

Muhammad (peace be upon him) - A Mercy for Mankind and All Others

Alhamdu-li-llah wa as-Salatu wa as-Salamu 'ala Rasool-il-llah,

Can we ever say enough about the greatest of Allah's creations and the most noble of His servants? Certainly, we can't. That is not because we attribute to him divinity, for that would be the greatest betrayal to his legacy, which was all about the worship of the one true God (exalted be He), who is distinct from His creations and who didn't share His divinity with any of them. Our failure to properly describe the greatness of the Messenger of Allah stems from our own incapacity to grasp the different aspects of it, and properly express what we believe about his character. The following are glimpses of his character and preaching that show how he was a mercy for all existences, sent by their Lord, the Most Merciful.

HIS BIRTH

Our most beloved Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace), the last Prophet and Messenger, was born in the Bani Hashim neighborhood in Makkah on Monday morning, the ninth of Rabi' Al-Awwal, in the year of the Elephant Event, i.e. the twentieth or twenty-second of April, 571 CE.

HIS CHARACTER

'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said: "Whenever Allah's Apostle was given the choice of one of two matters he would choose the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful to do so, but if it was sinful, he would not approach it. Allah's Apostle never took revenge over anybody for his own sake but (he did) only when Allah's legal bindings were outraged, in which case he would take revenge for Allah's sake." (Bukhari.) 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said that he used to repair his shoes, sew or mend his dress and to do what ordinary men did in their houses. Milking the she-sheep and catering for himself were some of his normal jobs. He would pray: "O Allah, grant me life as a poor man, cause me to die as a poor man, and resurrect me in the company of the poor." (Tirmidhi, Baihaqi).

HIS MESSAGE AND HOW IT CHANGED THE WORLD

In the following pages, we will embark on mentioning a few examples of the Messenger's conduct and preaching. I hope that after reading the following pages, our love for him will grow and we shall become more aware of the great impact of his message on humanity. We will also see that he was truly, as Allah indicated, sent as a mercy for all worlds.

PREACHING MERCY FOR ALL:

MERCY WITH PARENTS

The Prophet taught good conduct towards ones parents, saying, “The Lord’s good pleasure results from a father’s good pleasure, and the Lord’s displeasure results from a father’s displeasure.” (Tirmidhi.) Mu’awiyah ibn Jahimah reported, Jahimah came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: “O Messenger of Allah! I intend that I should enlist in the fighting force and I have come to consult thee. He said “Hast thou a mother?” He said, “Yes.” He said: “Then stick to her, for Paradise is beneath her two feet.” (Nisai.) He was once asked: “O Messenger of Allah, who is most deserving of friendly care from me?” He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “Your mother.” The questioner asked who came next, and he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “Your mother.” He was asked again who came next and he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “Your mother.” And when He asked who came next, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “Your father.” (Bukhari, Muslim).

MERCY WITH THE WIFE

He enjoined compassion towards ones wife, saying, “The believer should not harbor hatred towards his wife. If he dislikes something in her, then surely he will be pleased with another quality in her.” (Muslim.)

MERCY WITH THE FAMILY

About the importance of good conduct towards ones family, he said, “Among the believers who show most perfect faith are those who have best disposition and are kindest to their families.” (Tirmidhi). He emphasized maintaining good relations with the family. “One who cuts ties of relationship will not enter Paradise.” (Bukhari, Muslim)

MERCY WITH THE CHILDREN

“If anyone cares for two girls till they grow up, he and I will come on the Day of Resurrection thus,” and he joined fingers. (Muslim). This was within the same culture and generation that daughters were so devalued that they had frequently been buried alive by their own parents.

MERCY WITH THE ORPHANS

“I and the one who takes responsibility for an orphan, whether his own kin or of others, will be in Paradise thus,” and he pointed his forefinger and the middle finger with a slight space between them. (Bukhari).

MERCY WITH THE WOMEN

“Act kindly towards women, for they were created from a rib and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it you will break it, if you leave it alone it will remain crooked: so act kindly towards women.” In this hadeeth the Prophet forbids men from forcing women to be

like themselves. The bent they have is most suitable for the functions of motherhood which requires emotions to be put in front of reason. (Bukhari, Muslim.)

He also said, "Verily women are the full sisters of men" (Abu Dawood & al-Tirmidhi: Saheeh al-Jame' 2333). There is no stronger statement that can further affirm gender equity. In delivering Allah's message, he also gave women the right to inheritance, choosing their husbands, getting separations from them, owning and managing their property and many more that were not given to them during his time by any nation.

MERCY WITH THE POOR AND CAPTIVES

He established the believers' responsibility towards the weak of their societies. "Feed the hungry, visit the sick and free the captive." (Bukhari.)

MERCY WITH THE SICK

Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whenever a Muslim visits a sick brother (Muslim) or merely goes to meet his brother, then Allah says: 'You are holy; your walking is holy; you have arranged your abode in Jannat.'" (Tirmidhi.)

MERCY WITH THE SERVANTS

Anas said: "I served the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for ten years and he never said to me, 'Shame!' or 'Why you do such and such?' or 'Why did you not do such and such.'" "A person who has a female slave in charge and takes steps to give her a sound education and trains her in arts and culture, and then frees her and marries her, he will be doubly rewarded." (Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah).

MERCY FOR THE OUTCASTS AND LOWER CLASSES

The Prophet gave a speech during the days of Tashreeq in Hajj and said, "O people know that your Lord is One and your father is one. Let it be known that there is no virtue of an Arab over a non-Arab, or for a black over white, or white over black, except by piety and righteousness." He then recited: "O people we have created you from a single male and a single female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most noble of you before Allah is the most righteous. Certainly Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Reported by Ahmad after Jabir).

MERCY FOR THE COMMUNITY IN GENERAL

The Prophet taught respect for the dignity and privacy of others. "O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), let not women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil-doers." "O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one

another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty (to Allah). Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful”

THE SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENT

If some one wants to look impartially at what is called the severity of punishment in the Islamic law, they need to compare the statistics of theft, robbery and murder in Mecca and New York City. The punishment of a few deviant members of the society will deter many from deviation which is ultimately good for those with such tendencies and the society at large. This is a form of mercy towards those who would otherwise become their innocent victims.

MERCY FOR HIS UMMAH (NATION)

The Prophet taught the brotherhood and mutual support, both with his words and in his conduct. “The Prophet is closer to the believers than they are to their own selves.” [Sûrah al-Ahzâb: 6] He said, “Believers are to one another like a building whose parts support one other.” He then interlaced his fingers. (Bukhari, Muslim).

MERCY WITH THE NON-MUSLIMS

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that when Allah’s messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked to invoke a curse on the polytheists he replied, “I was not sent as one given to cursing; I was sent only as a mercy.” (Muslim). “If someone entrusts a person with his life and then that person killed him then I am clear of the killer even if the victim is a disbeliever” (Nisa’i) “He who harms a non Muslim harms me, and he who harms me harms Allah.” (At Tabarani) The Prophet stated in his contract with the Christians of Najran, “No man from among them may be held accountable for the violations of another of his fellows.” (Abu Yusuf in Alkharaj)

MERCY WITH THE ANIMALS

The Prophet (peace be upon him) truly was a mercy not only to all humanity, but even to animals – to beasts and birds. He said: “There is a reward for all the good that you do for anything possessing a living heart.” (Sahîh al-Bukhârî) He also mentioned to us the story of a prostitute who gave water to a thirsty dog and who was forgiven by Allah and admitted into Paradise. On the other hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that another woman entered Hell because she imprisoned a cat without feeding it or letting it out to eat until it starved to death. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a sparrow in her nest lamenting the loss of her chicks which had been stolen by someone, he said: “Who has caused her to grieve over her chicks? May Allah curse the one who caused her to grieve over her chicks.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “No sparrow is killed without cause except that it complains to Allah about it on the Day of Judgment.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade the killing of any animal for mere sport. “Verily Allah has prescribed proficiency in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill well; and if you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters.” (Muslim).

MERCY FOR THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING THE INANIMATE THINGS

“Uhud is a mountain that loves us and we love it” said the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace), after their defeat at the hands of the pagans by ‘Uhud. (Bukhari & Muslim)

MERCY FOR ALL

Those who count on mercy from their Lord must be merciful. “Allah will not show mercy to him who does not show mercy to others,” Prophet Muhammad said (Bukhari, Muslim). Do you see now how he was mercy not only for mankind, but for all creation? (May Allah bless him and give him peace)

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