the Battle of Badr. However, the Prophet (pbuh) did not give him permission. Amr then wanted to join the Battle of Uhud. His sons tried to stop him saying:

“Allah the Almighty has exempted you from fighting.”

Thereupon, Amr went to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah’s Messenger told him that he was excused because of his disability. But upon Amr’s insistence, he said to Amr’s sons:

“Do not prevent your father from going to battle. Allah may bestow martyrdom upon him.”

This exited Companion attended the Battle of Uhud and said during the battle: “By Allah I miss Heaven.” Finally he was martyred with one of his sons, who was trying to save his father. (Waqidi, I, 264-265; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, IV, 208)

During Omar’s caliphate, wearing armor and carrying a black flag, Ibn Umri Maktum (r.a.) also joined the Muslim army in the battle of Qadisiyah. According to a report he became a martyr in this battle and according to another report he passed away when he returned to Medina. (Ibn Sa’d, IV, 112; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, IV, 264)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) emphasized that the disabled will obtain the same rewards as those who join the army, as long as they have the intention to join it.

It was narrated by Anas (pbuh):

While the Prophet was in a Ghazwa he said:

“Some people have remained behind us in Medina and we never crossed a mountain path or a valley, but they were with us (i.e. sharing the reward with us), as they have been held back by a (legal) excuse.” (Bukhari, Jihad, 35)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) also advised disabled people not to rebel because of their disabilities and show patience for the blessings that other people had. In this way he noted that they could gain Paradise. Anas b. Malik (r.a.) reported that he heard from the Messenger of Allah saying:

“Allah the Almighty said, “If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (i.e., his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.”” (Bukhari, Marda, 7; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 58)

Only when a blessing is lost, one understands its real value and it becomes harder to show patience for losing that blessing. This is why Allah the Almighty promises to give Paradise to those who can keep their patience.

Even though it is a great blessing to be able to see the wonders of this world, this blessing is limited by the life in this world; whereas the reward (i.e. Heaven) promised by Allah the Almighty is eternal and its blessings are endless.

Illnesses, which are not yet curable, can also be considered as disabilities. Therefore, there is nothing one can do but to remain patient in the face of



them. One can continue to bear the incurable hardships only through the help of patience. This way one can obtain peace in the eternal life and his station in the presence of Allah the Almighty ascends.

Ata b. Abi Rabah (r.a.) narrated:

“Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) said to me:

“Shall I show you a woman of the people of Paradise?” I said,

“Yes.” He said,

“This black lady came to the Prophet and said,

“I get attacks of epilepsy and my body becomes exposed; please pray to Allah for my recovery.” The Prophet said (to her),

“If you wish, be patient and there will be Paradise for you in the Hereafter; and if you wish, I will pray for Allah to cure you.” She said,

“I will remain patient,” and added,

“But I become uncovered, so please pray Allah for me that I may not become uncovered during my epilepsy attacks.” So the Prophet (pbuh) prayed to Allah for her.” (Bukhari, Marda, 6; Muslim, Birr, 54)

Here, the Prophet (pbuh) presented two choices to a woman asking for a solution to her problem. This may seem a little ambiguous for some people. By giving her choices, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) in fact, reminded and guided her to the better option as a solution to her problem. This is a manifestation of the Prophet’s mercy towards his Companions.

Allah’s Apostle was also concerned with the problems of mentally disabled people. There are also reports that he miraculously cured some mentally disabled people by placing his hand on their chests. (Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isaba*, IV, 453)

According to a narration reported by Anas b. Malik (r.a.) one day a woman with some mental problems went to the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) and said:

“O Apostle of Allah! I have some business with you.” The Prophet (pbuh) said to her:

“O Mother of so and so, Go wherever you want and sit in the corner of any street you wish. And I will come with you and take care of your problem.”

So she sat and the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) also sat with her until her problem was resolved. (Muslim, Fada'il, 76; Abu Dawud, Adab, 12)

In his following saying the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) stated that those who are weak in mind are exempted from religious responsibilities:

“The Pen that records the deeds has been lifted from three people [they are not responsible for their actions]; the minor, until he reaches puberty; the sleeping person, until he wakes up; and the insane person, until he recovers.”
(Tirmidhi, Hudud, 1)

The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) also issued some moral principles for the relationship between the healthy and the disabled people. For instance, in one of his sayings, helping and showing the way to the blind and explaining matters to the deaf and mute are noted as types of charity. (Ibn Hanbal, V, 169)

In short, the Prophet (pbuh) did not consider the disabled as people who are condemned to be the idle and piteous members of the society. He not only personally tried to solve their problems but also gave them responsibilities in accordance with their situation and drew them into the society. He also consoled them by giving them glad tidings promising happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter.

G. The Prophet's Treatment of Male and Female Slaves

“(Show) kindness unto... those whom your right hands possess...”

(al-Nisa 4; 36)

Firstly, we need to remind our readers that it is not Islam that established slavery. Muslims found this institution that was rooted in all ancient beliefs and philosophical systems and spread all over the world, functioning during the rise of Islam. However, Islam also brought many improvements contrary to the inhumane practices of the old systems.

As some of the people whom believers need to help are stated in the Holy Qur'an, slaves are noted as follows: **“(Show) kindness unto... those whom your right hands possess...”** (al-Nisa 4; 36)

When we examine the Prophet's approach to slaves, we can clearly see how this verse can be applied to daily life. As it is known, Allah's Messenger



(pbuh) had been sent as a mercy for the worlds. (al-Anbiya 21; 107) Slaves also benefitted from this endless mercy. In fact, these people, who had not been regarded as human beings, gained the right to come into the presence of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and to request help for their problems. (Bukhari, Adab, 61)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) taught how politely masters should address their servants in his following saying:

“None of you should say: My bondman and my slave-girl, for all of you are the bondmen of Allah, and all your women are the slave-girls of Allah; but say: My servant, my girl, and my young man and my young girl.” (Muslim, Alfaz, 15)

Paying attention to servants' subsistence, feeding them with what the household eats and clothing them with garments similar to what the household wears are among the practices of the Prophet (pbuh).

Khaithama b. Abdullah reported:

“While we were sitting in the company of my teacher Abdullah b. Umar (r. anhumā) his steward entered. He (Ibn Umar) asked his steward:

“Have you supplied the provision to the slaves?” The steward replied:

“No, I have not.” Then he said:

“Go and give (the provision) to them, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying:

“This sin is enough for a man that he withholds the subsistence from one whose master he is.” (Muslim, Zakat, 40)

Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid narrated:

“I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak that was exactly the same. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied,

“Once I abused a man because of his mother and he complained to the Prophet about me. The Prophet asked me,

“Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?” He added,

“Your slaves are both your servants and your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, whoever has brethren under his control, he should

feed them with the like of what he eats and clothe them with the like of what he wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job)." (Bukhari, Itq, 15; Muslim, Aiman, 40)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) advises his ummah not only to help their slaves in difficult tasks but also to forgive them and not to punish them right away when they make mistakes. Ibn Omar (r. anhuma) narrates:

"A man came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and asked:

"How much do I need to forgive my servants?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not respond and kept his silence. The man asked again:

"O Messenger of Allah! How much do I need to forgive my servants?" This time the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Forgive them seventy times a day." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 31)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) forbade beating and torturing slaves. He (pbuh) even stated in one of his sayings that the only way to be cleansed from the sin of beating a slave is to set that slave free. This principle is noted in the following saying:

"He who beats a slave without him having committed a cognizable offence slaps him (without any serious fault), then expiation for it is that he should set him free." (Muslim, Aiman, 30)

Ibn Omar (r. anhuma) is the narrator of this saying. According to a report, one day he asked one of his slaves, who had somemarks on his body from beating:

"Did I hurt you?" The slave replied:

"No, you did not." But Ibn Omar did not feel relieved so he set the slave free. And then He took hold of wood or something like it from the earth and said:

"There is no reward for me in this (setting this slave free) even equal to this piece of wood, but that I heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saying, and he narrated the above mentioned saying." (Muslim, Aiman, 30)

In this saying, Ibn Omar (r. anhuma) meant that he had set his slave free for expiation of his actions not as an act of goodness.



Abu Ali Suwaid b. Muqarrin (r.a.) said that

“I was the seventh one amongst my brothers during the lifetime of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), and we had but only one servant. The youngest one of us became angry and slapped him. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) commanded us to set him free.” (Muslim, Aiman, 32)

Abu Mas’ud al-Badri reported the following similar tradition:

“I was beating my slave with a whip when I heard a voice behind me:

“*O Abu Masud! You should know.*” But I did not recognize the voice due to my intense anger and did not hear the rest of the addressing. As the speaker came near me, I realized that he was the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). And he was saying to me:

“*Bear in mind, O Abu Mas’ud; bear in mind O Abu Mas’ud. Verily Allah has more dominance upon you than you have upon your slave.*” I (then) said:

“I shall never beat my servant in the future.” (Muslim, Aiman, 34)

In another version of the report Abu Mas’ud (r.a.) said that:

“O Allah’s Messenger, I set him free for the sake of Allah. Thereupon, he said:

“Had you not done that, (the gates of) Hell would have opened for you, or the fire would have burnt you. (Muslim, Aiman, 35)

Those who reproach, beat, and treat to the weak, the needy, and the servants badly for no reason should not forget the Prophet’s warnings.

Nevertheless, treating servants nicely, in accordance with the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), is something that requires patience and tolerance. This is expressed by the following common saying: “According to Islam, buying a slave means becoming a slave.”

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) asked from slaves first to worship Allah and then to serve their masters and behave nicely with good intentions. If they do this, their deeds will be rewarded twice as much. Allah’s Apostle emphasized this as follows:

“*If a slave is honest and faithful to his master and worships his Lord (Allah) in a perfect manner, he will get a double reward.*” (Bukhari, ‘Itq, 17)

After narrating a similar tradition, Abu Huraira (r.a.) added:

“By Him in Whose Hands Abu Huraira’s soul is if there had not been the reward for Jihad (i.e. holy battles), Hajj, and my duty to serve my mother, I would have loved to die as a slave. (Bukhari, ‘Itq, 16; Muslim, Aiman, 44)

On the other hand, enslavement of a free person except in wars is forbidden in Islam. In a sacred tradition, Allah the Almighty says that:

“*I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection:*

1. *One who makes a covenant in My Name, but proves treacherous.*
2. *One who sells a free person as a slave and consumes the price,*
3. *And one who employs a laborer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages.”* (Bukhari, Buyu’, 106)

Islam has also taken precautions to get rid of slavery in the course of time. The requirement of setting a slave free for the atonement of some sins is one of them. For instance, if it is possible, one is required to set a slave free as an expiation for breaking an oath (al-Maidah 5; 89), for the incident of Zihar (al-Mujadilah 58; 3)⁷⁴ and killing someone by mistake (al-Nisa 4; 92).

According to Islamic rules, if a slave offers to make an agreement with his master for his freedom and to pay his price (*mukatab*), his master should accept this offer and should even financially help his slave with the payment. (al-Nur 24; 33) Moreover, freeing a slave voluntarily is considered among the most valuable acts of worship. The spiritual and material rewards of emancipating a slave are noted in a Qur’anic verse as follows:

فَلَا افْتَحَمَ الْعُقْبَةَ وَمَا اَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقْبَةُ فَاَنْ رَقَبَةً اَوْ اِطْعَامًا فِي يَوْمِ ذِي
مَسْعَبَةَ يَتِيْمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ اَوْ مَسْكِيْنًا ذَا مَثْرَبَةٍ

74. **Zihar:** means that a husband likens his wife to the back, or belly, or another bodily part prohibited to look at of someone whose marriage is permanently banned in Islam. The reason for calling this practice *zihar* is that it is usually done by using the word “*zahr* or back of a person.” In pre-Islamic times, *zihar* was a way to dissolve marriage. Islam prohibits this form of marriage dissolution, asked men who make such statements to return their wives after serving a penalty. The wife is prohibited to her husband after he makes such a statement, and until he frees a slave, fasts the daytime of two consecutive lunar months if he does not find the wherewithal to free a slave, or feeds sixty needy people if he is unable to fast, in that order.



“But he would not attempt the uphill road, and what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) the setting free of a slave, or the giving of food in a day of hunger to an orphan, having relationship, or to the poor man lying in the dust.” (al-Balad 90; 11-16)

This is also expressed in one of the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh):

“He who emancipates a slave, Allah will set free from Hell every limb (of his body) for every limb of his (slave’s) body ...” (Bukhari, Kaffarah, 6; Muslim, ‘Itq, 22-23)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) set all his slaves free for various reasons. Freed slaves were called *mawali*. Because of *mawalis*’ roots of slavery, there was a difference between the status of *mawalis* and the free members of the Arab society during the pre-Islamic period. In order to correct this understanding Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) wedded his freed slave Zaid’ with Zainab bint Jahsh, the daughter of his (the Prophet’s) aunt Umayya. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, I, 564) He also contracted the marriage of Zaid’s son Uthama with Fatima bint Qais, the daughter of a Quraishite family. Abu Jahm and Muawiya had wanted to marry Fatimah, one of the early immigrants, but the Prophet (pbuh) suggested Uthama. (Muslim, Talaq, 36; Tirmidhi, Nikah, 38)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also gave positions to *mawali* in the state services. For instance, he appointed Zaid and his son Uthama (r. anhum) several times as the commander of the Muslim army. (Bukhari, Ashab al-Nabi, 17; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, I, 564) Bilal al-Habashi, the freed slave of Abu Bakr (r. anhum), served not only as the Prophet’s muezzin (Ibn Sa’d, I, 246) but also as the treasurer of the Muslim state (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, I, 165) and the host to foreign envoys. (Ibn Sa’d, I, 294, 298, 323)

The best manifestation of this approach can be seen in the treaty of brotherhood established by the Prophet (pbuh) between the Meccan immigrants and the Medinan believers without observing any difference among them. Companions like Bilal Habashi, Salman al-Farisi, Ammar b. Yasir, and Salim who were freed slaves attract our attention as part of this treaty; for Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) declared a brotherhood between Bilal and Abdullah b. Abdurrahman (Ibn Sa’d, III, 233, 234), between Salman al-Farisi and Abu al-Darda (Bukhari, Adab, 67), between Salim and Muaz b. Maiz (Ibn Abdilbar, II, 567), and between Ammar and Hudhaifa al-Yamani (Hakim, III, 435).

This brotherhood did not derive from ostentation; rather it was the result of love and a relationship of faith. It was based on mutual rights including the law of inheritance, equality, and cooperation. (Bukhari, Kafalah, 2; Adab, 67) Even though this relationship has continued as a principle in the later periods of Islam, the law of inheritance is later reserved for the blood kinship. (al-Anfal 8; 72-75; Bukhari, Faraiz, 16)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not forget the slaves in his death bed and his last words were:

"(Be careful about) Prayer, prayer; fear Allah regarding those whom your right hands possess." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 123-124; Ibn Majah, Wasaya, 1)



VII. THE PROPHET’S TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

“*S*urely there will be a reward for the goodness done for a living being.”

(Bukhari, Shurb, 9)

Human beings need many things for their survival. Animals are among the most important one of these things. In fact, animals are created for appeasing people’s needs from the indispensable ones like food, clothing, and transportation to the ones addressing to the esthetic joys of life. The Holy Qur’an speaks about this fact as follows:

“And He created the cattle for you; you have in them warm clothing and (many) advantages, and of them do you eat. And there is beauty in them for you when you drive them back (to home), and when you send them forth (to pasture).” (al-Nahl 16; 5-6)

“And (He created) horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them and as an ornament; and He creates what you do not know.” (al-Nahl 16; 8)

In another verse, the miraculous creation and the wisdom of the cattle are noted as follows:

وَأِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُّسْقِيكُم مِّمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ
مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا خَالِصًا سَائِعًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ

“And most surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle; We give you to drink of what is in their bellies—from between the feces and the blood-- pure milk, easy and agreeable to swallow for those who drink.”

(al-Nahl 16; 66)

Some of the chapters of the Qur'an have been given the names of animals,⁷⁵ and in some verses animals are also described as an ummah like human beings:

“And there is no animal that walks upon the earth or a bird that flies with its two wings but (they are) ummah (genera) like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered.” (al-An'am 6; 38)

The use of the term ummah, which has an important place in Islamic literature, for animals is indeed very remarkable; for animals occupy a significant place in the ecological order and balance. Like everything else, animals are trusts given to the service of human beings. Therefore, one should be careful when benefiting from these trusts, treat them nicely, and should not betray them. We can find the best examples of such treatment in our Prophet's life and orders. For instance, he prohibited killing animals unnecessarily and arbitrarily except some pests. (Bukhari, Bad'ul Khalq, 16; Muslim, Hajj, 66-67) One time he told his Companions:

“Allah the Almighty will call those who kill a sparrow unrightfully into account on the Day of Judgment.” The Companions asked:

“What is the right of a sparrow?” He said:

“To slaughter and then eat it.” (Darimi, Adahi, 16)

In a similar tradition, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said that:

“Whoever kills a sparrow for the fun of it, that sparrow will wail on the Day of Judgment and recount to Allah the Almighty:

Dear Lord! So and so killed me unjustly. He killed me for no benefit.” (Nasai, Dahaya, 42)

What we can conclude from these prophetic traditions is that Islam does not approve killing animals just for pleasure, with no reason. This is considered a violation of their right to life. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) even invites the believers to observe the right to life of the ants which he calls a community glorifying Allah the Almighty. (Bukhari, Jihad, 152; Muslim, Salam, 148)⁷⁶

75. For instance The chapters of Baqara (Cow), Nahl (Bee), Ankabut (Spider), and Naml (Ant)

76. In this context there is a story in Islamic literature: One day Bayazid al-Bistami (q.s.)



Allah's Messenger (pbuh) called people to show mercy and compassion to animals and their kids. Abdullah b. Mas'ud (r.a.) narrated:

"We were with the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) during a journey. He went to ease himself. We saw a bird with her two young ones and we captured her young ones. The bird came and began to spread its wings. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) came and said:

"Who grieved this for its young ones? Return its young ones to it." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 112, Adab, 163-164)

Another similar report was narrated by Amir al-Ram (r.a.):

"When we were with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), a man came to him. He had a sheet of cloth and something in his hand. He turned his attention to him and said:

"O Apostle of Allah, when I saw you, I turned towards you. I saw a group of trees and heard the sound of fledglings. I took them and put them in my garment. Their mother then came and began to hover round my head. I showed them to her, and she fell on them. I wrapped them with my garment. They are now with me.

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Place them far from you." So I placed them far, but their mother stayed with them.

The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) said to his companions:

"You are surprised at the affection of the mother for her young, aren't you?"

They said:

"Yes, Apostle of Allah." He said:

"I swear by Him Who has sent me with the Truth, Allah is more affectionate to His servants than a mother to her young ones. Take them back and

stopped under a tree and had a meal during a journey. After having his meal, he continued his journey. Later he recognized an ant on his bag. He said:

"I have separated this poor animal from his land" and went back to the tree and left it there.

put them where you took them from when their mother should have been with them. So he took them back.” (Abu Dawud, Janaiz, 1)

When we think about this issue in the light of the above mentioned traditions, what can we say about putting innocent animals into cages?

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) left Medina for Mecca in his Ihram garments. Then they went on until they came to the well of al-Uthaba, which was between ar-Ruwaytha and al-Arj (between Mecca and Medina), where they unexpectedly came upon a gazelle, lying on its side in some shade. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) told someone to stand by it to make sure no one disturbed it until everyone had passed by. (Muwatta, Hajj, 79; Nasai, Hajj, 78)

When the Muslim army was on its way to conquer Mecca, a magnificent scene of animal care happened. This was the result of seeing the creation from the side of the Creator. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) left the region of Arj to Talub with his army of 10000 men, he saw a dog nursing its puppies. The Prophet (pbuh) ordered Juail b. Suraqa to guard that dog and its puppies. He also warned his army not to disturb the animals. (Waqidi, II, 408)

Aisha (r. anha) once mounted upon a wild camel and she began to make that go round and round. Upon seeing this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said:

“You should show kindness, for kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but that it makes it defective.” (Muslim, Birr, 78, 79)

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) states in his various sayings that showing mercy or heartlessness may affect a person’s eternal salvation or damnation. It was narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a.) that:

“Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) said,

“While a man was walking on a road, he became very thirsty. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank from its water and then came out. Meanwhile, he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself:

“This dog is suffering from the same state of thirst as I did.” So he went down the well (again) and filled his shoe (with water) and held it in his mouth and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him.” The Companions asked:



“O Allah’s Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving animals?” He said,

“(Yes) There is a reward for serving any animate (living being).” (Bukhari, Shurb, 9; Muslim, Salam, 153)

Some Companions’ questioned “whether there was a reward for them in serving animals”, needs to be regarded as a normal question, for there was no such understanding in the society of that period. The Prophet’s response was an important advice and warning for those who had asked the question and those who were thinking like them. Therefore, we understand that we may obtain the pleasure and forgiveness of Allah because of our kindness, even if it is shown to animals. And obtaining the forgiveness of the Almighty is the means to eternal happiness.

Here is another remarkable tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) in this regard:

“A woman was punished because she had kept a cat tied up until it died, and (as a punishment for this offence) she was thrown into Hell. She had not provided it with food, or drink, and had not freed her so that she could eat the insects of the earth.” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 54; Muslim, Salam, 151)

Sometimes one may need to use some methods to discipline wild animals; however, they should not exceed the limits. Torturing defenseless animals is against the spirit of Islam. Such behavior will certainly be called into account both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Feeding our animals, loading them with not more than they can carry, giving them enough time to rest are among the issues expressed in the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh). In one such tradition it was noted that:

“When you journey through a fertile land, you should go slowly and give the camels a chance to graze in the land. When you travel in an arid land where there is a scarcity of vegetation, you should quicken their pace lest your camels grow feeble and emaciated for lack of fodder. When you halt for the night, avoid pitching your tent on the road, for it is the abode of noxious little animals at night.” (Muslim, Ijarah, 178)⁷⁷

77. This tradition attracts our attention to a situation peculiar to times when people were travelling by animals. In wild animals and pests would be around the routes of people to eat their leftovers. Both not to disturb such animals and not to be harmed by them, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) advised to camp at places far from the roads. In order to protect ourselves from the harm of animals and from all other kinds of evil, he also advised the following: *“When anyone lands at a place, and then says: “I seek refuge in the Perfect*

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) once stopped by the date garden of a Medinan believer. He saw a camel there. When the camel saw him, it began to wail and its eyes began to shed tears. The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) approached the animal and patted its head. And it calmed down. Then Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked:

"Who is the owner of this camel?" A young Medinan came and said:

"It is mine O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (pbuh) told him:

"Don't you fear Allah regarding your animal? It complains about you for keeping it hungry and tiring it too much." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 44)

We hear another example from Anas b. Malik (r.a.) another example of respecting the animal rights from the life of the Prophet (pbuh):

Anas b. Malik (r.a.) said that:

*"When we camped at a station, we did not pray until we united the saddles of the camels."*⁷⁸ (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 44)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also warns those who stay upon animals too long giving speeches:

"Avoid using back of your animals as pulpits, for Allah the Almighty has put them under your command to take you to places where you cannot easily go. He has made the earth your place of stay. So fulfill your needs upon earth." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 55)

Sahl b. Ansari (r.a.) says that:

"The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) came upon a camel very weak from hunger and said:

"Fear Allah regarding these dumb animals. Ride them when they are in a good condition and slaughter and eat them when they are in good condition." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 44)

Word of Allah from the evil of what He has created," nothing would harm him until he marches from that stopping place." (Muslim, Dhikr, 54, 55)

78. There are various interpretations about this statement. Here the prayer means that "the supererogatory prayers in general" or "*duha* prayer (the optional prayer performed before noon) in particular." (Saharanfuri, XII, 49)



In this tradition the phrase “dumb animals” elegantly expresses how much animals are in need of our mercy.

One should treat animals nicely even when slaughtering them. Slaughtering must be as quick as possible and should not cause the animal additional pain. One of the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) is as follows:

“Verily Allah has enjoined goodness to everything; so when you kill, kill in a good way and when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way. So every one of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably.” (Muslim, Said, 57; Tirmidhi, Diyat, 14)

According to a report narrated by Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) once saw a man slaughtering an animal. The man made the animal lie down and then he began to sharpen his knife. The Prophet (pbuh) reproached the man for his heartless behavior saying:

“Are you trying to kill it several times? Could not you sharpen your knife before making it lie down?” (Hakim, IV, 257, 260)

The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) also prohibited provoking animals to fight. (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 51; Tirmidhi, Jihad, 30) Therefore, today’s organizations of animal fights, like cockfights, camel, or bull fights are absolutely against the Prophet’s orders. Such customs are nothing but torture for the poor animals.

Our Prophet (pbuh) also banned his followers to use live animals as shooting targets. Ibn Omar (r. anhumā) happened to pass by a party of men who had tied a hen and were shooting arrows at it. As soon as they saw Ibn Omar, they scattered. Thereupon, Ibn Omar said:

“Who has done this? May Allah damn him, for verily Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) has invoked a curse upon those who use live animals as shooting targets.” (Bukhari, Zabaih, 25; Muslim, Said, 59)

He (pbuh) also prohibited cauterizing animals’ faces. Ibn Abbas (r. anhumā) reported that a donkey whose face had been cauterized happened to pass in front of Allah’s Apostle (pbuh). Whereupon he said:

“Allah has cursed one who has cauterized this animal on its face.” (Muslim, Libas, 107)

Both torturing and changing their natural appearance by cauterizing animals’ faces are practices against the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. This is

why Allah's Messenger (pbuh) uses the word "curse" to express the seriousness of this action. In fact he rarely uses such strong statements and he warns his followers even about cursing and using bad language towards animals. He strongly reproached some people who did not observe his warnings.

Imran b. Husain (r.a.) reported:

"We were with Allah's Messenger (pbuh) in some of his journeys and there was a woman from the Ansar riding a she-camel that it shied and she invoked curse upon it. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) heard this and said:

"Unload that animal and set it free for it is accursed." 'Imran said:

"I still remember that camel walking amongst people and none taking any notice of that." (Muslim, Birr, 80)

Other similar reports are as follows:

"Do not curse the cock, for it awakens (believers) for the prayer." (Abu Dawud, Adab, 105, 106)

"When you hear the crowing of cocks, ask for Allah's Blessings for (their crowing indicates that) they have seen an angel. And when you hear the braying of donkeys, seek Refuge with Allah from Satan for (their braying indicates) that they have seen a Satan." (Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 15; Muslim, Dhikr, 82)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) paid great attention to feeding and caring for horses, which were the primary vehicle of transportation and battle of the day.

Utba b. Abdullah al-Sulami (r.a.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Do not cut the forelocks, manes, or tails of horse, for their tails are their means of driving flies, their manes provide them with warmth, and blessing is tied to their forelocks." (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 41)

Jarir (r.a.) narrated:

"I saw the Prophet (pbuh) curling a horse's hair with his fingers. He was saying while curling its mane:

"(A great) benefit, i.e. reward for rearing them for Jihad and spoils of war, has been tied to the forelocks of horses until the Day of Judgment." (Muslim, Imarah, 97; Nasai, Hayl, 7)



According to the report by Anas (r.a.), the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was seen wiping the face of his horse with his cloak. When he was asked about it, he (pbuh) said that:

“I was reproached tonight about horses i.e. for not taking good care of them.” (Muwatta, Jihad, 47)

We also see in the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) that if it is not necessary, having a dog at home is not approved by him. It is stated in the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) that the reward of those who keep a dog in their homes without a reason, like farming, hunting, animal husbandry, or guarding a place, will be reduced every day (Bukhari, Hars, 3; Zabaih, 6) and that Angels (of Mercy) do not enter a house in which there is a dog. (Bukhari, Bad’ul Khalq, 7, 17; Muslim, Libas, 84)

Therefore, those who keep dogs in their homes just for pleasure are the subjects of these warnings. When we think that dogs are the main animals which carry and spread rabies and that their saliva, hair, and feces are the carriers of various diseases, we can understand the wisdom behind this prohibition. Another reason for this prohibition is that dogs frighten people and sometimes even hurt them. However, we should not forget that keeping them away from our house does not mean treating them badly.

On the other hand, prophetic traditions regard cats like the members of the family. It is noted that cats are not impure animals. This is clearly understood from the following tradition:

Kabshah, daughter of Ka’b b. Malik and wife of Ibn Abu Qatadah, (r. anhum) reported:

“Abu Qatadah visited (me) and I poured out water for him for ablution. A cat came and drank some of it and he tilted the vessel for it until it drank some of it. Kabshah said:

“When he saw me looking at him, Abu Qatadah told me:

“Are you surprised, my niece?” I said:

“Yes, I am.” Upon which he reported the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as saying:

“It (the cat) is not unclean; it is one of those animals which goes around among you.” (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 38; Tirmidhi, Taharah, 69)

Like human beings, animals also have some rights. As in every other aspect of life it is obvious that we need to follow the customs of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) in this matter. His warnings and advice about the rights of animals remind us that we will be held responsible for all of our deeds. Providing good care for animals, feeding them, and protecting them are among the responsibilities of their owners. Showing mercy and kindness to all of Allah's creation is the responsibility of every believer. It is also among their responsibility to warn those who do not follow these prophetic guidelines, for Muslim society is a society of mercy.



EPILOGUE

Allah the Almighty sent many prophets to organize people's lives in this world and in the Hereafter. And the prophets (may peace and blessings be upon them) did everything to fulfill their mission. They faced many unbearable hardships and tortures on their way.

The last Prophet of Allah the Almighty also experienced many hardships because of his mission, but he never surrendered or tired. He conveyed the message of Allah the Almighty until the end of his life. His efforts are proverbial. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) aimed to convey his message to the whole of humanity and first began from his closest relatives. He warned his audience especially about the punishment waiting in the Hereafter and invited them to eternal salvation. Facilitating matters, not scaring his audience and breaking their hopes, teaching his message gradually, not tiring his audience, and seizing every opportunity were among the methods that he followed in fulfilling his mission.

The primary instrument of our Prophet (pbuh) in his mission was the miraculous Words of Allah i.e. The Holy Qur'an. Every prophet was sent with a miracle peculiar to himself. And the greatest miracle of our Prophet (pbuh) was the Word of Allah. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) invited people to follow the guidelines informed in this Holy Book and so save themselves from the darkness of disbelief and attain the enlightenment of faith. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) manifested some other miracles, too; however these miracles do not have the continuous characteristic of the Holy Qur'an.

Our Prophet's letters to the neighboring countries, his Companions, and the foreign envoys are also among the instruments of his mission. Through these instruments he opened the wings of mercy and compassion to all humanity. Fighting was his last resort towards those who tried to stop him. Therefore, it is a great responsibility upon the preachers of Islam to follow these methods while conveying the message of Islam.

Islam wants to return people to their true consciousness by educating them with its principles. Human beings begin to be educated as soon as they come to this world and this process continues until the end of their lives. There



is no end for spiritual improvement and ascendance. However, in order to achieve this spiritual ascendance one should keep learning and apply what he learns in his life. In fact those who raised and educated by the Prophet (pbuh) have become exemplary figures for the whole of humanity.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) did not arbitrarily educate the people around him but followed certain methods. For instance, he never hurt his Companions' feelings, offended them. He always approached them with mercy and compassion and guided them to goodness. He corrected people's mistakes by convincing them. Sometimes he forgave those who made a mistake knowingly or unintentionally. Sometimes he intervened immediately and corrected the mistake by showing alternatives. And he always prayed for the guidance of such people.

Family occupies a very significant place in human education. Most of people's time passes within their families. Therefore, most of their behavior is manifested to their families. Because of this, actions and behavior of the elder members of a family have to be in unison with their words. This is very important for the training of the youngsters. In other words, one who tells his children to abstain from a certain evil should himself abstain from it first. Love, respect, sincerity, trust, honesty, and openness in a family form the basis of a strong education in the family. And of course, getting the most benefit from a family environment in a child's education can be achieved by observing the Prophet's family life. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gave full authority to his wives, mothers of the believers, to transmit everything that they had learned in this respect.

When we examine the Prophet's practices, we see that he loved and respected his wives very much. He also helped them in every aspect of life and he was never shy to help them. On the contrary, he considered it as an act of worship and stated that it was charity for a man to put a morsel in his wife's mouth. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also showed the politeness of asking permission from his wives when he wanted to perform worship at night. As a father, he embraced his children and grandchildren with love and compassion. He gave the necessary education while entertaining them. Of course, he always did these in an effort to prepare them for the eternal life of the Hereafter.

Allah's Apostle (pbuh) showed the best treatment towards his servants, relatives, neighbors, and guests. How nicely the following report shows this:

Ummu Salama (r. anha) told her slave Safina:





“I am emancipating you provided that you serve the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) for the rest of your life.” Then Salama gave the following meaningful answer:

“Even if you did not stipulate this condition, I would not leave the Prophet (pbuh) until the end of my life.” (Abu Dawud, Itq, 3/3932; Ibn Majah, Itq, 6; Hakim, II, 232/ 2849)

Even though the Prophet (pbuh) had many heavy responsibilities like being the head of the state and commander of the army, he never forgot the weak and unfortunate members of the society. He was always with the broken hearts and hearts filled with sorrow. He became a shelter and protector of children, the old, women, the poor, orphans, the families of the martyrs, the disabled, and even animals.

When the Holy Qur’an reminds us of goodness as a tangible behavior affecting personal and social life, it encourages us to help the weak groups in society as follows:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and gives his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observes proper worship and pays the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing.” (al-Baqara 2; 177)

We see the best interpretation of this verse, which summarizes principles of Islam, in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). His twenty three-year-long life is the best commentary of the Qur’an. Without his example, it is impossible for us to understand the Holy Qur’an and live in accordance with the principles of Islam. This is why Allah the Almighty has presented His Friend as *an Excellent Exemplar* to all of humanity and considered obedience to His Messenger as obedience to Him.

O Allah! Bestow upon us the will and ability to learn about Your Messenger’s life in the best way and to take him as an example in our own lives. Bless this humble work by making it a small contribution to achieving this goal. Bless us by giving us many more opportunities to serve on the straight path of Your Messenger.

Amin!



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