

This article was accorded first prize for an essay writing competition
entitled:

Civilizational values in the Sūrah of the Holy
Prophet (ﷺ *Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam*)

Essay title

MERCY FOR CREATION

Written by

‘Abd al-Mu‘min ‘Alīsa

Competition in Defense of the Holy Prophet (peace and
blessings of Allah be upon him)

College of Shariah and Islamic Studies

Qatar University

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Preface

Feelings ran high in the Muslim World when it was learnt that some Danish journalists had ridiculed the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by caricaturing him in local newspapers and Muslims gave vent to these feelings in various ways.

The reaction of the College of Shariah and Islamic Studies came out in the form of an essay writing competition entitled “In Defense of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)” in which students were encouraged to depict the brighter and glowing aspects of the life of their prophet and religion.

One of our colleagues who preferred remaining anonymous donated a handsome amount of cash prize for the winner. A committee headed by Dr. Yousuf Muhammad al-Siddiqui and comprising of several scholars and staff members of the College of Shariah and Islamic Studies was constituted to supervise the competition from the beginning to the end. Of the scores of students who participated in the competition, 8 won various prizes while the first prize went to ‘Abd al-Mu’min ‘□sa, a student of the College hailing from Benin. He wrote on “Mercy for all the creatures of Allah” under the theme “Civilizational values in the S□rah of the Holy Prophet □alla Allahu ‘*Alayhi Wa Sallam*”. It was also decided by the committee that the essay winning first prize would be translated into English and be published in both the languages on the web.

Unfortunately, due to some technical reasons, the translation process was delayed but is now seeing the light of day. Through the blessing of Prophet Mu□ammad bin ‘Abd Allah we are happy to publish this essay and wish brother ‘Abd al-Mu’min ‘□sa all the success in his life and pray that he becomes a role model for other students as well.

Professor Dr. Aisha Yousuf al-Mannai
Dean
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Section 1
Dedication

To the spirit in whose remembrance, the souls swiftly move [The cause of] peace for our world and intercessor for us on the Day of Resurrection

If you withdraw from us after the outpour [of your compassion] and mercy Then [your] light that shines through the universe is never absent

Honour has elevated you beyond stars and planets You rose to glory while your people slept

You could hardly bear their persistence on disbelief And yet were told from up above that you are worried to death!

A prophet most generous, merciful and Kind and Loving. During afflictions a solace

All creations of the earth and the heavens be sacrificed for you And may Allah bless you as long those gratified continue in their piety

By 'Abd al-Mu'min '□sa

Section 2

Introduction

All praises are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds who has favoured humanity by sending the leader of all creation, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). May Allah shower His blessings and peace upon the mercy for all the worlds, the beloved of the needy, brother of the poor, source of hope for the grievous, mercy for the destitute, shelter for the homeless, spring for all seekers, cure for the afflicted, provider of food for the hungry, helper of the confused and liberator of the oppressed from the oppressors in accordance with the word of Allah “Indeed we have sent you as a mercy for all the worlds.” (Al-Anbiyā’: 107). Undoubtedly he is greater than greatness, his qualities transcend words, his disposition is mercy itself, compassion and kindness are his nature, and forgiveness is his way (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

I would like to take my reader on a quick journey through the archives of history to observe with me the incidents that have taken place in the life of this Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who was the spring of mercy and love which depict his kindness, compassion and care writ large all over his very presence. I would rely upon those traditions which have been validated and accepted by scholars of Prophetic tradition so that the truth and reality of this Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) may become evident for all who have a vigilant eye and heart.

May Allah be my guide.

Section 3

Terminological definitions

The word *raḥmah* derives from the root word *R Ḥ M*, *Yarḥam*, *Ruḥman*, *Ruḥuman* and *Marḥamah* meaning to have pity or mercy, to show compassion, to forgive and to be kind towards somebody. [Such a person is then] *Raḥīm* or the one who feels pity, forgives and is kind and the other [upon whom pity is shown] is called *Marḥūm*.¹

So *Raḥmah* means compassion and kindness. *Raḥmat Allah* means God's compassion, blessings and provisions and *Raḥmah* among mankind means to have pity and feel compassionate towards somebody.²

Abū al-Baqā' has defined *Raḥmah* as "a state of affection found in a person whose heart is filled with compassion. It is the starting point of that emotional feeling which gives rise to the virtue of *Iḥsān* or doing good towards others."³

Khalq derives from the root *Kh L Q*, *Yakhluq Allah al-Shay'* meaning Allah created something or gave it existence after its being in a state of non-existence. *Khalq* and *Khalīqah* are synonymous and their plural form is *al-Khalā'iq*.⁴ It is said that by *khalq* is meant mankind and *khalīqah* is used for animals. It is also said that they have the same meaning and both are used to denote all creation.

Thus the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy towards all God's creation is his kindness and compassion towards human beings, *jinn*s, animals, inanimate objects, such that he treats them in a goodly manner, strives for their happiness and well-being and feels pained at their afflictions and troubles. All this forms part of the Prophet's mercy.

¹ 'Abd Allāh al-Bustānī, *Munjid al-Tullāb*, p. 399.

² See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 10, p. 1143.

³ See Abū al-Baqā', *Al-Kulliyāt*, vol. 2, p. 377.

⁴ See *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 1, p. 888.

Section 4

Introducing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Genealogy: Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥallib ibn ‘Abd Munḥif ibn Quḥayy... to Prophet Ismā‘īl (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Birth: The prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was born - according to authentic narrations - on Monday, 12th of Rabī‘ al-Awwal, the year of the Elephants corresponding to 570/571 AD to noble parents, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥallib and Ḥaminah bint Wāhib.

Prophethood: He was chosen as Prophet at 40 years of age when archangel Jibrīl came down upon him at the cave of Ḥirā’.

Migration to Madīnah: He migrated to Madīnah at the age of 53 with the permission his Lord.

Duration of revelation: The duration of his revelation was 23 years which included that of Makkah before migration and Madīnah after migration.

Demise: The demise of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took place after he had been ill for some time. It started with a headache in the beginning of Rabī‘ al-Awwal which advanced to fever and on Monday, 12th of Rabī‘ al-Awwal in the 11th year of hijrah, the best man who walked on the face of this earth passed away and met his Lord. May Allah reward him with His choicest blessings.

Section 5

Essence of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy

The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy is of two kinds:

The first kind is that which is related to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his capacity as a prophet. Allah sent him as mercy for all mankind as He says in the Qur'an: "We have sent you forth as nothing but mercy to people of the whole world." (Al-Anbiya': 107). Both Muslims and non-Muslims are beneficiaries of this mercy of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

It has been narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (Rahimah 'Anhu) who said: "He who believes in him, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) shall be mercy for him in this world and the Hereafter. As for he who doesn't believe in him, he would be spared from caving in, bombardment and being disfigured.⁵

His presence in their midst was itself a mercy. Allah says: "But Allah was not to chastise them while you are in their midst." Similarly the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) demise was also a source of mercy for them. the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When Allah desires mercy for a certain nation, He raises [to Himself] their prophet before them so that he may prepare for them and be a source of abundance for them and when He desires to destroy a nation, he punishes them while their prophet is alive among them and watches as they are destroyed; for then he is content at their destruction for having belied him and transgressed against him.⁶

His religion was based upon easiness and mercy just as his personality was based upon mercy and creating easiness for others which is why Allah said: "and He has not laid upon you any hardship in religion." (Al-Ajaj: 78).

The conditions which shall prevail on the Day of Judgement – when peoples hearts would be filled with terror, friends shall refuse to recognize friends, relatives would hurry away from each other, the sun would be brought near, bodies would be drenched in sweat and the young would turn old out of fear – and the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stance then is also an instance of his mercy. People would go to their prophets and request them to intercede for them but each prophet (Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Moses and Isah) shall ask them to go to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who would then intercede for them with the permission of his Lord. This intercession would include all nations of the past and under those difficult circumstances people would find peace and deliverance from fear through the mercy of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).⁷

⁵ See Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aam*, vol. 3, p. 197.

⁶ See Nawaw, *Ma'adhim Muslim bi Sharh al-Nawaw*, vol. 4, p. 791, hadith no. 2288.

⁷ Ibn al-Ajar al-Asqalani, *Fatwa al-Bihar Sharh Ma'adhim al-Bukhari*, vol. 11, p. 466, hadith no. 6565.

Among those fortunate nations which would be delivered by the intercession of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would be one about which 'Imrān ibn Qutayb says on the authority of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "Some people would be delivered by the intercession of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the fire and would enter paradise. They would be called *Al-Jahannamiyyin*."⁸

Thus the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a mercy for people by his being sent to them, his presence in their midst, his demise, his teachings and his intercession for them on the Day of Judgement until the good are made to enter paradise and the evil to hell. May Allah protect us from it. Amen!

The second kind of mercy is that which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was naturally endowed with as a human being. But here also Allah took it upon Himself to guide the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for his heart was cleansed very early in his childhood so that it could be filled with compassion and mercy for all creatures. It was through this sort of mercy, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) displayed his compassion and kindness in all sorts of situations and with creatures whether they be human beings, *jinn*s, animals or inanimate objects, whether they be close relatives or distant wayfarers. As a result, the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy touched the foetus in its mother's womb, the orphan in his care, the slaves in the bonds of his master, the employee working under his employer, the prisoner in his shackles, the martyr in blood, the disbeliever in his stubbornness, the disobedient in his disbelief, the criminal in his punishment, the aggressor forgiveness and the dog in its thirst. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would always return others' mischief with charity, violence with kindheartedness, severity with compassion, sin with virtue. A cursory glance at his life would convincingly prove without the slightest doubt that he had a royal demeanour about him with a spiritual outlook and behaviour which renders a person wondering at his disposition. It is this aspect of his personality and mercy which this article would be dealing with be with the blessings and help of Allah.

⁸ Ibid., vol. 11, p. 477-8, Hadith no. 6566.

Section 6

A splendid gift for the reader

Before I dive into the spiritual and prophetic world of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in an endeavour to highlight the mercy which exudes from his very presence, I would like to introduce this Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) very briefly so that it becomes evident that he was not a mythical character nor his words simply any words. He was first and foremost a human being, but one whose nature and characteristics throws one into sheer wonder. It was this merciful character of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he prayed to Allah, "O Allah, indeed I am a human being. If I have sworn at anyone from among the Muslims, or cursed him or whipped him make that for him a charity and mercy. Ibn Qajar said, "In this Qadth one observes the compassion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for his ummah and his sublime conduct at its peak as he meant everything he had done whether deliberately or by chance.⁹ I would like to add here that although the word 'Muslims' has been used here, it is in no way restricted to Muslims alone as would be evident from the second part of this article constituting of seven sections.

⁹ Ibn Qajar al-'Asqalani, *Fatwa al-Bihar Sharif* al-Bukhari, vol. 11, p. 194, Qadth no. 6361.

Part Two
Manifestations of the Prophet's mercy to all creation
Section 1

His mercy for mankind

Mercy is one of the most prominent characteristics of civilized and balanced behaviour and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was naturally endowed with this characteristic in all his capacities. He was as merciful to his enemy as he was to his friend, as merciful to the distant as he was to his close relatives and as merciful towards the non believer as he was to the believer. Nowhere is it narrated that he transgressed upon the others out of anger except when it was out anger for violation of the sanctity of religion or what angers God Himself. In the lines to follow, I am going to give some instances from the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) life to prove this point.

- 1- He reserved one of his prayers which Allah said would definitely be granted for the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "For every Prophet is a prayer which [God will grant] but I have reserved that prayer of mine for my ummah for the Day of Judgement."¹⁰ What an enormous display of mercy this is! Ibn Baḥār says: "One of the meanings implied in this ḥadīth is the preeminence of our prophet over other prophets as he preferred his ummah upon himself and his family and did not pray for their destruction as some of his predecessors.
- 2- Similarly an instance of his mercy towards the polytheists as mentioned in Bukhārī was when the tribe of Daws refused to subject themselves to his orders. He was asked to pray against them but he refused. Rather, he prayed in their favour saying: "O Allah, guide them [the tribe of Daws] and bring them to us in obedience. Allah granted the prayer and they came to him submitting themselves."¹¹
- 3- His mercy for the disbelievers. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to Ḥif after the demise of his uncle Abū Ḥalib and his wife Khadijah (*Raḥmatu Allah 'Anha*) to call them to Islam as the people of Makkah had virtually closed all doors of acceptance upon him. But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was ill treated and was extremely troubled at their behaviour. On his return from Ḥif, the angel of mountains came to him and asked him whether if he desired the angel could fold and destroy the city between two mountains but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with his heart filled with compassion and mercy strongly declined saying: "It may happen that Allah creates from among the progeny of these people who would worship Allah and not associate partners to Him."¹²

¹⁰ Ibn ʿAjar al-ʿAsqalāni, *Fatḥ al-Bukhārī Sharḥ ḥadīth al-Bukhārī*, (Cairo: Maktabah al-ʿAfīf, 1424 AH/2003 AD), vol. 11, p. 113, ḥadīth no. 6304.

¹¹ Ibn ʿAjar al-ʿAsqalāni, *Fatḥ al-Bukhārī Sharḥ ḥadīth al-Bukhārī*, vol. 11, p. 223, ḥadīth no. 6397.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 313, ḥadīth no. 3231.

This attitude of mercy and compassion under such adverse circumstances – circumstances which rend one's heart into bits and get the eyes to water - is just too extraordinary for a common man. It was as if he meant to say O Allah forgive them for they do not know.

- 4- A Bedouin passed water in the mosque of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in front of everybody. The \square a \square abah rushed to hasten him out but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prevented them saying, "Don't stop him and leave him meaning that don't disturb him while he is still urinating, since if he gets scared and stops it might be harmful for him. When the Bedouin finished, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called him and explained to him: "These mosques are not made for the purpose of urination or such dirt. Rather, they are for the remembrance of God."¹³ This attitude of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) clearly indicates that for him a man's honour was more significant in his eyes than the honour and place of the mosque.
- 5- During the Battle of Khaybar, the \square a \square abah rushed to collect the booty from the enclosure of the Jews. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) immediately ordered a person to announce the following: "O people! What is wrong with you that you hurry to the enclosure of the Jews. The property and belongings of those with whom we are in contract is not allowed."¹⁴ This was stated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he was standing in war with the Jews but he did not allow the circumstances to prevail upon him, rather, his compassionate nature prevailed and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prevented his companions from collecting booty from the Jews as they were powerless at that time.
- 6- During the conquest of Makkah, the \square a \square abah were traveling when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered them to break their fast feeling pity for they were tired. But some \square a \square abah felt that they could continue upon which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared that those who refused to listen to him would be sinners by saying: "They are sinners, they are sinners."¹⁵
- 7- His mercy for the servants: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said: "Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job)."¹⁶ This saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) constitutes in itself a better statement of the rights of servants and slaves than any of the human rights

¹³ Nawaw \square , \square ah \square \square *Muslim Shar \square al-Nawaw \square* , (Cairo: D \square r al-Man \square r li al- \square ib \square 'ah wa al-Nashr, 1423 AH/2003 AD), vol. 3, p. 528, \square ad \square th no. 285.

¹⁴ See A \square mad bin \square anbal, *Musnad A \square mad*, vol. 4, p. 89.

¹⁵ Nawaw \square , \square ah \square \square *Muslim Shar \square al-Nawaw \square* , vol. 7, p. 183, \square ad \square th no. 1114.

¹⁶ Ibn \square ajar al-'Asqal \square ni, *Fat \square al-B \square r \square Shar \square \square a \square \square al-Bukh \square r \square* , vol. 5, p. 307, \square ad \square th no. 2545.

organizations and is a glaring example of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy towards slaves.

- 8- The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) attitude towards the polytheists. After a certain battle the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was told: "O Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) some children were killed [during the battle]." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was greatly distressed, so they said: "Why are you distressed? They were the children of polytheists." He got angry and said: "They are better than you. They are on the *fiṣrah*. Don't ever kill children."¹⁷ It is evident from this ḥadīth that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims in matters related to good dealing with people.
- 9- One of the most glaring instances of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) compassion came to pass during the conquest of Makkah when he forgave the people of Makkah for the harm that they had inflicted upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and even his companions or by retrieving from the people of Makkah what they had captured from the properties of the companions after their Hijrah. Sayyiduna 'Umar narrates that: On the day of the conquest the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked 'Afwān ibn Umayyah, Abū Sufyān and 'Uthayb ibn Hishām to present themselves before him." 'Umar said: "God has granted us control over them; I shall remind them today of what they had perpetrated." But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The like of you and me is like Prophet Yūsuf and his brothers. I say to you what Yūsuf said to his brothers: "No reproach on you this day, may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" 'Umar said: "I felt ashamed at what might have taken place at my hands after I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say what he said."¹⁸
- 10- His mercy used to increase to phenomenal proportions whenever he used to prepare a contingent of his army and dispatch them for war. He would tell them: " Proceed in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah, and fight those who disbelieved in Allah, and do not distort bodies, do not break promises, do not kill babies, do not destroy plants nor mutilate bodies. He in fact used to order that the pots in which things were cooked should not be broken.¹⁹ History is totally empty of such displays of compassion and kindness. This in itself is compelling evidence of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) merciful character.
- 11- An instance of his mercy towards women and children is that he used to shorten his prayers whenever he heard children crying during prayer time. Sayyiduna Anas reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of

¹⁷ See Fatḥ al-Abyr, *Al-Muḥammadiyyat*, vol. 2, p. 211.

¹⁸ Sa'īd al-Awwā, *Al-Rasā'el alla Allahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam*, vol. 1, p.143.

¹⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Fiqh al-Srah al-Nabawiyah min Zād al-Ma'ad fī Had'y Khayr al-'Ibād*, arranged by Al-Sayyid al-Jamili, p. 116. The ḥadīth has also been narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad.

Allah be upon him) said: "I like to lengthen my prayers but I hear the crying of children and feel for the suffering mother at her child's crying, so I shorten my prayer."²⁰

- 12- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also ordered his companions not to carry weapons such as spears and arrows in the midst of people as it might harm someone. He is reported in *Muslim* to have said: "If one of you passes by a group of people or the market and is carrying an arrow, then he should take care of its blade [so that it doesn't prick the passersby], and then he should take care of its blade and then he should take care of its blade."²¹ Not only that; the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in fact said: "He who points towards his brother – even if he is his paternal or maternal uncle's son with an iron, the angels curse him until he puts it down."²²
- 13- After the battle of Badr finished and the captives were brought to him, he ordered his companions: "I ask you to take good care of them." Had they taken the Muslims prisoners, they would have thoroughly quenched the thirst of their revenge but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was filled with mercy for them even though only some time back they had been waging war with the Muslims. Clearly, the reason is that Jihad for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not spilling the blood of innocent people; rather, it was one of the last means of reforming the society. Incidentally Allah admonished the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for showing too much mercy upon the non-Muslims at that time by saying: "It behoves not a Prophet to take captives until he has sufficiently suppressed the enemies in the land. You merely seek the gains of the world whereas Allah desires (for you the good) of the Hereafter. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (Al-Anfal: 67).
- 14- Another instance of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy is that he prevented Sayyiduna S'ad ibn Waqqid not to bequeath more than a third of his property to others saying: "A third and a third is more than enough. It is better for you to leave your heir's rich rather than leaving them begging in front of others."²³
- 15- One of the strangest displays of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy and kindness came on the Day of Udu. It is no secret that during war one rarely, if not at all, keeps his cool and wishes his enemies well. But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did just that during the heat of the war when he prayed to Allah: "O Allah forgive my people for they do not know." And that also after his head had been pierced with blood flowing from his holy face and the enemies were bent upon killing him. In fact they spread the rumour that he had actually been killed. This is indeed a moment of

²⁰ Ibn al-Jar al-'Asqalani, *Fatā al-Bār Sharī a al-Bukhārī*, vol. 2, p. 202, ath no. 709.

²¹ Nawawī, *ahī Muslim Sharī al-Nawawī*, vol. 5, p. 475, ath no. 131.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 476.

²³ Ibn al-Jar al-'Asqalani, *Fatā al-Bār Sharī a al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 164, ath no. 1295.

reflection for all those who carry a sound mind in their heads and a sound heart in their chest.²⁴

- 16- Mu'awiyah ibn Suwayd narrates the following incident as an example of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) compassion: "We were Bani Maqran at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and we didn't have but one maid. Once one of us slapped her and this report reached the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "Free her." He was told, "They don't have a maid other than her." So he said: "Then they may use her. When they feel they don't need her, let them let her go her way."²⁵ This *hadith* has been narrated by Bukhari and Muslim.
- 17- Sayyiduna Jabir narrates that he participated in a Ghazwah (Holy-Battle) in the company of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Midday came upon them while they were in a valley having many thorny trees. The people dispersed to rest in the shade of the trees. The Prophet rested under a tree, hung his sword on it, and then slept. Then he woke up to find near to him, a man whose presence he had not noticed before. The Prophet said, "This (man) came to me while I was asleep, took my sword (out of its scabbard) and said to me while standing on my head, "Who will save you from me?" I replied, "Allah." So, he put the sword back into its scabbard, and sat down. Now, you see him sitting here." Anyhow, the Prophet did not punish him. The *hadith* was narrated by Bukhari.²⁶ Had it been somebody else, he would have exacted revenge from him but not the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).
- 18- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was once very happy and tears rolled down his eyes when the son of a Jew embraced Islam. The boy used to visit the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sometimes. When he didn't come for sometime, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited him and found that he was ill. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him to embrace Islam and the boy looked at his father. His father said, "Obey Muhammad." The boy then embraced Islam and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was filled with pleasure and said, "All praise be to Allah who saved this boy from fire." This pleasure of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was obviously natural as he once said as reported by Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "My example and your example is that of a person who lit the fire and insects and moths began to fall in it and he would be making efforts to take them out, and I am going to hold you back from fire, but you are slipping from my hand."²⁷ Here the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is drawing parallels between the way moths and insects fall upon fire and the fact that people are similar

²⁴ See for more details 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suhayli, *Al-Rawd al-Unuf fi Sharh al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah li Ibn Hisham*, vol. 5, pp. 152-171.

²⁵ Ibn 'ajar al-'Asqalani, *Fatwa al-Bihar Sharh al-Bihar al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, p. 373.

²⁶ See Bukhari, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, vol. 13, p. 40, *hadith* no. 3284.

²⁷ Nawawi, *ahadith Muslim Sharh al-Nawawi*, vol. 15, p. 433, *hadith* no. 3385.

trying to fall into hell fire and he is trying to pull them out by holding on to their waists out of mercy and compassion.

19- Another notable example of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy is when Mā'iz ibn Mālik came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and confessed that he had committed adultery and requested the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to cleanse him by punishing him for his sin. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) tried to persuade him to repent by saying, "Be gone! Return and seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him." But he kept confessing until he confessed four times and requested to be punished. Finally the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked his companions, "Is he mad?" One can easily see that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was trying to persuade the man to repent and Allah may out His mercy forgive him but the man was adamant. So the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked, "Has he drunk alcohol?" It was said that he hadn't. It was only then that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pronounced the Judgement upon the man who had so bravely and out of fear of Allah confessed his own crime.²⁸

20- While emphasizing the need to take care of orphans and being kind towards them, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I and the caretaker of orphans would be like this and he joined his index finger and middle finger."²⁹ This ḥadīth was narrated by Sahl ibn Sa'd in Bukhārī.

21- Another instance of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) extraordinary kindness was when the leader of the hypocrites 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy passed away. His son 'Abd Allāh came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked him to bury his father in one of his [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] shirts. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) immediately agreed and went for the funeral prayer. It is stated in Bukhārī's narration that Sayyiduna 'Umar asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "You are praying his funeral while he said this and this on that day." And in another narration, "Didn't Allah stop you from praying for him?" the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "Allah has given me the choice and He said, "(O Prophet), it is all the same whether or not you ask for their forgiveness. Even if you were to ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah shall not forgive them.' If I know that were I to exceed 70 he would be forgiven I would do that." And then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed for him and Allah revealed the verse: "Do not ever pray over any of them who dies, nor stand over his grave." Sayyiduna 'Umar said, "I was surprised at my boldness with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."³⁰

²⁸ Nawawī, *Ḥaḥīth Muslim Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 4, p. 273-274.

²⁹ Ibn 'Ajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Burḥ Sharḥ Ḥaḥīth al-Bukhārī*, vol. 10, p. 507, ḥadīth no. 6005.

³⁰ See Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bid'ah wa al-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Taqwā, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 37.

'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy was probably the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) most dangerous enemy and yet the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to his funeral and prayed for him. There can't be a more dazzling example of kindness and soft heartedness than this.

22-On the way to Badr where a battle was supposed to be fought, the Muslim army had very few horses and camels. So three shared one mount. Sayyiduna 'Alī and Sayyiduna Marthad ibn Abī Marthad shared the horse with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). While it was the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turn to walk they were greatly troubled by seeing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) walking while they sat on their mount so they asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to mount while one of them walked. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "Neither of you is stronger than me nor am I ready to forsake the reward [for this walking] for you people."³¹

23-His compassion towards travelers. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cautioned wayfarers and travelers from vermins and other animals saying, "If you rest by the night, stay away from the roads for they are the paths used by vermins by the night."³²

24-Lastly let it be said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his capacity as a prophet heavily felt the burden of the responsibility of conveying the message of Allah to all human beings and this was a constant source of worry for him. It was difficult for him to see mankind falling into the ditch of ignorance and infidelity. It was because his feelings of mercy and compassion extended to the whole of mankind that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) felt this way and Allah admonished the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on more than one occasion for feeling that way. For instance Allah said: "(O Muḥammad), you will perhaps grieve yourself to death because these people do not believe. (Al-Shu'arā': 3) meaning thereby that your duty is to carry my message to the people and not to worry about their end.



³¹ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 268.

³² Ibid., vol. 13, p. 56.

Section 2

A query and its clarification

The mercy of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) might well be questioned by some people on the grounds that he took part in battles and had some people killed. This seems to be inconsistent with the claims of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) being mercy for all the worlds. However, a little thought is enough to clear these clouds of doubt and we shall try to clear them in the following points:

- The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordering the killing of some people and taking part in battles in itself a sign of his mercy because through that he was reforming the society. We all know that no doctor is called a butcher simply because he amputates a man's leg when it is feared that his disease might spread to the rest of his body nor does one blame a doctor for prescribing for him a bitter pill. Similarly when it becomes necessary to clear the society of certain troublesome elements, carrying that out itself is a sign of mercy.
- It would have been ridiculous for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to stand with his hands up, and somebody slaps him on his face while he goes along making peace with that enemy on the pretext of his mercy. It is well known that the world progresses in line with the act of defence and you can't counter a naked sword with mere sweet words. So even when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) killed somebody, he was actually removing the bad blood of the body of the society for if not, then that bad element would spread to encompass other parts of the society.
- Sometimes mercy comes in the form of chastisement as Allah says, "People of understanding, there is life for you in retribution that you may guard yourselves against violating the Law." (Al-Baqarah: 179). So a murderer may well be intimidated by the punishment of murder and not murder then.
- On occasions the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in spite of his mercy, ordered the killing of some animals as they were harmful for people. So nothing that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did was actually outside the fold of his mercy.
- Lastly, count the people killed during the battles in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took part and compare that with the staggering number of people who are killed in modern war during this age of civilization, human rights, democracy and freedom.



Section 3

The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy for *jinn*s

The message of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was universal and transcended the boundaries of time and space which means that it is for times and places. Similarly, it was not only for human beings but also for the *jinn*s as the Qur'ān informs us. So the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) preached his message to these very subtle creatures who see us from whence we don't see them and the *jinn*s responded to his message as the Qur'ān indeed informs us, "And call to mind when We sent to you a party of the *jinn* that they may listen to the Qur'ān.³³ When they reached the place (where you were reciting the Qur'ān), they said to one another: "Be silent (and listen)." And when the recitation ended, they went back to their people as warners." (Al-Aqāf: 29).

So the first sign of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy towards the *jinn*s was that he called them to this new religion which would take them out of the darkness of evil to the light of Islam so that they could be saved from chastisement on the Day of Judgement and so that he would have dispensed of his duty in the eyes of Allah.

Another sign of his mercy towards the *jinn*s is the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying, "Don't clean yourselves with parts and bones of animals for it is the food of your brothers the *jinn*s."³⁴ Here the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is killing two birds with one stone by asking human beings not to use what can serve as food for the *jinn*s in an unworthy fashion. At the same time, he is protecting human beings from being harmed by the *jinn*s should they try to avenge human beings for disgracing the food of the *jinn*s.

The third manifestation of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy for the *jinn*s is when he prohibited the killing of snakes without allowing them three days to leave the house they might have inhabited. It is reported by Muslim, Tirmidhī, Al-Nasā'ī and Mālik on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khuḍārī that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "In Madīnah, there is a group of *jinn*s who have embraced Islam. Whoever sees one of these inhabitants of houses [snakes], he should allow them three days [to leave the house]. If he sees him after three days, then he should kill him for then it is the devil."³⁵ So although snakes are harmful creatures, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) even then ordered that they should be allowed three days to leave the house lest one of these snakes turns out to be a *jinn* in the guise of a snake.

³³ This refers to the incident that occurred during the Prophet's return journey from Makkah. The Prophet (peace be on him) was reciting the Qur'ān in Prayer when a group of *jinn* that was passing by stopped to listen to his recitation. In this connection, all traditions concur that here the *jinn* did not actually appear before the Prophet (peace be on him), nor did he feel their presence. God, however, later informed him, by means of revelation, that they had indeed come and listened to the Qur'ān.

³⁴ Narrated by Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*, chapter on Cleanliness, section on what should not be used for cleanliness, vol. 1, page 29.

³⁵ Nawawī, *ahī Muslim Sharī al-Nawawī*, vol. 5, p. 95. hadīth no. 14.

The fourth manifestation of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy for the jinns is his prohibition of urinating on stones or holes as they are generally their abodes. Ahmad has reported on the authority of Qatadah ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Sarhan that "the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited from urinating on stones. They asked Qatadah: 'And what has been said about urinating on stones?'. He said, 'It was said that they are the abode of *jinns*.'"³⁶

Similarly the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited from defecation in clearings amidst herbage. Ab Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited from defecation in clearings. He was asked what he meant by clearings. He replied it was cleared land in the midst of herbage for that was the abode of your brothers the *jinns*.³⁷

So these are four manifestations of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) merciful attitude towards the *jinns* and his feeling for them.



³⁶ See Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 5, p. 83. And Abd Durd, *Sunan*, chapter on *Aharah*, hadith no. 166.

³⁷ See Ibn 'Adi, *Al-Kamil* quoted from Abd 'Abd Allah al-Shibli, *Al-Marjan fi Akmal al-Jinn*.

Section 4

The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy for animals

The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy was not reserved for human beings alone as was pointed out earlier, rather, it included all creatures including animals. For instance, he enjoined upon people not to mutilate or harm animals, to sharpen their knives before slaughtering, to pity beasts of burden and not overburden them with excessive load. It was also reported that he was disturbed when an anthill got burnt. There have also been reports of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) giving glad tidings of Paradise to people on account of their merciful attitude towards animals. In the lines to follow, we shall quote some examples to highlight this aspect of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy.

On the way to Makkah during the Year of the conquest of Makkah, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was leading his army, he saw a bitch feeding her puppies. Concerned that they might get crushed under the hooves of the camels and horses, he asked Ja'far ibn Surayyah to stand by them thus warding off any danger of being crushed.³⁸

'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Abd Allah says that we were with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during one of the journeys when we saw a amrah (a small bird) with two chicks. We took the two chicks away from her and she hovered over our heads frantically beating her wings. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came and saw this, he said, "Who has troubled the bird by taking her chicks from her? Return the chicks right away."³⁹

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was always concerned about the beasts of burden and always reminded the sahabah that although these beasts had been made subservient to people, they should ensure their good health and rest. In a hadith reported by Abi Hurayrah the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "When you travel through lands full of vegetation, give your camels the rest they deserve and when you travel through dry land then hurry through with your camels."⁴⁰

While explaining this hadith Imam Nawawi said, "[This hadith] urges people to be kind towards animals and take care of their needs. If they travel through lush green land, they should let their animals eat to their fill part of the day so that they may proceed and if they should be traveling through dry land with no vegetation then they should keep on proceeding as long as there is strength in the animals for if they stop and the animals find no food, they would suffer and languish for lack of strength.

I would like to add here how often does one come across people who forget about their day to day matters and future plans to think about animal welfare. Surely these incidents depict the unusual mercy and kindness of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for animals.

³⁸ See Waqidi, Kitab al-Maghazi, edited by Dr. Marsden Jones, vol. 2, p. 804.

³⁹ Sa'ad bin 'Abi Waqqas, *Al-Rasul alla Allahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam*, vol. 1, p.114.

⁴⁰ See Nawawi, *al-Muslim bi Sharh al-Nawawi*, vol. 13, p. 56, hadith no. 1926.

In another report, it has been narrated by Jabir (Raḥim Allāh ‘Anhu) a donkey whose face had been branded by hot iron passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "May Allah curse the person who branded his face."⁴¹ As is obvious from the above incident the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was so moved by the sight that he felt no remorse in cursing the person who had committed the heinous crime. In another ḥadīth, it is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited people from striking animals on the face or brandish them on it.

Since Allah had permitted man to partake of the meat of some animals, it was only natural that they should be slaughtered but even here the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy knows no bounds. He said in a ḥadīth reported by Imam Muslim, "Indeed Allah has written goodness and beauty in everything. So when you kill, ensure that it is done in the best way and when you slaughter ensure that it is done in the best way. [The slaughterer] should sharpen his knife well and thus relieve the animal to be slaughtered [and make its death as painless as possible]."⁴²

The following points may be observed here:

- 1- The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) command to sharpen the knife so that the beast may feel as little pain as possible. How this attitude contrasts to the wanton killing of people and their persecution in prisons is something to ponder over.
- 2- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also forbade people from sharpening their knives in front of animals lest they feel scared. Ibn ‘Abbās (Raḥim Allāh ‘Anhu) said that a man laid down a goat to slaughter it and then started sharpening his knife. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "It would have been so much the better if he had sharpened his knife before he laid it down."⁴³
- 3- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also forbade slaughtering an animal in front of another animal lest the second one got scared.
- 4- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on an occasion conditioned the mercy of Allah upon mercy shown to animals. A man once told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Messenger of Allah, I pity the goat when I slaughter it." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "If you have pity on the goat Allah will have pity on you."⁴⁴
- 5- Once Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah climbed a camel and found it difficult so she started turning its head from side to side. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Be kind for Allah is kind and loves kindness, and He gives upon kindness what He doesn't give upon rashness or anything other than rashness." Here we have Sayyidah

⁴¹ Ibid., vol. 14, p. 363, ḥadīth no. 2116 & 2117.

⁴² Ibid., vol. 13, p. 85, ḥadīth no. 1955.

⁴³ See Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 4, p. 231.

⁴⁴ See Ahmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 3, p. 436.

‘ishah who is excusable for her rashness with the animal because it wouldn’t submit to her but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) finds it hard to tolerate and immediately reminds his wife of the virtue of kindness.”⁴⁵

- 6- During one of his travels, as reported by Ibn Mas‘ūd, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was angry to see an ant valley being burnt. He said, “It is not becoming of man to punish in the way God has chosen to punish.”⁴⁶ Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) related to them the story of a prophet who was chastised by Allah for burning down an ant valley. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also forbade from killing animals without reason as he said in one of this traditions mentioned in Abū Dā‘ūd on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās. This tradition is authentic according to the conditions mentioned by Imam Bukhārī. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) categorically mentioned the four following: ants, honey bee, hoopoe and the quard.

There is hardly the need to say that no constitution, declaration or charter of human or animal rights provides for such statements of compassion and kindness towards animals to this day. Moreover, this attitude of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not the product of any civilization progress nor did it develop or evolve as did people’s attitude towards animals in the modern period.

- 7- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) out of sheer compassion towards animals and for fear of their manhandling or mistreatment at the hands of human beings, once narrated an incident of a thirsty man who climbed down a well to drink water. When he came up, he saw a dog panting with his tongue out and the man immediately thought that the dog should be thirsty in the same manner that he was, so he climbed down again and drew water in his leather socks and gave it to the dog. Similarly there is a narration about an unchaste woman who fed a thirsty dog. In both the cases the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that God forgave them. After mentioning these incidents the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that every living creature deserves to be treated in like manner and there is reward on such treatment.⁴⁷
- 8- This compassion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) towards animals reached its peak when he further elaborated that those who were cruel towards animals might end up incurring the wrath of God. He related the incident of a lady who was punished by God merely because she used to lock up her cat and wouldn’t feed her nor provide her water nor let her eat of the pests.⁴⁸ These were some incidents which highlight the Prophet’s (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) attitude towards animals.

⁴⁵See Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 16, p. 112, hadīth no. 2594.

⁴⁶ See Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 1, p. 396. See also Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 14, p. 373, chapter on forbidding killing of ants.

⁴⁷ Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 14, p. 375, hadīth no. 2244.

⁴⁸ Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 14, p. 374, hadīth no. 2243.

I would however like to add a word of caution here. In several of the Aq̄d̄th of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it is mentioned that he ordered the killing of some animals whether people are in Āram or outside it such as a mad dog, scorpion, crows, rats and specific types of snakes, and all those animals who are considered harmful. This also constitutes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy towards people since it is well known that the above mentioned animals can cause man great harm.

Section 5

The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy for inanimate beings

It might be said the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kindness and compassion were for human being alone because he himself was one or for animals because they were living beings as well. But we observe that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was equally loving and compassionate for inanimate beings as well. It was almost as if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) considered everything on this earth a living being and treated it in his usual loving manner. Let me mention three instances from the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

- 1- It is related by Sayyiduna 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar that on Fridays or whenever the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wanted to say something to the people, he would give his sermon leaning on the trunk of a date palm. Once people asked him, "Shouldn't we make something for you according to your height?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "There is no harm in that." So a pulpit was constructed for him with three steps. When he sat upon it, the date palm made a sound like the mowing of a cow on missing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to it and caressed it until it calmed down and in another tradition, he embraced it and it calmed down and said, "If I hadn't embraced it, it would have wept until the Day of Judgement."⁴⁹ One is reminded of a mother embracing and comforting her distraught child.
- 2- Sayyiduna Anas ibn Mālik reports that once the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) climbed Mount Uḍud and said, "This mountain loves us and we love it. Indeed Ibrāhīm made Makkah sacred and I make sacred what lies between its black mountains"⁵⁰ Mountains are non-living beings and yet the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) behaves with it as if with a living being.
- 3- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave instructions regarding the preservation of environment and non-pollution of the resources of the world as all living things partake of their benefits. These instructions are a sound depiction of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concern for civilisational values. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) expressed this concern in various ways. At times he would say removal of any harmful thing is part of sound faith and at others he would say, "Don't anybody pass water in stagnant water and then take a shower in it as well" as narrated by Sayyiduna Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍī Allāh*

⁴⁹ See Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 2, p. 109 and vol. 1, p. 149. Also see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalāni, *Fatḥ al-Bḥr Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 2, p. 397, ḥadīth no. 918.

⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalāni, *Fatḥ al-Bḥr Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 13, p. 204, ḥadīth no. 7333.

'*Anhu*).⁵¹ Not only is this concern for the welfare of man himself, rather, also for the environment. In another tradition the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said, "None of you should wash himself in standing water if he is in a state of impurity." Sayyiduna Abū Hurayrah was asked, "how should we go about it then?" He replied, "He should draw water from it and then use it."⁵²

⁵¹ Nawawī, *al-Muṣṣaḥḥ al-Muṣṣaḥḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 3, p. 525, ḥadīth no. 282.

⁵² Nawawī, *al-Muṣṣaḥḥ al-Muṣṣaḥḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 3, p. 536, ḥadīth no. 283.

Section 6

Sources of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mercy

One who studies these incidents from the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is enthralled by the various shades of his mercy and compassion. Perhaps one would end up asking himself 'what is the source of this mercy and compassion?' In the lines to follow, I shall try to answer this question briefly.

- 1- This was a gift of God to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Since He had chosen him to be the last messenger, He also made him the most merciful and the most compassionate towards His creatures.
- 2- It has mentioned in the Prophetic tradition that while still young, the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) chest was cut open and a clot of red blood like thing was taken away from it. The presence of this clot is the cause of all rancour and bitterness among human beings. Naturally its absence may well be considered a source of mercy and kindness.⁵³
- 3- The fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lost his father while still in his mother's womb, then lost his mother's love at an early age and then lost his loving grandfather when only eight, must have left an indelible mark on his personality as he had had first hand experience of losing loved ones thus rendering him absolute kindness and loving towards others.
- 4- Taking care of herds and cattle. While taking care of these herds, Allah was actually training him for a much loftier work for a person who could rear mindless animals could well rear people as well. It might well be that during this period love for animals would have developed in his nature.

⁵³ See Abū Bakr al-Jazīry, *Hadh al-ʿab*, (Madīnah: Maktabah al-ʿUlūm wa al-ʿIkmaḥ, 1425 AH/2004 AD), pp. 47-48.

Section 7

Conclusion

After this brief journey through the various incidents of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) life depicting his merciful and kind attitude and altruism, one may understand that kindness and mercy are civilisational values upon which individuals thrive and societies are found. When this value is absent, it invariably leads to disequilibrium in the system. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was able to show through his own example how kindness is to be demonstrated and made applicable in the society. This in itself is a matter which first and foremost needs to be appreciated, pondered upon and lessons ought to be drawn from it.

Undoubtedly the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) attitude of love and mercy towards all creatures before fourteen centuries forms a challenge for all for one rarely hears, if at all, from geniuses, leaders, reformers, kings and the wise people of ancient times giving out such explicit instructions regarding treatment of others and then applying it in letter and spirit very successfully. The various relief organizations and committees who raise the standard of freedom and help have only recently begun. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had left his example several centuries ago. May Allah shower his blessing upon you O best of all Prophets, as long as the sun rises upon the dunes, as long as rain patters upon the open land and as long as the rider rides upon his horse.

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