



# THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

A collection of articles on why his  
character is a lasting miracle.

**Shaykh Haytham Tamim**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Peace and blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad, the final prophet of Allah,

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*A collection of articles on why his character is a  
lasting miracle.*

*Shaykh Haytham Tamim*

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This is a collection of separate lectures given by Shaykh Haytham Tamim on the character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

## The Greatness of Muhammad (peace be on him)

*Al Manaar New Muslim Group 23rd November 2021 and How to Lead a Better Life 2019.*

*Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.*

### The status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was the final messenger of God and had the perfect character, and the perfect religion. He is an inspiration and a role model and following his example, which has been meticulously documented and preserved for us, brings enormous benefits in this life and the next.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is Allah's Messenger, and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah knows everything. (33:40)*

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

*O Prophet! We sent you as a witness, and a deliverer of good news, and a warner. (33:45)*

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

*And a caller towards Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating beacon. (33:46)*

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا

*And give good news to the believers that they will have from Allah a great favour. (33:47)*

Though there were messengers and prophets before him, Abu Sa'id (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*I am the master of the children of Adam, and it is no boast. I will be the first for whom the earth is split on the Day of Resurrection, and it is no boast. I will be the first to intercede and whose intercession will be accepted, and it is no boast. The banner of praise will be placed in my hand, and it is no boast. (Ibn Majah)*

This is the truth about his status, and he stated it without any arrogance. Out of all the prophets, he has been given the honour to intercede on behalf of all humanity for reckoning to begin on the Day of Judgement.

As stated in Surat al-Baqarah, we believe in all the prophets God sent, as mentioned in the Torah and Bible – we do not, for instance accept Noah and reject Abraham, we believe they were all special people chosen by God to disseminate His message. However, this does not mean they are all equal in status, as God elevated some of them above others. And the best of them was Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). As God says in the last two verses of Surat al Baqarah:

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ



مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۖ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۗ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

*The Messenger (Muhammad (peace be on him)) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in God, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say: "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" – and they say: "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all). (2:285)*

It is not atypical that God preferred some over others, as we see this pattern throughout His creation. He has given certain aspects of creation more eminence than others; certain days over others, such as Friday; certain months over others, such as Ramadan; and He preferred some places over others, such as Makkah. And similarly, God chose Muhammad (peace be on him) above all others in creation and told us to follow him.

### God Almighty made the Prophet Muhammad the role model for all humanity

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

*Verily, you have in the Prophet of God an excellent model, for him who hopes to meet God and the Last Day and who remembers God much. (33:21)*

This is why God Almighty commands us to follow him. Following him is known as 'itiba', which means to follow him – internally and externally. The life of the Prophet (peace be on him) was not just theory, but also practice. His Companions could see that he already espoused the qualities he advocated, even before the Revelation came to him.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*Say (O Prophet): If you really love God, then follow me, and God shall love you and forgive you your sins. God is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. (3:31)*

Guidance is dependent on following the Prophet (peace be on him) physically and morally. Physically we can copy the way he ate and drank and prayed. This is the outward dimension, and it is straightforward. Morally, emulating his character and personality is much harder. This is the internal aspect.

As he was the personification of Quranic values, such as justice and mercy, this means we have to work on ourselves to improve the status of our heart, our conduct, our compassion. It means training ourselves to lower our gaze from eyeing the opposite sex, reining in our anger, meticulously guarding what comes out of our mouths and our choice of words, and treating all of creation well, including animals and the environment. This is the core of the divine message and God set the standard for us by giving us the example of how the Prophet (peace be on him) was and behaved.

### Working on our flaws is CPD for the Hereafter

None of us are perfect – we all have flaws and shortcomings. When we get a job in a company, we do not come with all the skills we need for it, so we are sent on courses to acquire those skills, to sharpen them and maintain them. This enables us to be fit for our job and do it properly. This is CPD (Continuing Professional Development). CPD for the Hereafter is learning from the character of the Prophet (peace be on him).



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*We do CPD to improve our skills for our job. CPD for the Hereafter is learning from the character of the Prophet (peace be on him).*

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When you have shortcomings in your professional life, you do your best to improve your qualifications, skills, and your network. This is how you handle issues pertaining to life in this world. Yet, when it comes to upskilling for the Hereafter, you are more likely to lack persistence and resolve. You might say you tried but it didn't work. Therefore we need more of a growth-mindset to work on our flaws.

### **Kindness**

The Prophet (peace be on) showed always showed kindness and encouraged believers to show kindness.

*He said to me: Aisha! show gentleness, for if gentleness is found in anything, it beautifies it and when it is taken out from anything it damages it. (Abu Dawoud)*

Jabir reported from Allah's Messenger (peace be on him):

*He who is deprived of kindness is in fact deprived of good. (Muslim)*

There are some people who by birth are kinder than others. We have all met lovely people whom we feel an instant connection with when we meet them, whilst others make us want to stay miles away from them. Unfortunately, that person might even be us, so we have to assess ourselves and check if we have an issue in our own character first. It might be that you lack kindness or generosity. Moreover, you might lack the insight to spot this. Some people have more self-awareness than others, but we all have blind-spots. That is why we need loyal friends to tell us our flaws, so we can work on them.

### **Humour**

Not many accounts of the Prophet (peace be on him) dwell on the fact that he had a wonderful sense of humour. The Prophet (peace be on him) loved humour, but his humour was never cruel, never based on lies, never at the expense of others, and never inappropriate.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad had a gentle sense of humour. His jokes were clean and never based on untruths, as lying is the not the attribute of a believer, even in jest.

The wife of the Prophet (peace be on him), Aisha (may God be pleased with her) narrated that:

*The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was very witty and used to say that God is not displeased with a person of true wit. (Jami'-ul-Kabir)*

The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) used to sit in their gatherings, and it never happened that they were sitting and enjoying themselves and he would talk about some sad or dull matter. He would sit with them, laugh and tell jokes, and listen to their humorous stories, as mentioned in Sahih Muslim, *Kitab-ul-Fadhail*.

### **Change**

We are moulded and shaped by our environment. Some of our qualities are learned by nature, and others by nurture. Some people are harsh, however they do not realise it because they have

unconsciously acquired the qualities of those around them. If you live with kind people, you pick up this quality from them. If you are surrounded by rough people, by nurture, you will become rough.

You can change what you have learned by nature and nurture. There is always room to change your character and improve. We have the ability to change ourselves, if we decide to. It requires the will to do it. If you are sincere, then change is possible.

The proof that we can change is Ramadan. Those who are smokers or addicts manage to quit their habits during at least during daylight hours for the month of Ramadan. If you want to change it does not happen overnight, but it is a question of mind over matter. From a scientific point of view, you can kill a bad habit and adopt a new one by being consistent over 30-40 days, which is the length of Ramadan. Training and having willingness and sincerity can take you miles.

## **Honesty**

Most renowned for his honesty, Muhammad (peace be on him) had told the truth long before his prophethood, and hence was known as As-Sadiq ul-Ameen (the truthful and the trustworthy) since his youth. These two characteristics were the traits which gave credibility to the message he was delivering. When he climbed Mount Safa and addressed the tribes and his clansmen saying:

*“O Banu ‘Abd Al-Muttalib, O Banu Fihir, O Banu Lu’ay; would you believe me if I say that there is an enemy at the foot of this mountain behind, ready to launch an attack on you?” They said: “Yes. You are Al-Ameen (trustworthy) and Al-Sadiq (truthful), and we have never seen you speak lies.*

Abdullah (may God be pleased with him) reported God’s Messenger (may peace be on him) as saying:

*Truth leads one to Paradise and virtue leads one to Paradise and the person tells the truth until he is recorded as truthful, and lie leads to obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell, and the person tells a lie until he is recorded as a liar. (Muslim)*

## **Generosity**

The Prophet (peace be on him) was not attached to the material world. He was generous – he would give and give and give, and never stopped giving. Many accepted Islam because they were deeply impressed by his generosity. In some instances, the Prophet (peace be on him) would look across a valley full of sheep and cattle as far as the eye could see, and tell someone they could have it. They would be dumbfounded and embrace Islam from their heart, and their whole tribe would follow.

Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him say good words or remain silent. Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him be generous to his neighbour. Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him be hospitable to his guest. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

## **Wise leader**

A leader should be genuinely caring. It is not a pretence to merely get their votes. He should be down to earth. The Prophet (peace be on him) accepted the invitations of slaves and when he visited them, even when they could only serve him bread and vinegar, he would compliment their food, saying it was the best food he had eaten.

The Prophet (peace be on him) was the perfect leader. He was in touch with his people. He could feel the pulse of the community and understand their needs. He knew the rich from the poor, the educated from the illiterate, the young and the old. His insight was based both on information, as he would ask about them, as well as his sixth sense. He was very intuitive and could read people's minds from their faces. We see this quality when Wabisa bin Ma'bad came to him, and he knew before he asked his question what he wanted to know.

*Wabisa bin Ma'bad reported God's Messenger (peace be on him) as saying, "Have you come to ask about righteousness and sin, Wabisa?" When he replied that he had, he joined his fingers and striking his breast with them said, "Ask yourself for a decision, ask your heart for a decision (saying it three times). Righteousness is that with which the soul is tranquil and the heart is tranquil, but sin is that which rouses suspicion in the soul and is perplexing in the breast, even if people give you a decision in its favour." (Ahmad and Darimi)*

### **Choosing the right people for the right positions**

A good leader can identify the talents of his team and nurtures them. You might be less qualified or creative than your team, but you know how to manage them, put them together and bring the best out of them. Do not be afraid that there are more talented people than you in your team. It is an honour for you to work with them.

Sometimes leaders are insecure and afraid that people who are under them are in fact more talented than them. A weak leader side-lines them and removes them to minimise the threat to his leadership, but a strong leader encourages them and utilises their talents by giving them good roles, and allows them to shine. We see this beautifully exemplified in the appointing of the brilliant Khalid bin Waleed (may God be pleased with him) as the military leader.

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*A strong leader is not afraid of competition. He is like string holding together all the pearls he is managing. A necklace without a string is not a necklace but a bunch of scattered pearls.*

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The Prophet (peace be on him) knew the varied abilities of Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman, Ali and Hodayfah bin Yaman (may God be pleased with them), whom he appointed to important roles. Hodayfah is not as well known as them, yet he was the secret-keeper of the Prophet (peace be on him).

### **Know your reality**

A good leader combines living in this world and preparing for the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be on him) did not live in an ivory tower, nor was he confined to the mosque. In our terms today, he watched the news and did his homework. He was not just au fait with what was happening in his community, but also kept abreast with what was going on further afield, and the political scene with the Romans and the Persians. After all, his message was universal, and so he had to have a plan to reach as many nations as possible.

Other prophets were sent to a limited number of people, but the Prophet (peace be on him) had a greater task. Jabir bin `Abdullah (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*I have been given five things which were not given to anyone else before me. 1. God made me victorious by awe (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey. 2. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due. 3. The booty has been made Halal (lawful) for me, yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me. 4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection). 5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only, but I have been sent to all mankind.*  
(Bukhari)

We see in his biography that the Prophet (peace be on him) had a plan and made long-term preparations. He did not jump from one step to another. Each phase was sequential. Thus we see how, in the Year of Delegations, he sent letters to the world leaders inviting them to accept Islam. Two great Empires that lay on the borders of Arabia—the Persian and the Roman Empires—and they had been at war with each other for many years. Initially the Persians were winning and spreading through the Middle East and took Syria and Jerusalem, so it seemed unthinkable that their situation could be reversed in favour of the Byzantines, who were Roman Christians. Yet in Surat ar-Rum, God Almighty revealed that the Romans would be defeated within 9 years and that this would bring victory to Muslims:

*The Byzantines have been defeated*

*In the land nearby. But, they will reverse their defeat with a victory.*

*In three to nine years time: God is in command, first and last. On that day, the believers will rejoice.*

*At God's help. He helps whoever He pleases: He is the Mighty, the Merciful. (30:2-5)*

Though the Prophet (peace be on him) had been given knowledge of this, he did not sit back and wait for it to happen, but strived to make it happen and achieve the success of his mission.

### **The best ambassadors**

He chose the best people to represent the message of Islam when he sent them as ambassadors. He carefully chose those who had the best looks and appearance, the language and eloquence and the skills for the job. He asked them to learn the language of the communities they were being sent to. The Prophet (peace be on him) would pray for them to do this and they would learn the language in just a few months.

When we are inviting people to accept Islam, turning up with a long beard, a short abaya and old trainers is not the right way. It is not the Sunnah, as some people mistakenly believe. You are representing the message of God. The Sunnah is having the right character, right education and understanding and being presentable.

There was a teacher who had many followers whom I went to meet when he was in town, and he was so generous, but I was put off by him when he said that he had not followed the news for the last ten years. A leader must not be out of touch with reality. He must know what is going on. He can't be living on a different planet or asking people to live on a different planet. This is a red flag. This is not how the Prophet (peace be on him) was. And God told us to follow him.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) appointed leaders. The nature of the responsibility was huge, so he had to delegate to others, so he appointed leaders in different localities, and they would report back to him. We cannot do everything ourselves. If we try to do everything, we will not achieve anything. We have to share our responsibilities with others, otherwise it is too much to carry. Then we need to nurture them. This is more efficient. Otherwise you waste time.

If you are so bogged down about insignificant details like the font of the letter being sent out, or the type of door being fitted for the mosque, you will miss the bigger picture. A leader should not be a control freak and obsessed by the minutiae. Small tasks are not your responsibility. Give a clear brief and let your team get on with it.

The Prophet (peace be on him) would educate his team, so they could go and teach their community, as he did in Madinah before he arrived. He would distribute responsibilities, not do everything himself. He would visit those who were sick and attend the funerals of people if he was not travelling. He looked after the needs of the community.

### **Train youngsters**

The Prophet (peace be on him) would train those who had potential. They had skills they may not even have been aware of themselves. For instance, he mentored Ibn Omar and Abdullah Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them). He said:

*“Abdullah is a good man. Would that he offer the night prayer (Tahajjud)!” So after that day ‘Abdullah (bin ‘Umar) started offering Tahajjud. (Bukhari)*

He identified gaps in them and guided them how to improve themselves. He trained them how to be connected to God. Ibn Abbas reported:

*I was riding behind the Messenger of God (peace be on him) when he said to me, “Young man, I will teach you some words. Be mindful of God and He will protect you. Be mindful of God and you will find Him before you. If you ask, ask from God. If you seek help, seek help from God. Know that if the nations gathered together to benefit you, they could not benefit you unless God has decreed it for you. And if the nations gathered together to harm you, they could not harm you unless God has decreed it for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.” (Tirmidhi)*

He encouraged them to do physical training to prepare them for battle, so he did not focus on one aspect and neglect another. Abdullah ibn Umar (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*“Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband’s home and his children and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.” (Bukhari and Muslim)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) was encouraging us to be good leaders, and instilled the qualities of good leadership in those around him – you have to love and care about your followers, and be genuine.

Leadership is a trust. You are answerable for those who are under your command. Leadership is not just a privilege but a responsibility.

### **Giving time to develop leadership in others**

The Prophet (peace be on him) spent the majority of his time out of the home, but when he returned home, from Isha until Fajr he divided his time into three main categories. His Companions knew they could not disturb him, except during certain hours. When everyone went to sleep, he would dedicate his time to God, and then sleep a little. He would wake before Fajr and resume his day. He also took a nap during the day – the *qayloola* around midday.

The first portion of the Prophet's time (peace be on him) was dedicated to God – doing his ablutions (wudu), ritual bathing (ghusl) and trimming nails etc. in preparation for worship (ibadah) – prayer (salah), supplication and recitation. The second portion of his time was spent on his family – entertaining them, listening to them, joking and helping with household chores, and dealing with their needs. This was quality time with his family, and we need quality time our family.

The third portion of his time was spent on leaders – they would report back to him. They would have time to ask questions, discuss issues and problems. He would prioritise them according to their level and their needs – one might need a signature, another might have a few quick questions, and someone else might need a deeper level of input. From the Shama'il<sup>1</sup> and commentaries on it, we know that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to hold a special circle for Abu Bakr and Omar (may God be pleased with them) as they were his deputies and had to respond to the questions and needs of their community, so he would give them time to deal with their issues and concerns. They would come with confusion and depart with knowledge, confidence and clarity, so they could deliver it to the community. They tasted the sweetness of his teaching. Sometimes people think that the Prophet (peace be on him) just spent his whole time praying, but he had many different management skills. He knew what to prioritise and how to manage.

It is not enough to be a person of sincerity (ikhlas), we need to be organised and learn skills, especially when we are in positions of leadership. This is how we evolve and raise the next generation in command.

### **Correcting mistakes**

The Prophet (peace be on him) allowed his team to make mistakes, but he corrected their mistakes wisely and kindly until they became better and well rounded. Under his supervision, they became capable of taking on more responsibility, and then he would send them on great missions, for instance he sent Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Ali (may God be pleased with them) to Yemen.

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<sup>1</sup> The Shamail is collection of hadith by Imam Abu 'Isa al-Tirmidhi of 397 narrations dealing with all spheres of the Prophet's life (peace be on him) from his outer appearance and clothing, as well as characteristics like his humility and humour.

## The lasting miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

*Al Manaar New Muslim Group October 2021 and How to Lead a Better Life 2019.*

*Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.*

### The miracle of the lasting character of the Prophet (peace be on him)

The Prophet (peace be on him) was asked, “Which Muslim has the perfect faith?”

*He answered, (peace be on him): “He who has the best character.” (Tirmidhi)*

It is as if the message he brought is summed up in the perfection of good character. This character was exhibited by the Prophet (peace be on him) who said:

*“I have been sent to complete the good character”. (Musnad Ahmad)*

God Almighty talks about the character of the Prophet (peace be on him) because it is the miracle. While Moses (peace be on him) for instance was given the parting of the Red Sea, the shining hand and the staff which turned into a snake, and Jesus (peace be on him) was given the power to cure the sick, when God Almighty talks about Muhammad (peace be on him) He does not refer to miracles, but instead chooses to focus on his character.

The second revelation (after ‘Read in the name of your Lord’, which is the first five lines of Surat al-Alaq) was Surat al-Qalam, in which God Almighty said:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

*Truly you have a noble character. (68:4)*

All the miracles of the other prophets disappeared after their death, but the character of the Prophet (peace be on him) is an ever-lasting miracle. Whoever emulates his character is part of this living miracle.

When Aisha (may God be pleased with her) was asked about His character (peace be on him). She said:

*His character was the Quran. (Bukhari)*

Sometimes you read this hadith translated as ‘He was a walking Quran’, but this is not an accurate translation. It actually means that his actions demonstrated the qualities exhorted by the Quran.

The Quran is like a magnet which attracts those who read it. As the Prophet (peace be on him) was the closest companion of the Quran, he mirrored it the most – he recited it and demonstrated it. We too should be like a pin which becomes magnetised by being in contact with a magnet over time. This is why when we read the Quran, we should reflect it and implement it in our lives. When the Quran talks about mercy, we should show mercy, and when the Quran talks about generosity, we should be generous, and when the Quran talks about giving forgiveness, we should forgive others’ shortcomings, and so on.

According to the most authentic narrations, the Prophet (peace be on him) was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the Islamic month of Rabbi al-Awwal, but we do not only celebrate his birthday on this day, but rather by following his example throughout the year in our actions, in the way we communicate, and by acquiring knowledge – this is real itiba’ (following). Following his example cannot be eulogising him or commemorating him at a one-off occasion, when we re-tell part of his biography (the seerah) and

sing nasheeds (Islamic songs). These are fine, but true love is more than this. True love is when you combine your sentiment and belief with action, as the Quran repeatedly commands believers to:

*Believe and do good deeds. (5:9)*

### The description of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) in the uniquely detailed narration of Umm Ma'bad

During the migration of the Prophet (peace be on him) from Makkah to Madina, he passed by the tent of an old lady, called Umm Ma'bad, who was well-known for her services to the community in Qudaid.

He (peace be on him) asked to buy some meat and milk, but unfortunately, she had nothing to offer due to the drought. She and her husband had barely enough to eat or drink themselves. They only had one lone sheep at the back of the tent, which had no milk as she was not pregnant and was too weary to follow the rest of the herd. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked Umm Ma'bad if he could milk it. She said he could try, but reiterated that the sheep had no milk and was very weak.

The Prophet (peace be on him) pronounced God's name and rubbed its udders, and milk miraculously started gushing from her udders. He asked Umm Ma'bad for a large container, which immediately filled up. Umm Ma'bad was astonished. The Prophet (peace be on him) offered it to her to drink. She refused saying that her guest should drink first, but out of his kindness and respect he insisted she drink it first.

Then he offered milk to Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him), until he was satisfied, then his servant. He did not fill up himself and then share it, but ensured everyone had taken enough to be satisfied first, then he filled the container and then they departed.

When her husband, Aktham ibn Abu al-Jawn al-Khuza'i returned from herding his sheep, he was amazed to see the milk. He asked his wife where it had come from, so she explained that a 'blessed man' had stopped by (as she did not know his name) and described what had happened. In her description, Umm Ma'bad painted one of the most incredible, thorough and poetic pictures of the Messenger of God (peace be on him) we have. It has been mentioned widely in the biographies of the Prophet (peace be on him).

Umm Ma'bad 'Atikah bint Khalid al-Khuza'iyyah (may God be pleased with her) said:

*"I saw a man who is distinctly handsome and of a beautiful countenance. He is well-built, neither blemished by a big belly nor disfigured by an unusually small head. The pupils of his eyes are very dark, his eyelashes are very long and the area around the pupils is extremely white. His eyebrows are perfectly close. He has very dark hair, a rather long neck and a thick beard.*

*When he remains silent he is ever contemplative and when he speaks, eminence and splendour exhibit in his words. His words are like sliding stringed pearls. He is a gifted orator whose words are neither too few nor too many. He has the clearest words and the most audible voice as he speaks. When you look at him from afar, he is the most handsome of all people, and when you move closer to him, he is the most pleasant of them.*

*You will never be tired of looking at him. He is like a branch between two branches.*



*He is the most handsome of the three and the most important of them. He has companions who honour him; when he speaks they listen to his words and when he commands they hasten to carry out his order. They serve and gather around him. He neither frowns or nags."*

*(Al-Baihaqi and al-Hakim)*

### **The perceptiveness of Umm Ma'bad**

Having reached her old age running a resting spot for travellers, Umm Ma'bad had years of experience, and had seen a multitude of travellers come and go, and she had the knack of being able to recognise people for who they were.

Umm Ma'bad within a few hours, had noticed that the Prophet (peace be on him) was a man of striking beauty and cleanliness, with a glowing face. Even though she was not Muslim, she could recognise the light that radiated from his face.

She mentioned his good character, kindness and his beauty. The softness of his speech, and how his words were like a string of pearls, the dignity of his presence and his perfection. Her husband realised that 'This was the man I was told about and if I had the power to follow him, I would follow him.' Later he and his wife accepted Islam and become Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him), who was generous towards them.

Even on that occasion, hungry and thirsty from his journey, the Prophet (peace be on him) could have taken the first sip of the milk from the sheep, but instead he offered it to Umm Ma'bad. He could have drunk the milk after her, but instead he offered it to Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him) and drank it last. This shows the virtue of altruism (*eethar*) in action, to give preference to others over yourself. He set the example for the Ummah to follow. He did not just talk the talk, but he walked the walk. He embraced and demonstrated what he taught.

### **The Prophet (peace be on him) was a mercy for mankind**

We can see from this that simple yet revealing interaction, that his example was of sweetness and mercy. Mercy is the word which best reflects the attribute which God chose to describe Himself, and which is at the core of His message and by extension, His Messenger (peace be on him) and the key feature which believers must develop in themselves.

Of Himself, God Almighty, the Most Merciful and All Merciful (ar-Rahman and ar-Raheem), said in the Holy Hadith:

*My mercy prevails over my anger. (Bukhari)*

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said:

*I am a gifted mercy. (Musnad Ahmad)*

He (peace be on him) also said:

*Verily God is merciful only to those of His slaves who are merciful (to others).*

*(Bukhari)*

As God Almighty stated:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for all the worlds. (21:107)*

and:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

*There has come to you a messenger from among yourselves, concerned over your suffering, anxious over your well-being. Kind and merciful towards the believers. (9:128)*

The 'worlds' (al-'alameen) includes mankind and Jinn, animals and the environment.

### Mankind – particularly the downtrodden and oppressed

Throughout his biography we see the Prophet (peace be on him) showing respect to those who were not valued by society. He was kind to the elderly, women, children, servants, slaves, as well as to animals and the environment.

### Children

We see plenty of examples of his mercy towards children. He used to play with them and make himself a camel and put them on his back. When they interrupted his Friday khutbah and clambered onto his mimbar (pulpit), he would stop to embrace them, or put them on his lap.

On other occasions, he would prolong his prostration while he was leading the congregation, until some Companions wondered if he had passed away. They asked him afterwards why he had done that, and he explained that his grandson had climbed onto his back during *sujud* (prostration).

### Women and wives

His mercy to his wives was beyond description. He would offer them his knee as a step to mount their camel. He emphasised the importance of treating wives kindly, and reiterated it again in his Farewell Sermon.

Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ نِسَاءً إِيمَانًا خَيْرًا

*The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the best character, and the best of you are the best in behaviour to their women. (Tirmidhi)*

Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَشِيرٍ، بَكْرُ بْنُ خَلْفٍ وَمَحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى قَالََا حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ ثَوْبَانَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ ثَوْبَانَ عَنْ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ " خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِيهِ وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي ".

*The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives. (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)*

### Slaves

At the time when slavery was the norm, he taught people to respect slaves, to feed them from the same food that they ate themselves, not scraps, and to give them clothes that they would wear themselves, not rags. He gave them back their dignity and promoted justice for all.

### **Animals and the environment**

The Prophet (peace be on him) also asked his Companions to look after their animals well: to feed them properly, and not overburden them or be cruel to them. He was not just concerned about the welfare of humans, but all creatures and all of creation. He taught us to preserve water, even when we are near an abundant water source, like a river, and encouraged us to plant trees as they bring benefit, not just to us, but to birds and other creatures.

### **The character of the Prophet (peace be on him)**

#### **Gentle and easy going**

The Prophet (peace be on him) had a soft nature and was easy-going; when people asked for his approval, he would generally give it, unless they were asking for something impermissible. He did not speak in a harsh tone and nor was he hard-hearted. God Almighty said in Surat al-Imran that the reason people warmed to him was his gentleness:

*It is part of the mercy of God that you dealt with them gently. (3:159)*

He avoided arguments, arrogance and pointless disputes. He did not waste time on things which had no value and he told people not to argue.

#### **The way he spoke**

Aisha said (may God be pleased with her):

حَدَّثَنَا حُمَيْدُ بْنُ مَسْعَدَةَ الْبَصْرِيُّ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا حُمَيْدُ بْنُ الْأَسْوَدِ، عَنِ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنِ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَسْرُدُ سِرْدَكُمْ هَذَا، وَلَكِنَّهُ كَانَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِكَلَامٍ بَيْنَ فَصْلٍ، يَحْفَظُهُ مَنْ جَلَسَ إِلَيْهِ.

*God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) would not speak on and on the way you do. Rather, he would pause periodically, so that those who sat with him would remember what he said. (Zubair 'Aliza'i)*

Anas ibn Malik (may God be pleased with him) said:

*God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) used to repeat each expression three times in order to make himself understood.*

The art of communication is the art of listening. When the Prophet (peace be on him) spoke, he did not go on and on. He would pause periodically and ensure people had understood what he had said. This teaches us not to rush our conversations and our speech. Every word the Prophet (peace be on him) uttered was important, as it was an instruction or recommendation, or a piece of revelation. Therefore when addressing an audience, he spoke slowly and paused and repeated what he said three times. Those near could hear him and those further away might be unsure about what they heard, but hearing it repeated would confirm it for them. By repeating it, people could also memorise what he was saying. He understood his audience. Whenever you have to deliver a talk, you should know the background of your audience, so you can reach their hearts and minds and connect with them.

The Prophet (peace be on him) would give his full attention to his speaker, facing him attentively.

*He did not interrupt someone talking and did not begin speaking when someone else was busy speaking. (Tirmidhi)*

This is so important. He never cut anyone off who was speaking. He would let them finish. There is a difference between hearing and listening. If we listened to each other more it would resolve a lot of our problems. Conversely, when we do not wish to listen, it causes many issues.

The Prophet (peace be on him) was very approachable. Even if a slave came to him to speak to him in private, he would give them the time to listen to them, responding to the old and young, the well-off and the poor.

Anas (may God be pleased with him) reported:

*A woman came to the Messenger of God (peace be on him) and said: "I would like to speak to you in private." The Messenger of God (peace be on him) replied: "Sit on any street of Madinah and I will come there and listen to you." (Tirmidhi)*

### **Cheerful**

Anas (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) always had a smile on his face, and Ali (may God be pleased with him) observed that his smile was a reflection of his internal happiness. He said:

*The Messenger of God (peace be on him) was always happy and easy mannered. There was always a smile and a sign of happiness on his blessed face. (Shamail Al-Tirmidhi)*

### **Humility and compassion**

Anas (may God be pleased with him) reported:

*The Messenger of God (peace be on him) visited the sick, attended funerals, rode on donkeys, accepted the invitations of slaves. (Tirmidhi)*

This shows his unassuming nature, as much at ease riding on donkeys and mules, which were the least impressive forms of transport, as camels, which held the most status. He did not say, 'I am the Messenger – I can only sit on a camel or accept the best invitations'.

### **Patient and supportive**

When we see his interactions with the rough Bedouins, we see his remarkable patience when dealing with their questions – no matter how rude, harsh or indecent. He understood that they lived in a harsh environment, and so he made allowances for their behaviour and answered their questions. He encouraged his Companions to be the same and to be ready to help.

The Messenger of God (peace be on him) would say:

*When you see a person in need, then help that person (or give him, be generous with him). (Tirmidhi)*

Having good character earns the intercession of the Prophet (peace be on him)

Abdullah ibn Amr reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*“Shall I tell you about the most beloved to me and the closest to my assembly on the Day of Resurrection?” They were silent, so the Prophet (peace be on him) repeated himself two or three times. They said, “Yes, O Messenger of God.” The Prophet (peace be on him) said, “Those with the best character.” (Musnad Ahmad)*

### **Prayer for good character**

The Prophet (peace be on him) did not just have the best character, but would supplicate for good character, thus teaching us to ask for it:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي لأَحْسَنِ الأَعْمَالِ وَأَحْسَنِ الأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَهْدِي لأَحْسَنِهَا إِلا أَنْتَ. رواه النَّسَائِي

*O God, guide me to the best of deeds and the best of character, for none can guide to the best of them but You. (Nasa’i)*

### **Read the biography of the Prophet (peace be on him)**

We should read the biography of the Prophet (peace be on him) – there are short booklets and longer ones, depending on how much time you have. One of the best books is *Our Master Muhammad* by Shaykh Abdullah Siraj. *Shamail at-Tirmidhi* is also useful, but not as easy to read. When you read it, note the traits of the Prophet (peace be on him). During workshops I have run, people usually identify about 40 characteristics. Then tick the boxes and assess what qualities you need to work on. It might be patience, or generosity, or being less temperamental or angry. You can try this and then work through them systematically, one or two traits at a time. Some traits will take more time than others. Over the course of a year, you will be able to improve your character practically and will see the benefits in your life.

There are many countries which the Muslims did not conquer through battles, but by the character of their merchants and tradesmen. Some of them moved there and began trading, and through their example they spread Islam. People judge Islam by your character. If you behave badly, this is how you portray Islam. If you are good, you will be a good ambassador of Islam.

When we make the intention to improve, God Almighty will enable us to be the best Ummah. God Almighty said:

*The best among you in God’s eyes, is the one who is best in conduct. (49:13)*

‘The best in conduct’ means doing what is encouraged in Islam and refraining from what has been prohibited. If we do not do this, we will lag behind. The Prophet (peace be on him) came to show us how to keep improving ourselves and how to perfect ourselves. He is our inspiration. God the Almighty said:

*Verily in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow. (33:21)*

## How being cheerful is continuing the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

Youth Circle 31st October 2019.

Transcribed by Uzma Kareem

### Cheerfulness

In another hadith, which is one of my favourites, the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*You cannot accommodate everyone with your wealth and your money, [i.e. no matter how much money you have, you can't always win people over or please them], but you can accommodate them with two things: a cheerful face and a good character. (Al-Bazzar)*

In a colloquial Lebanese proverb, there is a similar saying: 'Meet me with a cheerful face and don't invite me to dinner with a frown.' I.e. the cheerful face is more pleasing to me than your dinner without the warm welcome. This is a similar principle in HR. Those who are in the front office, meeting the public and clients must have the right persona. Not everyone is suited to be in the front office. As in medicine, paediatricians need to be friendly so they can work with children. A harsh mannered or angry person cannot carry out the role well.

In the eighth and ninth year after the migration of the Muslims to Madinah, the Prophet (peace be on him) used to send delegates to different leaders of different countries and cities, and he would choose these people very carefully. He would select the most eloquent, well presented, cheerful ones. He always chose the right person for the right job. It couldn't be simply the person with the most piety (taqwa). Personality and presentation are more important in this position. People can't warm to someone with a serious demeanour. They would be better suited to the front of the battlefield.

### Real happiness emanates from a heart that is connected to God

There are many times someone makes your day with their cheerful face. Just a smile from someone can brighten your day and help you feel positive about the day. On the other hand, if you see someone with a frown on his face, it fills you with negativity. The expressions of the face can have a great deal of impact on us. We are sensitive creatures, and the smallest things can affect our mood.

The Prophet (peace be on him) always had a smile on his face. His smile was a reflection of his internal status of genuine peace and tranquillity. Such cheerfulness cannot be faked. How do we get this peace and tranquillity? From being in a state of remembrance (dhikr) of God Almighty.

*You have an excellent example in the Messenger of God; for anyone who seeks God and the Last Day and remembers God frequently. (3:21)*

Thus, the Prophet (peace be on him) remembered God Almighty all the time, from waking to sleeping. He would begin the day with the supplication:

*All praise is for God who gave us life after having taken it from us and unto Him is the resurrection. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

### Feeling true gratitude and being mindful of God

The Prophet (peace be on him) started the day by feeling gratitude towards God Almighty who grants life after death (by returning our souls to our bodies upon waking). The moment we open our eyes we too should remember the Hereafter. It is one thing to say you believe in the Last Day because it is an

article of faith, but if you do this in a state of distraction and obliviousness it is different from believing it deeply, and actually seeking God and being mindful of Him during the day as you carry out your business, your lesson or your chores. Your focus is the Hereafter and God Almighty is the core of your day. It does not mean that you stay on your prayer mat all day, but it means that you are not agitated by the concerns of this world.

Aisha said the Prophet (peace be on him) remembered God Almighty all the time. He did not disconnect from God Almighty when his salah finished. His smile was therefore a smile of true satisfaction and gratitude towards God Almighty for His favours. We are enveloped by inward and outward favours. If we appreciated these, we would feel satisfaction too. Switch your internal app to gratitude mode, not moaning mode. Thank God Almighty for obvious and hidden favours.

### Daily remembrance (adhkar)

The Prophet (peace be on him) would supplicate throughout the day, upon waking, dressing, entering and exiting the toilet. If you begin to incorporate these in your day you will feel the benefit. Download and recite his supplications – before salah, after salah, etc. No matter how busy you are, if you recite these with sincerity, believe me it will change the course of your day. You will feel the tranquillity descend on you. When you have tranquillity inside, you will not argue with your spouse, or shout at your employees. You will notice the difference.

### Praying for the best character

One of the opening supplications of the prayer before reciting al-Fatihah is:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي لَأَحْسَنِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَقِنِي سَيِّئِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَسَيِّئِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَقِي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ. رواه النسائي

*O God, guide me to the best of deeds and the best of character, for none can guide to the best of them but You. And protect me from bad deeds and bad character, for none can protect against them but You. (Nasa'i)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) was continuously asking for this in every salah. If you multiply this supplication by the number of times the Prophet (peace be on him) prayed it would be considerable. In every salah he made this supplication, and He was the Messenger of God. He was teaching his Ummah that to be the best if you have the best character.

### How the miracle of Muhammad (peace be on him) lives on

Whenever we talk about the Prophet (peace be on him), the main thing we associate with him is his character. When we reflect that when God Almighty mentions Moses (peace be on him), he mentions his miracles, but when God Almighty mentions Muhammed (peace be on him), though he did have many, Allah focuses on his character. His miracle was his character.

While the miracles of the previous messengers ceased when they passed away, the character of the Prophet (peace be on him) has been meticulously documented and transcends time. The Ummah of the Prophet (peace be on him) carry the good qualities of their Prophet (peace be on him). Everyone who follows their Prophet (peace be on him) in the right manner is part of this ongoing miracle of his character. It is no wonder Islam spread across many countries without wars and invasions. It was spread through the good character of the people. The good character of the merchants, businessmen who were doing business with the people in different countries. Their hearts rather than their countries were invaded by Islam. The Muslims were able to communicate with people with cheerful faces, with fairness, justice and goodness.

## Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him): The Maker of a New Civilisation

*Khutbah delivered on 1st January 2019 at UKAMCCC.*

*Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.*

### The New World

God Almighty gifted the Prophet (peace be on him) to humanity, and through His revelation enabled him to create and establish a brand-new civilisation, the likes of which had never existed before.

*We have not sent you, but as a mercy to the worlds. (21:107)*

In this oft-repeated ayah, God Almighty informs us that He sent the Prophet (peace be on him) as a *rahmatan lil-'alameen* – a mercy to all humanity. In the hadith, the Prophet (peace be on him) himself said he was *rahmtun muhdat*:

*I am not but as a gifted mercy. (Sunan Al Darimi and Bayhaqi)*

When we see the essence of the new civilisation, inspired by the revelation of God Almighty, we can see it is built firmly on clear ideological pillars – a civilisation based on peace and justice, balanced between the soul and the body, with equilibrium between rights and responsibility. A way of life which aligns the inward and the outward.

The civilisation which he created was not exclusively for Muslims, but for all mankind. It ushered in a new era to sweep away oppression, ignorance, arrogance and misunderstanding. The society at the time was not entirely devoid of values; they had many good character traits and values, but at the same time, many of their practices went against justice, and this why the Prophet (peace be on him) mentioned in the hadith:

*I have been sent to perfect good character. (al-Muwatta)*

### Justice

One of the most prevalent themes in the Quran and Sunnah is the concept of justice (*adl*). One of God's names is the All Just. When justice is breached, we have the birth of oppression and harm in multifaceted guises. The Prophet (peace be on him) taught people to promote justice and was just himself, even if it was in the arbitration of justice to a close relative or stranger. The promotion of justice and truth, and the restraining of oppression and falsehood pervade the Quran and Sunnah.

### Hope

The Prophet (peace be on him) brought hope to those who were hopeless. If you rely on God Almighty, He will facilitate a way out for you. He will enable you to do things you never thought were possible. He put an end to the might of the oppressors and reminded us of accountability. No one can go against justice and revelation without facing the consequences. There is no reliance on might or allies.

### Vision

The Prophet (peace be on him) gave vision to people. He taught them how to think, who to worship, how to perform ibadah, how to plan our future. Without vision, we are either heedless, dead or oppressed.

As increasing numbers of people deny the reality and finality of the Hereafter, our purpose and our actions only become meaningful when we understand the relationship between our today and our tomorrow. Knowing there is a Hereafter changes your actions. Knowing that there is accountability



changes your actions. Inevitably we experience difficulties in acting in accordance with what is right, but the Prophet (peace be on him) taught us to navigate through obstacles.

### Relationship between belief and action

Belief is like a code which is latent until it is activated. Belief is not simply an emotion felt in the heart. It has to be connected to action. Only then has it been properly expressed.

All prophets and messengers brought one formula: success only comes to those who believe and do good deeds. Thus the Prophet (peace be on him) taught us to act on our beliefs. Not just live according to our whims and desires. This means we cannot make empty claims, but are duty-bound to spread goodness through tangible actions. When we connect actions with faith, we balance the inward and the outward. The spiritual with the physical.

### Perfecting character

In many narrations, the Prophet (peace be on him) says:

*The best among the believers in their belief are those who have the best character. (Tirmidhi)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) taught us to live by the principles of Islam, defend them and activate them. This is why the Islamic Civilisation was progressive, not oppressive. This is why the righteous caliphs were role models. Their actions were based on the principles of Islam, which is why we should read the Quran not just for barakah but for guidance and practical action. Not just for reward, but to practically make our life better.

We need to teach ourselves the biography of the Prophet (peace be on him), with deep understanding. It is not just a catalogue of battles, as it has been portrayed, as the battles only comprise a fraction of his life. The years of revelation were spread over 23 years, whereas the battles combined would only approximate to a year of the Prophet's (peace be on him) life. There is plenty to learn from his biography apart from the battles – we can see the many beautiful facets of the Prophet (peace be on him) as a human being, husband, companion, community leader and so on.

### The concept of *shurah* (consultation) and tolerance

The example of the Prophet (peace be on him) is that of consultation and collaboration. Not dictatorship. His reality was similar to our own, as he brought the revelation to the hearts and minds of a society with varying views and personalities.

When we read the Sunnah it is evident there are plenty of differences among the Companions. How did the Prophet (peace be on him) accommodate the differences? Today, if one person disagrees on any matter with someone else – not even on a theological issue, the next day they refuse to pray behind each other. This is an extreme mentality. We need to learn how to accommodate our differences among ourselves, as long as they are within the permissible boundaries.

### We can learn from the Prophet (peace be on him) to accommodate differences

Who says the Maliki or Hanafi or Shafi' or Hanbali school is Islam? Unfortunately some people think their school is the entirety of Islam and everyone else is outside Islam. All schools are from Islam, but they themselves are not exclusively Islam. We must not overcomplicate matters. We can live with our differences as long as they are inside the boundaries. Instead of animosity, let us have deeper understanding and bigger hearts.

### Not making Islam alien through our practice

Our actions are the reflection of Islam. People cannot distinguish between Muslims and Islam. When Muslims behave badly, they give a bad impression of Islam, even though the bad actions are not coming from their faith, but simply from bad behaviour. If we do not behave with humanity, we risk making others hate Islam. The Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Do not make the worship of God disliked to worshippers (Bayhaqi)*

We need to apply the example of the Prophet to our lives, and transmit the mercy we were sent through our actions, so we can regain our honour and become a mercy for others.

## The five roles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

*Khutbah 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.*

*Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.*

In two verses of Surat al-Ahzab, God Almighty mentioned that he sent the Prophet (peace be on him) with five roles:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

*O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good news, and a warner. (33:45)*

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

*And a caller towards God by His leave, and an illuminating beacon. (33:46)*

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا

*And give the believers the good news that for them is a great reward. (33:47)*

These five functions – being a witness, a bearer of good news, a warner, a caller to God and an illuminating beacon encapsulate his mission. As corporations have mission statements, this was the mission statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

### 1. The Witness (*Shaheedan*)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) will be a witness for those who believed and accepted his message, and against those who rejected his message. The Ummah will be the *Ummah as-Shahada* – witnesses that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered the message of God, when other nations will deny that they were ever sent a message and deny their messengers. Their messengers will call upon the Ummah of Muhammad to testify that they were prophets and delivered their message, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us this.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

*Thus We made you a moderate community, that you may be witnesses to humanity, and that the Messenger may be a witness to you. (2:143)*

### 2. The Bearer of Good News (*al-Mubashshir*)

This is the great title of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as he has brought the good news that those who believe and do good deeds will be rewarded with paradise. When we read his biography and description in books such as *Shamail at-Tirmidhi* and Qadi Iyyad's book, *Ash Shifa*, it is clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) loved good news.

How do we activate this quality of bearing good news in our lives? Loving the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not merely about nodding our heads when we hear his name, or feeling warmth in our heart, but about following his footsteps as the bearer of good news. We do so by demonstrating mercy and kindness to all creation.

### 3. The Warner (*an-Nadheer*)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to warn people about the punishment of Hellfire using a kind and merciful approach. His nature was gentle and approachable. As Allah stated in Surat Ali 'Imran:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ

*So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. (3:159)*

He rewarded kindness more than any other quality and he recommended kindness in our dealings. Anas (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*Make things easy and do not make them difficult, cheer the people up by conveying glad tidings to them and do not repulse (them). (Bukhari and Muslim)*

#### 4. A Caller to God (*Da'eean*)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) guided people towards the best choices and called to God Almighty with clarity. As all prophets and messengers, the Prophet (peace be upon him) disseminated the message with absolute clarity. Unfortunately, we have many misconceptions about our message and misrepresentations within our community as well as by our enemies. We can expect this from our enemies, but what is more upsetting is when people from our own community give the wrong impression about him and project a bad image of him, and twist his mercy to harshness and claim this is what Islam is about. Yet, he was a mercy for all humanity.

Aisha (may God be pleased with her) reported that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

*Aisha, verily God 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). (Muslim)*

#### 5. An Illuminating Beacon (*Sirajun Muneera*)

God Almighty described the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an illuminating light – his brightness was like the sunlight: you cannot deny it unless you close your eyes. Those who deny the clarity of his message need to be educated. We need to reflect his character in our actions and be the bearers of good news to people, not make people shun away from Islam or hate Islam because of our actions. Make people love Islam because of your good character.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) should not just be celebrated in Rabi al-Awwal, but on a daily basis throughout our lives – our dealings with others; actions and transactions; speech and communication; and in our plans.

We have to pass on this good news (*bishara*) that we were given to others: we are not born sinful, but we make our choices and we can choose paradise with the right choices or reject it with the bad.

We ask Allah to enable us reflect on and project the character of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in our lives. Ameen.

## Unique gifts of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

Khutbah 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.

### The special characteristics of the Prophet (peace be on him)

There are many hadith and verses in the Quran discussing special characteristics and gifts that God Almighty gave the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), which He did not give to any other prophets.

For example, Jabir bin 'Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

أُعْطِيتُ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطَهُنَّ أَحَدٌ قَبْلِي نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ شَهْرٍ، وَجُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا،  
وَطَهْرًا، فَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَدْرَكْتُهُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْيُصَلِّ، وَأَجَلْتُ لِي الْمَعَانِمَ وَلَمْ تَحِلَّ لِأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي  
وَأُعْطِيتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً، وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى النَّاسِ عَامَّةً

*I have been given five things which were not given to anyone else before me.*

- 1. Allah made me victorious by awe, (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.*
- 2. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due.*
- 3. The booty has been made halal (lawful) for me, yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me.*
- 4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).*
- 5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only, but I have been sent to all mankind. (Bukhari)*

There are also many other gifts.

### The Prophet (peace be on him) was given the best book

One of the greatest gifts given to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), above all other prophets, was that he was honoured by having the revelation of the noble Quran. He was chosen to receive the best and everlasting revelation until the end of time. God Almighty stated:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

*God has revealed to you the book and the wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. God's grace towards you has always been great. (4:113)*

### The Fatihah

Indeed the final revelation of God is so great that its first seven verses eclipse the previous revelations. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

*When God's Messenger once asked Ubayy bin Ka'b how he recited in the course of the prayer and he recited Umm al- Quran (Surat al-Fatihah), he said, "By Him in whose hand my soul is, nothing like it has been sent down in the Torah, the Injil,*

*the Zabur, or the Quran, and it is seven of the oft-repeated verses and the mighty Quran which I have been given.” (Tirmidhi)*

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) also narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ

*Allah’s Messenger (peace be on him) said, “The Umm the mother (substance) of the Quran is the seven oft-repeated verses (Al- Mathani) and is the Great Qur’an (i.e. Surat-al-Fatihah). (Bukhari)*

And it says in the Quran:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْءَانَ الْعَظِيمَ

*We have given you seven repeated verses, and the Glorious Quran. (15:87)*

All messengers have been commanded to follow the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

Among the unique characteristics was that the Prophet (peace be on him) was made the Master (Sayyid) of all prophets and Messengers. Indeed, God Almighty took a covenant from all messengers from Adam onwards, that if he were to come during their time, they would have to support him and believe him, as He said:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

*Allah took the covenant of the prophets, “If I give you a book and wisdom; should a messenger come to you verifying what you have, you shall believe in him, and support him.” He said, “Do you affirm My covenant and take it upon yourselves?” They said, “We affirm it.” He said, “Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.” (3:81)*

The one who will lead the intercession on the Day of Judgement

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) will be the one who leads everyone on the Day of Judgement and begin the intercession.

Abu Hurayrah reported Allah’s Messenger (peace be on him) as saying:

أَنَا سَيِّدُ وَوَلَدِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَأَوَّلُ مَنْ يَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْقَبْرُ وَأَوَّلُ شَافِعٍ وَأَوَّلُ مُشَفِّ

*I shall be pre-eminent amongst the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection and I will be the first intercessor and the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah). (Muslim)*

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was granted the best Ummah

The Ummah of Muhammad was the best Ummah. Although we have lost our way and are no longer the best Ummah, we have the ingredients to become the best Ummah again, and to make him proud of us.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

*You are the best community that ever emerged for humanity: you advocate what is moral, and forbid what is immoral, and believe in God. Had the People of the Scripture believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are the believers, but most of them are sinners. (3:110)*

The characteristic of the best ummah is that 'they command what is good and forbid what is evil', and they believe in Allah. If we do this, we will regain our status again inshallah.

The followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) will be half of the residents of Paradise

The Prophet (peace be on him) said we would be half of the residents of Heaven. We need to earn our entry to Jannah.

`Abdullah bin Mas'ud narrated:

كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي قُبَيْةٍ فَقَالَ " أَتَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ تَكُونُوا رُبْعَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ". قُلْنَا نَعَمْ. قَالَ " تَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ تَكُونُوا ثُلُثَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ". قُلْنَا نَعَمْ. قَالَ " أَتَرْضَوْنَ أَنْ تَكُونُوا شَطْرَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ". قُلْنَا نَعَمْ. قَالَ " وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ إِنِّي لأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا نِصْفَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ لَا يَدْخُلُهَا إِلَّا نَفْسٌ مُسْلِمَةٌ.

*While we were in the company of the Prophet (peace be on him) in a tent he said, "Would it please you to be one fourth of the people of Paradise?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Would it please you to be one-third of the people of Paradise?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Would it please you to be half of the people of Paradise?" We said, "Yes." Thereupon he said, "I hope that you will be one half of the people of Paradise, for none will enter Paradise but a Muslim soul, (Bukhari)*

We ask Allah to make it easy for us to learn more about the Prophet (peace be on him), not just in Rabi al-Awwal but throughout the year, to carry out his message on a daily basis and emulate his character, and be among those who are close to him in our actions and intentions in this world and the Hereafter. Ameen.

## How did the Prophet Muhammad deal with those who made mistakes?

*Al Manaar New Muslim Group 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021.*

*Transcribed by Rose Roslan.*

### A mercy to the world

Praise be to God Almighty that He sent Muhammad (peace be on him); a mercy for all mankind; a mercy for the worlds. I want to focus on his mercy by seeing how he dealt with people when they made mistakes and committed sins – big and small.

Making mistakes is part and parcel of our nature and society. We cannot pretend that we are angels, yet we tend to give the impression in our teachings that the Companions were angels. This was not the case. Although we respect the Companions as they had the companionship of the Prophet (peace be on him), and no one can reach their level, they were not an angelic society. They were a human society. Therefore, by definition, they made mistakes, had shortcomings, and committed sins, as we do.

Anas bin Malik reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*All the children of Adam are liable to make mistakes and the best amongst those are those who repent. (Tirmidhi)*

This is our reality. We tend to lack his mercy, especially when we have somebody in our midst who has committed a mistake. We make a big hoo-ha about it. I'm not saying we should celebrate their mistake or their sin, but equally we shouldn't push them off the cliff, as we often do. We all have some good aspects and some bad aspects in our character, but when it comes to others, we do not give them that allowance. This was not the way of the Prophet (peace be on him).

### Mercy – the prophetic way

#### **1) Do not support Satan against your brother**

I'd like to highlight some practical examples from the life of the Prophet (peace be on him) on dealing with sins in a prophetic manner. For instance, Abu Hurayrah narrated that a man who was drunk was brought to the Prophet (peace be on him).

The Prophet (peace be on him) said that as he had broken a command, he would be punished. There are set punishments for different sins and crimes, and for being drunk it is being flogged. The Prophet (peace be on him) told them to carry out the punishment of beating him. Some of the Companions started beating him with their hands, some with shoes, and some began berating him, crying 'Don't you feel ashamed?!' and then one of them cursed him.

The Prophet (peace be on him) retorted immediately, 'Do not say this, rather say, "O God, forgive him. O God, have mercy on him."' Compare this hadith with people's usual reaction when someone has committed a big sin. When they cross the limits, it makes people react with fury and tell them that they should feel ashamed, etc. This is a common human response. However, though the Prophet (peace be on him) stopped people when they broke laws, at the same time he prevented others from making statements like, 'May he be cursed! May he be punished in Hell!'

He (peace be on him) said:

*'Do not be the supporter of Satan against your brother.'* (Bukhari)



This is instilling the concept of how to deal with somebody who has committed a mistake. It's very deep. The Prophet (peace be on him) is definitely not accepting the sin, but he does not want to throw the person to Satan so Satan can incite them to more sin. You can either pull them towards mercy, as is the prophetic way, or push them further off the edge. If you were in that position, you would want a hand to pull you out of it, not a kick off the edge.

It takes a big heart to do that. It's not easy; but you need to see the bigger picture. Definitely it is natural to be angry because somebody has crossed the limits of God, but we do not publicise the sin, as many people are doing on social media etc. which is absolutely unacceptable and prohibited. We celebrate goodness, not evil, and we keep a border between us and the sins. If somebody commits a mistake or a sin, it's not the end of the world. You should try to help them be a good member of society rather than a hardened criminal.

This is the mercy of the Prophet (peace be on him) training our hearts and our brains to control our reaction when somebody breaks the limits. Naturally we will be angry, but we have to be balanced in how we handle the situation. Let's see the prophetic way.

## 2) Deliver the message kindly and mercifully

The revelation was constantly descending on the Prophet (peace be on him), and the angel Gabriel would bring the updates, from version 1.1, version 1.2, version 1.3, etc. Many Companions would not be aware of this if they were abroad, and would be advised of this by other Companions on their return.

In the early years in Madinah, there were new Muslims who had barely learned how to pray. They had taken their Shahada (declaration of faith) and learned the basics, but had gaps in their knowledge as they had been away. Once, a man entered the mosque while the congregation were praying. One of them sneezed in the prayer, so the man said, 'Yarkhamukallah', which is the Sunnah. The whole mosque looked at him and tried to stop him from talking, but this confused him even more and he wondered what was wrong with them all. Why were they looking at him like that? So they slapped their thighs to give a subtle indication that he should be quiet, as the new rules were that they could not speak.

Until then, they would reply if someone asked about something and if anyone entered the mosque and said, 'as-salamu alaikum', they would reply, 'wa alaikum as-salam.' Later, God Almighty revealed:

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

*'So preserve and pray your salah on time especially the middle salah and stand attentive in your prayer'. (2:238)*

When this verse was revealed the Prophet (peace be on him) told the Companions they could no longer speak during their salah. He said:

*In this prayer nothing of human speech is permitted; it is only tasbeeh (glorifying God), takbeer (magnifying God) and recitation of Quran. (Muslim, Abu Dawood and an-Nasaa'i)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) knew the man was not disturbing the prayer or breaking the etiquettes deliberately and he taught him gently, without shouting, or frowning, or any harshness. He could tell the man wasn't in the community, so didn't know the updates.

He delivered the message kindly and mercifully, whereas the companion commented that he was a bit anxious when he finished the prayer, expecting to be reprimanded. And he was so relieved instead that he commented how merciful the Prophet (peace be on him) was, saying: 'I have never seen anyone with such character.' And indeed, he did have the best, as God stated in Surat al-Qalam:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

*Indeed, you have the best character. (68:4)*

### **3) Be people who make things easier, not more difficult**

On many occasions in the life of the Prophet (peace be on him), Bedouins would approach him to seek knowledge. However, due to their rough upbringing and environment they were quite uncouth. Yet the Prophet (peace be on him) exercised the utmost patience with them, making allowance for their rude behaviour.

Anas bin Malik reported:

*While we were in the mosque with God's Messenger (peace be on him), a desert Arab came and stood up and began to urinate in the mosque. The Companions of God's Messenger (peace be on him) said: "Stop, stop," but the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said: "Don't interrupt him; leave him alone." They left him alone, and when he finished urinating, God's Messenger (peace be on him) called him and said to him: "These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of God, prayer and the recitation of the Quran," or God's Messenger said something like that. He (the narrator) said that he (the Holy Prophet) then gave orders to one of the people who brought a bucket of water and poured it over. (Muslim)*

Imagine if somebody urinated in your local mosque. Even if it was a baby, the people in the mosque would be in uproar. They would shout at his parents. Yet, the Prophet (peace be on him) had surmised immediately that this man was ignorant. He knew that he was not trying to create trouble, or deliberately defiling the mosque. Had that been the case, he would have dealt with it in a different manner, but the Prophet (peace be on him) could read people accurately and solve situations simply. He told them to bring a bucket of water and pour it on, and showed them that this is how you purify the najasa (impurity). A bucket of water. Sorted.

This was how he tolerated the ignorant and embraced everyone with his big heart. He didn't say, 'Shame on you! How could you do this?!' He said, 'Indeed you have been sent as people who make things easier, not more difficult'. From his example we learn not to be harsh with others, but to make it easy.

#### **Tolerating the small sin to avoid the bigger sin**

If you handle other people's mistakes badly, you may cause them to lose their faith. They may leave Islam altogether. I know many real stories of new Muslims who came to Islam and then met the wrong people and it put them off. They left because they got the impression that Islam is harsh and difficult because those people lacked gentleness and wisdom. However, the Prophet (peace be on him) was looking at the bigger picture. And we need to do the same – zoom out, not in, and look at the bigger picture. Making a mistake is one thing, but leaving the fold of Islam is much worse. Therefore, it is wiser to tolerate the small harm to avoid the bigger harm.

## **Punishment as a deterrent**

In another example we see that the Prophet (peace be on him) did not treat mistakes as occasions to take revenge, nor did he mete out punishments for the sake of it. The philosophy of punishment in our terms today is to deter people from committing mistakes and sins. Penalties for traffic offences are less punishments, and more deterrents. Many people have the impression that Islam is about chopping off hands, and heads and lashing people. No, this is completely wrong. The core message of Islam is mercy and love.

## **4) Remorse is a repentance**

Anas (may God be pleased with him) reported that:

*On one occasion, the Prophet (peace be on him) received a man, who said, 'O Messenger of God, I have kissed a woman and she's not my wife'. So he asked for the punishment. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'Have you prayed with us?' He said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Then God has forgiven you your sin' (Bukhari and Muslim)*

By this, he was not encouraging the man to sin, but he did not punish it as a major sin. Though it is prohibited (haram), he could read the remorse and regret in the man's tone and face. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*Remorse is repentance. (ibn Majah)*

When you are remorseful about the mistakes you have done, this is part of tawbah (repentance). There are certain conditions for sincere tawbah. If you are repenting for a mistake that is between you and God alone, for instance if you missed a prayer, it is enough for you to ask God for forgiveness (istighfar), regret what you have done, stop repeating this sin, and intend not to do it again. (If you want to repent you have to quit, you can't repent whilst you are continuing sinning.)

The other scenario is when you have wronged someone else. You may have insulted somebody, or hurt them. In this case, it's not enough for you to ask for God's forgiveness only. You have to ask for forgiveness from God Almighty AND you have to ask the one whom you have wronged in the first place, because you have to make up for it to them. God forgives you when you ask Him for forgiveness sincerely, but you also need people's forgiveness.

## **A sin is a sin whether minor or major**

We can see from this, that by praying regularly and continually asking God for forgiveness, God will forgive your sins. This does not mean that you take sinning lightly, as something you can keep doing and then deleting. That is not the prophetic way. The Prophet (peace be on him) definitely did not encourage people to sin. He was teaching them to repent and keep connected to God Almighty.

## **Patient and understanding approach**

Abu Umamah (may God be pleased with him) reported:

*A young man came to the Prophet (peace be on him), and he said, "O Messenger of God, give me permission to commit adultery." The people turned to rebuke him, saying, "Quiet! Quiet!" The Prophet said, "Come here." The young man came close, and he told him to sit down. The Prophet said, "Would you like that for your mother?" The man said, "No, by God, may I be sacrificed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither would people like it for their mothers. Would you like that for your*

*daughter?" The man said, "No, by God, may I be sacrificed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither would people like it for their daughters. Would you like that for your sister?" The man said, "No, by God, may I be sacrificed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither would people like it for their sisters. Would you like that for your aunts?" The man said, "No, by God, may I be sacrificed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither would people like it for their aunts." Then, the Prophet placed his hand on him, and he said, "O God, forgive his sins, purify his heart, and guard his chastity." After that, the young man never again inclined to anything sinful.*

While the Companions were outraged by this man's audacity and lack of shame, the Prophet (peace be on him) invited the man to come forward. Just his invitation speaks volumes, because it shows he was not frowning angrily, otherwise this young person would have just left the mosque. No, the Prophet (peace be on him) was very welcoming: he could see that the man was troubled and needed help to navigate his predicament.

Their proximity is important because it shows how he took a keen interest in the man and his dilemma. He did not dismiss his question from afar, or shut him down by saying, 'Don't you know it is haram?!' Instead he took him under his wing, and the closeness would have given him a sense of comfort and security. The man would be more responsive to advice now and would be protected from the Companions who wanted to jump on him and attack him for posing such a question.

Then the Prophet (peace be on him) looked below the surface of the question to understand why he asked this. Sometimes if our immediate response is anger, it blocks our thought process, and we jump to conclusions, or raise our voice and start shouting. However, this was not the prophetic way. Instead, he broke down the issue and tried to figure out what was the reason behind this question. A) He was a young man; B) He probably could not afford to marry; C) His hormones were raging and he needed to fulfil his desire but did not know what to do. Moreover, it is evident that he did not want to sin, because he could have done this, but he sought permission so that he would not be blameworthy. Thus, he found himself asking this question and seeking approval for a sin. We also see his naivety in thinking that it might even be a possibility that he is given permission to sin.

The Prophet (peace be on him) then gently guided him through the reason why it is not acceptable and that he would not wish this on the women in his own family, so why would he wish it on any other woman? As he worked through the logic of it, he made the young man use his own intellect to come to the same conclusion once his mind was no longer clouded by his desire. The Prophet (peace be on him) helped him see through this fog, and finally, made supplication for him. He put his hand on that young man's chest and said,

*'O God forgive him his sins, purify his heart and facilitate for him chastity'.*

This is the core of the mercy – he knew what he needed more than what he was asking for, he needed extra support, he needed his protection. He asked God to forgive his sin, to purify his heart, to protect him from sin, to facilitate chastity and thereby marriage for him to fulfil his desire in a halal way.

That young man was saved from sinning. This is the prophetic remedy of the Prophet (peace be on him). In another narration, it says that nothing became more hateful to that man than zina, following the supplication made by the Prophet (peace be on him).

This is exactly what we need: the Prophet (peace be on him) was mercy in action. He talked to people, read their faces, read their minds, understood where they were coming from, why they were asking

their questions. What was the motive behind their actions – was it deliberate, accidental, or out of forgetfulness, etc. We see this across the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him).

### Balanced approach

‘Abdullah (may God be pleased with him) narrated:

*We were with the Prophet (peace be on him) while we were young and had no wealth. So God’s Messenger (peace be on him) said, “O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty (i.e. his private parts from committing illegal sexual intercourse etc.), and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power.” (Bukhari)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) recommended that young people who have the ability should marry, and those who couldn’t should fast because it diminishes their desire. With hormones raging, if young people cannot fulfil their desire in a halal way, it might lead to haram. Therefore, until then, they can take the middle way and fast. He also facilitated marriage by recommending that women do not ask for a mahr (dowry) that puts men off marrying them. Unless their mahr is affordable, it will be hard for them to find a spouse who is wealthy enough to marry them.

The Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*The best of marriage is that which is made easiest. (Ibn Hibban)*

*The best of mahrs is the simplest (or most affordable). (al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqi)*

Thus, he opened the halal door for marriage rather than overburdening those who are seeking marriage with hefty mahr and a long list of requirements etc. This is balanced on both sides.

The Prophet (peace be on him) told the Companions not to help Satan against their brothers; this is the concept. If someone commits a mistake, the Islamic approach is to shield his mistake, not to publicise it. It helps him get back on track rather than pushing him further to sin.

The Prophet (peace be on him) wanted the Ummah to practice balance; to be merciful and understanding, and to treat others as we would like to be treated – not to ostracise them and make them feel ashamed. You cannot guarantee that you will not be in that position one day. May God protect all of us.

Whoever conceals the mistakes of his brother, God will conceal his sins on the Day of Judgement. Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*“Whoever removes a worldly hardship from a believer, God will remove one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection from him. Whoever grants respite to (a debtor) who is in difficulty, God will grant him relief in this world and in the Hereafter. Whoever conceals (the fault of) a Muslim in this world, God will conceal him (his faults) in this world and in the Hereafter. God will help a person so long as he is helping his brother.” (Muslim)*

Again, it’s not encouraging the sin, but trying to minimise the sin and not to publicise and magnify it. This is a very important concept when you talk about the prophetic character; this is so important to embrace and practice in our communities.

Every now and then we have plenty of cases in which a person, or celebrity, or teacher, or community leader, etc. is exposed for their misdemeanours. How do we deal with this? We tend to fail every time. It was the greatness of the Prophet (peace be on him)'s character, that he taught us how to deal with each other in different scenarios and how to deal with our weaknesses, how to support one another; not to have more conflicts with one another.

## Learn from the Prophet how to communicate

*Al Manaar New Muslim Group 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (transcribed by Shamaila Jawaid) and khutbah 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (transcribed by Ayesha Khan).*

To talk about the Prophet (peace be upon him) is like trying to talk about the ocean, where does one start?

My focus will be how we can improve the way we communicate by learning from the Prophet (peace be upon him). A major proportion of our problems in our relationships (with family, friends and colleagues etc.) and at work, whether they are small businesses or large corporations, stem from miscommunication. So often, small misunderstandings escalate and snowball into more serious issues, simply because we did not manage to explain something clearly or did not understand what someone meant.

### Words are not knives

How did the Prophet (peace be on him) communicate with his Companions? What can we learn from this? In the Quran itself, Allah instructed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Ummah to communicate by choosing the best words, as Allah Almighty stated:

*Tell my servants to say what is best. (17:53)*

This does not mean that we sharpen our knives as though we are going into battle when we speak, as is the case on many occasions and during many conversations. Rather, when you communicate, make a conscious effort to choose the words which will convey a good meaning in the kindest way.

This is not very easy, given that we are creatures who love to talk and we do not always put thought into what comes out of our mouths. However, we are obliged to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him), because he is the perfect role model, and we need to bring our character in line with his character as much as possible.

### Think before you speak, especially when you are angry

In order to have the best speech the first thing we need is a grip on our emotions. Not in the sense that we have no feelings, but that when we are provoked, we do not react with anger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would always repel the bad with the good. We need to do the same.

Some people find it easier than others to remain calm, but as anything in life, we need to train ourselves. Always consider, what the Prophet (peace be upon him) would say in that situation. Imagine if the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in your situation, how would he respond? Definitely not like me or you. His response would be wise. Let's copy him and elevate our status by following his example.

### Speak clearly – not too fast, not too slow – and concisely

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) described how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to speak. She said he did not rattle on and on the way people sometimes do. Some people speak so quickly they do not pause for breath. It is hard to follow what they are saying, and they do not let you get a word in edgeways. This is not the Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) by contrast spoke slowly and clearly. We need to learn how to speak this way. If you speak too fast, remember to breathe, to pause, and to speak more slowly – not too slowly, simply at a pace that helps people to understand what you mean.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had a mission – he had to deliver God's message, so it was critical that he did this with clarity. At times depending on the size of his crowd, he would repeat what he said

3 times to allow everyone to hear it, and to understand it, and for his words to reach people at the back. Hence he repeated himself and spoke clearly. 'Urwah narrated that Aisha said:

*The Messenger of Allah did not speak quickly like you do now, rather he would speak so clearly, unmistakably, that those who sat with him would memorise it.”*  
(Tirmidhi)

*When the Apostle of the Allah gave a talk, a man could count his words if he wished to count. [Abu Dawoud]*

If you do not speak clearly, people may miss the point of what you are saying and later you might be annoyed that they did not follow your instructions. It creates friction needlessly. Therefore make your speech clear, and concise and make it easy to understand.

### Say it with love

Finally, depending on the scenario, and most importantly in difficult scenarios, you need to say what you want to say with love. This is to diffuse the tension and reduce the possibility of arguments. When you have the right intention, and you say it with love, the person listening will understand.

Sometimes you are saying the best thing or best words, but you're using the wrong tone, it is as if you're insulting someone. The tone of your voice is important to regulate and monitor. Is the tone of your voice high pitched or low pitched? Is it sarcastic? Is it with compassion? Your tone will convey all this. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would choose the right tone to speak to his audience. Whether he was encouraging them, or warning them, or softening their hearts – his pitch would vary to convey it appropriately. Of course it came naturally from the heart.

Anas ibn Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ إِيمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ وَلَا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُهُ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ رَجُلٌ الْجَنَّةَ لَا يَأْمَنُ جَارُهُ بَوَائِقَهُ

*The faith of a servant is not upright until his heart is upright, and his heart is not upright until his tongue is upright. A man will not enter Paradise if his neighbour is not secure from his evil. (Musnad Ahmad)*

### The purer the heart, the purer the tongue

This means that the quality of one's words depends on the quality of one's heart. There is a direct correlation between the faith, the heart and the tongue. The tongue reflects what's in the heart, the heart reflects your faith. They are interconnected. The one who is always spouting foul language, is reflecting the poor quality of his heart. He has a heart that needs purification. And this shows that he has weak faith. Thus our communication is very revealing as it exposes whether we are good or bad.

Allah stated that we cannot enter Jannah without a sound heart:

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

*Except for him who comes to God with a sound heart. (26:89)*

Ibn Al-Qayyim commented on this ayah that the soundness of one's heart is never complete until one is safe from 5 things:



1. From shirk (polytheism) that contradicts monotheism
2. And bid'ah innovation that contradicts the Sunnah
3. And desire that contradicts the command
4. And heedlessness that contradicts the remembrance
5. And inclination that contradicts monotheism and sincerity.

### Listen attentively and with genuine interest

When the Prophet (peace be on him) listened it was to understand what the other person was saying. He was not busy preparing an answer in his mind – that is not listening. He wanted to understand where the other person was coming from. We see this in his conversation with his Companions, and it teaches that we need to focus on what others are saying, and not prejudge what they are saying before they have finished. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would listen to his speaker until they finished, and then ask if they had anything further to add. Only then would he reply. How many of us do this? I doubt that it is many.

### Smile

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke he would have a smile on his face, as described in the Shama'il – it reflected that he was a cheerful person. A smile diffuses any difficult scenario or conversation. He said that to meet your brother with a smile on your face is an act of charity. Thus he was encouraging us to increase our reward in our bank of good deeds by small but not insignificant gestures. Do not frown when you speak, unless the scenario requires it. If you have a colleague, friend, relative, or spouse, who is always grumpy, you don't want to talk to them. You actually avoid talking to them, and they make you grumpy. Lack of communication can create distance and move the relationship in the wrong direction.

The best thing is to follow the prophetic guidance, when we speak we speak with good intention, we say the best thing, we pay attention, we choose the best words, we have a smile on our face, we allow the other to speak until they finish, we listen attentively and then we reply. You go through The Prophet (peace be upon him) seerah and you find much more on that. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us how to communicate in this best form. When we communicate in the best way it increases love and friendship between people.

### Give your full attention

Being addressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was very special and unique and those who follow his footsteps will be blessed with the opportunity to hear him speak to them one day inshallah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made you feel that you were the most important person to him. When he spoke, he gave his full attention – he was not distracted, he was not in a rush to disengage. If the person was to his side, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would turn his full body to face them, not just his face. This was one of his beautiful etiquettes in conversation. If we can apply this in our conversations, what a difference it would make – imagine when we are talking with our families, our spouse or our parents. When you pay someone full attention it gives you the flavour of the sweetness of faith. It is being all ears – having your senses fully focused on what the other person is saying, because you value them. How many marital problems, and friendship problems, start from one person feeling they are not being given attention? They were speaking but the other person was ignoring them – they were on their phone, sending some messages, and they were not responding. This is definitely a recipe for disaster. It won't increase love between people, it will destroy the love. When it keeps happening, the partner will feel humiliated and bitterness will take seed and grow.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) would even give full attention to his enemies. For instance, when he was negotiating with Quraysh, he would pay attention to their offer, even though their offer would be nonsensical.

One of the other etiquettes of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was that he never interrupted his speaker. He would wait until they finished. In our communication, we do not wait for others to finish – we just shoot at each other and interrupt each other; we do not even letting others complete their sentence. This is rude. Is not prophetic guidance – wait until the other person finishes before you respond to them.

‘Amr ibn al-‘As, who accepted Islam in the 8th AH and was appointed a leader in a battle just 6 months later. When he returned, he narrated that the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke to him was so full of attention and interest that it made you feel you were the most special person to him. He said:

*Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to turn his face and his speech directly towards the worst of people, thereby winning their hearts. He used to do the same with me, so that I thought I was the best of the people, so I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, am I better, or Abu Bakr?’ He said: ‘Abu Bakr,’ so I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, am I better, or ‘Umar?’ He said: ‘Umar,’ so I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, am I better, or ‘Uthman?’ He said: ‘Uthman!’ Whenever I asked Allah’s Messenger, he told me the truth, so I wished I had not asked him!’*  
(Shamail at-Tirmidhi)

Having experienced this attentive listening from the Prophet (peace be upon him) was convinced that he must be the most beloved person to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Yet when he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) whom he loved the most, the Prophet (peace be upon him) enumerated so many people that he was disappointed and wished he had not asked the question! However this shows that the communication of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so endearing that it won over people’s hearts.

The way the Prophet (peace be upon him) communicated was not just to turn his neck towards someone but to give them his full attention, so they felt the warmth from his pure heart – which was the soundest heart Allah ever created.

Is it possible for us to follow his footsteps? To give this level of attention to our spouse, our children and our friends, neighbours and employees – to make them feel genuinely special to us. Not just superficially or for our self-interest. For the sake of Allah and to follow the blessed example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

### Between spouses

A major problem in marriages is when spouses do not listen to each other when they speak – they are on different planets. When one comes back, the other one is mentally somewhere else. The more attention you pay to others the closer you become.

With training you can improve this. Shut down all the disruptors. Stop using your phone when someone is talking to you. Put it aside and listen attentively. Don’t be engaged in anything else when someone is talking to you, especially when you are talking about close relations like parents, like spouse, like siblings and so on. It hurts a lot when you speak to someone and they are not paying attention. So don’t harm anyone. Stop this bad habit. I know people who have been married for years, but they’ve never been on the same page, why? Because one of them did not bother to give their

spouse attention. The solution is easy – pay attention and focus. This is the way to resolve this issue. It will take some time to develop this habit, but if you really love that person, you need to pay attention, and it is their right to be listened to attentively. Vice versa, when you speak to someone, it's your right to be listened to attentively. This is the way we should communicate; this is the prophetic way.

### Do not gossip

Among the tools we use to keep the heart sound is to do istighfar on a daily basis. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*There are times where my heart feels clouded and I seek Allah's forgiveness a hundred times a day.*

Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

لا يُبَلِّغُنِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِي عَنْ أَحَدٍ شَيْئًا، فَإِنِّي أَحَبُّ أَنْ أُخْرَجَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنَا سَلِيمٌ الصَّدْر

*None of my Companions should convey to me anything regarding another because I desire to meet every one of you with a clean heart. [Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi]*

This shows clearly that the heart is affected by gossip, backbiting and relaying bad news about others. If you want to keep your heart healthy, then disengage from all gossip because it is TOXIC. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not therefore like to hear anything bad about any of his companions because he felt it poisoned his heart making him cold and distant towards that person when he wanted to be warm and genuinely happy to meet them.

We need to work on our hearts and then our actions will follow. Do this to follow his footsteps to meet Allah with a sound heart.

### Speak the truth

The Prophet (peace be upon him) always spoke the truth, even when he was joking. We should always tell the truth because being truthful is one of the main features of the believer. This is why when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked:

*“Can a believer be a coward?” He said, “Yes, he can be coward. Then it was asked whether a believer could be a miser? He replied, “Yes, he can be a miser”, it was then asked whether a believer could be a liar? He replied, “No, a believer cannot be a liar.” (Imam Malik, Mishkaat)*

### Self-assessment checklist

We need to tick these boxes and assess our shortcomings – we all have some shortcomings. Check yourself: When I speak to someone...

- Do I interrupt?
- Do I really listen attentively?
- Do I really speak with a smile?
- Do I mean what I'm saying or saying anything to save myself?
- Am I always telling the truth?
- How do I use my tone of voice?

How can we tick all these boxes? We need to train ourselves.

## Why is following the Sunnah the key to happiness?

al-Ghazali Class 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.

In Imam Ghazali's *Kitaab Al-Arba'in Fi Usul ad-Din* (The Forty Principles of the Religion), which is the summary of his great work, *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), he examines the concept of why following the Sunnah is the key to happiness in life.

The words 'key to happiness' instantly appeal to our hearts. In Arabic we say this is a very encouraging beginning. Ghazali says if you are searching for happiness, he will tell you how to achieve it, by divulging some spiritual secrets, known as *asrar* in Arabic.

### The key to happiness is following the Sunnah (Ittibaa' as-sunnah miftaah as-sa'aada)

We can write reams and reams on this topic, and indeed there is a 5th century book called *Miftahu as-Sa'ada* (The Key to Happiness). It is a beautiful concept and a great motto that the key to happiness is to follow the Prophet (peace be on him). God Almighty said:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say, O Prophet, "If you sincerely love God, then follow me; God will love you and forgive your sins. For God is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (3:31)

In this life and in the afterlife, if we follow the Prophet (peace be on him) it will bring us happiness and success, as he is our role model in everything. Whether it is how he entered and left the house, or his movements and stillness, or the way he ate and drank, walked and slept, spoke, we have the blueprint of how to conduct every aspect of our lives.

If you are feeling low – tired, anxious and sad, and searching for relief – Ghazali says that the path to happiness is to follow the Prophet (peace be on him). Why is this the case? Because Muhammad (peace be on him) was the Messenger of God, therefore the key to happiness and success (*falah*) is to follow him. God Almighty summarised what he wants from us in His message, and He sent it through the Prophet (peace be on him) and his example.

Real success is not about acquiring money, status and success, although these are desirable when used in the right way. Unless you follow the Sunnah, you will not have *sa'aada* (happiness), which is an internal state, in your life.

The Messenger (peace be on him) delivered the message from God Almighty to us, which is the only route to the safest destination, Paradise, the home of peace (*Dar as-Salam*). Following him is the shortcut. Instead of getting lost in the wilderness, we must simply follow the straight path, that he trod, as he was sent by the Creator of the whole universe. God Almighty sent him to us to show us how to navigate this life to arrive safely at our destination. We are shown how to get *sa'aada* by avoiding the dangers, blockages, hiccups and pitfalls, by reading the manual, which is the Quran and Sunnah.

### Fard vs Sunnah

When we follow the Sunnah, we should not limit ourselves to copying how the Prophet (peace be on him) prayed and fasted. It is much broader than emulating how he performed the obligations. You need to embrace his whole way of life.

This means that you should not make a distinction between the actions that are fard and the actions which are Sunnah – you should do them both. Though the fard is undeniably the obligation, if you only perform the fard, and ignore or disdain the Sunnah because you think it insignificant and unimportant, you will develop a habit of missing it out.

Moreover, this is akin to the physician who says you can remove your eyes from your body, because they are not vital. You can live without them. Ghazali is talking directly from his personal experience. Although he did not live very long, his book *The Forty Principles of the Religion* was composed towards the end of his life and thus contains the cream of his rich experience. We should benefit from his discoveries and excel using his advice, rather than trying to figure it out for ourselves from scratch.

Though there is a distinction between the fard and Sunnah, if you keep neglecting the Sunnah, it is an entry point for Satan.

The believer should not distinguish between Sunnah and fard, as we are only here in this world once, so how will we spend our time? If you have plenty of hours for Facebook and Snapchat but not for the Sunnah, you are making the wrong investment.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*(O Prophet!) Tell people: 'If you indeed love God, follow me, and God will love you and will forgive you your sins. God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate. (3:31)*

In this ayah, the verb *fattabi'uni* (follow me) is used in its command form. Therefore, if you want to be saved, or to please God, or want to achieve perfection or excel in this world and the Hereafter, follow the Prophet (peace be on him).

### Life is a bumpy ride, but you can enjoy it

Life is not an easy ride; it is pretty bumpy. Some people enjoy bumpy rides, such as those who like funfairs. Life is certainly a bumpy ride, but you have the joy of knowing where you are going. You will experience pleasure even when life is bitter, if you bear it with acceptance. For instance, if you miss your flight, instead of bursting with anger and blaming the taxi driver or your spouse or anyone but yourself, realise that it is a message for you from God Almighty. You can think about how you can pass that test without failing. Often you fail the test because you can't see the bigger picture.

### God's love is conditional on following the Prophet (peace be on him)

If you follow the Prophet (peace be on him), God Almighty will love you. It is conditional love. If you do not follow him, you do not get God's love. If you are not following him, you are wasting your time.

فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا لِرَسُولٍ وَمَا آتَاكُمْ

*Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you from, desist. (59:7)*

If you want to express your love to God, convey it through actions, not poems. I have come across many people who say they love God and His Messenger (peace be on him) yet they do not pray. When asked why, they say they are a bit lazy. Real love is not just expressed through emotions, it is demonstrated through actions.

Get beyond knowing what you have to do, and actually implement it in your life. Prove your love through your actions, by following the Sunnah. Imam Qushayri commented beautifully on the ayah we just discussed, that *hubb* (love) is giving your heart and soul to God Almighty.

In Arabic, the word *hubb* (love) is composed of two letters: *ha* and double *ba*. The *ha* has a spiritual meaning which is *ar-ruh* (the soul). And *ba* is for *badan*, the body. Qushayri, who lived close to Imam Ghazali's era, said:

*The lover will spare from his beloved neither his heart nor his soul nor his body.*

This means, if you love God Almighty, you are willing to give Him your heart and body. That is why those who show the highest level of love for Him are martyrs, as they give their body and heart to God. Qushayri is a master when it comes to expressing this.

### The first secret of following the Sunnah

Following the movements and stillness of the Prophet (peace be on him) is a sign of real *ittiba'*. Don't say the Sunnah is not a big deal. Don't take it lightly. Otherwise it shuts the door of goodness and locks the gate of happiness for you. You might want to know why you should follow the Prophet (peace be on him) in all his actions.

Ghazali goes on to say that the motivating factor for following the Sunnah is three secrets. The first of these is the connection between the inward and outward realms: the limbs and the spiritual heart. For instance, there is connection between the salah and wudu as the relationship between the outward and inward, as the outer washing has the impact of inner washing. Together, they purify the heart.

We know that we don't understand why the Prophet (peace be on him) used to carry out certain actions in a certain way. However, we know that he was given the revelation by God, and he had knowledge of the Unseen, which we do not have access to. Therefore, though we do not have the reason, we know that he knew something we did not, so by following him, we benefit in ways we do not know. Of course, we might wonder why, but there are some things we can understand, and some we cannot but simply follow to capture the goodness.

Why do we go around the Kaaba seven times, not ten, or three? Why do we go around it anticlockwise? Why is Maghrib three rakahs, not two or four? Is there any reason? Yes – it is not an arbitrary or trivial point, but we submit ourselves and trust that there is *hikmah* (wisdom) in it, which we cannot fathom.

I am reminded of an occasion during my Hajj when some of our group appointed a man to lead the salah, assuming that his turban and long beard meant he was knowledgeable. As we were travelling, we had to combine and shorten our salah. The man proceeded to lead the prayer, and prayed three and a half rakahs. Everyone was surprised, and when he finished, they asked him why he had done that. He replied that Isha is usually shortened from four rakahs to two, so he shortened Maghrib as well to one and a half and combined with the Isha. This was of course completely wrong and completely ignorant! You cannot invent your own forms of worship. The Prophet (peace be on him) taught us to emulate him.

Malik ibn al-Huwayrith (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Pray as you have seen me praying. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

Regarding Hajj, he also said, as reported by Jabir (may God be pleased with him):

*Learn your rituals (by seeing me performing them). (Muslim)*

Therefore, we perform seven *tawaf* and seven *sa'ee* between Safa and Marwa. Our knowledge and intellect are limited. Though we have access to plenty of information, there is a big difference between information and knowledge, and between the Seen and the Unseen. There is much we don't know, so be humble.

The first secret is that there is a connection between the outer dominion (al-mulk) and the spiritual realm (al-malakut) – the Seen and the Unseen. We see this in the hadith where the Prophet (peace be on him) revealed that the effect of salah five times a day was like washing the heart and soul. Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*“If one of you had a river at his door and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?” They said, “Not a trace of dirt would be left.” The Prophet said, “That is the parable of the five prayers by which God removes sins.” (Bukhari and Muslim)*

Truly, the heart is like a mirror. If you do not want to be deceived by appearances, know that the reality of things (*haqa'iq al-ashya*) does not show in the mirror unless it is polished, illuminated and straightened.

The more we work on our hearts, the more the heart is prepared to receive the light and truth from God Almighty. The more sound the heart, the more we are on the straight path.

Ghazali is taking us on a journey into the heart, as if he is a surgeon showing you what is usually concealed to the eye. Otherwise, we learn lessons through trial and error. Ghazali is sparing us the pain of making our own mistakes by sharing his experience with us.

Some of the things which affect the body can be understood by us, but not all. Just as we may not understand all the reasons behind a doctor's advice on what to do or not to do, but we trust his knowledge and experience.

There is nothing wrong with following the Sunnah blindly if you are following authentic narrations. However, blindly following any other than the Prophet (peace be on him) is blameworthy. Therefore, embrace the Sunnah and emulate the Prophet (peace be on him) as much as possible in as many ways as possible, whether it is how he ate, or slept, or walked, or worshipped.

Adjust your limbs and faculties by performing your actions in accordance with the Sunnah. For instance, by preferring the right hand over the left hand for good actions such as carrying a Quranic text, or eating, and using the left hand for cleaning oneself, touching dirty things or taking off shoes. Keeping nails trimmed honours the hand. The right hand has superiority over the left because of its strength and because the Prophet (peace be on him) preferred it.

The world is the farm for the Hereafter. You plant your seeds in this world and reap them in Hereafter.

## Loving the Prophet is about truly following and guarding his Sunnah

Wednesday Tafsir Class 6th November 2019.

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.

God Almighty said:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

*And [God has] raised high your [the Prophet's] status (94:4)*

How, then, is it possible for us to elevate the Prophet (peace be on him) beyond this?

Any ways we come across, we need to be careful and double check their source and meaning. Sadly, many oft-repeated hadith are in circulation which have no basis but were invented out of love for him (peace be on him).

### The Sunnah is protected

The difference between Islam and other religions is its robust system of authenticating knowledge, which has led to the unprecedented evolution of a vast science to ensure that hadith that are passed down generations are vetted rigorously.

For this reason, we have clear, unbroken chains of transmission documenting each saying of the Prophet (peace be on him). These provide a solid foundation, and nothing can shake this.

The detailed knowledge we have of the Prophet (peace be on him) is due to the painstaking efforts of our pious predecessors and scholars. Their efforts were supported by God Almighty who promised in Surah Hijr:

*We have without doubt sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption). (15:9)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) made a special du'a for those who preserve the Sunnah:

*God illuminates a man who hears a hadith from me, preserves it carefully, and passes it on to others as he heard it. (Ahmad)*

His dua is specifically for those who heard, understood, and correctly conveyed the Sunnah as it is, intact.

### Undermining the Sunnah

The Sunnah is protected, but this does not prevent people from trying to corrupt it or contaminate its purity. One way of doing this is by creating new hadith and forwarding them.

The Prophet (peace be on him) mentioned there would be fake narrations which would circulate. On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*There will be people in the last part of my Ummah who will relate to you that which neither you nor your fathers have heard, so beware of them. (Muslim)*

Therefore, we should treat any hadith that seems odd with caution. The Prophet (peace be on him) predicted that the Ummah would be afflicted by the *dajjalun*, and *kadhabun* would be in the Ummah.



The dajjalun and the kadhabin are great liars and they would spread narrations that no one has ever heard before, just as we have today.

Sadly, these fake hadiths have come not from those trying to destabilise the Sunnah, but those who are acting out of love for the Prophet (peace be on him). Ironically, they think their made-up narrations promote the Prophet (peace be on him) and by creating and spreading hadith they try and raise his status. For example, many of us are familiar with this famous so-called hadith:

O Muhammad were it not for you, I would not have created the universe.

This is a fabricated hadith, as critiqued by the Muhaddithun (the great scholars of hadith), including Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani and Mulla Ali Al-Qari.

It is akin to previous nations who altered their religious heritage over time until it become significantly distorted from its origin. The people during the time of Jahiliya (pre-Islamic times) said this was their age-old custom:

*And when it is said to them, 'Follow what God has revealed,' they say, 'Rather, we follow what we found our parents devoted to.' Even if Satan is calling them to the suffering of the Blaze? (31:21)*

If we allow this distortion to prevail, we are no different from the ignorant nations of the past.

We have to be vigilant against this, to ensure that our Sunnah remains robust and protected from inserts, changes and fabrications. The Sunnah is a fortress, and we need to protect it and its principles.

### Exaggerations about the Prophet (peace be on him)

Narrations which suggest that the universe was created for the Prophet (peace be on him) to exist, or that he is made of light or that he was made with God's nur (light) and a spark from that fell on Yusuf (peace be on him) making him one of the most handsome men ever created are well known narrations in many Sufi traditions. They are recited regularly particularly at mawlid (gatherings to celebrate the birth of the Prophet (peace be on him)).

When there isn't such a narration, why create it?

Many of the people who fabricated hadith said they were not lying against the Prophet (peace be on him) but for him. This is misguided and dangerous. And some repented. The punishment for this is clear.

Salama may God be pleased with him narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Whoever (intentionally) ascribes to me what I have not said then (surely) let him occupy his seat in hellfire. (Bukhari)*

And in another narration the Prophet (peace be on him) said,

*'To attribute lies to me, is not equivalent to attributing lies to anyone else.'*  
(Muslim)

The Prophet (peace be on him) is the authority. We have to stick to the Quran and Sunnah and not invent additional sayings. While the Quran is firmly protected from any amendment, the Sunnah is enormous. It's not easy for everyone to have access to the full Sunnah as we have access to the complete Quran, therefore one can try and insert a fake hadith.

## The science and method of authentication

Over time, the critics of hadith (muhaddithun) periodically and systematically sift through the hadith in common circulation and distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic. They have catalogued them alphabetically and published them. One of the best among these books is by Imam al Ajluni al-Jarrahi (died 1162 AH), whose huge two volume book of around 1200 pages, is called *Kashf al-Khafa' wa-Muzil al-Ilbas am ashtahara min al-ahadith ala alsinatin naas*. He collected the famous hadith of his time, circulating in the books and social media of that time.

Now we have new fabrications, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we need to root out the fake ones of our time. We have special encyclopaedias which specialise in authentication of hadith, called *Kutub at Takhreej*.

In some Sufi books, which are very famous, there are many hadith on loving the Prophet (peace be on him) – many are authentic, but there are also many fabricated and weak hadith. We don't need to spread these fabricated and weak narrations. There is no necessity, when we have something better in the Quran itself and the authentic Sunnah. Why spread the culture of lies?

God Almighty already elevated the Prophet (peace be on him). He is not in need of any further elevation that this!

One of the fabricated narrations is that the Prophet was given the *attahiyyat* (salutations to the Prophet) during the *Me'raj* (ascension to heaven). There is no chain of transmitters for this. It is authentic that we recite *attahiyyat* in our *salah*, but there is no evidence that this came from the Prophet's conversation (peace be on him) with God Almighty during the *Me'raj*. I am sure that many scholars and people are unaware that this narration had no *isnad* (chain of transmission). We have to be careful.

Unless we have solid evidence that the Prophet (peace be on him) narrated something and it is authenticated we can't repeat it or forward it.

## Being cautious and critical

There is a culture among some Sufi orders that the students nod their head at whatever their shaykh says and follow it blindly. This is wrong. The example of the Prophet (peace be on him) endorses verifying what you are learning. His teaching and Sunnah are contrary to this blind obedience to one's shaykh. We see this in the astonishing but beautiful occasion when a Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and probed him if what he had heard was true, the Prophet's reply was not 'How dare you ask such a question' instead he replied to his queries.

It is reported on the authority of Anas bin Malik that he said:

*'We were forbidden that we should ask anything (without a genuine need) from the Holy Prophet. It therefore pleased us that an intelligent person from the dwellers of the desert should come and ask him (the Holy Prophet) and we should listen to it.*

*A man from the dwellers of the desert came (to the Holy Prophet) and said: "Muhammad, your messenger came to us and told us your assertion that verily God had sent you (as a prophet)." He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: "He told the truth." He (the Bedouin) said: "Who created the heaven?" He (the Holy Prophet) replied: "God." He (the Bedouin again) said: "Who created the earth?" He (the Holy Prophet) replied: "God." He (the Bedouin again) said: "Who raised these mountains and who created in them whatever is created there?" He (the Holy*

*Prophet) replied: "God." Upon this he (the Bedouin) remarked: "By Him Who created the heaven and created the earth and raised mountains thereupon, has God (in fact) sent you?" He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes." He (the Bedouin) said: "Your messenger also told us that five prayers (had been made) obligatory for us during the day and the night." He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: "He told you the truth." He (the Bedouin) said: "By Him Who sent you, is it God Who ordered you about this (i.e. prayers)?" He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes." He (the Bedouin) said: "Your messenger told us that Zakat had been made obligatory in our riches." He (the Holy Prophet) said: "He has told the truth." He (the Bedouin) said: "By Him Who sent you (as a prophet), is it God Who ordered you about it (Zakat)?" He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes." He (the Bedouin) said: "Your messenger told us that it had been made obligatory for us to fast every year during the month of Ramadan." He (the Holy Prophet) said: "He has told the truth." He (the Bedouin) said: "By Him Who sent you (as a prophet), is it God Who ordered you about it (the fasts of Ramadan)?" He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes." He (the Bedouin) said: "Your messenger also told us that pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House (of Ka'bah) had been made obligatory for him who is able to undertake the journey to it." He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes." The narrator said that he (the Bedouin) set off (at the conclusion of this answer, but at the time of his departure) remarked: "By Him Who sent you with the Truth, I would neither make any addition to them nor would I diminish anything out of them." Upon this the Prophet remarked: "If he were true (to what he said) he must enter Paradise." (Muslim)*

The Prophet (peace be on him) approved the Bedouin's double checking by answering his questions and not shutting him down. Blind obedience to any shaykh is not in line with our deen. We have the two extremes of Sufism and Salafism, but the truth is in the middle.

### Can we accept weak and fabricated hadith

As a rule, if you come across a weak hadith, do not believe it is authentic. Don't treat it as authentic. Imam Nawawi said acceptance of weak hadith has three conditions – otherwise we cannot accept it: it should be in line with a general principle, it should not be very weak, and we should not believe it's authentic. And we do not accept weak hadith in matters of belief (aqeedah).

There are two branches relating to hadith. The first is Hadith Riwaya, which is the transmission of hadith by narrating and receiving hadith. The scholar listens, collects and narrates. The second is Hadith Diraya which is the critique of the hadith. The top scholars critique hadith. They have special books in which they keep the biographies of all the narrators known as *asma' al rijaal*. They screen every single narrator, going into the details of their life- where and when they travelled, whom they met, where and how they lived. They check for inconsistencies in the chain, such as a narrator claiming he heard a narration from a shaykh, whom he could not have met. For example, if he was in Yemen and the Shaykh was in Aleppo. They are tested for their memory and dignity. The sciences of the Sunnah are very detailed and thorough. It is in good hands.

The reason behind a weakness might be the narrator's memory became weak or he could be a liar. An authentic hadith should have different routes. In other words, it must have been narrated by several narrators. When there are several narrators who said similar things, then the weakness in one of them is covered by the others. But if there are only two and they are both weak then we can't take them that seriously. It's a science.

There are some hadith which might be listed as weak in one place but good in another – this might be an honest mistake or might be because the *muhaddith* (scholar of hadith) initially thought it was weak and labelled it but later found more evidence and concluded that it was good and changed his mind.

We also need to be careful as there are weak hadith in famous books, such as in Ghazali's *Ihya Ulumudeen*. Ghazali was certainly a great scholar, but his speciality was not the science of hadith. All scholars are not specialised in all Islamic sciences. However, the hadith in his book have been vetted by Iraqi and Zabidi who went through them and pointed out which were defective and which are authentic, so if you are reading Ghazali, make sure you read the edition with their commentaries.

Not all weak hadith are to be dismissed. As long as the hadith is in line with the shariah, not narrated by weak narrators, and not be used in matters of aqeedah (belief) and fiqh (legal rulings), they can be useful. We have to be careful that we do not spread any hadith about the Prophet (peace be on him) which are not authentic out of our love for him.

## Why do we send salah (supplication) and salam (blessings) on the Prophet (peace be on him)?

*Hadith Qudsi Course 16th June 2020.*

*Transcribed by Rose Swinburn.*

It was narrated from Abdullah bin Abi Talha, from his father, that:

*The Messenger of God (peace be on him) came one day with a cheerful expression on his face, and we said: 'We see you looking cheerful'. He said: 'The Angel Gabriel came to me and said: 'O Muhammad, your Lord says: 'Will it not please you (to know) that no one will send salah upon you, but that God will send salah upon him tenfold, and no one will send salams upon you but that I will send salams upon him tenfold?'' (Nasa'i)*

We have a multitude of similar authentic narrations. They say that the one who sends salam and salah on the Prophet (peace be on him) in turn receives salam and salah ten times, and in some narrations, the reward is seventy.

I wish I could go through them all, but they exceed 50-70 narrations, each with subtle differences and additions, creating a fuller picture.

For instance, in Musnad Ahmed we have more details about this episode. The Prophet (peace be on him) went out one day and entered a garden which was full of palm trees, and then made sujud. He remained in sujud for such a long time that Abdul Rahman bin Auf thought the Prophet (peace be on him) must have passed away. He went to him and examined him to see if he was still alive, when the Prophet (peace be on him) raised his head and asked, 'What's wrong with you?' He replied that he feared during this prolonged sujud the Prophet (peace be on him) had passed away.

The Prophet (peace be on him) then told him, 'Gabriel came to me (may God be pleased with him) and he said:

*I'll give you the good news God the Almighty says He said to you, 'Whoever sends his salah upon him I will send salah upon him and whoever sends salams upon you I will send salams upon him.'* (Musnad Ahmad)

### Sajda shukr (prostration of gratitude)

The fact the Prophet (peace be on him) made the sujud for shukr is used by scholars of hadith, who say it is very authentic evidence for performing sujud shukr when you are grateful.

The Prophet (peace be on him) prolonged his sujud because Gabriel had given him good news, and he was celebrating it, thanking God, and praising Him for his blessing.

From this incident we see that the Sunnah is to make sujud or to pray two rakats to celebrate good things which we receive from God.

### Salah ala Nabi

In almost every book of the Sunnah, we see a special section dedicated to the virtues of Salah ala Nabi.

Ibn Mas'ud (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*Those who are nearest to me on the Day of Resurrection are those who invoke many blessings on me. (Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban)*

Scholars of hadith have commented on this that no one has such an elevated level as the scholars of hadith, because they are engaged in the hadith of the Prophet (peace be on him) day and night and constantly sending their salah upon the Prophet (peace be on him). No wonder so many scholars wrote many books on the virtues of Salah ala Nabi, from the early years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century until today.

### **What is the meaning of Salah ala Nabi?**

‘Salah’ linguistically means supplication. Salah is a homonym, as it has different meanings. Here specifically, the meaning changes depending on whether the salah is from God, the angels or us.

When you say God Almighty is sending salah on the Prophet (peace be on him), it means He is sending *rahma* (mercy) on the Prophet (peace be on him). Meanwhile, from the angels it means *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness), and from us it means supplication.

### **Forms of Salah ala Nabi**

We have different forms of salah mentioned in the authentic narrations, such as the most famous one in Bukhari and Muslim:

*Allahumma salli ‘alaa Muhammadin wa ‘alaa ‘aali Muhammad, kamaa sallayta ‘alaa Ibraaheem wa ‘alaa ‘aali Ibraaheem, innaka Hameedun Majeed. Wa baarik ‘alaa Muhammadin wa ‘alaa ‘aali Muhammad, kamaa baarakta ‘alaa Ibraaheem wa ‘alaa ‘aali Ibraaheem, innaka Hameedun Majeed.*

We use this in our five daily prayers. It is authentic (sahih).

There are some Salah ala Nabi which are not in this form, or not in line with general guidance, so it is better not to use these, and to stick to the authentic forms and ask God Almighty to accept them.

Abu Muhammad Ka’b bin Ujrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to us and we asked him,

*“O Messenger of Allah, we already know how to greet you (i.e., say As-salamu alaykum), but how should we supplicate for you?”*

*He replied, ‘Say: “Allahumma Salli ‘ala Muhammadin wa ‘ala aali Muhammadin, kama sallaita ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala aali Ibrahim innaka Hamidum-Majeed. Allahumma barik ‘ala Muhammadin wa ‘ala aali Muhammadin kama barakta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala aali Ibrahim innaka Hameedum-Majeed.”’*

*O God, have mercy on Muhammad and his family as You showed mercy to the family of Ibrahim, and bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as you blessed the family of Ibrahim. You are the Praised, the Glorious. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

### **Why send Salah ala Nabi?**

God has commanded the believers to send prayers upon the Prophet (peace be on him). God Almighty mentions in Surat al-Ahzab:

*Indeed, God and His angels give blessings to the Prophet (peace be on him). O you who have believe, confer blessings on him and greet him with prayer of peace or greet him with salam in abundance (peace be on him). (33:56)*

God Almighty and His angels 'give blessings to the Prophet (peace be on him)'. When you read this verse, you might ask why.

The reason is because God Almighty selected Muhammad (peace be on him) to be the Last Messenger – to receive the last message, the perfect message and to be the seal of the prophets, the best creation of God Almighty, and the most beloved person to God Almighty. You have to take this into consideration when you read this ayah and these narrations, to understand what's behind this.

God Almighty wants the Ummah to send their salah and *salams* upon this prophet, whom God selected and loves. This is part and parcel of our commitment to the message that we receive from Him. It is a way of showing appreciation to him for what he did for us and passed on to us, which God Almighty sent.

### Benefits of saying Salah ala Nabi

Imam Ibn Qayyim in his book mentioned forty benefits for the Salah ala Nabi, to show how important it is.

#### **Respond to God's command**

Firstly, we are responding to God's command in the *ayah* which was discussed earlier.

#### **Be engaged in what God and the angels are doing**

When you send *salawat*, you are doing the same thing at the same time as God Almighty. You are sending salah while God and His angels are sending salah. And when you do salah then God and His angels send salah on the Prophet (peace be on him) as well as you. So you receive blessings from God Almighty.

#### **Rewards**

You receive ten *hasanat* (good deeds) as is in the hadith, which means that *sayyiaat* (bad deeds) will be deleted from your record, as per forty different narrations.

#### **Accepted dua**

Your supplication will be more entitled to be accepted when you begin or end with Salah ala Nabi. When you put it at the beginning and end of your supplication, hopefully God will accept what's in between as well.

Umar bin Al-Khattab narrated:

*Indeed, the supplication stops between the heavens and the earth. Nothing of it is raised up until you send Salat upon your Prophet. (Tirmidhi)*

#### **Lessen your troubles**

When you send salah, it decreases your worries. If you are troubled, increase your Salah ala Nabi (peace be on him), and your concerns will be looked after by God Almighty. Again there are many narrations on this.

## Have your wishes fulfilled

Ubayy ibn Ka'b (may God be pleased with him) said:

*I said: O Messenger of God, I send a great deal of blessings upon you; how much of my du'aa' should be sending blessings upon you? He said: 'Whatever you wish.' I said: One quarter? He said: 'Whatever you wish, and if you do more, that will be better for you.' I said: One half? He said: 'Whatever you wish and if you do more, that will be better for you.' I said: Two thirds? He said: 'Whatever you wish and if you do more, that will be better for you.' I said: I will make all of my du'aa' for you. He said: 'Then your concerns will be taken care of and your sins will be forgiven.'*  
(Tirmidhi, Bayhaqi)

This is the reason for your supplications and wishes to be fulfilled by God Almighty, and a purification of the heart and a reason for you to be firm on the *sirat* (bridge) on the Day of Judgement.

## Perfume in a gathering

Salah ala Nabi is the perfume in any gathering. If you are in a group of people and you mention Salah ala Nabi, it is the fragrance in that place.

## Don't be a miser

You will not be classified as a miser when you send salah ala Nabi (peace be on him), whereas in the hadith as Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*The miser is the one in whose presence I am mentioned, and he does not send blessings upon me. (Tirmidhi)*

## Increased barakah and sign of love

The reason barakah is increased is because the Salah ala Nabi is a sign of loving the Prophet (peace be on him). The more you love him, the more you send salah and salams upon him (peace be on him), and the more you are blessed.

## Your name is presented to the Prophet (peace be on him)

The hadiths also mention that whoever sends salah and salam upon the Prophet (peace be on him), an angel will present their name to him. They will say, 'X the son of X is sending you salah,' and then God Almighty will enable him to reply the salam to them. This is an authentic narration.

*Increase the salat blessings on me, for God has entrusted an angel to my grave. If a man from my nation sends salah to me, the angel will say to me: Oh Muhammad, so and so, son of so and so sent salah for you now. (Daylami)*

The more salams you send to the Prophet (peace be on him), the more it elevates your status in the Hereafter.

## Raise your rank

Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'As (may God be pleased with them) reported that he heard the Messenger of God (peace be on him) saying:



*Whoever supplicates God to exalt my mention (i.e. send salah), God will exalt his mention ten times and remove from him ten sins and raise him ten degrees.*  
(Nasa'i)

God has special angels roaming around. Abdullah ibn Masoud said the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*God has appointed angels who travel about the earth, conveying to me the salams of my Ummah. (Nasa'i)*

### **The Prophet (peace be on him) returns your greeting**

In the hadith, we find out that God returns the soul of the Prophet (peace be on him) to reply the salam. This is an authentic hadith: because the life of barzakh (being in the grave) is special life, we cannot compare it with our life.

Prophets have a special life after their death, with special advantages from God Almighty. Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*Whenever someone greets me, God returns the soul to my body (in the grave) and I return his greeting. (Abu Dawud)*

### **Follow the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be on him)**

God Almighty says in the Quran:

*If you love God, then follow me, (so) God will love you and forgive you your sins.*  
(3:31)

This hadith is an encouragement from God Almighty to increase our connection with the Prophet (peace be on him). It's not just about the salah and salaams we are sending to him, but also through following his teachings, his guidance, his Sunnah, his practices, his character (peace be on him). Therefore, to show our love to God Almighty we have to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be on him).

### **Being consistent in word and deed**

There is no point in sending Salah ala Nabi (peace be on him) if you contradict it by bad behaviour and bad character. You shouldn't do this. Real love is beyond words. Truly loving the Prophet (peace be on him) is not simply verbal love. We need true love, which is reflected in the verses of following him.

At the end of the day, the Prophet (peace be on him), who is the Messenger of God, related to us the revelation, and we worship God, but we learn from the Prophet (peace be on him) how to do that (peace be on him). Sending the salah and salam to the Prophet (peace be on him), has to move from our lips to our hearts, our limbs, and our practices, not just our tongues. That is why we must put it into practice and do as much as possible to follow his footsteps (peace be on him).

Follow him (peace be on him), increase your love for him and your salah upon him, and whenever he's being mentioned, always say '*alahi as-salatu wa as-salaam*' or '*alahi as-salam*', or the perfect form, '*salla-llahu 'alayhi wa alihi wasallam*'.

Part of our daily remembrance is to send our Salah ala Nabi. You will see the benefit of this when you start practising it: you will see the barakah in your time and in your life.

We ask God Almighty to enable us to be truthful about the Prophet (peace be on him) and to be amongst those who are always connected to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him) in practice and in our da'wah. And we ask Him to enable us to convey this message to others, and to act upon it ourselves. Ameen.

## Seven external and internal qualities of the Prophet

23rd October 2022

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan

### External qualities

In his seclusion in the Cave of Hira, the Prophet (peace be on him) received the first revelation and he was terrified. He rushed back to Khadija, saying, "Cover me! Cover me!" She covered him until his fear passed and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." There are multiple opinions about what it was that he feared. Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. She explained her reasons:

1. You keep good relations with your family
2. You speak the truth
3. You fulfil the trust
4. You bear people's burden
5. You help the destitute
6. You serve your guests generously and
7. Assist those who are deserving and afflicted by calamity. [Bukhari]

In this scene we see the role of Khadija in consoling the Prophet (peace be on him) and that we should learn from her how to be an anchor for our spouse in time of sadness or anxiety

These qualities related to how the Prophet (peace be on him) dealt with others. Khadija had observed these qualities, which are integral to Islam, in him before the revelation had come. She was inspired with the knowledge that these qualities were what made him stand apart from others and protected by Allah. If anyone has these qualities, and holds fast to them, Allah will never let them down.

The Prophet (peace be on him) was also ready to help others. To carry the burden of others is something we are experiencing now, as we are carrying the burden of others due to the crisis of living. Don't wait for people to beg, find those in need and help them. There are plenty of them especially with the rising number of food banks. Give to those who have nothing – the destitute are not just poor, they have nothing.

The Prophet (peace be on him) was generous with his guests. He said, 'Whomsoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him be generous to his guest.' We barely receive anyone these days, since the pandemic.

There is no other way to demonstrate love for the Prophet (peace be on him) than to follow his footsteps. If we truly love him, then we should focus on these seven traits. Khadija mentioned seven traits related to dealing with others. When we look at the du'a of the Prophet (peace be on him) for himself, we see that he asked for seven internal qualities.

### Internal qualities

Ibn `Abbas said:

*The Prophet used to supplicate, saying: "My Lord, aid me and do not aid against me, and grant me victory and do not grant victory over me, plot for me and do not plot against me, guide me and facilitate guidance for me, grant me victory over those who transgress against me. My Lord, make me:*

1. *Ever-grateful to You*
2. *Ever-remembering of You*
3. *Ever-fearful of You*
4. *Ever-obedient to You*
5. *Ever-humble to You*
6. *Oft-supplicating to You*
7. *Ever-returning to You in repentance.*

*My Lord, accept my repentance, wash my sin, answer my call, make firm my proof (against my enemies), make my tongue speak the truth, guide my heart, and remove the (spiritual) diseases from my chest. [Tirmidhi]*

Let's apply the external and the internal qualities of Rasulullah (peace be upon him) in order to follow his example and be better people inshallah.

We ask Allah to be pleased with us. Ameen

## Unpicking the concept of wasilah – can you visit shrines or ask people to pray for you?

Wednesday Tafseer Class 25th March 2020.

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.

### Tawassul

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

*O you who have believed, fear God and seek wasilah the means (of nearness) to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed. (5:35)*

Seeking the means of nearness (*wasilah*) is called *tawassul*. We gain *wasilah* by striving in the way of God (jihad). This is not just physical jihad on the battlefield, but spiritual jihad, as it has two dimensions. Thus, if you strive for the sake of God, you will be among those who succeed. The ayah is directing the believers to practice taqwa, which is to do His commands and avoid His prohibitions.

Seeking nearness to God Almighty comes through performing the obligations, for instance the salah, zakat, siyam, and Hajj. These are the obligations, and they pull us close to him.

Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) narrated the famous Hadith Qudsi. The Messenger of God (peace be on him) said:

*God (mighty and sublime be He) said: "Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about (seizing) the soul of My faithful servant: he hates death and I hate hurting him." (Bukhari)*

This means that we only get closer to God by continually doing the obligations, and then by adding the sunnah and the nawafil. Through that, we will reach the level of His love.

### Can you seek nearness to God through an intermediary?

In Sahih Muslim, Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al 'As (may God be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Messenger of God (peace be on him) saying:

*When you hear the Adhan, repeat what the mu'adhhdhin says. Then ask God to send blessings on me, because everyone who does so will receive in return ten rewards from God. Then beseech God to grant me al-wasilah, which is a high rank in Jannah, fitting for only one of God's slaves; and I hope that I will be that man. If anyone asks al-wasilah for me, it becomes incumbent upon me to intercede for him. (Muslim)*

Wasilah is the highest and best rank in Jannah, which only accommodates one person under the throne of God Almighty. Whoever asks for wasilah for the Prophet (peace be on him) will get his

shafa'a (intercession). Therefore, by asking God for this we will be included in his intercession inshallah. This is the easy bit. Everyone agrees on it.

Seeking *tawassul* from anyone other than the Prophet (peace be on him) is a matter of discussion among scholars. It is not a straightforward topic. Ibn Taymiyya wrote a book of around 500 pages on *tawassul* and *wasilah*. However, what is agreed and clear is that we draw close to God through our own personal actions. In Imam an-Nawawi's book *Riyaad as-Saliheen* (The Meadows of the Righteous), he mentions a story of three men who become trapped in a cave due to a rockfall. They each beg God to move the rock for the deeds they had done for God's sake. Each time, the rock moves a little bit, until the entrance is clear enough for them to get out. The core of this story is that they were seeking nearness to God through their good deeds.

### **What to say when hearing the adhan (call to prayer)**

The Sunnah recommends that while the adhan is being called, one should repeat every line silently after the Mu'adhhdhin (the one who calls the adhan), but when he says '*Hayya 'alas-salah*' and '*Hayya 'alal-falah*', one should say: '*La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah*' (There is no might or power except with God).

After the adhan, it is recommended to say the following supplication:

*O God, Lord of this most perfect call, and of the Prayer that is about to be established, grant to Muhammad the favour of nearness (to You) and excellence and a place of distinction, and exalt him to a position of glory that You have promised him.*

### **Asking others to make supplication for you**

The Prophet (peace be on him) said it is possible to seek nearness to God through other people. For instance, if you believe someone is a righteous person, you can ask them to make supplication for you.

We often say, 'Keep me in your dua' or 'I'm making supplication for you'. This is fine, as the Prophet (peace be on him) himself did this when he asked Omar (may God be pleased with him) to pray for him. When he was going to umrah he said to Omar, 'Ya akhy (my brother), don't forget me in your supplication.' Omar (may God be pleased with him) was so pleased at being called brother by the Prophet (peace be on him). The Prophet (peace be on him) gave us more proof of the permissibility to ask others to pray for us when he mentioned people who pray for his *wasilah*.

It is forbidden to ask the deceased to make supplication for you, including the Prophet (peace be on him).

Omar (may God be pleased with him) used to make a special supplication when they had drought, called *salatul istisqa*. He used to say: 'O God, we used to do *tawassul* to you through your Prophet (peace be on him) and after his death we seek nearness to You through his uncle, Abbas, so give us the rain, O God.'

There is disagreement about the interpretation of this hadith. Some say that during the life of the Prophet (peace be on him) they were not asking God through the Prophet (peace be on him) but through his duas. After he passed away, he couldn't make supplication for them, so they asked God for nearness to him through the supplication of Abbas. Therefore, it is not allowed to ask anyone who is dead to make supplication for you.

### **There can be no third person between us and God**

It was narrated from 'Uthman bin Hunaif that a blind man came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said:

'Pray to God to cure me.' He said: 'If you wish to store your reward for the Hereafter, that is better, or if you wish, I will supplicate for you.' He said: 'Supplicate.' So the Prophet (peace be on him) told him to make supplication perfectly and to recite the dua:

*'Allahumma inni as'aluka wa atawajjahu ilaika bimuhhammadin nabiyyir-rahmah. Ya Muhammadu inni qad tawajjahtu bika ila rabbi fi hajati hadhihi lituqda. Allahumma fashaffi'hu fiya*

*O God, I ask of You, and I turn my face towards You by virtue of the intercession of Muhammad the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I have turned to my Lord by virtue of your intercession concerning this need of mine so that it may be met. O God, accept his intercession concerning me. (Ibn Majah)*

There is a lot of debate about this narration. The bottom line is that we have different views. It is not allowed for there to be a third person between us and God Almighty. In Jahiliyya they used idols as a means of getting nearness to God. In Surat az-Zumar, God says:

*Unquestionably, for God is the pure religion. And those who take protectors besides Him (say), 'We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to God in position.' Indeed, God will judge between them concerning that over which they differ. Indeed, God does not guide he who is a liar and (confirmed) disbeliever.*  
(39:3)

Those people said they were not worshipping God but using their idols to become close to God. This is where the core problem is. Even the Prophet (peace be on him) can't be a third person between us and God. This is where shirk creeps in.

### Salafis and Sufis

We find two extreme attitudes on this topic. Hardcore Salafis tend to be very harsh when deterring people from shirk, which is not in line with the prophetic approach; they often tar everyone with a sweeping stroke of the brush. However, everyone is not the same, so the approach needs to be less aggressive when dealing with issues of disagreement in the community. Nevertheless, without doubt we want to keep the *tawheed* (oneness) of God and prophetic guidance, without going to either extreme or creating more harm to the community through harshness and looseness.

The Salafis say narrations such as those above are weak and unreliable. However, the critics of hadith verified these narrations and said they are authentic. Therefore, it is permissible to do *tawassul* (seek someone's dua) with conditions, knowing that it is only God who grants the supplication. Then why seek the supplication of a third person?

We know we have many mistakes and shortcomings, and that there are people who are closer to God than us. Indeed, children are purer than us, so some scholars would ask children to make supplication for them, because children have no sins and no takleef (accountability); they are close to God.

We rely on God for repentance and provision and protection, but because the Prophet (peace be on him) made *tawassul* (seeking the supplication of others) permissible, we can do this. However, we have to be very clear that we do not believe any person other than God Almighty has the power to increase our provisions or protect us etc.

It is very common to find people visiting the shrines of saints and the graves of *awliya* (pious people who were close to God), and we see plenty of impermissible practices. People visit imams, or *shuyukh*, or *walis* and ask them to grant their duas. This is absolutely unacceptable.

Though it is wrong to be bowing down at shrines, tying knots and requests, and all the myriad practices people do, expecting the deceased to answer their supplications, we must educate them with kindness, and be careful not to tar them all with the same brush. We shouldn't pronounce people who visit graves kuffar (non-believers), as some people do, and at the same time we do not say what they are doing is ok. We should educate them and tell them they are not allowed to do this. The one who is answering, relieving, and curing is God.

A Salafi speaker at an event we were both speaking at, said the people of Sham are grave worshippers. This is not true. If people go to graves and make supplication to God to forgive the deceased, protect them, and give them relief, that is fine, as long as they are very clear that they are not worshipping the grave, or asking the deceased to answer their supplication. We do not worship the *wali*, and we are not approving the haram practices like prostrating in front of the grave or putting the dust of the graves on their eyes. This is *bid'ah* (innovation) and not allowed at all.

### **Can we visit graves?**

God Almighty sent the Prophet (peace be on him) to liberate us from shirk and such practices. There is a heavy disagreement among scholars whether you can get closeness to God by going to the grave of the *wali*.

The position which is in the middle of the dispute is that all shirk is forbidden. If someone wishes to visit the grave of pious person, with the intention that they are good people based on their reputation and biography, then they may visit the grave and make supplication for that person, and their own supplication to God. The person in the grave does not boost their supplication, though we can ask a pious person who is alive to make supplication for us.

It is permissible to give charity, such as feeding people on behalf of the deceased, as *sadaqah*. The deceased may be your relative or friend, or an *awliya* (person close to God) from the past. For instance, you want to give charity on behalf of your father, this charity will be in his record.

The Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Visit graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter. (Muslim)*

You are reminded of your mortality and reality. This does not mean that you travel the world for the sake of visiting graves; this is not what our shariah promotes. Instead, it is better to make the intention to visit the Prophet's grave (peace be on him), his masjid and Makkah. But if you happen to be in the vicinity, then you can visit the graves of people like Abu Hanifa and Imam al Awzai (may God be pleased with them) as their maqam (place of burial) is very well known. You may recite al-Fatihah and Quran, and make supplication, but that's it.

There is barakah in the area a pious person is buried, because barakah does not leave with the soul when a person leaves this world. The soul lived in that body and as the body is in that place, that place has barakah. In the hadith the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Verily, God has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets.  
(Sunan Abi Dawoud, Nasai, ibn Majah)*

In another narration, the Prophet (peace be on him) said:



*The Prophets are alive in their graves, and pray... On the night of the Isra (Night Journey), I passed by Moses (who was) standing in his grave and praying.  
(Muslim)*

There is a point of disagreement among scholars whether the bodies of pious people also do not decompose. Life in *barzakh* (the realm between death and resurrection) is different from life in this world, and particularly when it comes to the lives of prophets.

### **The Sufi position and karama**

The Sufi position tends to exaggerate the blessings of the sites where pious people are buried and what pious people can do, such as be present with you all the time, or when you say their name.

The *awliya* (those close to God) do not perform miracles (*mujiza*), however they can be blessed with extraordinary gifts in this world, which are called *karama* (not *mujiza*). These can be quite remarkable, for instance, the *karama* for Maryam is described in the Quran that she was gifted food from the ghayb (unseen):

*Whenever Zakariyya entered the sanctuary to (see) her, he found with her food. He said, 'O Maryam! Whence comes this to you? She said, It is from God. Surely God gives to whom He pleases without measure.' (3:37)*

In the story of the throne of Bilqis, which was transported in the blink of an eye during the time of Suleman, the man who performed this extraordinary act was Asif bin Barkhiya, the scribe of Suleman, a truthful believer who knew the greatest name of God. (There has been much written on which of God's names is the greatest, and there is an opinion that it is Allah itself).

There are also many instances of *karama* that occurred with the Companions, but no one who genuinely receives *karama* advertises this fact. No one in this position sticks a flag on their house. There are plenty of exaggerations and confusions not in line with shariah. We need to understand the basics in shariah. Otherwise, you end up living in an illusory bubble. We need to be careful not to deny *karama* but not to exaggerate them either. Be balanced.

### **Is it permissible to visit the shrines for saints?**

All over the world there are big Sufi *mazaars* (shrines), but they are in fact a money-making machine. They have odd practices which pollute people's minds. Some people do tawaf around the mazaar (shrine). This is shirk if they do it understanding what they are doing, and intending it as a form of 'ibadah. We need to educate them and tell them not to do this.

On the other end of the spectrum, we have the other extreme. For example, in Libya, there was a big mosque, which I prayed in on my first visit. A few years later after Ghaddafi passed away, I visited Tripoli again but found the mosque had been turned to rubble. A bulldozer demolished the mosque because in one corner there was a pious person's grave. It was not in the path of the qibla, and no one was doing tawaf around it, and it was not disturbing anyone.

In conclusion, there are certain points of agreement regarding *tawassul*. But we have to avoid the two extremes of the Sufi and the Salafi position. We all want to keep the *tawheed* of God, but not by harming the community by being harsh or loose.

## Celebrating the Mawlid – finding the balance between two extremes

Youth Circle on 31st October 2019.

Transcribed by Ayesha Khan.

### When is the birthday of the Prophet (peace be on him)?

The Prophet (peace be on him) was born on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Awwal (22nd April 571 CE).

There are messages floating around in WhatsApp orbit stating that 28<sup>th</sup> Safar was the date of his death, however he passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Awwal. This date is agreed upon by all top critics of hadith. If you receive any WhatsApp messages to the contrary, ignore them. They are not authentic.

The celebration of his birth began in Egypt in the fifth century Hijri. It was never done by the Companions (may God be pleased with them). The traditions of marking the day are recorded in a book called *Husnul Maqasid* By Imam Suyuti (911 AH) which details its origins. It is a long story, but the top scholars in hadith, like ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, ibn Al- Jawzi, Sakhawi, Ibn Kathir, and many others have written about al-Mawlid.

Though we remember the Prophet (peace be on him) during the month of his birth, we shouldn't only talk about the Prophet (peace be on him) during Rabi al-Awwal. His life is an example to us all year round, not just once a year.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

*You have an excellent example in the Messenger of God; for anyone who seeks God and the Last Day and remembers God frequently. (33:21)*

Should we celebrate his birth during this month? Every year we have the same old debate... is it permissible to celebrate the Prophet's (peace be on him) birth? Are we allowed to hold a Mawlid Nabbawi or is it *bid'ah* (innovation)? Is it haram?

### The clash

There is a clash between opposite opinions. The bottom line is that we have two views, and we cannot cancel out either viewpoint. They both have their own evidence. If you belong to one opinion, you need to see the other opinion. Whether you follow it or not is your choice, but you must acknowledge that the other opinion exists. When there is authentic evidence, just as in any fiqhi (legal) debate, we have to acknowledge both sides.

### Those in favour of celebrating

When people say celebrating the Prophet's birthday (peace be on him) is *bid'ah* or haram, this is untrue, as the Prophet (peace be on him) marked the day himself. When the Companions asked him why he fasted on Mondays, he said it was because that was the day of his birth. He therefore celebrated his birthday by fasting. Abu Qataadah al-Ansari (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of God (peace on him) was asked about fasting on Mondays and he said:

*On (that day) I was born and on it revelation came down to me. (Muslim)*

You cannot delete this narration because you don't like celebrating his birthday. If you want to gather and worship, by reciting the Quran and reading his Sunnah, or having some *nasheeds* which soften the heart, can you say this is haram and unacceptable? No. All these activities are halal and rewarding actions. So, it is wrong to call this haram.

If your gathering has free-mixing in proximity without limits, dancing together, dance music during this celebration – yes, this is haram. Not the celebration itself, but the method of celebrating this way would make it haram. These elements are haram regardless of whether they are carried out on this day or any other day.

You may not subscribe to it yourself, but do not say anyone celebrating the birthday is committing bid'ah or doing haram, or promoting what is not in line with shariah. This is not fair.

### **Those against celebrating**

Those on the other side they say they follow this Hadith: Aisha reported God's Messenger (peace be on him) said:

*If somebody innovates something which is not in harmony with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

They claim celebrating his birthday is an innovation, because it wasn't done during his lifetime. Though, it wasn't celebrated during his time, innovations are not permitted in matters of worship, and this is not worship. Moreover it is in line with the principles of our religion. We have those who say that celebrating the Prophet's birthday (peace be on him) is incumbent on us otherwise we are Wahabi, not worthy of following the Prophet (peace be on him) and against his Sunnah – they should also calm down. This is not the case. So, we have two extremes – those who say it is haram and those who say it is an obligation.

### **My personal opinion**

If someone is celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace be on him) and they are doing so in line with the shariah, reciting Quran, or the Sunnah or the *seerah* (life of the Prophet), playing *nasheeds*, distributing sweets, these are all halal and rewarding acts.

Reminding people of the Prophet (peace be on him) and encouraging them to follow his Sunnah more throughout the year is commendable. However, if someone is not celebrating his birthday, I will not say he is sinful. You do not have to celebrate his birthday.

I am usually invited to these celebrations, and we generally read the *seerah*, distribute sweets and make supplication. That's all we do.

### **Do not exaggerate your love for the Prophet (peace be on him)**

It is not allowed to go overboard in your love for the Prophet (peace be on him). Omar (may God be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (peace be on him) saying:

*Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only His servant. So, call me the servant of God and His messenger. (Bukhari)*

Out of love, do not be excessive. We can never match what God Almighty Himself says about the Prophet (peace be on him). We should stick to what God Almighty says rather than inventing new titles for him.

God Almighty called him 'Muhammadun Rasulallah'.

*Muhammad is the Messenger of God. (48:29)*

Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him) reported God's Messenger (peace be on him) said:

*I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection. (Muslim)*

This is the highest level any human can ever reach. It is the level of *risala* (being a messenger). There is nothing beyond *risala* except God himself. God Almighty has given him this status of messengerhood and made him the best of creation, so if you go beyond this, you need evidence to say he is more than that.

### **Is it kufr to say the Prophet (peace be on him) was made of light?**

Some Sufi followers believe that the Prophet (peace be on him) has been created from *noor* (light). Where is the evidence for this claim? They use the narration that the Prophet (peace be on him) was having a conversation with Jabir, and he said: 'The first thing, O Jabir, which was created was the light of your Prophet.' However, the top scholars of hadith have said that this is a fabricated hadith, or at best very, very weak.

It is an issue of *aqeedah* (belief) to claim the Prophet (peace be on him) was made of light. As scholars, we follow a rule that we never accept a weak narration in matters of belief. It must be *sahih* (good) or very sound for us to base our belief on it. We dismiss weak and fabricated narrations. If it had been a good narration, we could interpret it further and figure out if it was meant metaphorically etc, but I will not go into interpretations when it is not a sound narration. It has not passed the first test – of being authentic.

There is a big sect who believe the Prophet (peace be on him) was created from *noor*. This is wrong. Some people call it kufr to believe this, as it goes against *aqeedah*. Such a view is too extreme. Others say you cannot call it kufr because though it is wrong, it is based on some evidence, even though it is very flimsy evidence.

As knowledge seekers, we need to know what is right or wrong. We should not make a big issue out of this. People love the Prophet (peace be on him) and on the day of his birth, let's say anyone who wants to rejoice on this day and mark the occasion can do within permissible conditions and limits. It is not an obligation to celebrate.

Let's keep peace in the community. Don't just create friction when we have enough friction already.

Another misguided concept being spread on social media is the hadith, 'O Muhammad Were it not for you, I would not have created the universe.' This is a fabricated hadith, as critiqued by the *Muhaddithun* (the great scholars of hadith), including Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani and Mulla Ali Al-Qari. Be careful and don't be misled by the fact that it's a widely held belief in Sufi books.

Salama narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Whoever (intentionally) ascribes to me what I have not said then (surely) let him occupy his seat in hellfire. (Bukhari)*

Al-Mughira narrated that he heard the Prophet (peace be on him) say:

*Ascribing false things to me is not like ascribing false things to anyone else. Whosoever tells a lie against me intentionally then surely let him occupy his seat in hellfire. (Bukhari)*

## Invest in this occasion for our children

*Say, 'In God's grace and mercy let them rejoice. That is better than what they hoard.'* (10:58)

The Prophet's birthday is not Eid: there are only two Eids in the Islamic calendar. There is no 'Eid al-Mawlid' in our religion as such. However, it is an opportunity to remind people of the Prophet (peace be on him). We can use this occasion, especially when our children are surrounded by the festivities of so many non-Muslim occasions. Avoid participating in anything disrespectful towards the Prophet (peace be on him), such as making him a birthday cake and singing 'Happy birthday Ya Rasulallah'! But make the most of this opportunity for the sake of your children.

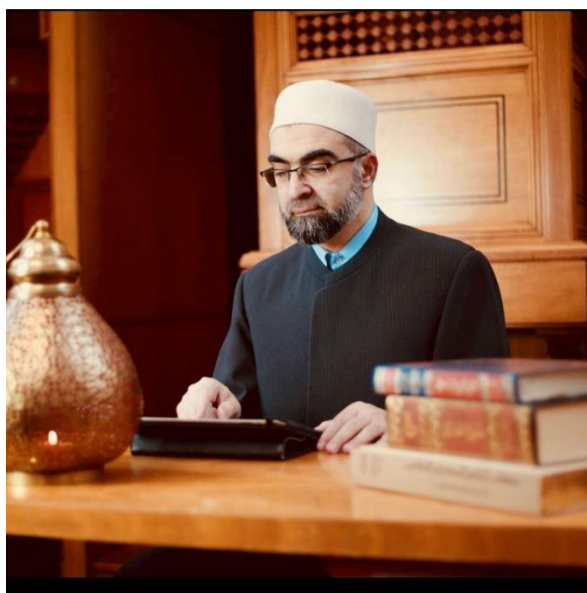
Islamic schools in Syria and Lebanon traditionally mark the occasion as a day of joy for children, by holding parades and carnivals, dressing up and singing *nasheeds*, thus leaving the children with fond memories and happy associations. Distributing sweets also brings joy to the community. These are rewarding actions.

Regardless of whether you choose to celebrate it or not, it is a time for us to be thankful to God Almighty for sending us the Prophet (peace be on him) who was a gifted mercy for mankind.

*We did not send you except as mercy to mankind.* (21:107)

*O People! I am only mercy gifted to you!* (Bayhaqi)

## About Shaykh Haytham Tamim



Shaykh Haytham Tamim, the founder and main teacher of the Utrujj Foundation defines himself as a knowledge seeker. Praise be to God, his Foundation was the pioneer in disseminating Islamic knowledge in the UK over 20 years ago.

His extensive expertise spans over 30 years across the main Islamic jurisprudence schools of thought and different Islamic denominations through highly advanced classical and religious texts.

With 29 links in his chain, Shaykh Haytham's unbroken chain of scholarship goes back the Prophet (peace be on him), and gave him the opportunity to study with some of the foremost scholars in their expertise. He holds some of the highest Ijazahs (certificates) in Quran, Hadith (the Prophetic traditions) and Fiqh (Islamic rulings).

His respected teachers include the late Professor Wahba Al-Zuhayli, the late Shaykh Muhammad Sukkar, the late Shaykh Khalil Al-Mays, Professor Ahmad Al-Haji Kurdi, the late Shaykh Abdul Razzaq Al-Halabi, the late Shaykh Adeeb Al-Kallas, the late Mulla Abdul 'Aleem Al-Zanki and Professor Mustafa Azami, Mufti Taqi Usmani, Shaykh Nizam Yaqoubi.

His own gift for teaching was evident when he gave his first sermon to a large audience at the age of 17, after which he studied in Damascus and returned to serve as a senior lecturer of Islamic Transactions and Comparative Jurisprudence at the Islamic University of Beirut (Shariah College).

Prior to coming to the UK, he established an office for the research and publication of important manuscripts and published three books on Comparative Jurisprudence (Fiqh). He also worked in Lebanese Shariah courts as a trainee judge.

In 2000, Shaykh Haytham moved to the UK, where he founded Utrujj to spread the message of Islam with an emphasis on clarity, authenticity and practicality.

Due to his wide breadth of experience, he is a scholar and advisor on Islamic Finance and Shariah for international organisations ranging from investment firms to legal and accountancy firms. In addition, he has 20 years of experience advising British lawyers, as well as charities such as Save the Children and UNICEF.

He is the Director of Shariah Solutions Limited, consultancy firm in Islamic Finance and also a member of several advisory roles on Shariah boards, and has assisted multiple institutions launch Islamic compliant products to serve the Muslim consumers of Europe and the Middle East.

Shaykh Haytham Tamim is leader of the Lebanese Sunni community in the UK under Dar Al-Fatwa in the UK and an authorised Faqih with knowledge of the Shariah.

He takes a keen interest in promoting love and tolerance within the Muslim community as well within wider society, and voicing the need for social justice.

Often consulted by his students for his wise, compassionate and balanced stance, he loves spreading knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah in a way that is authentic, relevant and down to earth.

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*Jazakumullahu khayran for spending time learning with us. We need your support to enable us to reach more people and spread authentic knowledge. Every contribution big or small is valuable to our future.*

[utrujj.org/giving/](https://utrujj.org/giving/)

*'If anyone calls others to follow right guidance, his reward will be equivalent to those who follow him (in righteousness) without their reward being diminished in any respect.'* (Muslim)



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