

Prophet Muhammad: The Glad Tidings of Jesus

Selections from Muhammad's Biography and Noble Features

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1- A difficult equation!

Gloomy darkness covered the earth. The world was enveloped in utter blackness. In every corner, devils were toying with humankind, luring them into false, distorted religions completely devoid of Allah.¹ There were the Buddhists, who worshipped a man named Buddha, and next to them lived the worshippers of cows and fire.

Some nations worshipped angels and *jinn* (creatures of free will created from fire), some worshipped images and statues, while others worshipped the spirits and relics of the dead!

Some people prostrated in adoring worship to cosmic creations such as the sun, the moon, the rivers, and the trees, while others raised the prophets and the righteous to the level of Allah!

Corruption spread as far as the Persian and Roman Empires. Everywhere, morals degenerated, injustice prevailed, and vice and sin flourished widely and became a characteristic trait of rulers and powerful people.

Such was the state of the world in the period surrounding the Year of the Elephant (571 CE). The state of the Arabs was even worse.

A god of dates made for worship could end up eaten whenever the ardent worshipper felt hungry! Another would carve a god out of a rock, and then would bring some bread and butter and place it over its head and ask it to eat! Instead, a fox would come and eat the bread and butter, and then urinate over its head, with the man looking on astonished, while saying the following lines:

¹ Allah is the superior, all-comprehensive name of the One True Universal God. This name is absolutely unique to the Creator of existence. In Arabic, it means 'the One exclusively worthy of deification and worship.' Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews also use the name Allah for God.

*People who place hope in you have come disappointed,
They wanted your victory when they engage in fighting.
You are not helpful against the matters predetermined,
Nor do you defend them when a disaster is approaching.
Is there a god whom foxes urinate on his head?
Surely, those on whom foxes urinate feel ashamed!*

As soon as a daughter was born, her father, foolishly and ignorantly, took her away and buried her alive out of fear of shame! He might also murder his son out of fear of poverty!

Intoxicants predominated the gatherings and societies of the Arabs! Women were no more to them than pieces of furniture.

For the most trivial reasons, fierce wars raged among them and persisted for decades. The forty-year-long war of Dahis and Al-Ghabra' was kindled because of a contest of horses (the stallion Dahis against the mare Al-Ghabra') and a bet on the results. It devoured everything in its path.

Plundering, robbery, violence of the strong against the weak, bad traditions and false pride in lineage and ancestry prevailed everywhere.

O Allah! To what depths of iniquity the human brain had sunk!

Even those Jewish and Christian nations to which prophets and messengers had been sent by Allah were not safe from the tampering and distorting hands of human intervention. They changed and twisted the contents of their scriptures and religions.

Only a few believers, who knew the truth, existed at the time; a small remnant of the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) who adhered to the veracious divine teachings.

With few exceptions, all people were living in a world immersed in total chaos during this era.

This leaves us wondering who would be able to liberate the minds from widespread myths and superstitions? Who could ennoble and elevate humanity to sublime heights? Who could save it from sinking to the bottom?

Who would be the lamp that dispels the darkness of the earth?

Allah (Exalted be He) describes this era by saying: “*I created all My servants Hunafa’ (Muslims or upright monotheists). But, the devils came to them and deviated them from their (original) religion. They forbade them that which I made lawful for them and commanded them to associate with Me that for which I sent down no authority.*’ Then Allah looked at the people of the earth and detested them all, Arabs and non-Arabs, except for a remnant of the People of the Book...”¹

In such a critical time of pitch-black darkness lived a man on the plains of Mecca, renowned for his trustworthiness, honesty and loyalty, who had a sublime moral character. He was born in tough circumstances. His father died while his mother was pregnant with him, and six years later his mother also died. He then faced one sorrowful event after another. Yet, unlike the men of his generation and society, he never followed their way of life, such as *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and drinking alcohol.

This person exhibited graceful moral and physical qualities. His name was Muhammad—a name unknown before this time, except in divinely revealed books.

He had now attained the age of forty years.

¹ Narrated by Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 2197, no. 2865, and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 162.

O how terrible!

He claimed himself to be a prophet, and that he was receiving revelations from Allah! He warned people against idol worship! The Quraish (the Meccan people) exploded with rage and descended upon him with all kinds of scorn and mockery.

Persecution and besiegement followed. Then they planned to assassinate him!

Yet a few people believed in the truth of what he said and preached. He stayed with them, steadfast in his stance, for thirteen years, until he was forced to immigrate to Medina, where he stayed for ten years before he died.

But he revived a worldwide community that could restore the human mind to its primitive rectitude, that could defeat injustice and debauchery and carry the human soul back to safe shores. In this way, the darkness of the world could be illuminated and the dead awakened from sleep!

All this change happened over the span of only twenty-three years, during which he tipped the balance of power and was capable of lifting up human beings to the high goal for which they have been created.

Comparing twenty-three years with the number of Muslims today, while taking into consideration the steady permanence of this message over the course of fourteen centuries, makes us feel the significance of the equation at hand—especially knowing that he stayed in Mecca for only a year and a half following his conquest over it. Mecca became the *Qiblah* (direction of prayer) of Muslims worldwide and the place attracting their hearts.

The equation has not yet ended!

The second part of the equation: Before Muhammad (peace be upon him [PBUH]) the Arabs had been plunged into ignorance so deep that they ruined everything. They left nothing intact in

which they could take pride, except for one thing, agreed upon by all people of the earth. Do you know what it was?

It was eloquence and rhetoric, something evident in the words of their creative poets and brilliant orators. Anybody with the least knowledge and taste of the Arabic language can appreciate this. Every word they uttered carried profound meaning and precise intentions.

Then Muhammad (PBUH) emerged from among the people, took over the banner of eloquence and carried high the flag of irrefutable proof of Allah's existence, by which he turned their ignorance into knowledge, their darkness into light, their confusion into clarity, and their terror into the peace of Islam. Human values underwent a significant elevation, to the extent that many of them would wipe their forehead with their hand, with tears running over their cheeks, regretting what transgressions they had committed in the past.

As soon as the sad tears were wiped away, another tear of joy would glisten at the mercy and blessings experienced through Muhammad ibn `Abdullah.

Ever since then, over several centuries, his followers have continued to increase among people from different countries, backgrounds, and cultures, and they are still on the rise to this day.

But do not think that their changing their convictions and conceptions, and controlling their desires was an easy matter!

Now it remains for you to know that when Muhammad (PBUH) spoke the language of the Arabs and excelled over them all in it and took eloquence to new amazing heights by the words he brought (from Allah), he was an illiterate man who could neither read nor write!

Truly! It is a difficult equation, and we can only understand it in the light of the next chapter: An Easy Equation!

2- An easy equation!

Allah is the Sole Creator of everything; everything other than Him is created

That is the rule; entirely straightforward and abundantly clear. It will forever remain the solution for the many dilemmas and thoughts of the human soul.

The father of humankind, Adam (PBUH) inhabited paradise, but because of his sinful deed of succumbing to Satan's temptation and eating from the tree, which Allah had forbidden, Allah sent him down to earth after accepting his repentance. Each act was henceforth linked with its consequent result; Adam continued to be penitent, constantly seeking forgiveness.

Adam, and his descendants after him, adhered to monotheism and sincere belief in Allah alone, free from any form of *Shirk*. Still, the seductive attempts of Satan towards humankind never ceased. As he had solemnly sworn, he relentlessly endeavored to beautify ugly realities and confuse the vision of dubious matters to cause humankind to depart from the worship of the One True Lord.

People continued for a time after Adam (PBUH) to pursue the right religion while preserving their *Fitrah* (the pure, pristine, and original state of being). Then depravity, disbelief, and *Shirk* crept in. They needed prophets and messengers from Allah to help them, once again, discern Allah's Purpose and the means to His Contentment, so that they could try and earn them, and the causes of His Wrath, so that they could shun them.

Hence, Allah sent Nuh (Noah, PBUH), and there were ten generations (centuries) between Adam and Nuh (peace be upon them). They both followed the true religion (i.e., they were

Muslims)¹, even though a thousand years or more elapsed between them, according to the time period referred to by the word *Qarn*.²

So, it is part of Allah's Mercy, Justice, and Wisdom that He should send prophets and messengers to the people of the earth. In our mundane world, we see that countries appoint ambassadors between them to represent them and accomplish their interests. And indeed, Allah is transcendentally beyond likeness to His creation.

The divine messages flowed onwards from Nuh (PBUH) clarifying the truth, establishing justice, and manifesting light on the earth.

Allah, the Most Exalted, did not create and then abandon His creation. He brought out from among them messengers who recited to them His Revelations. They gave the glad tidings of entering Paradise to those who obeyed Him and warned those who disobeyed Him of Hellfire.

Some of these nations responded to and followed the messengers, while others rejected them and invented heresies (to subvert the faith). Allah, if He had so willed, could have guided all of humankind. But if it were not for error and misguidance, a person adhering to guidance would have no merit. If it were not for mistakes, corrections would be pointless. If it were not for the magnificence of faith and belief in Allah alone, the hideousness of disbelief and *Shirk* would have been vague. And

¹ Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Fatawa*, vol. 28, p. 306; and Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*, vol. 1, pp. 102-103.

² In Arabic, a *Qarn* can mean either a century or a generation. If *Qarn* means a generation, according to how the Qur'an defines it, then it would mean ten generations and the amount of time could be much more than a thousand years. [Trans. Note]

if it were not for night and darkness coming upon people, they would not have rejoiced in the break of the morning. In the life of this world, we, as humans, are living in an abode of testing; through tests and trials, those who are in the wrong are distinguished from those who are in the right, and those who are good are distinguished from those who are bad. Thus, every person shall be recompensed according to his/her deeds.

In this way, a long series of prophets and messengers was sent in succession to convey Allah's Purpose. Every messenger was sent in the tongue of his people. It would be illogical that a messenger would speak a language other than that of the people intended to receive the message, let alone being an angel, as some people demanded of their messengers.

Allah (Blessed and Exalted be He) answered such people, saying: "*Say, 'If there were on the earth angels walking about in peace and security, We* should certainly have sent down for them from the heaven an angel as a messenger.'*" (Al-Isra' 17:95)

Since they were humans, the appropriate messengers for them should be humans like them. Allah sent His messengers from among the people themselves. Then, through an angel, He revealed to them whatever He willed. Each human messenger would thus act as the human model for the other humans and the criterion against which their performance in life would be measured.

Prominent among these messengers, who showed the strongest will and perseverance in communicating the message entrusted to them by Allah, were five¹, namely Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), `Isa (Jesus), and Muhammad—peace

* Royal 'We' used by Allah in the Qur'an to denote majesty and power.

¹ See: Ibn Manzhur, *Lisan Al-`Arab*, vol. 12, p. 400, and Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah fi Gharib Al-Hadith wa Al-Athar*, vol. 3, p. 231.

and blessings of Allah be upon them all. This is the reason why Allah, the Most Exalted, says, “*He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islam) which He ordained for Nuh, and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibrahim, Musa, and `Isa, saying you should establish religion, and make no divisions in it (religion).*” (Al-Shura 42:13)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) even said, “*Of all the people, I am the closest to `Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one.*”¹

Paternal brothers share a common father, but have different mothers. This explains the drift of the hadith. The fundamental principles of the religion and faith of all prophets was one and the same: to worship none but Allah and ascribe divinity to none beside Him. As for the subsidiary rules of their laws, they varied according to their different times, books, and circumstances.

Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’*” (Al-Nahl 16:36)

Hence, Nuh was a Prophet sent by Allah, and so were Ibrahim, Musa, `Isa, and Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all. They were all creatures of Allah, the Most High. It brings more honor to them, then, that they were servants and slaves of Allah along with being chosen to be His Prophets, commissioned by Him to preach His Own Word.

Earlier, we said that Allah alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Giver of Life and death. He is the High, Exalted, Holy Lord

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 550, nos. 3442, 3443; Muslim in his *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 1837, no. 2365; Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 12, p. 281, no. 4661; and Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 319, 406, 437, 482, 541, through various chains of transmission, all on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

Who deserves that all acts of worship and devotion be directed only to Him.

Again, we say: all else besides Allah is created and therefore deficient and in constant need of its Creator Allah, the Lord of existence. The prophets previously mentioned were no more than creatures of Allah, but Allah chose them above all humankind for the task of conveying His Message. Indeed, Allah does whatever He wills and chooses for His tasks whomsoever He will.

Anybody who claims that a creature of Allah can be comparable or equal to Him, or that His Divine Essence dwells in a creature and imparts some of His Divine Attributes to that creature is no better than those ignorant people who worshipped their hand-crafted gods and ate them whenever they became hungry.

If it were possible that Allah could have a rival—Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above such a claim—what would eliminate the possibility of a second or a third or a fourth rival?

And if it were possible that Allah could have a son—Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above such a claim—what would eliminate the possibility of a second or a third son, and so on? Naturally, we, as humans, have a need for a spouse and children. Allah has absolutely no needs or wants from anyone. He is the one God, the Self-Existing, Self-Sufficient Master, to whom everything else owes its existence and completely depends on for survival and power.

Otherwise, when humans pray, to whom would they be praying? When they do a good deed in the hope of reward, to whom would they be dedicating it? If it were not to Allah alone, then to whom?

Putting all this confusion aside, we have never heard of a country with two presidents. If this should happen, expect the failure of such a country and the ruin of its people.

This vast universe, in its precision, its order, its spaciousness, its splendor, and its mystery, asserts the Oneness of Almighty Allah.

Land and sky, soil and water, vegetation and desert, sunrays and fresh air, stars and lights, summer and winter; these are the things that our eyes can see and our minds can perceive. Certainly, the things that are beyond the power of our eyes and minds are far greater, deeper, and loftier.

Ultimately, all this creation points to a Supreme Power—far above human ability—that is controlling and managing the universe, to which humankind and the rest of creation must submit.

Do you know what this power is?

It is the power you turn to during every hardship and calamity. It is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

3- `Isa (PBUH) confirming the prophet who came before him and giving glad tidings of the prophet to come after him

Allah's Wisdom dictated that these paternal brothers—namely, the prophets and messengers—would act as a link chain, where each link is joined to the previous one and the following one, except for the last link. It is only attached to the one before it, because logically there is no next link.

This grand and venerable prophet, `Isa (PBUH) confirmed the truth of the prophet who came before him, namely Musa (PBUH) and the book revealed before him, namely the Torah, which the Christians call the Old Testament. He also heralded the coming of the next prophet, namely Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*And (remember) when `Isa, son of Maryam, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you confirming the Tawrah [(Torah) which came] before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.’*” (Al-Saff 61:6)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said, “*Of all the people, I am the closest to the son of Maryam. All the prophets are paternal brothers, and there has been no prophet between me and him (i.e., `Isa).*”¹ No prophet was sent between `Isa and Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them both. If there was any other prophet, his law would follow the teachings of `Isa (PBUH). This means that no one brought a new law after `Isa (PBUH) except Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

¹ Previously referenced in the footnote of another hadith; this is one of the wordings collected by Al-Bukhari.

Each of these honorable prophets warned his people and nation against the Antichrist.¹

At the end of time, two Messiahs will appear: a false Messiah, the Antichrist, who will mislead the people, and a True Messiah, `Isa son of Maryam (PBUH) who will guide the people.

Muhammad (PBUH) said, “*Allah, the Exalted, has not sent down to earth a greater affliction, since He created Adam until the Last Hour arrives, than that of Al-Dajjal (Antichrist)... then `Isa, the son of Maryam, will descend to earth affirming Muhammad’s prophethood and a follower of his creed. He will be a guided Imam and a just ruler. He will kill Al-Dajjal.*”²

According to other hadiths: When *Al-Dajjal* sees `Isa, son of Maryam, he will start dissolving like salt in water. And if he were to leave him be, he would melt away until he was destroyed. But Allah will kill him by the hand of `Isa; and he will show them his blood upon his lance.³

¹ As stated in the authentic hadiths, such as the hadith reported by Al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn `Umar. See *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 427, no. 3337, and vol. 13, p. 96, no. 7127, and the hadith reported by Muslim on the authority of Anas, vol. 4, p. 2248, no. 2933.

² Narrated by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat*, vol. 5, p. 27, and Al-Haythami in *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 7, p. 339. He commented on it, saying: “It was cited by Al-Tabarani in his books *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir* and *Al-Mu`jam Al-Awsat*. Its narrators are trustworthy; some of them are weak, but this does not affect the soundness of the hadith.” It was reported on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Al-Mughaffal. In the version of Muslim (vol. 4, p. 2266) (2946), narrated on the authority of Hisham ibn `Amir as *hadith Marfu`* (attributed to the Prophet): “*From the time of the creation of Adam until the Hour begins, there will never be a graver creation than Al-Dajjal.*” The last part of the hadith is confirmed by the hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 566, no. 3448, and Muslim vol. 1, p. 135, no. 155 on the authority of Abu Hurayrah as *hadith Marfu`*: “*...the son of Maryam (Mary) is about to descend among you as a just ruler...*” There is also the hadith that is referenced in the footnote after the next one.

³ Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (vol. 4, 2221) (2897). It was also stated in some hadiths that he shall melt as lead melts (in fire). Also in this regard, another

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said, “*How will you be when the son of Maryam descends among you and leads as one from among you (i.e., he will judge people by the Law of the Qur’an and not by the law of Gospel).*”¹ This hadith means that `Isa (PBUH) will lead and rule the Muslim world by the law of the Noble Qur’an—the book revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This does not, in the least, detract, from the merit of `Isa (PBUH). Rather, it completes it; for prophets are brothers, each completing the mission of the other.

As any rational person will say, the law which abrogates and substitutes all previous laws and has remained original and uncorrupted must be the law brought by the last of these prophets, namely Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The divine books brought by the prophets and messengers contained the rulings, events, and narratives that were sent as revelations to them. This makes it obligatory for us to believe in these prophets and also in their books, which were revealed from Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He.

The Zabur (the Psalms) was the holy book revealed to Dawud (David, PBUH), the Tawrah (the Torah) to Musa, the Injil (the Gospel) to `Isa, and the Qur’an to Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

But despite their sacredness, the catastrophe has occurred, and it continues as a persistent affliction by which humanity is tried. Mischievous and pernicious hands tampered with the content of

hadith said: “*Anyone who intends to do harm to the people of Medina, Allah will cause him to dissolve as salt dissolves in water.*”

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 566, no. 3449, and Muslim, vol. 1, pp. 136-137, and 244-246.

these divine books, either in the way of alterations, additions, or omissions, and they twisted and distorted the meanings altogether. It was even said that if ten Christian scholars were asked to gather and form a conclusive opinion on their creed, they would come out with eleven opinions!

It is useless, then, to rely on these books.

Except for the miraculous book!

Has the word astounded you and kept you wondering what that miraculous book can be?

All past prophets were supported by miracles to substantiate the truth of their claim to prophethood, so that those whom Allah willed would be guided by them. To Sulaiman (Solomon, PBUH) Almighty Allah subjected the wind, blowing gently by his command to wherever he directed. Musa (PBUH) was given the staff with which he struck the sea and it turned to dry land, along with eight other confirming signs mentioned in the Qur'an. `Isa (PBUH) by Allah's Leave brought the dead to life, healed the born-blind and the leper, and informed his people of what they ate and stored in their houses.

Muhammad (PBUH) was the last of prophets and messengers of Allah. Multiple centuries and several generations may come after him until the Last Hour. No one but Allah knows their number. You are one of them. It is, therefore, appropriate that his supporting miracle should be eternal and last as long as the day and night exist. It shall stand as the irrefutable evidence against the people of the earth in the judgment. It is needless, after it, to send any more prophets. The Glorious Qur'an, Allah's Eternal Miracle, descended on Allah's final prophet and messenger, then Allah posed the challenge to the most powerful and eloquent speakers of the Arabs to produce a chapter or even a single verse like it!

Now, can you see any of the miracles performed by any of the preceding honorable prophets? In fact, they ended with their death, because they were sensible miracles perceived by the eyes of the spectators who were living at the time of their occurrence. If the miracle given to Muhammad (PBUH) were of the same nature, it would have died away too (and become a memory of the past). Humanity, then, would have been lost in a maze of confusion and separation from truth.

Muhammad (PBUH) was supported by other signs and wonders, such as the *Isra'* (Night Journey to Jerusalem) and *Mi`raj* (Ascension to Heaven), the palm tree stump (which he used as a pulpit) yearning and crying out for him, the gushing of water from between his fingers, the miraculous multiplication of food, and other similar miracles on which extensive books have been written. But the Noble Qur'an is a permanent miracle, divinely protected forever from corruption. It contains healing for the ailments of the hearts, and a guidance and mercy for those who believe. Yet, people live absent-minded and distracted from this glorious book.

“Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind.” (Al-Hajj 22:46)

The Noble Qur'an is the last of the heavenly books revealed by Allah to one of His Honorable Prophets. It abounds with wonderful stories telling of how the prophets called their people and nations to Allah, such as the story of the disciples of `Isa (PBUH) asking him to send down to them a table spread with food from heaven.

It was also narrated in a hadith that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) spent the whole night in prayer and recited a single verse, which he repeated over and over when bowing and

prostrating, until it was morning.¹ It was the Statement of Allah, the Most Exalted, quoting the words of `Isa (PBUH) regarding the incident of the Table from Heaven: “If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily You, only You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (Al-Ma’idah 5:118)

Interestingly, do you know that the Glorious Qur’an was the source through which Christians learned the actual details about `Isa (PBUH)? Some scholars stated that the story of the Table from Heaven is not mentioned in the *Injil* (the Gospel). Christians know about it only from Muslims.*

Truly! How gracious and honest you were, O Muhammad, in your absolute belief in the Oneness of your Exalted and Forgiving Lord. And how great you were, O `Isa son of Maryam, in your servitude to Allah, the One, the Sublime.

¹ Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 149, Al-Nasa’y, vol. 2, p. 177, no. 1010, Ibn Majah, vol. 1, p. 429, no. 1350. He commented on it in *Al-Zawa’id* by saying: “Its chain of transmission is authentic and its narrators are trustworthy.” All narrations of this hadith are transmitted on the authority of Abu Dhar, may Allah be pleased with him. The Prophet’s crying out of compassion for his *Ummah* was narrated in the version reported by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 191, no. 202 on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As, may Allah be pleased with him.

* This was stated by Sheikh Sulayman ibn Hamad Al-`Udah. See: Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*, vol. 2, p. 89.

4- The Divine Books give glad tidings of the coming of Prophet Muhammad

Just as Divine Books warn against the Antichrist, they also give glad tidings of the coming of `Isa, the son of Maryam, and Muhammad (peace be upon them both)¹. I will not mention and explore everything in this regard, but I will offer some proof.

Mount Paran

It is stated in chapter 33 of the Book of Deuteronomy (1-3), the Old Testament (262): “This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, pronounced on the Israelites before his death. He said, “The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned over them from Seir, he shone forth from Mount Paran...”²

“The Lord came from Sinai” refers to the revelation of the Torah to Prophet Musa (PBUH) on Mount Sinai.

“...and dawned over them from Seir” refers to the revelation of the Bible to Prophet `Isa (PBUH) from Seir, which is located in Hebron in a village called Al-Nasirah (Nazareth), from which the word “Al-Nasara” (Christians) is derived.

“...he shone forth from Mount Paran” refers to the revelation of the Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). There is no disagreement between Muslims and People of the Book about the fact that Mount Paran is located in Mecca.

In fact, Allah swears by these three places in the Qur’an in His saying, “*By the fig, and the olive. By Mount Sinai. By this city of security (Makkah).*” (Al-Tin 95:1-3)

¹ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 197, and p. 250.

² *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, pp. 199-207, along with the footnote.

Allah swears by *the fig and the olive* that refer to the holy land in which figs and olives grow, and from which Jesus Christ was chosen as a prophet. It is also the land that witnessed the revelation of the Bible.

Allah swears by *Mount Sinai*, which is the mount on which Allah spoke to Prophet Musa.

Allah also swears by *the city of security*, which refers to Mecca, in which Prophet Ibrahim lodged his wife and his son Isma`il, and supplicated to Allah to send a messenger from among the dwellers of Mecca. Then Allah answered Prophet Ibrahim's supplication and sent Muhammad as a Prophet (peace be upon all prophets).

These three honorable and holy places witnessed the appearance of Allah's Light and Guidance and the revelation of the Divine Books: the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an.

It is stated in chapter three (3-4 / 3-7) of the Book of Habakkuk, the Old Testament: "God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and his praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand..."¹

The book entitled *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih* (vol. 5, p. 267) states that Habakkuk said, "God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and his praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden. Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps..."

This is another glad tidings of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and declaration of his prophecy, which came from

¹ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 221, and p. 267, along with the footnotes.

Mount Paran. His glorification and praise of Allah and those of his nation fill the heavens and earth.

It is stated in chapter three (3-8) of the Book of Habakkuk, the Old Testament (1046): “The Holy One comes from Mount Paran ... his praise filled the earth ... He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble ... His brightness was like the light ... You trampled the sea with your horses...”¹

The barren woman

It is stated in chapter 54 (1-3) of the Book of Isaiah, the Old Testament (835): “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband. The Lord said, ‘Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.’”²

The barren woman refers to Mecca (may Allah honor it) because it had never brought any prophet before Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is unlikely for the barren woman to refer to Jerusalem because it is a place in which many prophets lived, and to which the *Wahy* (Divine Revelation) descended.

It is stated in chapter 66 (12) of Isaiah, the Old Testament (846): “We have heard the voice of Muhammad coming from the ends of the earth.”³

¹ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 223, along with the footnote.

² *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 259, along with the footnote.

³ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 266, along with the footnote.

Farqalit

It is stated in the Gospel of John (14, 26), the New Testament (143), “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things.”

It is also stated in the Gospel of John (15, 19), the New Testament (143) that Jesus Christ said to his disciples, “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it does not know him. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you before long.”¹

The word *Firqalit* (Paraclete) is a Hebraic word, which means ‘Ahmad’. Some people pronounce it as *Farqalit*, which means ‘advocate’, while others distorted and replaced it with the word *Al-Mu`azziy* (Comforter). As the word *Farqalit* means ‘the Savior’, it applies to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to the Bible, Jesus Christ is the first Savior or the first Paraclete who gave glad tidings of the coming of another Savior.

Jesus’ saying, “and be with you forever” refers to what will last and remain forever. It is well known that Jesus did not mean that the person himself would live and remain forever; he meant the *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law) and Allah’s commands conveyed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This applies to Prophet Muhammad and his religion, as he is the last prophet, and the *Shari`ah* he conveyed abrogates that of any other religion.²

It is well known that all people agree on the fact that no one came after Jesus Christ, dominated the whole world, caused the people’s hearts and bodies to submit to him, and conveyed a

¹ See this part and the preceding and following parts of *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, pp. 284-285, along with the footnote.

² *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 291, and p.304.

religion that came to light except Muhammad (PBUH). The *Masjids* (mosques) are the best proof of this fact; Muslims fill the different parts of the earth, and the Qur'an is the only book that gains confidence and respect. Moreover, it is well known that Allah unmasked and destroyed each person who claimed prophecy, and exposed his falseness to people.

The ruler of the world

It is also stated in chapter 14 (30) of the Gospel of John, the New Testament (143): "I will not say much more to you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no hold over me." It is stated in *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih* that Jesus Christ said, "The ruler of the world shall come, and nothing is for me."¹

The word *Arkun* in their language means 'the great person'. Therefore, Jesus Christ's saying, "*Arkun Al-'Alam*" means the great person of the world and master of the world who would succeed Jesus Christ. This is another glad tidings from Jesus Christ of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clarified the religions of the messengers who preceded him, believed in them, praised and honored them. Following in his footsteps, we believe in all prophets and messengers, and we extol and honor them. Prophet Muhammad's belief in the prophets and messengers is proven by the fact that he believed Jesus Christ's saying that he would be the master of the world, as he said, "*I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Judgment, and I am not boasting. The Banner of Praise will be in my hand, and I am not boasting. There will not be a prophet on that day, not Adam nor anyone other than him, except that he*

¹ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, pp. 304-306.

*will be under my banner. I am the first one for whom the earth will be opened, and I am not boasting.”*¹

He also said, “*When the Day of Resurrection comes, I will be the leader of the prophets, the one who addresses them, and the one who will agree to intercede.*”²

The sword for the sake of establishing the Truth

It is stated in the Book of Psalms, psalm 45 (1-5), the Old Testament (72): “My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility, and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet.”³

The only prophet that girded his sword after Prophet Dawud (PBUH) was Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), under whose feet nations fell. His *Shari`ah* is associated with awe, and he is the Prophet of Mercy and the prophet who engaged in battles. We will see later how he showed mercy in everything, even in his wars against his enemies.

¹ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy and this is his wording, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Hawadhy*, vol. 10, p. 59; Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1440, no. 4308 from Abu Sa`id; Muslim from Abu Hurayrah, vol. 4, p. 1782, no. 2278; and Abu Dawud as stated in *ʿAwn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 12, p. 278, no. 4656.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Hawadhy*, vol. 10, p. 58, no. 3856; Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1443, no. 4314; and Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 5, pp. 137-138, from Ubay ibn Ka`b (may Allah be pleased with him). Al-Albany considered this Hadith as *Hasan* (a Hadith whose chain of narration contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish), as stated in *Sahih Al-Tirmidhy* no. 3613 and *Sahih Ibn Majah* no. 3500.

³ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, p. 237, along with the footnote.

It is stated in the Book of Psalms, psalm 72 (8-15), the Old Testament (688), “May he rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him with gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him. He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given to him. May the people always pray for him and bless him all day long.”¹

When we examine the above-mentioned characteristics, we will find that all of them apply to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his nation. He fought those who disobeyed him in the company of those who obeyed him until he controlled the Mediterranean Sea and the countries with a coastline along it as far as the Persian Gulf, which is an extension of the Indian Ocean. He also controlled an area that extended from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers in Khorasan and Transoxiana until the end of the Western borders of Africa.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is also the one to whom the inhabitants of different islands surrendered, such as the Arabian Peninsula, the island that is located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and the island of Cyprus. In the past, peninsulas were called islands. In addition, he is the one to whom kings gave presents, and to whom the kings of Persia surrendered. The nations in question, which acknowledged him and his nation, yielded to him; they either believed in him or

¹ *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 5, pp. 246-248, along with the footnote.

submitted to him out of hypocrisy, in compliance with a truce or reconciliation, or out of fear.

Prophet Muhammad saved weak people from tyrants and supported the oppressed against their oppressors. Peace and blessings are invoked upon him whenever he is mentioned, at the end of the prayers, and during the *Adhan* (call to Prayer). No prophet before Muhammad gained this privilege. All these signs gave glad tidings of the coming of Prophet Muhammad, and prove the truthfulness of his prophecy and the emergence of his religion. This shows that any person who has doubts concerning Prophet Muhammad, and mocks or ridicules him, is insane!

5- Between two birth events

After Allah had raised `Isa, the son of Maryam, to Himself, the people's circumstances changed, as their faith gradually weakened to the extent that idols and fire were worshipped, religions changed, corruption prevailed, and oppression and ignorance became widespread. People went astray, with the exception of a few people who adhered to some religious instructions of earlier prophets, including rabbis and Christian worshippers. People remained in this condition until Allah sent Muhammad (PBUH). Allah (Glorified be He) said, addressing the People of the Book from among the Jews and Christians, "*O people of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and pass over (i.e., leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) and a plain Book (this Qur'an).*" (Al-Ma'idah 5:19)

The period between Jesus Christ's era and that of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them both) was approximately 600 calendar years and 620 lunar years.¹ This is the period in which the light derived from religions faded; *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) prevailed in different countries, and people forgot the religious instructions conveyed by the different prophets and messengers in earlier ages. The darkness of ignorance became so intense that the people's eyes and hearts did not perceive the signs of Allah's existence. *Shirk* spread through people's houses, markets, and societies, mixing with their thoughts and dreams and causing them to indulge in vain desires and suspicious acts.

¹ See Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 350, and *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih liman Baddal Din Al-Masih*, vol. 2, p. 101.

In a decisive and crucial moment that Allah determined in *Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuzh* (the Preserved Tablet), and in which light slipped into a mountainous land with neither plants nor river, unparalleled morning shone with fragranced rays, and with its breezes thought flowed. In addition, flying birds announced the coming of a new dawn, singing melodious songs that attracted minds and hearts, and flew in a friendly atmosphere. The morning glowed, and light appeared on a mountainous land that had no plants or trees, in order to draw the world's attention to it. This land did not have any distinctive worldly features, such as rivers, seas, trees, beautiful landscape, or flowers, in order to save these pleasures for the Hereafter. It was "the barren woman"¹ that has never given birth, declaring a birth event that would please the whole world. Light shone from the land of Hijaz, spreading over the whole world from Mount Paran. The moment of birth was approaching rapidly, so the whole world rejoiced, birds sang, the whole universe gleamed, and joy prevailed. How brilliant minds are when they become sublime, and how happy people are when they become spirited.

It was the beginning (birth) of a new era, a unique generation, a time-honored religion, a great newborn baby, whose greatness was imparted by Allah. It was the birth of Muhammad, the slave and Messenger of Allah (PBUH), who was once asked, "O Prophet of Allah, did your prophecy begin?" He said, "*I am the (result of the) supplication made by my father Ibrahim and the glad tidings `Isa delivered. My mother had a dream in which she saw a light that emanated from her and radiated the palaces of the Levant.*"²

A brilliant historic sign

¹ It is mentioned in the Divine Books, as we have stated, that Mecca was like a barren woman as it had not brought any prophet before Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In addition, we have mentioned that the Divine Books state that the mountains located in Mecca are called Paran.

² The referencing of this hadith was previously mentioned in another footnote.

Prophet Muhammad was born on April 20, 571 A.C.¹ The year is known to the Arabs as the Year of the Elephant, as Abraha Al-Ashram came from Yemen to Mecca aiming to destroy the Ka`bah in order to divert the Arabs from performing Hajj around the Ka`bah to performing it in a huge church in Sana'a called Al-Qullis. It was given this name due to its tremendous height; it was so high that when a person looked at it, his cap may fall off his head. Abraha came to Mecca with a great army that the Arabs were not equipped to defeat, and with huge elephants which were considered strange by the Arabs. He swore to destroy the Ka`bah one stone after another, not knowing that the Lord of the Ka`bah protects it.

When Abraha reached the border of Mecca, he defeated all the Arab tribes he encountered and spent that night there. In the morning, when he got up and attempted to direct the army and elephants towards the Sacred House and the Ka`bah, one great elephant dropped to its knees. The members of the army did their utmost to make the elephant stand up and move, but it remained kneeling without taking a step towards the Sacred House and the Ka`bah. When they moved its face towards any other direction, it moved briskly. Then Allah ordered some birds (martins) to come from the direction of the sea holding stones in their beaks and claws. The birds dropped the stones, which hit members of the army and killed them. As a result, the remaining members of Abraha's army who escaped these stones ran away.²

This amazing sign and unforgettable event is considered to be a distinct landmark, clear imprint, and decisive stage in history. It announced to the whole world how the Disposer of the affairs of this universe, the One from Whom nothing is hidden, and the

¹ See Mahdy Riqallah Ahmad, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah fi Daw' Al-Masadir Al-Asliyyah*, p. 109.

² Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 7, pp. 369-376.

One Who is Able to do all things (Allah only) showed the world His Mercy during the year in which He manifested His Power.

Answering Ibrahim's supplication and carrying out the glad tiding conveyed by `Isa (peace be upon them both), history recorded this event and Allah mentioned it in the Qur'an. Subsequently, the Arabs and non-Arabs stated in history that the year in which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born would be called the Year of the Elephant. He was born on a Monday, and most likely on the 12th of Rabi` Al-Awwal.

Despite all the signs that accompanied his birth, Muslims during his lifetime and many centuries after his death did not celebrate his birth as a festival and did not hold a ceremony. However, when the number of Muslims increased and their culture mixed with other cultures, their pure culture was negatively affected. As a result of this, some Muslims have invented festivals and ceremonies that Allah and His Messenger did not ordain, and have forgotten that *“Muhammad (peace be upon him) is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (as disbelievers)? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.”* (Al `Imran 2:144)

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in a very humble manner and a magnificent style, *“The similitude of mine and that of the Messengers (before me) is that of a person who constructed a building and he built it fine and well, and the people went round it saying, ‘Never have we seen a building more imposing than this, but for one brick,’ and I am that brick (which gives the finishing touch to the building) and the last prophet.”*¹

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Al-Fat-h* (6/645) (3535); and Muslim (4/1790-1791) (2286), and this is his wording.

Accordingly, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) believed that absolute greatness, pride, and power are owned only by Allah, the Lord of the two worlds.

Logical analysis

Many Christians (*Nasara*) have not understood the difference between what they wanted Jesus Christ to be and what Allah has willed Prophet Muhammad to be (peace be upon them both).

Devout Christians in the West consider Jesus Christ to be a god in the shape of a human being who sacrificed his life in advance as a price for all the sins they will commit. When utilitarian thought has controlled the Western personality, clinging to Jesus' character tended to represent the utmost utilitarianism for those who chose religious devotion. He paid the price of the Christians' sins even before they commit them, and left them to do whatever they want as long as the love of Jesus (PBUH) as a person and a god dominates their feelings.

As for those who desert Christianity and become non-religious, Jesus Christ (PBUH) is central to their intellectual approach (after the distortion of their religion). They regard him as a mere person, so he cannot be different from other human beings. They claim that there is no god, and that Jesus (PBUH), as depicted by the Western church, is merciful and isolated from people's lives, and accepts all the criteria of human life. He only calls for freedom and equality, which are the most important values of secularism. As such, there is no need to clash with Jesus Christ (PBUH).

Conversely, the relationship with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clashes with the religious and secular trends of Western thought. Muhammad (PBUH) was keen to be treated as a human being in the full sense of the word, and refused to be treated as a god in human form. Therefore, he contradicts the concept that deeply religious Westerners have of the Deity. This has led to hatred of

and unease about everything that Muhammad (PBUH) represents, because they take the view that Muhammad (PBUH) is not like Jesus Christ. In addition, he contradicts the desires and emotions of non-religious people because he asked people to perform many acts of worship, good deeds, and duties, as Allah commanded him. He also gave precedence to the freedom of society over the freedom of the individual, and sacrificed equality for the sake of justice and the integrity of society. This has contributed to the formation of a negative, cruel, and faulty image of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH).¹

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against going to extremes with regard to prophets and messengers by raising them above the rank which Allah gave them. Thus, he was right and hit the target when he said, “*Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger.*”² It is obvious that he did not want to be treated as a god in the form of a human being and a prophet, but he wanted to be treated as a human being and a prophet who sets an example for the slaves of Allah.

In fact, the coming of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered to be a test for the world with regard to accepting or rejecting mercy. Some people succeed in tests, while others fail. Allah (Glorified be He) said to Prophet Muhammad, “*I have sent you in order to test you and test people through you.*”³ Allah says in His

¹ See, Basim Khafagy, *Limadha Yakrahunahu*, pp. 60-61. N.B.: The quotation is paraphrased.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Al-Fat-h*, vol. 6, p. 551, no. 3445; Ahmad in *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 23; Al-Titmidhy in *Al-Shama'il*, p. 271, chapter 48, no. 331; and Al-Darimy in his *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 320 from the narration of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (peace be upon him).

³ The referencing of this *Qudsy* hadith (Revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words) was mentioned previously.

miraculous Book, “*We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.*” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:107)

6- The truthful from among the Jews and Christians

Allah (Blessed and Exalted be He) gave a splendid description to a group of the People of the Book about the way they responded to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—it stated that, by the knowledge they already had of him in their scripture, their scholars could recognize him as easily as they recognized their own children.

Allah (Exalted be He) says, *“Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognize him (Mubammad) as they recognize their sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it [i.e., the qualities of Mubammad (PBUH) which are written in the Torah and the Gospel].”* (Al-Baqarah 2:146)

The People of the Book took varied stances. One group of them suppressed the truth about him and bore him enmity. A second group of them confirmed and revealed this truth, and attained the merit of testifying to truth. The third group, the most superb of them all, embraced and believed in this truth. Some *Sirah* (prophetic biography) books provide a record of the names of the Jews and Christians who believed in and followed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).*

However, how could they not attest to his truthfulness? Prophethood was something he started to experience as early as his childhood, through several signs that could only occur to a prophet.

Anas ibn Malik, the servant of Allah’s Messenger, Muhammad (PBUH), attested to this, saying: “Jibril (Angel Gabriel, [PBUH]) came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) while he was playing with the other boys. He took hold of him, laid him on the

* This was stated by Sheikh Sulayman ibn Hamad Al-`Udah.

ground, split open his chest, and took out his heart. He then extracted a clot out of it and said, ‘This was Satan’s share of you.’ He then washed it with Zamzam water in a golden basin, and then joined it back together and restored it to its place. The boys went running to his mother—meaning his wet nurse (Halimah)—and said, ‘Muhammad has been killed!’ They all rushed towards him to find him pale.” Anas added: “I used to see the trace of that stitching on his (the Prophet’s) chest.”¹

It remains for you to know what was put there to replace that clot, which constituted the devil’s share. It was replaced with compassion and mercy in his heart. Quite likely, some of you who are now reading this may be likely to entertain suspicion about the truth of this story. But let everybody know that had the human mind alone been responsible for attaining Allah’s Contentment and reaching the truth, people would have fallen into perplexity and confusion. Consequently, it would have been pointless for them to have revelations or any prophets or messengers in the first place. But the fact is, receiving divine revelation and using reason are both necessary, and neither can dispense with the other.

Indeed, there is nothing in the heavens or the earth that is beyond Allah’s Power or knowledge. Nothing is impossible with Allah. He can do whatever He wills.

Such an incident was an early announcement of the significance of Muhammad (PBUH), and a physical preparation for him from

¹ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 1, p. 162; Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 149, and Al-Nasa’y, vol. 1, 224, no. 452. Other hadiths mentioned that the splitting of the chest also happened to him during the *Isra’* (Night Journey to Jerusalem) and *Mi`raj* (Ascension to Heaven). This causes no contradiction because the expert examiners of hadith stated that this incident occurred to him twice. As for compassion and mercy being placed in his heart, this part is found in the version reported by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 139, on the authority of Ubayy ibn Ka`b from Abu Hurairah.

childhood to accept divine inspiration. Later in his life, this incident would give the Arabs and others who would meet him all the more reason to believe in him and his message.

In essence, it was a moral purification, taking on the form of a sensory and physical process so that the divine announcement would be witnessed by the people.

The Seal of Prophethood was perfectly known to the People of the Book as one of the physical signs of prophethood. On Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) back, between his shoulders, was a clear mark, the size of a pigeon's egg.¹

Another evident proof thereof was the Jews' several attempts to murder Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Indeed, their history is stained with the murder and assassination of prophets. But this time, they wanted something, while Allah willed something else. Allah's Will prevailed in this matter and they did not achieve what they wanted. Allah's Will is ever stronger than the wicked tampering of created beings.

¹ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 1823, no. 2344; Al-Tirmidhy, *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 89, no. 3888 also in *Al-Shama'il*, pp. 42, 17; and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol.5, p, 90. All narrations of this hadith are on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Bahira (the Christian Monk)

At the age of twelve, Muhammad (PBUH) accompanied his paternal uncle Abu Talib on a trading journey to Syria among a group of elders from the Quraish. Syria was their commercial destination (during summer). When they came near (the hermitage of) the monk, i.e., Bahira, they dismounted and unloaded their camels. The monk came out to meet them, although previous times when they had passed by, he had never come out to them or paid them any attention.

Abu Is-haq narrated, “As they were unloading their belongings, he went down to them and began walking among them. Taking the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) by the hand, he said, ‘This is the master of the worlds. This is the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. Allah has sent him as a mercy to the worlds.’ Some elderly men from the Quraish asked him, ‘How do you know?’ and he replied, ‘When you appeared at the top of the pass, there was not a tree or rock that did not prostrate itself; such creatures only prostrate themselves to a prophet. I also recognize him by the seal of prophethood, like an apple, below the cartilage of his shoulder blade.’

Then the monk went back and made some food for them. When he brought it to them, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was tending the camels, so he said, ‘Send for him.’ He came with a cloud shading him, and the monk said, ‘Look at him! There is a cloud shading him.’ Then when he (Prophet Muhammad) approached the people, he found that they had already occupied the shade beneath the tree. But when he sat down, the shade of the tree inclined over him. The monk said, ‘Look how the shadow of the tree has inclined over him!’

So while he (the monk) was standing by them, beseeching them not to take him (Prophet Muhammad, PBUH) to the land of the Byzantines—because if the Byzantines were to see him, they would recognize him by his description and kill him—he turned

around, and there were seven men who had arrived from *Al-Rum* (the Byzantine Empire). He greeted them and asked, 'Why have you come?' They said, 'We have come because this Prophet is going to appear during this month, and there is not a road left that people have not been sent to. We have been told about him, and we have been sent to this road of yours.' He asked, 'Have you left anyone behind you who is better than you?' They said, 'No. We have been told about him and sent to this road of yours.' He said, 'Do you believe that something which Allah wishes to bring about can be prevented by anyone?' They said, 'No.' Hence, they gave him their pledge, and stayed with him.

The monk then said (to the members of the caravan), 'I adjure you by Allah to tell me which of you is his guardian.' They replied, 'Abu Talib.' On being told that it was Abu Talib, he kept beseeching him to send him back (to Mecca) until he did so. And the monk supplied him with provisions of bread and olive oil."¹

¹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 64, no 2863; Ibn Jarir Al-Tabary, *Tarikh Al-Tabary*, vol. 1, p. 519; Ibn Sa`d, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 121; Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, pp. 615-616; and Al-Bayhaqy, *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 1, pp. 307-312. In his book *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah fi Dhaw' Al-Masadir Al-Asaliyah* (p. 120), Mahdi Rizqullah said: "Scholars held different opinions concerning this hadith. It was classed as *hasan* (good hadith) by Al-Tirmidhy and *sahih* (authentic) by Al-Hakim, Al-Albani, `Urjun, Shu`ayb, `Abdul-Qadir Al-Arna'ut and Ibn Hajar, but Al-Dhahabi classed it as *munkar* (rejected). He commented on it, saying: "It is a hadith that is very *munkar*. Where was Abu Bakr then?"

Ibn Hajar answered this point saying as stated in *Al-Isabah*: (vol. 1, p. 177) (705): "This story was stated based on a trustworthy chain of narrators, from the hadith of Abu Musa Al-Asha`aray. Al-Tirmidhy and other scholars transmitted it, but without mentioning the name of the monk. Yet he added in his narration a rejected part, which is his statement: Abu Bakr sent Bilal to accompany him. The reason for rejecting this part is that Abu Bakr was not eligible at the time (to act as such) and had not yet purchased Bilal. It is possible that this last sentence was taken from another hadith and inserted here by mistake by one of its narrators."

Ibn Kathir also said in *Al-Bidayah* (vol. 2, p. 289): "...it was reported by more than a hadith memorizer based on the hadith transmitted by Abu Nuh `Abdul-Rahman ibn Ghazwan Al-Khuza`i, the freed slave of Khuza`ah, who was called 'Al-Dabbi' and was known by the name Qurad. He resided in Baghdad and was one of the reliable transmitters who Al-Bukhari reported from. He was ranked as *thiqah* (trustworthy) by a group of hadith scholars and memorizers. I have not heard of anyone criticizing his reports. Nevertheless, this hadith which he reported contains an element of *gharabah* (being unique and uncorroborated by other sources)." Al-Tirmidhy classed it as *hasan gharib* (good hadith yet scarce), and said: "We do not know of it except through this chain of transmission." Al-`Abbas Al-Duri said: "No one else in this world has narrated it except Qurad ibn Nuh. Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma`in heard it from him for its uniqueness and scarcity." It was also reported by Al-Bayhaqy and Ibn `Asakir. I commented, saying: "This story was mentioned and cited as proof by Ibn Taymiyyah in *Al-Jawab Al-Sahih*, vol. 2, pp. 72-79, and Ibn Al-Qayyim in *Zad Al-Ma`ad*, vol. 1, p. 76. Also see *Sahih Al-Tirmidhy* by Al-Albani, vol. 3, p. 191."

The Christian monk referred to here was Bahira. He was able to recognize the Prophet (PBUH) through the knowledge he had acquired about him from the study of the scripture.

The man from pre-Islamic time who turned to Christianity

Waraqah ibn Nawfal was a man searching for the light and the truth and the true religion. He had a companion named Zayd ibn `Amr ibn Nufayl, who adopted the same stance. They both denounced the *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and idolatry of the Meccan people. They left Mecca in search of the true religion, until they reached a monk in Mosul who said to them, “The one you are seeking is about to appear in your land.”¹

They also travelled to Syria. After Zayd ibn `Amr ibn Nufayl asked the Jewish and Christian scholars there about the true religion to follow, they guided him to the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham, PBUH). Afterwards, he used to raise his hand and say, ‘O Allah, I make You my Witness that I am of the religion of Ibrahim.’ Zayd also abstained from eating from the animals sacrificed by the Quraish, and he used to say: “Allah created the sheep; He sent down water for it from the sky and caused food to grow for it from the earth, then you slaughter it in a name other than that of Allah!”²

Zayd died as a follower of the religion of Ibrahim (PBUH) before Allah had appointed Muhammad as His Prophet and Messenger (PBUH). It is important to know that he was forty

¹ Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 439, and he classed it as *sahih* (authentic); Al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 2, pp. 124-126; Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 162; Dawud At-Tayalisi, *Tartib Musnad Al-Tayalisi* compiled by Al-Banna, vol. 2, p. 161, and Mahdi Rizqullah, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah fi Dhaw' Al-Masadir Al-Asaliyah*, based on the transmitting chain of *Al-Tayalisi*; and he declared it to be *hasan lighairihi* (sound due to other supporting chains and narrations).

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 176, no. 3826 and 3827.

when he was entrusted with the message and commissioned with prophethood.

At the time Zayd embraced the religion of Ibrahim (PBUH), his friend and lifelong companion, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, embraced Christianity. He transcribed some portions of the Gospel into Hebrew and Arabic as well, as he had mastered both languages. Waraqah was the paternal uncle of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Waraqah stayed in Mecca, keeping to the faith of the Christians at that time, until he grew old and blind. He lived with a reputation of being knowledgeable, forbearing, wise, and sagacious, then the following incident occurred:

The incident

Muhammad (PBUH) used to seclude himself in the Cave of Hira' in Mecca, away from the false beliefs of the *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and their ignorance. There he would worship his Lord—in accordance with the religion of Ibrahim—for several consecutive nights. Then he would return to his wife and replenish his provisions to go into seclusion again in the Cave. This continued until the truth descended upon him. The Angel came to him and said, "Read." He replied, "I am not a reader (i.e., I do not know how to read)."

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) narrated, "He (Angel Gabriel) took hold of me and embraced me so hard that I could not bear it anymore (i.e., I held my breath), then he released me and said, 'Read.' Then, for the second time, he embraced me tightly until I could not bear it anymore, then he released me and said, 'Read.' I said, 'I am not a reader.' Then, for the third time, he embraced me tightly until I could not bear it anymore, and then he released me and said, '*Read in the Name of your Lord...*' (that is, you will not be reading by your own power and knowledge, but rather by

Allah's Power and Help. Just as He created you, He is now teaching you. And, just as He took out Satan's portion, that clot of blood which He removed from your heart when you were a child, He is teaching your *Ummah* (worldwide followers and community) to write by the pen, after being illiterates. *'Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created the human from `Alaq (literally, clinging clot). Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught by the pen. He has taught the human that which he knew not.'*" (Al-`Alaq 96:1-5)

Then he returned with the revelation, his heart shivering with terror until he got home to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" She covered him until his terror had subsided, after which he told Khadijah everything that had happened. He said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadijah replied, "Never! Accept the glad tidings, for by Allah, Allah will never disgrace you; you keep good relations with your kith and kin, speak the truth, help the needy, provide for the destitute, serve your guest generously, and assist calamity-stricken people."

Khadijah then accompanied him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal. She said, "O my cousin! Listen to your nephew." Waraqah said to him, "O my nephew (meaning Muhammad, PBUH)! What have you seen?" The Messenger of Allah recounted to him what he had seen.

Waraqah said to him, "This is the *Namus* (the Angel who is entrusted with divine secrets, Gabriel) that Allah sent to Musa (Moses). I wish I was young and could live until the time when your people drive you out." The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah answered in the affirmative, and said, "Never did a man come with the like of what you have come with without being treated with hostility. If

I should remain alive till that day, I would support you strongly.”¹ But it was not long before Waraqah died.

This was the first time Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received the divine revelation; he was forty years old. And these were the first divinely revealed verses of the Qur’an.

It was the truth attained, through its broadest gates. Waraqah had already taken hold of one end of the rope and drawn an everlasting, perpetual bridge between Muhammad (PBUH) and all preceding prophets.

A bridge connecting them with each other that is impossible to destroy, for example, by the nuclear bombs that devastated Japan, or the smart bombs that hit Iraq, or the cluster bombs that ravaged Afghanistan, or the “big terrorism hoax” under the cover of which the followers of Muhammad (PBUH) are being chased worldwide!

The Christian king who became a Muslim

The kings of Abyssinia wore the title of Negus, just as the kings of Egypt wore the title of Pharaoh. At that time, the Abyssinian land was much bigger in size, extending beyond its present geographic boundaries. Even the Sudanese tribes had to pay allegiance to the Negus.

The name of the Negus who ruled at the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was As-hamah. He was a just king; no one under his reign was wronged. His faith was Christianity. When the persecution exercised by the *Mushrikin* in Mecca against Prophet Muhammad and his followers intensified, Prophet Muhammad gave many Muslims permission to emigrate to Abyssinia, where they could worship Allah in an atmosphere of justice and freedom, under the sovereignty of this just ruler.

¹ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, in some places of the book – see *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 30, no. 3; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 139, no. 160, in addition to other scholars.

Gradually, successive Muslim emigrants arrived in Abyssinia until they totaled nearly eighty men and eighteen women.

This clever tactic aroused the anxiety of the *Mushrikin*, who resorted to a policy widely used by today's media to obstruct the truth and distort reality. They dispatched two envoys, named `Amr ibn Al-`As and `Umarah ibn Al-Walid, to the Negus with gifts.

When they reached the Negus, they fell in prostration to him, and then stood to his right and left. They said to him, "Some of our cousins have taken up residence in your land, after having abandoned us and our religion." He asked, "Where are they?" They said, "They are in your land. Send for them." So the Negus summoned them (the Muslims). Ja`far said to the Muslims, "I will be your spokesman today." They followed him, and when he was in the presence of the Negus, he made salutation without prostrating himself. They (those present with the Negus) asked him, "What is wrong with you? Why do you not prostrate to the king?" Ja`far said, "We only prostrate to Allah, the Exalted and the Glorious." The Negus asked him, "Why is that?" Ja`far said, "Allah has sent us a Messenger from Him. He ordered us not to prostrate to anyone except Allah, the Exalted and the Glorious. He also ordered us to offer prayer and give charity." `Amr bin Al-`As commented, "They contradict your creed about `Isa, son of Maryam." The Negus asked, "What do you say about `Isa and his mother Maryam?" Ja`far replied, "We only say what Allah says about him; that he is Allah's Word and a soul He created and sent down to the Ascetic Virgin whom no man had touched and who never bore any children before (the Christ)."

At this, the Negus picked up a straw from the ground and said, "O Abyssinian people, priests, and monks! By Allah, these people have not added even the extent of this (straw) to what we say about him. Welcome to you and to the man from whom you have come. I bear witness that he is the Messenger of Allah

(PBUH) and the one (whose description) we find in the *Injil* (the Gospel). He is the Messenger who `Isa, son of Maryam, foretold the good news of his advent. Stay wherever you wish. By Allah, had I not been entrusted with the responsibilities of kingship, I would have gone to him so that I could be the one who carries his sandals and pours out water for his ablution.” The king then ordered that the gifts of the *Musbrikin* be returned to them.¹

Among the many signs testifying to the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) was his proclaiming to the Muslims, while in Medina in the ninth year of Hijrah, the death of the Negus, on the very same date he died.

The present fast means of communication did not exist at that time. Rather, it was the connection of heaven with the earth. The source of his knowledge was divine revelation and he announced it by saying: “*A righteous man died today. Get up and offer the funeral prayer for your brother As-hamah.*”²

May Allah bestow His Mercy upon you, O Negus As-hamah. You ruled with justice. You testified to the truth and it carried you straight to the heart of it; as soon as you realized the veracity of what you were told, you believed in it. At that moment, you became a winner indeed!

The Christian Byzantine Emperor Heraclius admitting the truth but not grasping hold of it!

‘Caesar’ was a title adopted by the Byzantine emperors, who established their capital in the Levant, the commercial business

¹ Imam Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 461, on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud. Ibn Kahtir said about its chain of narrators: “This is a sound and strong chain of narration and has a good *siyaq* (context).” It was stated in *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 118.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7. P. 230, no. 3877; Muslim, vol. 2, p. 657, no. 952, and Al-Nasa’y, vol. 4, p. 69, no. 1970, on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah.

region of the Arabs. The Caesar of that era, Heraclius, was a shrewd emperor. He had heard of the emergence of Muhammad (PBUH), who sent a message directly to him inviting him to Islam. Heraclius sent for the merchants from the Quraish (the tribe to which Muhammad belonged), who happened to be in the Levant and came upon his request. In Medina, Muhammad had concluded a ten-year truce with the Meccan *Mushrikin*, effective from the end of the sixth year of *Hijrah*.

One of the story's two main figures—Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, leader of the Quraish (who embraced Islam)—will now relate what occurred during this encounter:

Heraclius sent a messenger to us. We were a trading caravan from the Quraish doing business in the Levant when we made a truce with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He called us to his court in Ilya' (Jerusalem), where he was surrounded by all the senior Byzantine dignitaries. He then called for his translator who, translating Heraclius's question, asked us, "Who among you is most closely related to that man who claims to be a Prophet?"

I replied, "I am the closest relative to him (among the group)."

Heraclius said, "Bring him close to me and make his companions stand behind him."

Heraclius told his translator to tell my companions that he wanted to ask me some questions regarding Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and that if I told a lie, they (my companions) should contradict me. By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labeling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about him (the Prophet).

The first question he asked me was, "What is his lineage among you?"

I replied, "He belongs to a noble lineage among us."

Heraclius asked, “Has anybody among you ever claimed the same (i.e., to be a Prophet) before him?”

I replied, “No.”

He asked, “Were any of his ancestors a king?”

I replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Do the nobles or the weak (mostly) follow him?”

I replied, “It is the weak who follow him.”

He asked, “Are his followers increasing or decreasing (day by day)?”

I replied, “They are increasing.”

He then asked, “Has anybody among those who have embraced his religion become displeased with it (i.e., lost conviction in it) and renounced it?”

I replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Did you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?”

I replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Does he betray (break his promises)?”

I replied, “No. We are in a truce with him, but we do not know what he will do in it.” I could not find an opportunity to insert anything untruthful against him except that.

Heraclius asked, “Have you ever had a war with him?”

I replied, “Yes.”

Heraclius asked, “What was the outcome of the battles?”

I replied, “Sometimes he was victorious and, at other times, we were.”

Heraclius asked, “What does he order you to do?”

I said, “He tells us to worship Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors said (about Allah). He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste, and to keep good relations with our kith and kin.”

Heraclius asked his translator to convey to me the following, “I asked you about his family background and your reply was that he belonged to a noble lineage. In fact, all the Messengers come from noble lineages among their respective peoples ... I asked you whether anybody else among you claimed such a thing, and your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man was imitating the previous man’s claim ... Then I asked you whether any of his ancestors was a king. Your reply was in the negative, and if it had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his ancestral kingdom ... I further asked whether he had ever been accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So I knew that he would not have refrained from lying to people and then lie about Allah ... I then asked you whether the nobles or the weak among people followed him. You replied that it was the weak who followed him. They, in fact, have always been the followers of the Messengers ... I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were increasing, and indeed such is the way of true faith, until it is complete in all respects ... I further asked you whether there was anybody, who, after embracing his religion, became disaffected and abandoned his religion. Your reply was in the negative, and in fact this is (the sign of) true faith, when its delight blends completely into the hearts ... I asked you whether he had ever betrayed anyone. You replied in the negative, and likewise the Messengers never betray ... Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship Allah and not to worship anything

along with Him, and forbade you from worshiping idols, and ordered you to pray, to speak the truth and to be chaste. If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place underneath my feet. I knew (from the Scriptures) that he was going to appear, but I did not expect that he would be from you ... If I was sure I could reach him, I would (readily) take the trouble to meet him. And if I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet.”

Caesar then asked for the letter sent to him by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and it was read. Its contents were the following:

“In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever Merciful.

From Muhammad, the Slave of Allah and His Messenger, to Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantium.

May peace be upon those who follow the guidance!

To proceed, I am inviting you with the Call of Islam (that is, the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger). Become Muslim (i.e., surrender to Allah) and you will be safe. Become Muslim, and Allah will give you a double reward. But if you turn away, upon you shall rest the sin of the Arisiyin (peasants, i.e., his subjects and followers). (Almighty Allah says): *‘Say (O Muhammad): O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e., those who have surrendered to Allah).’* (Al `Imran 3:64)”

Abu Sufyan recounted, “When Heraclius had finished his speech and read the letter, there was a great hue and cry in the royal court. So, we were escorted out. After we were sent out, I said to my companions, “The matter of Ibn Abu Kabshah [i.e., Prophet Muhammad] has become so prominent that even the King of Banu Al-Asfar (the Byzantines) is afraid of him.” Then I became

certain that he (i.e., the Prophet) would eventually emerge victorious, and Allah led me to embrace Islam.”¹

I remember the remarkable and unforgettable impression this fascinating historical account left upon me when I first heard it. I deeply admired the shrewdness of Heraclius, the profoundly sensible deductions he made, and then his testifying to truth. I long marveled at the eloquence of Abu Sufyan; his superb style and honest accounts. Believe me when I say that my heart is throbbing up to this moment, as I write this, and my pen halts in honor and veneration for Muhammad (PBUH), and the lucidity and succinctness of his message.

Allah willed goodness for Abu Sufyan, who embraced Islam in the Year of the Victory of Mecca, after the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) soothed and lifted his spirits with his announcement: “...*anyone who enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe...*”²

Heraclius, on the other hand, was gripped by the desire to believe and embrace Islam, but was overcome by a fear of death and the termination of his reign—especially after he tested the reaction of his people and Christian scholars, as related in the following account:

Heraclius invited all the heads of the Byzantines to assemble in his palace at Homs (a city in Syria). When they had assembled, he ordered that all the doors of his palace be closed. Then he came out and said, “O Byzantines! If success is your desire, and if you seek correct guidance and want your empire to remain, then give a pledge of allegiance to this Prophet (i.e., Muhammad) by embracing Islam.”

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 42, no. 7, and in several other places in the book; Muslim, vol. 3, p.1393, no. 1773, and other scholars reported it as well.

² Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1405, no. 1780; and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 292, and other scholars reported it.

On hearing the statement of Heraclius, the people turned away in aversion and ran towards the gates of the palace, which they found closed. Heraclius realized their hatred of Islam, and when he lost hope of their embracing Islam, he ordered that they be brought back to him. When they returned, he stated, “What I said was just to test the strength of your conviction about your religion, and I have seen it.” The people then prostrated before him and became pleased with him.¹

The clear indication here is that some people, driven by material greed, an unwholesome cultural environment, bad intentions, or inner malice, may be pulled away from the truth, and so Allah does not will guidance for them. “*And he for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.*” (Al-Nur 24:40)

Salman, the Magus Persian—A Christian who became Muslim

Have you ever heard of a man who agreed to lose all his property and family for the sake of gaining the truth? Have you ever known a man who surmounted difficulties, conquered his passions, and roamed the deserts and wilderness at a time when the sole means of traveling was one’s own feet—or a pair of sandals or hooves—in the scorching sand until he reached the shore of light? He recognized the truth the moment his gaze caught sight of it, and on he sailed in it, peacefully and happily.

Let me not ruin the story for you by expressing it in my own words. Let us hear it from the one who lived it—Salman, the Persian: I was a Persian man from the people of Isfahan, from a village called Jayy. My father was the village chief. I was the dearest of Allah’s creation to him. His love for me went to such lengths that he kept me shut up in his house as though I were a

¹ See Al-Bukhari, as cited in a previous footnote; and see *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 44, no. 7.

girl. In time, I exerted myself in fire-worship until I became the keeper of the fire; the one who would kindle it and not let it to go out for a moment.

My father owned a large country estate, and one day he was very busy with some building, so he said to me, "O my son, I am too busy with this building today to go to my estate. Go there and check on it." He told me some things that he wanted to get done there. I left for the estate, and as I passed by one of the Christian churches, I heard voices praying. I had no idea about the ways of other people because my father had kept me confined to his house.

So, when I came across those people in the church and heard their voices, I went inside to see what they were doing. When I saw them, I liked their prayers and I felt drawn to their worship. I said to myself, "By Allah, this is better than the religion we are following." By Allah, I did not leave them until the sun had set, and I did not go to my father's estate. Then I asked them, "Where did this religion originate?" They said, "In the Levant."

I went back to my father, who had had been distracted from his work and sent people out to look for me. When I came to him, he said, "O my son, where have you been? Did I not entrust you with an assignment?" I said to him, "O my father, I passed by some people who were praying in their church, and I liked what I saw of their religion. By Allah, I stayed with them until sunset." He said, "O my son, there is nothing good in that religion. Your religion and that of your forefathers is better than it." I said to him, "No, by Allah, it is better than our religion." After this, my father became apprehensive about what I might do, so he put fetters on my feet and imprisoned me in his house.

I sent word to the Christians, telling them, "If any caravan of Christian merchants comes to you from the Levant, let me know." When the next caravan of Christian merchants came to them from the Levant, they let me know. I said to them, "When

they have finished their business and want to go back to their land, tell me.” So, when they wanted to go back to their land, they told me. I thus threw the chains off my feet and went with them to the Levant.

Upon my arrival, I asked them, “Who is the most knowledgeable man of this religion?” They replied, “The bishop in the church.” I therefore went to him and said, “I like this religion, and I would like to stay with you and serve you in your church and learn from you and pray with you.” He said, “You may come in,” so I joined him. But he was a wicked man who commanded and exhorted the people to give charity, only to keep whatever they collected for himself. He did not give it to the poor. Eventually he had heaped up seven jars of gold and silver. I hated him intensely for what I saw him doing. Then he died, and the Christians assembled to bury him. I told them, “He was a wicked man. He commanded and exhorted you to give charity, and when you brought it to him, he hoarded it for himself and gave none of it to the poor.” They asked, “How do you know this?” I replied, “I will lead you to his treasure.” They said, “Lead us to it!” I showed them where it was and they brought out the seven jars filled with gold and silver. They said, “By Allah, we will never bury him.” They crucified him and then pelted him with stones.

Then they brought another man to take his place. I never saw anyone who offered the prayers better than him (the new bishop), nor a man more detached from this worldly life and attached to the Hereafter, nor more diligent in worship both day and night. I loved him as I had never loved anyone before. I stayed with him for a time and then, when he was approaching death, I asked him, “I stayed with you and loved you as I have never loved anyone before, and now the Decree of Allah has come to you as you see; to whom do you advise me to go? What do you command me to do?”

He replied, "O my son, by Allah, I do not know of anyone today who follows the same path I followed. The people have died; they have either changed or abandoned most of what they used to follow, except for a man in Mosul (a major, well-known city in Iraq). He is on the path I was on, so go and join him." When he died and was buried, I joined the bishop of Mosul. I said to him, "Such-and-such a person advised me, as he was dying, to come to you, and he informed me that you are following the same path he followed." He said to me, "Stay with me," and so I stayed with him. I found him to be the best man, following the path of his companion (predecessor), but it was not long before he also died. When he was dying, I said to him, "Such-and-such a person advised me to come and join you, but now there has come to you from Allah what you see. To whom do you advise me to go? What do you command me to do?"

He said, "O my son, by Allah, I do not know of anyone who follows the same path we follow except for a man in Nusaybin (a city in northeastern Syria). His name is so-and-so; go to him." When he died and was buried, I went to the man in Nusaybin and told him my story and what my companion had advised me to do. He said, "Stay with me," so I stayed with him and found him to be a follower of the same path as his two companions. I was staying with the best of men. But, by Allah, soon death came upon him. When he was dying, I said to him, "Such-and-such a person advised me to go to so-and-so, who in turn advised me to come to you. To whom do you advise me to go? What do you command me to do?"

He said, "O my son, by Allah, we do not know of anyone left who follows our way and to whom I can tell you to go, except for a man in `Amuriyah (Amorium, a city in Phrygia, now Anatolia). If you wish, go to him, for he follows our way." When he died and was buried, I went to the man in `Amuriyah and told him my story. He said, "Stay with me," so I stayed with the man,

who was on the same path as his companions. I earned some wealth, until I had some cows and sheep of my own, then the Decree of Allah came to him. When he was dying, I said to him, “You already know my story, so to whom do you advise me to go? What do you command me to do?”

He said, “O my son, by Allah, I do not know of anyone among the people who follow our way to whom I can advise you to go. But a (new) Prophet is about to emerge in your time, who will be sent with the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham PBUH). He will appear in the land of the Arabs and will migrate to a land lying between two *harrabs* (lave fields; land with black rocks), between which are palm trees. He will have manifest signs (attesting to his prophethood). He will eat of what is given as a gift but will not eat from charity, and between his shoulders will be the Seal of Prophethood. If you can go to that land, do so.”

Then he died and was buried, and I stayed in `Amuriyah for as long as Allah willed that I should. Then some merchants from the tribe of Kalb passed by me, and I said to them, “If you take me to the land of the Arabs, I will give you these cows and sheep of mine.” They agreed, so I gave them the animals and they took me with them; but when we arrived in Wadi Al-Qura (a city north of Medina, lying midway between Hejaz of Saudi Arabia and Syria today), they betrayed me and sold me as a slave to a Jewish man.

I stayed with the Jewish man and saw the palm trees, hoping this was the land my companion had described to me, yet I was not sure. While I was with him, a cousin of his from Banu Qurayzah (a Jewish tribe) came to him from Medina and bought me from him, and took me to Medina.

By Allah, as soon as I saw it, I recognized it from the description given to me by my companion. I stayed there, and Allah sent His Messenger (PBUH), who remained in Mecca for some time. But

I heard no mention of him, coupled with the toil of slavery that preoccupied me.

Then he (PBUH) migrated to Medina. By Allah, I was working at the top of a palm tree belonging to my master while he was sitting there, when a cousin of his came and stood beside him and said, “By Allah, destroy Banu Qaylah (i.e., the inhabitants of Medina who supported Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—Al-Ansar)! By Allah, right now they are assembled in Quba’ (a place on the outskirts of Medina, in which is situated the famous Quba’ Mosque) to welcome a man who has come to them from Mecca today, and they claim that he is a prophet.”

No sooner had I heard these words than a chill gripped me and I felt that I would fall upon my master.

I climbed down from the palm tree and said to his cousin, “What are you saying? What are you saying?”

This angered my master and he punched me hard, then said, “What business do you have with this? Go back to your work.”

I said, “Nothing. I just wanted to be sure of what he said.”

I had some food I had saved, so when evening came, I took it to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in Quba’. I said, “I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have some companions with you who are strangers and are in need. This is something that I have to give in charity, and I see that you are more deserving of it than anyone else.” I placed it near him, and the Messenger of Allah said to his Companions, “Eat,” but he refrained from eating himself. I said to myself, “This is one (sign).” Then I left him and started to save some more food, and when the Messenger of Allah moved to Medina, I took it to him and said, “I noticed that you do not eat what is given in charity; this is a gift with which I wish to honor you.” Therefore, the Messenger of Allah ate from it and told his Companions to eat with him. I said to myself, “These are two (signs).”

I then went to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) when he was at Baqi` Al-Gharqad (a cemetery in Medina), where he had accompanied the funeral procession of one of his Companions. He was wearing two cloaks and was sitting among his Companions. I greeted him with *salam* (PBUH), and then moved towards his back in an attempt to see the Seal (of Prophethood), which my companion had described to me. When the Messenger of Allah saw me go behind him, he knew I was trying to confirm something described to me, so he took off his cloak. I looked at the seal and recognized it. Immediately, I embraced him, kissing it (the seal) and crying.¹

Salman, the Persian, converted to Islam and uttered the testimony, declaring his acceptance of Islam: I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He then told Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) his story, who listened to it with admiration and wonder. He then wanted his Companions to hear Salman's story from his own lips.

With the Prophet's (PBUH) help and support, Salman earned his freedom from his master, and in recognition of his endeavors, the Prophet granted him a distinguished status among his Companions.

So much so that, although Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was the Prophet's (PBUH) life-long companion who was with him in the Cave and during *Hijrah*, and succeeded him as the first *Caliph* (successor in the leadership of the Muslim community), when one day Prophet Muhammad sensed that Abu Bakr might have angered Salman the Persian, Bilal the Abyssinian, and Suhaib the Roman during an incident that took place between them, he said to him, "*O Abu Bakr, perhaps you have angered them. If you did, you have angered your Lord.*"

¹ Ibn Is-haq, *Al-Siyar wa Al-Maghazi*, and Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 273-282.

Hence, Abu Bakr, who was brought up in the School of Muhammad (PBUH) and was his first outstanding student, went back to them and asked, “O my brothers, have I angered you?” to which they responded, “No, may Allah forgive you, O our brother.”¹

It was as though the Prophet (PBUH) wanted to show the whole world, that, in the sight of Islam, there is no difference between a black and a white person, or an eastern and a western person, or an Arab and a non-Arab, or a Persian and a European. Rather, excellence and honor are to be earned (and not awarded), through work and inner purification by educating one’s soul to love what pleases Allah.

Truly, Salman, you were such a hero. You suffered difficulties, endured hardships, and went through life getting tossed about between servitude and slavery, although your father occupied the position of the village chief. For what reason, Salman?

It is as though I can hear the Truth answering on your behalf, saying: “So that Salman would set an ideal example and be a superb role model for every truth-seeker to follow, leaving his indelible footsteps as the guiding landmarks, and the irrefutable proof, carved out with both his hands, that there is a divine inner aim, innately instilled within the souls of human beings, for which they search keenly.” It is the religion of Muhammad (PBUH).

¹ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 3, p. 1947, no. 2504, and Imam Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 64.

7- The Russian litterateur and the Scottish historian

Now, I find myself obliged to soar with you beyond time, since Islam was not limited to some Arab or Christian or Jewish individuals entering the religion of Muhammad (PBUH). Rather, there were delegations and communities flowing from everywhere to delight their eyes with the sight of the Prophet and, willingly and lovingly, believe in him.

But there is nothing to wonder about here; these people personally saw the clear and bright evidence of his prophethood and the sacredness of his message. The wonder is that some people still live entangled in the snares of denial, doubt, misconception, and confusion!

Over a billion and a half Muslims exist worldwide today, despite facing continual mass annihilation and genocide, not to mention the millions of Muslims who preceded them. Is it reasonable to believe that all these people have been deceived by a fraudulent scheme?

The famous Scottish historian and writer Thomas Carlyle said it very well in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*: “Our current hypotheses about Mahomet (Muhammad), that he was a scheming impostor, a falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only ... The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty million men these twelve-hundred years. These hundred-and-eighty million were made by God as well as we ... Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition ... One would be entirely at a loss what to think of

this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here ... More godless theory, I think, was never promulgated on this Earth. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he does not know and follow truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay, and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries, to lodge a hundred-and-eighty million; it will fall straightway.”

Often, we drift into various thoughts and beliefs and cling too stubbornly to opinions that we soon discover to be wrong.

The problem does not lie with the discovery of faulty opinions; it lies with the insistence on them. Then, after realization, how wonderful is the rational boldness, which leads a person to abandon a fallacious view or attitude and adopt the correct one—even if this involves loss as part of the decision.

The world-renowned Russian author Leo Tolstoy stood among the creative thinkers who applied this logical rule. Because of his defense of Muhammad (PBUH), he was deprived by the Pope of Allah’s Mercy after he criticized some extremist orientalist for imputing false accusations to Muhammad. Tolstoy wrote assertively that, “Prophet Muhammad is one of the greatest reformers who rendered extensive service to the human community.”

Tolstoy was deeply impressed by the personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as evident in his works; in his article entitled ‘*Who is Muhammad?*’ he wrote: “Muhammad is both a founder and a Messenger. He was among the great men who served the social framework profoundly. It suffices him that he guided an entire nation to the light of truth and made it incline towards peace and tranquility, prefer modest life, and prevented it from shedding blood and giving human sacrifices, and opened for it the way to progress and civilization. This is a great deed

that only a strong man can do and a man like him is worthy of respect and admiration.”

Does a man who speaks such judicious words, I would ask you, deserve to be cast out of papal mercy? But really, is there any such thing as ‘papal mercy’? I believe the real reason behind the exclusion of Tolstoy and other luminaries from papal mercy was their laying bare the falsity of this mercy law ingrained in Christian dogma, and finding true mercy when they gained accurate knowledge about Islam and the person of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

8- Nothing to be done with the doubtful

While the Qur'an was not the only miracle given to Muhammad (PBUH), it was the greatest, most enduring, and most conclusive.

Besides the Qur'an, there were many other physical miracles, signs of prophethood, and extraordinary occurrences during the Prophet's (PBUH) life, which Muslim scholars have collected into special compilations.

The Qur'an, along with the Sunnah, narrates the stories of the previous prophets of Allah and the past generations of humanity, which we would not have known about were it not for the mercy that Allah extended to us in Muhammad (PBUH).

What is overwhelmingly astonishing is that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) foretold of future events that occurred after his death. Some of them have happened exactly as he described, while others are still expected and awaited.

Muhammad (PBUH) did not derive all this knowledge from his own self, for he did not know the Unseen (past, present, or future). He spoke only what was revealed to him by Allah. In Arabic, this is called *Wahy* (direct knowledge through divine inspiration and revelations). Allah (Glorified be He) says, "*(He Alone is) the All-Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His Unseen. Except to a Messenger (from humankind) whom He has chosen...*" (Al-Jinn 72:26-27)

Now let me display before your inner eyes a few select events that are of great significance:

(1) Muhammad's (PBUH) ascension to Mount Uhud in Medina in the company of Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them all). Addressing the mountain, (which began to tremble underneath them out of honor and joy), he

said, “Steady! For on you there is none but a Prophet, a veracious one (*Siddiq*), and two martyrs.”¹

These three men, as is well known, were his Caliphs (successors) after his death. He (PBUH) was referring to himself by “Prophet”, Abu Bakr by “*Siddiq*,” and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and `Uthman ibn `Affan by “the two martyrs.” Then history books recorded how `Umar was killed while praying near the *mibrab* (prayer niche), and thus earned his title “the Martyr of *Mibrab*.” `Uthman was killed while reciting the Qur’an. His blood dripped onto the pages of the Qur’an before him, each drop a witness of the prophethood of Muhammad.

(2) Muhammad’s (PBUH) prediction that the Caliphate, after prophethood, would last for thirty years, after which it would turn into a kingship.² This happened under the Umayyad dynasty, when they took the reins of sovereignty into their hands. How could Muhammad (PBUH) have known this, if it were not through prophethood and divine revelation?

(3) Muhammad’s (PBUH) prediction that “*a fire will come out of the land of Hejaz, and it will throw light on the necks of the camels at Busra.*”³ Busra was a town in the Syrian Hawran region. In 654 A.H., many eyewitnesses in Busra could see from a far-off distance at night the necks of camels illuminated by the glow and light of this fire. This fire appeared in some valleys of Medina and lasted for a month until it inspired poetry about it and was used as a chronological marker. It was described as twelve miles long and

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 26, no. 3675; Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 12, p. 263, no. 4637; and Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 127, no. 3944.

² Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 395, no. 2326 and he classed it as *hasan* (good hadith); and Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 12, p. 259, no. 4633.

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 13, p. 84, no. 7118 and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2228, no. 2902.

four miles wide (one mile is estimated to measure nearly three thousand *Dhira`*¹ [cubits]). It was of such intensity that it caused the stones to melt, which eventually solidified into black coal.²

On the same day I wrote about the above prediction, a newspaper headline caught my eye about huge fires in Australia that burned in the forests and mountains; water-bombing helicopters were used to put them out. I told myself that these fires resulted from either human abuse or natural disaster. As for the fire in the land of Hejaz, this was for a purpose of Allah. Perhaps the light of Muhammad's (PBUH) religion would illuminate the hearts of people, just as this fire lit up the necks of camels from as far as Busra.

(4) His prediction about “*camel-herders boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings.*”³ The people referred to here are the dwellers of the desert, whose best habitations were but a tent to sleep in. Nowadays, I see them with my own eyes, priding themselves on their grand stone and marble villas. I have even seen a small boy, with torn sandals, driving a herd of sheep until he reached his village at sunset. He then let the sheep into their fold and walked into his large two-storey house lying adjacent to it. Little did that boy know that he and his sheep were giving testimony to the truth of Muhammad's (PBUH) words.

(5) His prediction about “*the loss of interest in using the young she-camels.*”⁴ This refers to no longer traveling on camelback. It is sufficient to let airplanes, trains, and cars explain this. [Note:

¹ See *Lisan Al-`Arab*, vol. 3, p. 44 and vol. 11, p. 639; and *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit*, p. 1369.

² Ibn Kathir, *Al-Nihayah fi Al-Fitan wa Al-Malahim*, p. 11.

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 140, no. 50 and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 39, no. 9 on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

⁴ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 1, p. 136, no. 155 and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 494 and other scholars also reported it.

Consider that when the Prophet (PBUH) made this declaration, camelback was the primary means of travel.]

(6) His prediction about “*the acceleration of time*,”¹ which can be interpreted as the speed of modern transportation, communication, and media throughout the world. Within a few hours, people now can travel long distances around the world and go from east to west, and information is transmitted in a matter of seconds. [Note: “acceleration” in the hadith also includes the literal meaning of time speeding up].

(7) His prediction about “*the proximity of markets*,”² which signifies the interconnectedness of markets in a way that makes the upward and downward movement of prices global. It also refers to the ease of conducting business transactions via modern communication methods, such as phone, fax, and internet. A businessman in Mecca can now buy a commodity from as far away as Washington.

(8) His prediction about “*the spread of Zina (extramarital and premarital sexual intercourse) and drinking of intoxicants*.” Zina and the consumption of liquor have always been widespread, but never as rampant as they are today. They are easily available in a variety of types and brands. Hotels, restaurants, and companies show competitive interest in this business; some states even officially and shamelessly sponsor it for economic purposes. This reality serves to disclose how deeply immersed the world has become in sensual desires and materialism. Now, more than ever, we need the guiding light of Muhammad (PBUH).

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 13, p. 16, no. 7061; Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2057, no. 157 and Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1345, no. 4052.

² Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 519.

(9) His prediction about “*much bloodshed*”¹ and “*prevalence of sudden deaths*.”² The current violent wars and the highly destructive modern weaponry used in them are but one example. Even manmade conveniences, such transportation and communication systems, often result in deadly accidents. Added to this are the random explosions, the acts of violence, the suicide attempts, the fatal illnesses, and the heart attacks. A person may depart from your door safe and sound, only to have you receive news of his death the next day.

So, hopes are long-term, but lifetimes are short. How wrongful and wasteful of one’s existence to aimlessly keep wandering in the valleys of life!

(10) His prediction about “*the pervasiveness of the pen*,”³ which refers to the universal use of the pen and worldwide spreading of information. The millions of copies of books, magazines, and journals that are published everywhere are a clear manifestation of this.

Besides, have you reflected on the vast amount of information available through the internet in different languages? Or have the diverse means of education, dissemination of knowledge, and elimination of illiteracy passed by you unobserved?

All these matters were foretold to us by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over 1400 years ago.

The terse phrases used by the Prophet (PBUH) had clear linguistic importance to the generation of listeners who first experienced them; however, they could not have fully grasped their meanings and what they forecast. Then, they occurred in

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 213, no. 80; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2056, no. 2671.

² Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu`jam Al-Saghir*, p. 398, no. 1103.

³ Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 407.

the real world, personally observed by subsequent generations, which resulted in a greater understanding of what they stood for.

One of the special gifts that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was endowed with was *Jawami` Al-Kalim*—speech that is succinct in words, yet deep and comprehensive in meaning. A few examples among those we have already mentioned are: “*the acceleration of time,*” “*the proximity of markets,*” and “*the pervasiveness of the pen.*”

Right now, some questions are no doubt revolving in your mind. I would not even eliminate the likelihood that you wish to travel back hundreds of years to enter the City of Muhammad (PBUH), dressed in the clothing of its inhabitants, and stay among them for a while.

You can then walk into his life to see, hear, write down, and explore it yourself, and establish the truth or falsity of what people have said about Muhammad (PBUH).

I also do not believe that you should submit your mind to any one source, and close it to all else, at the cost of truth.

Just allow me to be your guide on this journey. I hope to be an honest one. Now let us start our journey together.

9- Muhammad (PBUH) enters Medina and is welcomed with joy and chanting

The world was astonished to see the American army entering Iraq, and the Iraqi people welcoming its members by throwing flowers.

Soon, however, the flowers turned into grenades. It seems that the American army had paid for the flowers!

Monday the 23rd of September 622 C.E., which corresponds to the 12th of Rabi` Al-Awwal 1. A.H., was an entirely different situation.

From the moment they heard about Muhammad's (PBUH) departure from Mecca towards Medina, the *Ansar* (the inhabitants of Medina who aided and supported the Prophet PBUH) started going out every morning to *Al-Harrab*—the direction of arrival from Mecca—and waited for him. They returned home only when overcome by the scorching noon heat.

One day, after waiting for a long time, they returned home. As they entered their houses, a Jew, who had climbed up to a high place looking for something, saw Muhammad (PBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) coming from afar, dressed in white, as if they were emerging from a desert mirage.

The Jew could not help shouting at the top of his voice, “O Arabs! Here is your Companion for whom you have been waiting!”

The inhabitants of Medina rushed from their houses to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and his Companion at *Al-Harrab* (lava field) area of Medina, with joy so great it obliterated the intense heat of the sun from their minds.

There were no guards, no army, no tanks, no airplanes, and no weapons.

Now let us proceed with earth's history, going through some of its grandest pages, most magnificent chapters, and most memorable events.

Having met with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), the people of Medina were enveloped with profound happiness. A gentle tranquility descended upon them all. They greeted him with the proper salutation befitting his prophethood status.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) then turned with them to the right and alighted with them in the neighborhood of Banu `Amr ibn `Awf, close to Medina. Abu Bakr stood up to receive the people while the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) sat in silence. (When the shade withdrew) Abu Bakr came forward and shaded him from the sun with his own cloak.

Only then did the people, who had never had the opportunity to see the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), come to know which of them was the Messenger of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) stayed with Banu `Amr ibn `Awf for fourteen nights, during which he built Quba' Mosque.¹

Then Banu Al-Najjar of Medina came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and, after greetings, said to him and his Companion, "Ride on (your she-camels) safe and respected." The Messenger of Allah and Abu Bakr rode and the *Ansar*, carrying their arms, surrounded them.²

¹ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, and also stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, pp. 281-282, no. 3906.

² Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, and also stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 294, no. 3911.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) approached the dwellings of Banu Al-Najjar, their women servants came out banging their tambourines and singing:

We are the girls of Banu Al-Najjar

How lovely to have Muhammad as a neighbor!

At this, Muhammad (PBUH) said, “*Allah knows that my heart loves you.*”¹

Everywhere in Medina, people began to eagerly look out and voices were heard shouting the news of his arrival, “The Prophet of Allah has arrived! The Prophet of Allah has arrived!” Soon enough he (PBUH) appeared, riding towards them until he stopped beside the house of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansary.

The Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), said, “*Which of our people’s houses is the closest?*”

Abu Ayyub replied, “Mine, O Prophet of Allah. This is my house and this is my door.”

He (PBUH) said, “*Go ahead and prepare accommodation for us.*” Abu Ayyub immediately went and prepared a place for both of them. He then returned to them and said, “Do come, with Allah’s Blessings.”²

The house of Abu Ayyub was two storied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) occupied the lower portion, while Abu Ayyub stayed in the upper portion. One night, Abu Ayyub became concerned that they were “...walking above the head of the Messenger of Allah!” So they (Abu Ayyub and his wife) withdrew to one corner, where they sat for the whole night. In the morning, Abu Ayyub requested that the Messenger of Allah

¹ Ibn Majah, vol. 1, p. 612, no. 1899 and Al-Bayhaqy, *Dala’il Al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 2, p. 805.

² Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1623, no. 2053.

move to the upper storey. The Messenger of Allah replied, “The lower storey is more convenient (for me and my guests).” But Abu Ayyub insisted, saying, “I will not be over a roof you are under.” So the Messenger of Allah shifted to the upper storey and Abu Ayyub to the lower.

Abu Ayyub used to prepare food for the Prophet (PBUH); and when the leftovers were brought back to him, he would seek out the part touched by the Prophet’s fingers and eat from there.

One day Abu Ayyub prepared a meal containing garlic. When the leftovers were brought back to him, he asked to be shown the spot the Prophet’s fingers had touched, but was told that the Prophet (PBUH) had not eaten at all. Dismayed, Abu Ayyub went up to him and asked, “Is it (garlic) forbidden?” The Prophet answered, “*No (it is not forbidden), but I dislike it (because of its pungent smell).*” Abu Ayyub said, “And I dislike what you dislike.” This was because the Prophet was visited by angels, and angels are offended by that which offends the children of Adam.¹

Amid this pleasant ambiance filled with love, brimming with purity, and inlaid with the lights of revelation arrived the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). It was an experience of happiness, jubilation, and successive manifestations of mercy, security, and peace never seen before.

Not far away, the Jews of Medina were watching, yet their attitude of stubbornness and arrogance blinded their eyes and deafened their ears against the truth.

Still, no matter what, Allah’s Will would be accomplished. Allah wanted to establish the truthfulness of His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) against the strenuous insistence of the Jews in their denial of this truth. It was for this reason that the following incident took place:

¹ Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1623, no. 2053.

A venerable Jewish rabbi embraces Islam

He was a descendent of Yusuf (Joseph PBUH), the son of Ya`qub (Jacob PBUH). He sought the truth, outside the influence of his environment. The Jewish rabbi heard the news of the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) while he was busy looking after a palm tree. He left it and came to the Prophet (PBUH). Now that I have introduced him to you, I will let him share his story in his own words:

“When the Prophet (PBUH) arrived in Medina, the people hurried to him, and I was among those who hurried to him. When I saw him, I immediately knew that his face was not that of a liar. The first thing I heard him say was: *‘O people, spread (the greetings of) peace, give food, join the ties of kinship, pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace.’*”¹

These words kept echoing inside the mind and soul of the Rabbi until they guided him back to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but this time he wanted to verify, through the knowledge (of Scripture) that Allah gave him, the authenticity of the teachings that this Prophet had brought.

He came to him and said, “I am going to ask you about three things that only a Prophet can answer:

What is the first sign of the Hour?

What is the first food that the people of Paradise will eat?

What causes a child to resemble his father or his mother?”

The Prophet (PBUH) replied, “*Jibril (Angel Gabriel) has just now informed me of these.*”

¹ Al-Tirmidhy, *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 7, p. 157, no. 2603 and Ibn Majah, vol. 10, p. 423, no. 1334.

The Rabbi commented, "He (Jibril) is the enemy of the Jews from among the angels."

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "*As for the first sign of the Hour, it will be a fire that will gather the people together from the east to the west. As for the first food that the people of Paradise will eat, it will be the caudate (extra) lobe of whale liver. As for the child's resemblance to either parents, if the man ejaculates first during intercourse, the child will take after the father; if the wife ejaculates first, the child will take after the mother.*"

At this, the Rabbi said, "I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah and that you have brought the truth." He then said, "O Messenger of Allah, the Jews are a people given to slander. If they should find out about my conversion to Islam before you ask them about me, they will slander me before you.

The Jews know I am their chief and the son of their chief, and I am the most knowledgeable of them and the son of the most knowledgeable of them. So send for them and ask them about me before they learn that I have become Muslim; for if they learn that I have become Muslim, they will claim untrue things about me."

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) sent for them, and they came and entered. Meanwhile, the Rabbi went inside the house to listen unseen. The Messenger of Allah said to them, "*O Jews, fear Allah, for by Allah, other than Whom there is no god, you know for certain that I am the Messenger of Allah and that I have come to you with the truth, so embrace Islam.*"

They replied, "We know nothing about this."

He (PBUH) then said to them, "*What kind of man is `Abdullah ibn Salam among you?*"

They replied, "He is our chief and the son of our chief; he is the most knowledgeable of us and the son of the most knowledgeable of us."

He (PBUH) asked, “*What would you think if he should embrace Islam?*”

They said, “Allah forbid! He would never embrace Islam.”

He (PBUH) said, “*O Ibn Salam, come out to them.*”

He (the rabbi) came out to them and said, “O Jews, fear Allah, for by Allah, other than Whom there is no god, you know for certain that he is the Messenger of Allah and that he has come to you with the truth.”

They replied, “You are lying. You are the wickedest among us and the son of the wickedest among us,” and they went on disparaging him.

The Prophet (PBUH) told them to leave. The rabbi, `Abdullah ibn Salam (may Allah be pleased with him), exclaimed, “This is what I feared, O Messenger of Allah.”¹

His entry was akin to a wave of fascinating fragrance flowing with truth into the streets of Medina and knocking on its doors with manifest proof; this was how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entered Medina—peacefully, not in war; and willingly, not by coercion. While days, years, and eras have passed, the anniversary of *Hijrah* is still radiant, with no deterioration in strength, freshness, or brilliance. Its stimulating effect is like a pleasant ballad in the mouth of humanity; or a charming melody that generations shall continue to hum whenever they thirst for the spring of dignified life, high ideals, and sublime moral values.

Who had ever before, and for the first time without precedent, marched into a city so safely, peacefully, lovingly, and in such

¹ The story of `Abdullah ibn Salam was reported in a number of hadiths in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. See *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 417, no. 3329 in addition to the *Atraf* (main parts) of the hadith.

concord, and was received with profound honor, reverence, and esteem by its people?

Has anybody heard that he marched into the city with his sword drawn in his hand, behaved violently, and created panic throughout the city? No.

It is time we stopped acting as mouthpieces for others. History is not blind. A skilled doctor may sometimes use his surgical blade to remove contaminated tissue from a wound or cut off a gangrenous portion, which, if left untreated, may progress slowly until it infects the entire body.

Would, then, such a doctor be looked upon as a terrorist or more appropriately regarded as a merciful hand offering treatment to this suffering patient?

*At Taibah¹ there remain the Prophet's relics and a luminous place,
While other relics fade and waste away.
Inedible are the signs of that inviolate abode,
Where the Guide's Pulpit stands on which he used to mount.
It stands so clear, the contours firm—and there
His precinct with a prayer-place and mosque.
There his chambers are; the Lord's Light used to descend,
To make him for others a light and warmth;
Signs which will not be effaced as time goes by,
Finding renewal in each decay.²*

¹ The name of the City of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), more commonly known as Medina.

² A poem by Hassan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him). See *Tahdhib Sirat Ibn Hisham* by `Abdul-Salam Harun, p. 308.

10- Apology

I apologize for what has come before and what is yet to come.

When writing about a renowned president who carried out their leadership responsibilities efficiently, it is necessary to examine the characteristics that distinguished them from other presidents. If the person you are writing about is a philanthropist, you will focus on their love of people. If they are a philosopher or a sage, you will discern how their words have been met with appreciation.

Allah (Exalted be He) has given people different tastes and interests. Every individual is created for a purpose.

Take a moment to consider what it would be like if these skills and qualities—and many more admirable ones—were assembled in one man, thus qualifying him to be the model of human perfection.

Despite the depth of the undertaking, I was driven by the power of academic tenacity to venture into writing about Muhammad (PBUH). I slowly rowed my modest boat across this enormous sea, only to find its waters tranquil, majestic, magnificent, and full of secrets.

Amid this breathtaking sea that has fascinated me with its exquisite blueness and beauty, what can my boat possibly represent?

I wish you could pay me a visit just to take a glance at my office, with my books spread all around. My wife brings me a cup of tea with a smile on her face, but can find no place to put it down.

But do not rush to accuse me of disarray. If you think about the huge number of books that have been written about Muhammad (PBUH), you will excuse the state of my office.

According to a statistical study done more than ninety years ago, the biographies of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in European languages alone, totaled approximately thirteen hundred! This number will be even greater if we add all the books written in all languages during the last ninety years.

In his book *'An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran'*, published in 1870, John Davenport wrote, "It may be truly affirmed that of all known legislators and conquerors, not one can be named, the history of whose life has been written with greater authenticity and fuller detail, than that of Mohammed."

In one of a series of lectures on *'Mohammed and Mohammedanism'*, published in 1874, Reginald Bosworth Smith, late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, said, "We know indeed some fragments of a fragment of Christ's life; but who can lift the veil of the thirty years that prepared the way for the three? ... But in Mohammedanism (Islam) everything is different; here, instead of the shadowy and the mysterious we have history. We know as much of Mohammed as we do even of Luther and Milton. The mythical, the legendary, the supernatural is almost wanting in the original Arab authorities, or at all events can easily be distinguished from what is historical. Nobody here is the dupe of himself or of others; there is the full light of day upon all that that light can ever reach at all..."

No one among international personalities, in any era, has been written about more than Muhammad (PBUH).

In his book *'Mohammed and the Rise of Islam'*, published in 1905, David Samuel Margoliouth wrote: "The biographers of the Prophet Muhammed form a long series which it is impossible to end, but in which it would be honorable to find a place."

When Michael H. Hart, originally an astrophysicist, published his best seller *'The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in*

History', he placed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) first in his list of the world's one hundred most significant historical figures.

I guess you have excused me now.

You may be surprised to learn that the Medinan era, which witnessed the establishment and flourishing of the Islamic nation by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Medina from the day he entered it, spanned only ten years.

By Allah, it was as though each of these ten years was ten in itself; there were ten years in time, and over one hundred years in terms of deeds, morals, ethics, and life history.

To state that the Glorious Qur'an is Allah's Miraculous Book carries the implication, in my view, that the Prophet's (PBUH) life history was no less of a miracle.

For this reason, when his wife, Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), was asked about the manners and morals of Messenger Muhammad (PBUH), she did not make a long speech. As an eyewitness to his life and conduct, her smart reply was short: "*His manners were (that of) the Qur'an.*"¹

Lady `Aishah thus referred people to the Qur'an; he (PBUH) was a living embodiment of the Qur'an in words and behavior.

Regarding myself, my excuse is that comprehension inevitably falls short, ink dries fast, and human life comes to an end, but the sun of truth is imperishable. I recall, in the middle of this sea, Allah's Saying: "*As for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is for the good of humankind remains in the earth.*" (Al-Ra`d 13:17)

I have no further words to say except: O Allah, please accept our apology regarding Your Beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

¹ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 513, no. 746, and Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 4, p. 153, no. 1338.

11- The image of Muhammad (PBUH)

The Western and European world has documented much of its civilization and history through drawing and painting. Such drawings and paintings hold profound meaning and significance for them.

For the Arabs, the art of eloquent and effective language, comprising both poetry and prose, has acted as their collective memoir and record of history, in which they take great pride. Hence, Arabic poetry is referred to as *Diwan Al-Arab* (i.e., the register of the Arabs to preserve cultural heritage).

Some of their poetic words are powerful enough to enable reader to see exactly what the poet wanted them to see. Furthermore, some Arab poets, although illiterate, were quite eloquent and gifted with inspirational poetry. Let us read, for instance, how an *Ansari* poet (Qais ibn Sirmah), from the people of Medina, described Muhammad (PBUH) and his Islamic call:

*He remained among Quraish for thirteen years,
Reminding them (of Allah) and hoping to find someone,
Who would be a friend to him and support him,
Presenting himself to the people in the festivals,
But he found none who would give him a home,
And he found none who would invite him,
Then when he came to us, having made up his mind,
And he became happy and pleased with Taibah (Al-Madinah),
And he no longer feared the oppression of a far off tyrant,
Nor feared a rebel from among mankind,
We sacrificed our lawful wealth for him,
And (we sacrificed) ourselves in times of war,
And we shared with him our worldly goods,
Opposing all of those people who opposed him,
Even though they had been beloved to us,
And we know that there is no lord besides Allah,
And the Book of Allah became our only guide.*

But even the eloquence of the Arabs was weak when compared to Muhammad (PBUH), who lived among them, a model of moral excellence and physical perfection.

Hearts, as a natural consequence, overflowed with reverence for him. People sacrificed their own lives for the preservation of his life, and upheld respect for him in a way unprecedented in history. Those who lived close to him and shared his path loved him to the point of passion, not caring whether their heads were torn off their shoulders, but only caring that not the least bit of

harm, not even the slightest scratch, should be done to Muhammad (PBUH). People would not have felt such a depth of love for him unless the portion of human perfection bestowed on Muhammad, which usually causes feelings of ardent love, was to a degree never bestowed on any human before him.

Allah (Glorified and Sanctified is His Name) would only send His Final Prophet and Messenger (PBUH) in the most graceful and attractive outer form, which, while dazzling to the eyes, would not cause unbearable attraction leading to infatuation—as happened to the women who fell in love with Prophet Yusuf (Joseph PBUH). Rather, he glowed with dignity and loftiness, and had an appearance of grace and serene respectability.¹

It is no secret the pleasant impact a good looking appearance has on the souls of those who received the message, and how it inspires acceptance and delight in it. And make no mistake about it, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us that anyone who has seen him in a dream, has really seen him, for Satan can never appear in his form.²

Muhammad (PBUH) was:

A man whose cleanliness was apparent and face was luminous.³
As if the sun was moving on his face.⁴

¹ Regarding the Prophet's (PBUH) dignity and humility, it was narrated in Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1101, no. 3312, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, that a man once came to the Prophet, and as he spoke to him, he started to tremble with awe. The Prophet said to him, "*Take it easy. I am not a king. I am just a man whose mother used to eat dried meat.*"

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 244, no. 110 and Muslim vol. 4, p. 1775, no. 2266 based on the hadith related by Abu Hurairah.

³ As stated in the famous hadith giving the physical description of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Umm Ma'bad, it was reported by Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, pp. 230-231, Al-Baghawi, *Sharh Al-Sunnah*, vol. 13, p. 261, no. 3704, Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, vol. 3, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892 and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 380 based on the hadith related by Abu Hurairah.

His face beamed like a moon on a full moon night.¹

Like the sun and moon in radiance and roundness.²

Whenever he (PBUH) was pleased, his face would shine, as if it were a piece of the moon.³

He (PBUH) was handsome, with ideally proportioned features.⁴

His complexion was ruddy (*azhar*, rosy white or white tinged with redness); neither extremely white (*ambaq*),⁵ nor extremely red.

His eyes were large⁶ with wide, jet-black pupils.⁷

His eyelashes were long.⁸

His eyes looked as if they were kohl-rimmed, although he (PBUH) did not use kohl.⁹

¹ The wording used here is that of the hadith related on the authority of Hind bint Halah. It was reported by Al-Tirmidhy, *Shama'il*, pp. 34-38, no. 8; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 422, and Al-Baghawi, *Sharh Al-Sunnah*, vol. 13, p. 269, no. 3705.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 653, no. 3552 based on the hadith of Al-Bara' and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1823, no. 2344 based on the hadith of Jabir ibn Samurah.

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 653, no. 3556 based on the hadith of Ka'b ibn Malik.

⁴ Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 63.

⁵ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3547 based on the hadith of Anas; the wording is according to the previously referred to hadith by Hind. See: Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 63.

⁶ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 1820, no. 2339 and Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 90, no. 3891.

⁷ According to the hadith related by `Ali ibn Abu Talib. It was reported by Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 82, no. 3882 and in his book of *Shama'il*, p. 32, no.7; and by Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, pp. 410 and Al-Baghawi, *Sharh Al-Sunnah*, vol. 13, p. 375, no. 3706 & 3707.

⁸ Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 1820, no. 2339 and Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 90, no. 3891.

⁹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 89, no. 3889.

He (PBUH) had fine, long, arched eyebrows that did not meet (were not joined).¹

His nose was high-tipped and slender.²

His mouth was large with finely shaped lips³ (the Arabs saw this feature as praiseworthy in men and took it as a sign of eloquence and clear pronunciation, and disparaged extremely small mouths).⁴

He (PBUH) had small, even spaces between his front teeth.⁵

His teeth were bright, slim, and evenly spaced.⁶

When he (PBUH) spoke, it seemed as if a light issued from between his teeth.⁷

He (PBUH) had an aura of dignity around him when he was silent, and an aura of splendor when he spoke.

He (PBUH) was well-spoken, clear in what he said, saying neither too much nor too little.

His words flowed forth like a perfect string of pearls.

His hair was jet black, reaching his earlobes,⁸ neither very curly nor completely straight (but slightly wavy).¹

¹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. See: Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 2, p. 296 and vo. 4, p. 54.

² Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 116. Also see *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 8, p. 279, the hadith of Hind.

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3547 based on the hadith of Anas.

⁴ Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 96. See *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 8, p. 279, the hadith of Hind.

⁵ Al-Tirmidhy, *Shama'il*, p. 41, no.15; Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu`jam Al-Awsat* and *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir*, vol. 11, p. 416 and Al-Bayhaqy, *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 1, p. 215. *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 468.

⁶ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 2, p. 503 and *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 8, p. 279.

⁷ Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 96. See: *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 8, p. 279, the hadith of Hind.

⁸ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3551 based on the hadith of Al-Bara'.

He (PBUH) had a thick beard² (dense-haired, without being long or thin),³ as was characteristic of all prophets.

When he (PBUH) died, he had scarcely twenty white hairs on his head and in his beard.⁴

His stature was neither too tall nor short (he was not exceedingly tall, nor was he short, but rather a little above middling stature).⁵

His appearance was not marred by a large stomach or a small head.⁶

His neck was moderately long, with the beauty, clarity, and whiteness of silver.⁷

He (PBUH) was broad-chested and broad-shouldered, and his stomach and chest were in line.⁸

The bones of his joints (e.g., elbows and knees, etc.) were strong and large; likewise; his upper back was broad and well-muscled.⁹

He (PBUH) had thick, sturdy fingers and toes (a praiseworthy quality in men).¹

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3548 and a similar hadith was also reported by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1819, no. 2338.

² According to the previously referred to hadith by Hind. Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. It was also reported by Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 4, p. 1823, p. 2344 based on the hadith of Jabir ibn Samurah who said: "He (PBUH) had a thick beard."

³ *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 152.

⁴ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3548 and a similar hadith was also reported by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1819, no. 2338.

⁵ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3549.

⁶ The physical description of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Umm Ma'bad. Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, pp. 230-231, Al-Baghawi, *Sharh Al-Sunnah*, vol. 13, p. 261, no. 3704, Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, vol. 3, pp. 9-10.

⁷ The meaning of what was stated in the physical description of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Umm Ma'bad and the hadith on the authority of Hind.

⁸ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892 and Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 380 based on the hadith related by Abu Hurairah.

⁹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 333 and *Shama'il*, pp. 33-34-37.

His skin was smooth and his palms were soft, even softer than silk and brocade.²

He (PBUH) had little flesh on his heels.³

His insteps were arched (to an appropriate degree, neither high-arched nor flat), and the soles of his feet were so smooth that water rolled off them quickly (and did not become trapped because of their smoothness and cleanliness).⁴

When he (PBUH) walked, it seemed as if he was striding downhill (due to his very brisk and active gait, by nature and not affectation).⁵

Whenever he (PBUH) turned, he would turn with his whole body.⁶

He (PBUH) was given the strength of thirty men.⁷

Thus, Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) attributes combined beauty and strength on the physical level, and emotional and intellectual qualities of human nature on the psychological level. They existed in him in the most perfect and complete manner, as befitted the exalted position of prophethood and the honorable status of humankind. For he would serve as the universal exemplar and role model for all humans, being himself one of them.

¹ According to the wording of the hadith related on the authority of Hind bint Halah and `Ai. Al-Tirmidhy, *Shama'il*, p. 34. It was also reported by Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 369, no. 5907.

² *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 654, no. 3561 based on the hadith of Anas: "I have never touched silk or brocade softer than the palm of the Prophet (PBUH).

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 652, no. 3547 based on the hadith of Anas; the wording is according to the previously referred to hadith by Hind.

⁴ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892.

⁵ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892. Also found in *Shama'il* p. 38.

⁶ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892.

⁷ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 449, no. 268.

When striving to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), emulating his external physical characteristics is not the objective, since they are from Allah (the Glorious and Exalted). Human will has no part to play in this. So, let us move to the internal qualities of his character. These are the ones meant to be followed and taken to heart. He possessed an impressive array of personal qualities, each of which has its own sweetness and irresistible attraction.

12- How unkempt is the appearance of Khawlah!

Some people have difficulty choosing the best clothes for themselves and their children, while others pay no attention to such matters. Life, for them, does not require such complexity. However, factors such as financial situation, cultural heritage, and personal life perspective may impact this.

A person leaves an unforgettable impression when the beauty of their character is enhanced by the beauty of their outward appearance, along with a pleasant, distinctive scent, without being pretentious or extravagant.

As for Muhammad (PBUH), beauty, neatness, and good grooming were an integral and habitual part of his life.

He (PBUH) did not depart from the conventional way of dressing that his people followed; hence, he did not introduce new or unfamiliar attire. One indication of this is that mode of dressing is firmly rooted in the cultural traditions of every community.

Rather, he (PBUH) laid down the rules and principles that would determine appropriate dressing and adornment of the body, and eliminate all forbidden forms of showing off and nudity.

Muhammad (PBUH) liked to dress in a Yemeni-style garment. It was usually striped cotton of red, green, or other colors. People regarded it as their most respectable attire. His preferred Yemeni garment even had the name *Hibarah*¹, which is a noun that derives from the Arabic verb *tabbir* and means to embellish, adorn, or refine.

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 287, no. 5812 and Muslim vol. 3, p. 1648, no. 2079.

He (PBUH) loved to wear a *Qamis* (long loose shirt)¹ because it fully covered the body, unlike an *Iẓar* (lower garment) or *Rida'* (upper garment). And white² was his favorite color, perhaps because it required frequent washing to preserve its purity, being more prone to showing dirt and stains.

He (PBUH) never left any impurity on his body or garment, as Allah (Exalted is He) had so commanded him.³

One time, he (PBUH) removed his shoes during prayer when Angel *Jibril* (Gabriel) informed him that there was some filth on them.⁴

He (PBUH) used to wear sandals and instructed his followers: “*Make a usual practice of putting on footwear (while traveling or outside the home), for a person is considered to be riding if they put on footwear.*”⁵

He (PBUH) disliked people wearing only one shoe; “...*you should either wear them both or take them both off.*”⁶

More than once, he (PBUH) told us of his love for perfumes and pleasant aromas.⁷

¹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 5, p. 372, no. 1817-1819, and his book of *Shama'il*, pp. 67, 55-57; and Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 11, p. 47, no. 4018-4019.

² Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 8, p. 76, no. 2962 and his book of *Shama'il*, pp. 75, 69; and Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1181, no. 3567 based on the hadith of Samurah ibn Jundab.

³ Allah's Saying in the Chapter of Al-Mudathir (74:4): “And your garments purify!” It includes both the inward and outward purity.

⁴ Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 2, p. 249, no. 646; Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 92, and Al-Darimi, vol. 1, p. 320. based on the hadith of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri.

⁵ Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1660, no. 2096 based on the hadith of Jabir.

⁶ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 322, no. 5855 and Muslim vol. 3, p. 1660, no. 2097 based on the hadith of Abu Hurairah.

⁷ Al-Nasa'y, vol. 7, pp. 61-62, no. 3939 and Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 128 based on the hadith of Anas.

He (PBUH) had a rare precious scent which he used to apply to himself.¹ His wife, Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), used to perfume him with her own hands, using the best scent available.²

About his scent, one of his Companions (Anas) said, “I have never smelt a perfume or scent pleasanter than that of the Prophet (PBUH).”³

Another Companion (Jabir ibn Samurah) said, “He (PBUH) wiped my cheeks, and I felt a coolness or fragrance from his hand, as if he had just taken them out of a fragrance (mixing) vessel of a perfumer.”⁴

Perhaps you have now realized the incorrect assumptions that some people make about Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam—when they think that the teachings of either call for taking on a tattered or unsightly appearance.

The statement of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), “*Anyone in whose heart is an atom’s weight of arrogance shall not enter Paradise,*” led some people to mistakenly think that self-adornment and grooming fall under this category. A man once enquired of the Prophet, “O Messenger of Allah, a person loves his clothes and shoes to look nice.” He (PBUH) replied, “*Indeed, Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty. Pride (or haughtiness) is to reject the truth and look down upon the people.*”⁵

¹ Abu Dawud, as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 11, p. 147, no. 4156 and Al-Tirmidhy in *Shama’il* pp. 178, 217 based on the hadith related by Anas: “The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had a *Sukkah* (a perfume container) from which he would apply fragrance to himself.” The word ‘Sukkah’ in the hadith was explained to mean a rare, valuable perfume.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 379, no. 5923.

³ *Al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, p. 333 and *Shama’il*, pp. 33, 34, 37.

⁴ Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1814, no. 2329 based on the hadith of Jabir ibn Samurah.

⁵ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 93, no. 91 based on the hadith of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud.

The Prophet (PBUH) thus set a clear demarcation line between the kind of pride that Allah hates and the kind of adornment that He (the Most Exalted) loves.

Appearance was a stronger issue for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when it came to spouses. In this case, the importance of maintaining a good appearance is emphasized. Each spouse is required to beautify themselves for the other, using the embellishments that they know would best appeal to the taste and style of the other.

‘Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (PBUH), narrated, “Khawlah bint Hakim came to visit me. She was married to ‘Uthman ibn Mazh’un. But when the Messenger of Allah noticed her untidy appearance, he said, ‘O ‘Aishah, how untidy Khawlah looks!’ ‘Aishah replied, ‘O Messenger of Allah, she is a woman with no husband. He (‘Uthman) fasts every day and prays all night long. She is like a woman without a husband, and so she has become careless and neglected her appearance.’ The Messenger of Allah sent for her husband, ‘Uthman ibn Mazh’un, and said to him when he arrived, ‘O ‘Uthman, have you turned away from my Sunnah (way of life)?’ ‘Uthman replied, ‘No, by Allah, O Messenger of Allah. Rather, I seek your Sunnah.’ He (PBUH) said, ‘I sleep and I pray, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Fear Allah, O ‘Uthman, for your family (wife) has rights over you. Your guest has rights over you. And your own self has rights over you. So, fast and break your fast, pray and sleep.’”¹

Here, we see how the honorable Prophet (PBUH) reminded this venerable Companion of a husband’s obligation to adorn and groom himself for his wife and show her his care, in order for her to reciprocate the same for him. As the Qur’an says, “*And*

¹ Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 268.

due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable.” (Al-Baqarah 2:228)

Indeed, you are beautiful, O Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and indeed your appearance and your teachings are equally beautiful!

13- I mention this especially to dentists

I do not believe I am exaggerating by stating that history, across its many centuries, has not known a religion that encourages people to engage in personal and collective hygiene more than that of Muhammad (PBUH).

A man who merely removed a thorny branch from a pathway was forgiven for his sins and admitted into Paradise by Allah (Exalted be He).¹

Removal of any harmful item from public pathways and roads is but one important element of the aforementioned teaching. The Prophet (PBUH) even literally said to us, "...*pay the road its due rights?*" And among these rights and rules that ought to be observed on the road, he included, "...*stopping harm...*"² whether of a physical, verbal, or psychological nature.

We are even forbidden from causing harm to people in the slightest matters, such as offensive smells. Although prayer in mosques gains us great merit and reward, anyone who eats garlic, onion, or leek should not approach a mosque. Thus, we learn that Muhammad (PBUH) even advised people what foods to avoid before attending the mosque.

He (PBUH) also directed us to keep the courtyards of our homes clean, and reprimanded those who did not clean them.³

This injunction relates to the outside spaces of our houses, but what about the inside? Of course, the inside is more important and takes priority.

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 163, no. 652 and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1521, no. 1914.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 11, p. 10, no. 6229 and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1975, no. 2121.

³ Based on the hadith related by Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 8, p. 67, no. 2951.

As for personal cleanliness, the Prophet (PBUH) set a day, at least once a week, to take a full bath. That day was Friday.¹ On this day, people would assemble to hear the sermon and pray congregationally.

Taking a full bath is essential if a person has body odor. He (PBUH) made bathing imperative for people whose bodies produce a strong odor, such as laborers.²

He (PBUH) pointed to the high desirability of ablution.³ In the teachings of Islam, ablution is performed several times throughout the day—it consists of washing the hands and face and passing wet hands over the head, and then washing the feet or wiping over them if socks are being worn (instead of removing the socks and washing the feet). Ablution is a necessary preliminary act to the daily prayers (whenever it has been invalidated).⁴

Both types of purification, outward and inward, are thus fulfilled in humans—outward purification of the body through ablution, and inward purification of the heart through prayer to Allah alone, without associating anything with Him.

It was amazing for me to read that a specialist in human health advised those traveling long distances by car to stop after several hours to exercise their muscles and joints. These exercises are similar to the motions that occur during Muslim prayer.

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 401, no. 858 and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 581, no. 847 on the authority of Abu Sa`id.

² See the hadith related by `Aishah in Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 447, no. 902 and Muslim vol. 2, p. 581, no. 846.

³ Such as the hadith: "...performing the ablution thoroughly despite difficult circumstances..." reported in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 219, no. 251 and other hadith books.

⁴ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 282, no. 135 and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 204, no. 225.

In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) prescribed a maximum time limit of forty days¹ for the removal of unwanted body hair such as armpit and pubic hair, trimming the mustache, and cutting the nails. It is thus impermissible to leave grooming longer than this period.

We can see the Prophet's (PBUH) precise schedule of cleanliness and hygiene-related practices over regular intervals of forty days, or weekly, or daily, according to the required type of purification and the time appropriate for it.

Other than this, cleanliness should be observed whenever necessary.

The Prophet (PBUH) combed his hair, and always started with the right side of his head, then the left.² He took care to groom himself, yet forbade exaggeration and stern observance of cleanliness standards to the point of conceit and self-admiration.³

He (PBUH) stressed the obligation of a wife to comb her hair, remove unwanted hair from the pubic region, and maintain a good appearance for her husband, especially if she received news of his impending arrival home after traveling.⁴

¹ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 222, p. 258.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 381, no. 5926 and Muslim vol. 1, p. 226, no. 268.

³ Based on the hadith of `Abdullah ibn Mughaffal, and other narrators, in which he said: "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) forbade combing the hair except every second day." Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 5, p. 363, no. 1809.

⁴ According to the meaning of the hadith: "...so that the lady whose hair is unkempt may comb her hair and that the lady whose husband has been away may shave her pubic hair..." Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 24, no. 5079 and Muslim vol. 3, p. 1527, no. 715.

Just by following the guidance of Muhammad (PBUH), we can reduce the losses accrued by visits to the dentist by caring for our teeth from an early age.¹

More than 1430 years ago, Muhammad (PBUH)² repeatedly urged us to maintain the healthy practice of using a *siwak* (teeth-cleaning twig) to clean the teeth and gums. Because of its extensive benefit, he would have made it obligatory for us to cleanse our teeth with it five times a day, if it were not for Allah's Mercy towards us and the Prophet's fear of overburdening us.³

Still, he (PBUH) encouraged us to use it, saying: "*The siwak purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord.*"⁴

Ibn Al-Mulaqqin, an eminent hadith scholar, stated that over a hundred hadiths have been narrated regarding the significance of *siwak* (or *miswak*).⁵

The oral hygiene benefits of *siwak* can also be acquired by using an alternative tool to remove leftover food from the teeth and purify the mouth. Therefore, today's toothbrush falls under this category.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to brush his teeth with a stick of Arak⁶ taken from the roots of *Salvadora Persica* (commonly

¹ Al-Nawawi said: "It is recommended to teach the little child to use *siwak* in order for them to get used to it." *Sharah Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 143.

² "I have so repeatedly urged you to use the *siwak*." Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 435, no. 888.

³ "Were it not that I might overburden my followers, I would have commanded them to use the *siwak* before every prayer." Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 435, no. 887 and *Muslim* vol. 1, p. 220, no. 252.

⁴ Reported by Al-Bukhari as *hadith mu`allaq*, *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 4, p. 187; and by Ahmad as *hadith mawsul*, vol. 6, p. 47; and by Al-Nasa'y as *hadith marfu`*, vol. 1, p. 10, no. 5 on the authority of `Aishah.

⁵ Al-Amir Al-Sana`ani reported it on his authority in his book *Subul Al-Salam*, vol. 1, p.59.

⁶ Based on the hadiths narrated in this regard, Arak was a very common tree for the Arabs. In *Muslim*, there is the hadith: "Whoever cuts off the right of a

known as the toothbrush tree). It is a small shrub or tree that grows in hot, tropical regions, especially desert valleys. It is widespread in Saudi Arabia.

According to research conducted by Dr. `Abdul-Rahim Mohammed, College of Dentistry, King Saud University, and research conducted by Dr. James Turner, College of Medicine, University of Tennessee, as published in the *Journal of Oral Medicine and Dentistry*: “The *siwak* made of Arak tree (popularly used in Saudi Arabia and other regions) contains cleaning substances that kill microbes, the most important of which are sulfur and β -sitosterol. *Siwak* also contains a natural dentifrice, which is sodium bicarbonate. Arak also possesses anti-inflammatory and anti-decay effects.”

The same was also stated by Braun and Jacob in their research on *siwak*. They both affirmed that *siwak* has antimicrobial agents in its composition.

Dr. `Abdul-Rahim Mohammed and Dr. James Turner clarified that the bark and wood of a freshly cut stick of Arak contains no substances with toxic effects on cells. However, the same part of the stick does develop harmful cytotoxic components after twenty-four hours. For this reason, researchers advise that the used part of the *siwak* be cut off at least every twenty-four hours.¹

Glorified is Allah Who says in this Noble Book: “*Say, I only advise you of one (thing) - that you stand for Allah, (seeking truth) in pairs and individually, and then give thought (about Prophet Muhammad PBUH). There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment.*” (Saba’ 34:46)

Muslim by their oath... even if it is only a stick of Arak.” This shrub is also popularly found in the Arabian Peninsula.

¹ Dr. Mohammed `Ali Al-Baar, *Siwak*, pp. 147, 156-157.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphatically encouraged us to use *siwak* during ablution, before prayer, before reciting the Qur'an, before standing up for voluntary night prayer, when having unpleasant breath odor, and before entry to one's home.

Yes indeed, it may happen that, upon arrival at home¹, a husband may kiss his wife. Let it be then with a fragrant, cleansed mouth.

How splendid are these personal cleansing measures for a community that applies the guidance of Muhammad (PBUH) to all areas of life, purifies all aspects of itself, and always maintains standards of good taste.

¹ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 220, no. 353.

14- Tamimah Al-Quraziyyah elicits a smile from the best man in creation (PBUH)

It helps you overcome difficulties. It opens your heart to everyone. It eliminates a great deal of irritability and estrangement. It relieves the heart and makes it much less immersed in the usual problems of life.

Last but not least, it makes you more acceptable and lovable, as people start to see you as a paradigm of happiness.

Have you perceived this magical effect? It is not a complicated issue, or a difficult task, and does not involve taking pills with harmful side effects.

This magic occurs just by stretching your lips a few centimeters into a smile. Yet for some people this can be a difficult equation, so simple that it becomes too hard for them to do!

I have worked as a teacher in several schools. Only those headmasters who smiled were able to get their employees to do as they directed. Their smile kept their employees positively charmed, and so they readily complied with their instructions and fell into line without dissent. Please, do not believe, as some unwise people do, that this will diminish your respect in people's eyes and trample on your pride.

Let the world know that Muhammad (PBUH), by a sincere smile on his graceful lips, taught an absolute lesson in the beauty of life. His smile soared across his face and beyond it to warble to the world and its people the message: Beware of anger! Beware of frowning! Beware of worry exhausting your body and sorrow consuming your mind! Just smile. Smile as Muhammad used to smile.

He (PBUH) was described as always cheerful,¹ with a perpetual smile on his face.

`Abdullah ibn Al-Harith, one of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), said about him: “I have not seen anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah.”²

Another of his Companions, Jarir ibn `Abdullah, said, “Since the day I accepted Islam, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) would never meet me without smiling in my face.”³

What Jarir narrated is magnificent! Whenever you saw him, he (PBUH) would smile at you, whether your meeting place was in the marketplace, on the road, in the mosque, or at home.

Yes, magnificent in every sense! One day one of my friends told me that the most beloved of all people to him were those who would smile often at him, although he could not offer the same thing in return. I said to him: “Certainly, they would love to get the same from you. Every time they see you, they do a charitable deed to you. But you act stingily and greedily by not reciprocating in kind. Do you not blame yourself?!”

He said that he did not quite understand what I meant.

I explained by quoting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): “*Your smiling in the face of your brother is an act of charity.*”⁴ Here the Prophet likened a smile to a charitable deed, for which the giver of charity earns a reward by acting generously towards the poor. By the same token, a smiling person earns a reward for the kindness they give to the people at whom they smile.

¹ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 91, no. 3892.

² Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 86, no. 3885.

³ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 187, no. 3035 and Muslim vol. 4, p. 1952, no. 2475.

⁴ Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 75, no. 2022. There is also the hadith reported by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2026, no. 2626: “Never belittle any good deed, even your meeting your brother with a cheerful face.”

The next day I saw this same man laughing and saying, “Your advice has benefited me greatly.”

I asked, “How is that?”

He replied, “I have felt wealthy because of my smiles, while those around me seem poor and in need of my smiles.”

I commented, “This is not my advice; rather, it belongs to Muhammad (PBUH).”

Indeed, Muslims are justified in feeling that their hearts are captivated by love for Muhammad (PBUH). The Companions used to recite poetry and recall humorous matters related to pre-Islamic time and laugh in his presence, and he (PBUH) would join in with a smile.¹

Smiling is a soundless prelude to laughter; a facial expression of cheerfulness in which the mouth stretches as a sign of joy and sometimes the teeth become visible. If it is loud and audible from a distance, it is called *Qahqaha* (laughter).²

The Prophet (PBUH) was never heard laughing loudly; loud laughter is inappropriate to the high station of prophethood. But we know well that a smile never left his honorable face.

Sometimes, he (PBUH) laughed until his teeth became visible. Have you heard the hadith that tells of a man who made the Prophet laugh until his premolar teeth appeared?

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “*I know the last of the inhabitants of Fire to be taken out from there, and the last of the inhabitants of Paradise to enter it. He is a man who will come out of the Fire, crawling. Allah the Lord of Glory and Honor will say to him, ‘Go and enter Paradise.’ He will go to it and think that it is full up. So he will come back and say, ‘O my*

¹ Muslim, vol. 1, p. 463, no. 670 and Al-Tirmidhy, as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 8, p. 115, no. 3008.

² Al-Bukhary, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vo. 10, p. 520.

Lord, I have found it full.' Allah will say to him, 'Go and enter Paradise.' He will again go to it and think that it is full up. So he will come back and say, 'O my Lord, I have found it full.' Allah will say to him, 'Go and enter Paradise, and you will have what equals the world and ten times as much.' The man will say, 'Are You making fun of me while You are the King?'"

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, the narrator of the hadith, said, "At this I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) laugh till his premolars were visible."

He (the narrator) used to say, "Such a person will be the lowest in status of the people of Paradise ."¹

What is more amazing about this merciful Prophet (PBUH) is his ability to smile even in the face of a harsh and rude man who physically assaulted him. As if through his smile, he was teaching and refining him—what would be wrong with demanding what you want in a friendly manner?

It happened this way: One day, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was out walking, wearing a Najrani cloak (made in Najran, the well-known city lying between Hejaz and Yemen) with a rough collar. Along the way, a Bedouin who had overtaken him pulled him so roughly by the edge of his cloak that the hem left marks on the skin of the Prophet's shoulder. The Bedouin then said, "Issue a command that I should be given out of Allah's Wealth which is at your disposal." In response, the Prophet neither rebuked nor reproved the behavior of this man, but turned towards him, laughed, and ordered that he be given something.²

Muhammad (PBUH) taught us through example that violence will not solve a problem; rather, forbearance will. Folly and anger must be responded to with kindness and deliberation. Rudeness

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 11, p. 426, no. 6571 and Muslim vol. 1, p. 173, no. 186. This is according to the wording of Muslim.

² Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 287, no. 5809.

prompts rash and impulsive reactions, but displaying kindness in the face of harshness enables us to act prudently and wisely.

Another story which you might be familiar with is that of the woman whose words were able to elicit a smile from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

Tamimah Al-Quraziyah, the wife of Rifa`ah Al-Qurazi, was irrevocably divorced by Rifa`ah. Afterwards, she married `Abdur-Rahman ibn Al-Zubayr, about whom she came complaining to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

She said, "O Messenger of Allah, I was the wife of Rifa`ah, but he divorced me irrevocably, by three divorce pronouncements. Then I married `Abdur-Rahman ibn Al-Zubayr. But, by Allah, all he possesses is like the fringe of a garment." She took hold of the fringe of her garment (to demonstrate how small his sexual organ was). "He has only approached me once, during which he could not consummate anything with me."

At that time, Abu Bakr was sitting with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and Khalid ibn Sa`id ibn Al-`As was at the door waiting to be admitted. Hearing this, Khalid called out loudly, "O Abu Bakr! Why do you not forbid this woman from what she is revealing frankly before the Messenger of Allah?"

Whereas the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) merely smiled and answered her, saying, "Perhaps you wish to return to Rifa`ah? No (you cannot), not until he (your second husband) tastes your sweetness (i.e., has sexual intercourse with you) and you taste his sweetness."¹

This is due to the reason that a man may become temporarily impotent, then return to normal.

¹ Al-Bukhari, in a number of places in his book, as well as the commentary of *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 284, no. 374, 5256, 5317, vol. 10. P. 518, no. 6084 and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 1055, no. 1433.

We are still in the household of Muhammad (PBUH). We will not stir from there until we have drawn a smile on your face.

There came `Umar bin Al-Khattab, the Companion well known for his strength in upholding the truth. He knocked on the door of the Prophet (PBUH), asking permission to see him. Some women were inside speaking to the Messenger of Allah, asking him for more financial support while raising their voices above his.

As soon as they heard the voice of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, they rushed to screen themselves. The Prophet (PBUH) then admitted `Umar, and he entered while the Prophet was laughing. `Umar said, "May Allah keep you joyful, O Messenger of Allah. Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you." He (PBUH) said, "*I am amazed at these women who were with me. The moment they heard your voice, they hastened to screen themselves.*"

`Umar said, "You, O Messenger of Allah (PBUH), are more entitled to be awed by them." Then `Umar turned towards them and addressed them, saying, "O enemies of yourselves! Do you fear me and not fear the Messenger of Allah?" They said, "Yes, you are harsh and strict compared to the Messenger of Allah."

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*O Ibn Al-Khattab! By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, whenever Satan sees you taking a path, he follows a path other than yours.*"¹

How splendid is the household of Muhammad (PBUH) from whose gates radiates the most illuminating smile that floats across the roads, the markets, the houses, and the mosques and goes back to him, after having deeply touched the hearts and captivated the eyes.

¹ Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 518, no. 6085 and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1863, no. 2396.

Truthful are Allah's Words, "*And by the Mercy of Allah, you (O Muhammad) dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you.*" (Al-`Imran 3:159)

May Allah's Mercy protect us against those who distort the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH) by wrinkling their foreheads.

15- Who will purchase this slave?

I was talking to a friend about the reason for people's dislike of a certain person and their reluctance to spend time with him. We agreed that his impudence, hurting people's feelings, and disrespecting and belittling them are among the main reasons for avoiding this person. Correspondingly, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "*The worst people are those whom the people desert or leave in order to save themselves from their indecency.*"¹

Conversely, respecting people and their opinions, treating them kindly, smiling at them, and showing leniency and love to them are among the main reasons for cordiality and attachment to people. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "*When one of you has love for his brother, he should inform him that he loves him.*"² This is because love is reinforced and cemented when the two parties feel it.

There is also a wonderful thing that makes life more beautiful and delightful, removes boredom and weariness, and makes it fresh and novel. Certainly, you will know it when you read the following lines:

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 467, no. 6032; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2002, no. 2591.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 7, p. 60, no. 2502; and Abu Dawud in his *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 332, no. 1524.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entered a market and found a man whom he knew and loved. The man, who was ugly, was sitting and selling some of his merchandise and did not realize the Prophet Muhammad was there. The Prophet gripped the man's torso from behind so the man could not see him. The man said, "Who are you? Let me go." When he turned his head and realized it was Prophet Muhammad, he pressed his back into the Prophet's chest. Then, Prophet Muhammad asked, "*Who will purchase this slave?*" Male and female slaves used to be sold at that time, but this man was not a slave. He was only the slave of Allah. The man said, "O Messenger of Allah, if you sell me, you will be selling a defective thing, and will earn a very little sum." Then the Prophet said, "*No, you are not defective in the sight of Allah, but very valuable.*"¹

The previous lines describe an example of the innocent joking that was one of the features of Muhammad's (PBUH) character—although he did not say anything other than the truth.²

Why was the Prophet (PBUH) joking with this ugly man? How did this joking end?

Ugly men and women are often belittled by people, but this is not the case with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), as the criteria by which Allah gives precedence to people is not their physical form, but their adherence to religion and good morals.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) joked with another man who asked for a mount (a camel or a horse to ride); Prophet Muhammad said to this man, "*I will let you ride on a she-camel's*

¹ Narrated by Ahmad, vol. 3, p.161; and `Abdul-Razzaq in *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 10, p. 454, no. 19688.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 107, no. 2058, and his book entitled *Al-Shama'il*, pp. 195 and 238; and Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 360.

child.” The man assumed that Prophet Muhammad meant a newborn camel, which is not suitable for riding, as the Prophet’s words gave this false impression. Therefore, the man asked, “What can a she-camel’s child do?” The Prophet replied, “*Are camels born from other than she-camels?*”¹ (This means that the adult camel was a she-camel’s child when it was born, so it is right to say that it is a she-camel’s child.)

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) joked with an old woman who came to him, saying, “O Messenger of Allah, supplicate to Allah to admit me into Paradise.” He said, “O Mother, an old woman cannot enter Paradise.” The woman started crying and began to leave. The Prophet said, “*Say to the woman that one will not enter in a state of old age, but Allah will make all the women of Paradise young virgins. Allah (Glorified be He) says, Verily, We have created them (maidens) of special creation. And made them virgins. Loving (their husbands only), (and) of equal age.*” (Al-Waqi’ah 56:35-37)²

Children enjoyed a great deal of the Prophet’s (PBUH) joking. He joked with a little child and asked him about a bird he was breeding. In addition, he gave the child a nickname and said to him, “O Abu (father of) `Umayr, what did the *Nughayr* do?”³ (The *Nughayr* is a small bird that has a red beak.)

¹ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 108, no. 2060, and his book entitled *Al-Shama’il*, pp. 196 and 239; and Abu Dawud in his *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 300, no. 4998.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy in *Al-Shama’il*, pp. 197 and 241 through the narration of `Abd ibn Humayd from Al-Hasan. This narration is *Mursal* (a narration missing the link whereby the name of the Companion was dropped); but it has other ways of narration that are mentioned in the hadith referencing found in *Al-Shama’il*. Therefore, he said that this hadith is *Hasan*.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 543, no. 6129; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1692, no. 2150.

This is amazing! Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) represents great mercy and merciful greatness. Although he gained such a great status, had a huge number of followers and significant missions, and was the leader of the nation and the ruler who is obeyed by Muslims, he was not too preoccupied to joke with a little child, an old woman, and an ugly man.

This innocent joking and hearty mirth have noble goals and honorable objectives, form and strengthen relationships, spread love, and remove rancor. This honorable Prophet (PBUH) wanted to make people happy. A person may be a great leader but does not joke or jest, and another person may be cheerful and funny but cannot govern people properly. In addition, a leader may be cheerful but not successful in other aspects relevant to mercy and good treatment of people.

However, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) possessed all these characteristics. As such, he embodied Allah's saying, "*Certainly, there has been in them an excellent example for you to follow—for those who look forward to (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day.*" (Al-Ahzab 33:21) And His saying, "*Verily, you (O Muhammad) are of an exalted (standard of) character.*" (Al-Qalam 68:4)

16- Leniency and kindness

A construction manager went to a work site in France where workers were constructing a huge building. He got close to one of the workers and asked him, “What are you doing?” The worker answered nervously, “I am breaking hard stones with primitive machines, which is very tiresome work that annoys me greatly.” The construction manager left him, went to another worker, and asked him the same question. The second worker replied, “I form usable pieces from these stones, which are collected thereafter according to the plans of the architect. It is very tiresome work which sometimes makes me bored, but I sustain myself, my wife, and my children from this work, and it is better than not working.” Next, the construction manager went to a third worker and asked him the same question. Pointing upwards, he replied, “Can’t you see? I am building a skyscraper.”

We can deduce the views of these workers from their answers, which demonstrate that people respond to the events occurring around them in different ways.

Norman Vincent Peale¹ said, “Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.”²

I do not know of anyone during or before my lifetime who set the foundations and fundamentals of patience, tolerance, leniency, and wisdom like Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He put his instructions into action to become the most patient, tolerant, and lenient person.

¹ Norman was an American minister and author known for his work in popularizing the concept of positive thinking. [Trans.]

² See Ibrahim Al-Fiqy, *Quwwat Al-Tahakkum fil Dhat* (Powerful Self-Control), p. 48.

Muhammad (PBUH) corrected false concepts of power, saying, “*The strong man is not the one who is good at wrestling, but the strong man is one who controls himself in a fit of rage.*”¹

This refers to the (inner) willpower when it overcomes the extremities, such as the hand, the tongue, or the leg. As a result, security will prevail, and welfare will last in the person’s heart, mind, and soul.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) urged Muslims to have good morals, encouraging people by saying, “*You have two qualities that Allah loves: clemency and tolerance.*”²

He (PBUH) also epitomized kindness, saying, “*Kindness is not found in anything without adding to its beauty, and it is not withdrawn from anything without making it defective.*”³ He emphasized this meaning, saying, “*The one who is deprived of kindness is deprived of goodness.*”⁴ He then links all these good attributes, saying, “*No one is given a better or vaster gift than patience.*”⁵

Be calm and gentle, O `A’ishah

The following outlines one of the signs of the Prophet’s (PBUH) tolerance as witnessed and narrated by the Mother of the Believers, `A’ishah, who was one of the closest people to the Messenger of Allah. When a small group of less than ten Jews, who were his bitter enemies, entered upon the Messenger of Allah, they said Arabic words similar to the Muslim greeting of

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 535, no. 6114; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2014, no. 2609.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 48, no. 17; and its origin is found in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* without the other hadith which was narrated by another Companion as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 221, no. 87.

³ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2004, no. 2594.

⁴ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2003, no. 2592.

⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 11, p. 309, no. 6470; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 729, no. 1053.

peace, but were in fact a supplication for the Messenger's death. They said, "Assamu `Alaykum (Death be on you)." `A'ishah understood their words and said to them, "`Alaykum As-Sam wal-La`nah (Death and curse be on you)." Then, the Messenger said, "Be calm and gentle, O `A'ishah, for Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters." `A'ishah said, "O Allah's Messenger, didn't you hear what they said?" Allah's Messenger said, "I have (already) said (to them), "`Alaykum (upon you)."¹

Once the Prophet (PBUH) took a camel on credit from a man, and after a period of time, the man demanded his camel back in a harsh manner. The Prophet's Companions intended to harm the man, but the Prophet said, "Leave him, for he (the creditor) has the right to demand it (harshly). Buy a camel and give it to him." They Companions said, "The camel that is available is older and better than the camel he demands." The Prophet said, "Buy it and give it to him, for the best among you are those who repay their debts handsomely."²

The Prophet (PBUH) teaches forbearance and instructs people to return the rights to their owners in a better manner.

O readers, when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was in Mecca, his people inflicted upon him many types of harm and mockery that I am not able to mention. However, I will mention to you unwillingly a type of harm that was inflicted upon him after his immigration to Medina.

The *Mushriks* came out of Mecca towards Medina with a huge army that included brave men and knights. When the Prophet (PBUH) learnt of this matter, he went out accompanied by the Muslims in order to encounter the army near Uhud Mountain. A fierce battle took place, then something amazing happened: a

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 463, no. 6024; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1706, no. 2165.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 4, p. 563, no. 2305; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1225, no. 1601.

rumor spread throughout the battlefield about the murder of Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the Prophet had not been killed, but had suffered a wound to the head and a broken canine tooth. His daughter Fatimah wiped the blood from his head and `Ali ibn Abu Talib poured water on the wound using a shield. However, when Fatimah saw that the water increased the bleeding, she burnt a piece of mat and placed the ashes on the Prophet's wound to stop the flow of blood.¹

Can you imagine this scene?

The Prophet (PBUH) wiped the blood from his face, saying, "*How can a people that wounded their Prophet's head and broke his canine tooth succeed, while he is calling them to Allah?*"² He wiped the blood from his face again and said, "*O Allah, forgive my nation, for they have no knowledge.*"³

After the passage of time, `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the intelligent wife, asked her husband, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), the following question, "Have you ever experienced a day harder than the day of the battle of Uhud?" The Messenger of Allah answered, "*Indeed, I have experienced danger at the hands of your people (i.e., the disbelievers from amongst the Quraish tribe when he was in Mecca). The hardest treatment I received from them was on the Day of `Aqabah when I went to Ibn `Abd Yalil ibn `Abd Kulal (who was one of the chiefs of Taiif) with the purpose of inviting him to Islam, but he made no response (to my call). Therefore, I departed in deep distress. I did not recover from this until I arrived at Qarn Al-Tha`alib (a*

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 430, no. 4075; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1416, no. 1790.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari who classified it as *Mu`allaq* (a Hadith missing link in the chain of narration, reported directly from the Prophet), as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 422; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1417, no. 1791.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 12, p. 294, no. 6929; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1417, no. 1792.

place between Mecca and Taif, and the Miqat of the people of Najd known at present as Qarn Al-Manazil, which is located about eight kilometers from Mecca). I raised my head and saw a cloud that had cast its shadow over me. In the cloud I saw Jibril (the great angel), who called to me and said, 'Indeed, Allah heard what your people said to you and the response they made to you. He has sent you the angel in charge of the mountains so you may order him to do to them what you wish.' Then the angel of the mountains called me, greeted me, and said, 'O Muhammad, your Lord has sent me to you so that you may give me your orders. (I will carry out your orders). If you wish, I will bring together the two mountains that stand opposite each other at the extremities of Mecca to crush the people in between.'" Do you think the Messenger of Allah rejoiced at this offer, which gave him great power in this moment of extreme distress? No. Instead, he said, "I rather hope that Allah will raise from among their descendants people who will worship Allah the One, and will not ascribe partners to Him (in worship)."¹

The Messenger of Allah was truly great; he represents *Tawhid* (belief in the Oneness of Allah) mixed with mercy that emanates wonderful tolerance and kindness.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 360, no. 3231; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1420, no. 1795.

17- Leave him, do not interrupt him!

The people were at the mosque with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) when a Bedouin entered the mosque and began to urinate on the floor. The people shouted at him while he was still urinating. However, the Messenger of Allah said, “*Leave him. Do not interrupt him. You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult.*” When the Bedouin stopped urinating, the best instructor said to him leniently and kindly, “*These mosques are not meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer, and the recitation of the Qur’an.*” Then, the Prophet gave orders to one of the people to bring a bucket of water and pour it over the urine.¹

The great status of the mosque did not prevent the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) from giving the people a valuable lesson on treating the ignorant leniently.

We will move to another incident that happened during *Salah* (prayer), narrated by the one to whom the incident occurred: Mu`awiyah ibn Al-Hakam Al-Sulamy. He said, “While I was in *Salah* with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), a man in the congregation sneezed and I responded with, ‘*Yarhamuk Allah* (Allah be merciful to you).’ (He supplicated Allah to be merciful to him because the Messenger of Allah instructed the Muslims to ask Allah to be merciful to the sneezer. However, this person was mistaken with regard to the timing, because it is not permissible to do so during the *Salah*.) People stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said, ‘May my mother lose me! Why are you staring at me?’ Thereupon, they began to strike their thighs with their hands. (Because it is not permissible to talk during *Salah*.) When I saw them urging me to remain silent, I became

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 387, no. 221; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 236, no. 284, from the narration of Anas.

angry but restrained myself. When the Messenger of Allah concluded his *Salah*—and I have never before seen an instructor who gave better instruction than him, may my father and mother be sacrificed for him—he neither remonstrated me, nor beat me, nor abused me. He simply said, *‘It is not permissible to talk during Salah because it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring His Greatness, and recitation of the Qur’an.’* I said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, I was till recently following the habits of the pre-Islamic era, but Allah brought Islam to us.’” He continued his speech until he said, “I had a maid-servant who tended goats by the side of Uhud. One day I happened to pass that way and found that a wolf had carried a goat from her flock. I am, after all, a man from the posterity of Adam. I felt sorry as they (human beings) feel sorry, so I slapped her. Feeling this act of mine to be grievous, I came to the Messenger of Allah and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, should I not grant her freedom?’ (So that this act serves as expiation for her.) The Prophet said, *‘Bring her to me.’* Therefore, I brought her to him and he said to her, *‘Where is Allah?’* She said, ‘He is in heaven.’ He said, *‘Who am I?’* She said, ‘You are the Messenger of Allah.’ He said, *‘Grant her freedom. She is a believing woman.’*”¹

How wonderful was Muhammad’s (PBUH) manner of dealing with people! Not only did Mu`awiyah realize his mistake, but he was so impressed by the Prophet’s kindness and tolerance that he became kind and tolerant himself, blaming himself for any contrary behavior. He remembered the maid-servant and set her free.

O men and women, do these stories not prompt praise and veneration of this Prophet (PBUH), the merciful instructor?

Accordingly, adopt the attitude of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was tolerant with the ignorant and gentle with the foolish.

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 381, no. 537.

The people who are most entitled to your gentleness are the members of your family, as this is one of the signs of familial success. Therefore, our honorable Prophet teaches us this point, saying, “*When Allah intends good for a family, He grants them gentleness.*”¹

18- Warmth of the ink

Muhammad’s (PBUH) teardrop is greater than a thousand words and more comprehensive than one hundred divans, to which I can find no parallel even in my words. It is the most truthful expression that can be perceived by both the literate and illiterate, the most precious feeling that can be experienced by both the intelligent and stupid, and the clearest image that impresses both the watcher and listener. It is a moment in which emotions and sentiments are stirred up, conscience is agitated, and feelings are excited. A small teardrop appeared on a cheek, but it was more expressive than any sentence. It had ascended from the heart to the eye before it fell on the cheek. It looked like ‘ink’ that was made in the heart and was spilled in the eye only to flow on a pure, fragrant cheek, that of Muhammad. This precious ink depicted great mercy. The hot tears that fell on these luminous cheeks depicted all the meanings of tenderheartedness that this kind heart failed to hide. This is the true nature of Muhammad, as he said, “*The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.*”²

I wish that the tyrants and oppressors who shed blood and kill innocent people would pay attention to this prophetic

¹ Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 104; and Al-Haithamy stated in *Majma` Al-Zawa'id*, vol. 8, p. 22.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 43, no. 1989; and Abu Dawud in his *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 285, no. 4941.

instruction. I wish also that managers, responsible officials, educators, and teachers realize this point. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also informed us that among the dwellers of Paradise is “*The person who is merciful and tenderhearted.*”

A child with breathing difficulties (his soul was shaking upon his death) was brought to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). When the Prophet saw the child, his eyes began to shed tears. Sa`d in `Ubadah said, “What is this?” (Because he knew that the Prophet forbade showing impatience with Allah’s decree.) He replied, “*It is mercy, which Allah has lodged in the hearts of His slaves, and Allah is merciful only to those of His slaves who are merciful (to others).*”¹ He distinguished between mercy and impatience.

The Prophet (PBUH) begot a child and named him after Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH). He used to kiss and smell this child when he entered upon him. However, this child died—for wisdom that Allah willed—when he was still an infant. When Prophet Muhammad entered and found his son taking his last breath, his eyes began to shed tears, so `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, who was with him, said, “Do you weep too, O Messenger of Allah?” Then, he said, “*O Ibn `Awf, it is mercy.*” Then, he began to weep again and said, “*The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim, indeed we are grieved by your departure.*”²

Tears shed for our sake

Once a little girl was dying in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH), so he picked her up and held her to his chest, then he put his hand on her, and she died in his arms. Umm Ayman wept and the Messenger of Allah said, “O Umm Ayman, do you weep

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 180, no. 1284; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 635, no. 923.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 206, no. 1303; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1807, no. 2315.

while the Messenger of Allah is with you?” She said, “Why shouldn’t I weep when the Messenger of Allah is weeping?” So the Messenger of Allah said, “*Verily, I am not weeping for her (i.e., out of impatience and distress); rather, it is compassion. The believer is fine whatever the situation is, even when his soul is being pulled from his body and he praises Allah.*”¹

Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) tenderheartedness and mercy also encompassed the sick. When Sa`d ibn `Ubadah was ill, Prophet Muhammad went to visit him, accompanied by `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, and `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with them). When they entered Sa`d’s house they found him unconscious, and the Messenger of Allah began to weep. When his Companions saw this, they also began to weep. Then he said, “*Allah does not punish for the shedding of tears or the grief of the heart, but punishes or shows mercy because of the utterances of this (and he pointed to his tongue).*”² (He refers here to showing discontentment or contentment with Allah’s decree.)

O readers, I will not conceal the fact that whenever I read or write a line of the Prophet’s (PBUH) biography, I long to know more about it.

The honorable Prophet (PBUH) was so tenderhearted when he was performing *Salah* or reciting the Qur’an that his chest sounded like a boiling kettle.³ Can you believe that the Prophet was weeping for our sake?

Once the Prophet (PBUH) ordered `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) to recite the Qur’an for him, as he

¹ Narrated by Al-Nasa’y, vol. 4, p. 12, no. 1843; and Al-Tirmidhy in *Al-Shama’il*, pp. 266 and 326.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 209, no. 1304; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 636, no. 924.

³ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 3, p. 121; and Al-Nasa’y, vol. 3, p. 13, no. 1214.

liked to listen to the recitation of the Qur'an. So Ibn Mas'ud recited the Qur'an until he reached Allah's saying, "*How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad, peace be upon him) as a witness against these people?*" (Al-Nisa' 4:41) The Prophet said, "*Enough for the present.*" Ibn Mas'ud looked at the Prophet and saw that his eyes were overflowing with tears.¹

Do you know why he (PBUH) wept? He did so out of mercy for us; Allah ordered him to be a witness of his nation, a mission that entailed witnessing all the people's deeds, which may include ill-deeds. Therefore, he wept.

Oh! These soft and tender tears reach us today while we are in bed, at home, or among our children. These tears, which are like ink, teach us tenderheartedness, sensitivity, and love, which we need badly during the age of globalization. O people, we are not iron machines or electronic programs; we are flesh and blood, and our hearts are beating with feelings and emotions, and are in dire need of the warmth of the love of Muhammad (PBUH).

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 8, p. 717, no. 5055; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 551, no. 800. See Ibn Hajar's words.

19- Make them laugh as you made them weep

Muhammad (PBUH), the merciful, used to urge people to love their relatives both from the side of the father and the mother. This is expressed by the words “*Silat Al-Rahim*” (maintaining the ties of kinship), which is a term that has clear intentions. Maintaining the ties of kinship does not only include exchanging visits, but also includes love, benevolence, offering gifts, giving help, calling on the telephone, and sharing joy and grief.

At the same time, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against replacing the words “*Silat Al-Rahim*” with the devilish words “*Qat` Al-Rahim*” (severing the ties of kinship). It is clear that the meaning of these words achieve Satan’s desires. Prophet Muhammad also instructed Muslims to maintain the ties of kinship even with those who have severed ties with them, and clarified that this act is rewarded by Paradise, blessings, and success in life. As Muhammad valued mercy shown to relatives and held it in high esteem, what about those who have caused you to have those relatives and are the cause of your existence? You should have realized who they are. They are the honorable parents: the merciful mother and the loving father.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) informed us of a story that took place during the era of Prophet Dawud and Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon them both), saying, “There were two women; each had her child with her. A wolf came and took away the child of one of them. One woman said to her companion, ‘The wolf has taken your son.’ The other said, ‘It has taken your son.’ So both of them took the dispute to Prophet Dawud who judged that the boy should be given to the older lady. Then they went to Prophet Sulaiman (PBUH), son of Dawud, and put the case before him. Prophet Sulaiman said, ‘Give me a knife so that I may cut the child in two and give one half to each of you.’ The younger woman said, ‘Do not do so; may Allah bless you! He is

her child.’ Then Prophet Sulaiman decided the case in favor of the younger woman.”¹

Mothers’ merciful hearts are rewarded by Muhammad (PBUH) with successive mercies that may give them their due right. Prophet Muhammad was an orphan; his father died when he was still an embryo in his mother’s womb, and his mother died when he was six years old. When he once visited his mother’s grave, he wept and caused those who accompanied him to weep.²

An incident took place between one of the Companions, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), and his mother. He (Abu Hurayrah) said, “I invited my mother, who was a polytheist, to Islam. I invited her one day and she said something about Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) that I hated. I went to Allah’s Messenger weeping and said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, I invited my mother to Islam but she did not accept (my invitation). I invited her today but she said to me something that I did not like. (Kindly) supplicate to Allah that He may guide the mother of Abu Hurayrah to the right path.’ Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, ‘O Allah, guide the mother of Abu Hurayrah to the right path.’ I left, pleased with the supplication of Allah’s Messenger. When I came to the door of my house, I found it locked from the inside. My mother heard my footsteps and said, ‘O Abu Hurayrah, just wait.’ I heard the sound of running water. She took a bath, put on her dress, quickly covered her head with a veil, opened the door, and then said, ‘O Abu Hurayrah, I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.’ I went back to Allah’s Messenger and (this time) I was shedding tears of joy. I said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, be happy, for Allah has answered your supplication and has guided the mother of Abu

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 528, no. 3427; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1344, no. 1720.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 2, p. 671, no. 976.

Hurayrah to the right path.”¹ How kind Prophet Muhammad is to the sons, daughters, fathers, and mothers!

A man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I have been afflicted by a tremendous sin. Is there any repentance for me?” He said, “*Is your mother alive?*” The man said, “No.” He said, “*Do you have a maternal aunt?*” The man said, “Yes.” He said, “*Then be dutiful to her.*”²

Another person came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and asked, “Who among people is most deserving of my good treatment?” The Prophet said, “*Your mother.*” The person asked, “Who next?” The Prophet said, “*Your mother.*” The person asked, “Who next?” The Prophet said again, “*Your mother.*” The person again asked, “Then who?” Thereupon, the Prophet said, “*Then your father, then your nearest, then nearest.*”³

Another person came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said, “I came to you leaving my parents in tears.” The Prophet said to him, “*Go back to them and make them laugh as you made them weep.*”⁴

Accordingly, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave parents great rights, and regarded dutifulness to them and kind treatment of them as pious deeds unmatched by any other. If we mentioned all his sayings on this matter, it would be a very long list. Prophet Muhammad wanted human beings to enjoy love, mercy, piety, and benevolence among their parents and relatives. Thus, what about those people who ungratefully desert their parents, neglect them, or leave them in an elderly care home as if they have

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1938, no. 2491.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhafat Al-Ahwardhy*, vol. 6, p. 26, no. 1986; and Ahmad in his *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 14.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 415, no. 5971; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1974, no. 2548.

⁴ Narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunan*, vol. 3, p. 17, no. 2528; and Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 930, no. 2782.

become useless? They have forgotten or pretended to have forgotten the great right which Allah, the Lord of the worlds, has given them.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clarified that dutifulness to parents includes treating their friends kindly. He said, “*The finest act of goodness on the part of a son is to treat kindly the loved ones of his father.*”¹

Where are benevolence, loyalty, love, and mercy at the present time? Will people realize that the guidance of Muhammad (PBUH) includes happiness for this miserable, exhausted world? Will this point be realized by those whose non-spiritual, materialistic civilization caused them to engage in two world wars within a quarter of a century, and who still proceed confusedly towards a third or a fourth war that may destroy their entire civilization?

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1979, no. 2552.

20- I have met the greatest magician

A woman brought a woven *burda* (sheet) with edging (a garment that was known in these days) to the Prophet (PBUH). Then the woman said, "I have woven it with my hands and I have brought it so that you may wear it." (It was a gift.) At that time, the Prophet needed such a garment, so he accepted it and put it on immediately, perhaps to show his gratitude. A man praised the garment, saying, "How nice it is! Will you give it to me?" The Prophet sat with the people for a while and then returned home, wrapped the garment, and sent it to the man. The other people said to the man, "You have not done the right thing as the Prophet needs it, and you have asked for it when you know that he never turns down anybody's request." The man replied, "By Allah, I have not asked for it to wear, but to make it my shroud." Later, it became his shroud.¹

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) accepted this woman's gift and when the man requested it, he gave it to him. I will not comment on this incident, but will follow it with another one that will clarify it. This incident took place when Prophet Muhammad was traveling with his Companions, among whom was `Imran ibn Husayn, who said, "The Prophet urged me to go ahead with some other riders to find water, as we felt very thirsty. Along the way, we came across a woman sitting (on a camel) with her feet hanging over two leather water bags. We asked her, 'How far is it to a water source?' She said, 'Far, very far. You cannot get water.' We (again) asked, 'How much distance is there between (the residence of) your family and water?' She said, 'It is a day and night journey.' We said to her, 'Go to the Messenger of Allah.' She said, 'Who is the Messenger of Allah?' We did not tell her (they did not tell her until she saw him), but went with her to the

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 170, no. 1277.

Messenger of Allah, who asked her about water. She told him what she had told us, and added that she was a widow with children. He ordered that her camel be made to kneel down. Then he gargled in the opening of her leather water bag (one of the Prophet's miracles was that water sprang out from between his fingers, just as Jesus healed the one who was born blind and the leper, and brought the dead back to life by Allah's Leave). First, we—forty thirsty men—drank water till we were completely satiated. Then, we filled up all our leather water bags and water skins until they were about to burst. He then said to us, 'Bring the food you have with you.' So we collected the bits (of food) and dates, and packed them up in a bundle, and he said to her, 'Take it away. This is for your children, and know that we have not decreased your water.' When she returned to her family, she said, 'I have met the greatest magician amongst human beings (due to his good morals and the water miracle), and he is a prophet.' She narrated what had happened and Allah guided aright this group (her people and the dweller of houses around her) through this woman. She embraced Islam and so did the people."¹

The two meanings of mercy

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was merciful to women, orphans, the poor, the weak, and those in need. He used to fulfill their needs and enquire about their circumstances.

A black woman named Umm Mihjan used to sweep the mosque, and people belittled her. When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) noticed her absence and asked about her, some people told him that she had died. He chastised them for not informing him of her death, saying, "*Why did you not inform me? Show me her grave.*"

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 671, no. 3571; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 474, no. 682.

Then, he went to her grave, offered her *Janaẓah* (funeral) prayer, and supplicated for her.¹

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strictly forbade and firmly warned against ignoring the rights of women and orphans. He said, “*I declare inviolable the rights of two weak ones: orphans and women.*”² Accordingly, the Prophet was more merciful to weaker people.

We should not forget our history or be deceived by the misleading aspects of modern life. When women asked for equality, they meant primarily equality in salaries to enable them to earn their livings and sustain themselves. When they could not attain this goal, they claimed their right to vote in elections. Then they asked to participate in elections to be proactive in achieving this equality. This is because the laws that govern the society were legislated only by men, and were not legislated, as in Muhammad’s (PBUH) religion, by Allah, Who treats His male and female slaves equally.

We cannot forget, for example, that France did not give women free use of their own money until its fourth republic after the last war—contrary to Muhammad’s (PBUH) religion. France only gave them this right with their guardians’ permission. However, it did not prevent women from practicing prostitution, both secretly and in public. Muhammad made prostitution unlawful to both women and men to preserve human dignity and elevate sexual relations beyond the merely physical.

O women, this is the modern devilish mercy, which is completely contrary to the mercy, which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) wanted you to attain. He also likened women to glass vessels, which are in danger of being broken. O women, woe to men, who keep stoning you with their empty slogans until they have

¹ Narrated Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 658, no. 458; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 659, no. 956.

² Narrated by Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1313, no. 3678; and Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 439.

broken you. Do not be deceived by empty slogans and insignificant behavior that has no value in relation to the Divine Messages.

To those people and others, we repeat Prophet Muhammad's words, "*Take care of the glass vessels.*"

21- Marriage has a different taste

The statistics of many countries show that approximately fifty percent of marriages end in divorce—and many other marriages are dominated by pain, boredom, and discontent. Unfortunately, many of us take our spouse for granted and fail to give them the care they deserve. Nothing makes a person happier than feeling that people give them recognition and gratitude.

The beautiful and kind words that spouses say to each other at the beginning of marriage become, after a time, like withering leaves that fall off trees in autumn.

We will now address what it means to be a great husband. When I have a problem with my wife that involves stubbornness, I think about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his merciful attitude towards his wives and all wives, and I feel ashamed of my wife and myself. I also feel guilty and know that problems cannot be solved with hostility.

Allah's Messages and Messengers are like lights that illuminate people's paths, guide them towards goodness and truth, encourage them to place value in trust and responsibility, and to understand their general rights and duties. However, people deviate from the path intended by Allah's Messages and Scriptures, and abstain from following the path that Allah has legislated for the sake of happiness, safety, and security.

The first declaration of human rights issued by Muhammad (PBUH) during the Farewell Hajj, which he performed during

the last year of his life, states that, “*Fear Allah regarding women, as you have got them under Allah’s security.*”¹ (i.e., fear Allah with regard to women’s rights, treat them kindly, and keep good company with them.)

He (PBUH) also said, “*Act kindly towards women.*” (i.e., follow my advice regarding women, and be merciful to them.) He mentioned something about women’s feelings, then repeated, “*Act kindly towards women.*”² In addition, he measured a man’s goodness according to how well he treated his wife. He said, “*The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives.*”³

We will discuss how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to interact with his wives at home. His wife `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked, “What did the Prophet do at home?” She said, “He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was time for *Salah*, he would go to perform *Salah*.”⁴

Accordingly, he (PBUH) kept himself busy serving his family. Do the men who avoid household responsibilities realize this? Prophet Muhammad used to carry out the tasks relevant to himself, and share the household chores with his wives. `A’ishah also said, “He used to sew his garment, mend his sandals, milk his goats, and serve himself.”⁵

¹ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 5, p. 251, no. 1902; and Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1022, p. 3074.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 418, no. 3331; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 1090, no. 1468.

³ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 10, p. 269, no. 4150 from the narration of `A’ishah; and Ibn Majah, vol. 1, p. 636, no. 1977 from the narration of Ibn `Abbas.

⁴ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 191, no. 676.

⁵ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy in *Al-Shama’il*, pp. 282 and 343 without the part of mending the sandals, which was stated in Ahmad’s compilation, vol. 6, p. 106.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not find fault with food; if he wanted to eat it, he would eat it; and if he disliked it, he would leave it.¹ He praised food, saying, “*What a good condiment vinegar is!*”² He sometimes kissed his wife when he was fasting to reveal that this does not nullify fasting. He also sometimes took a bath with his wife from one vessel.³ His wife `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “I would drink while I was menstruating, then I would hand it to the Prophet, and he would put his mouth where mine had been and drink.”⁴ He did so to reveal that this was acceptable. He instructed people that a man is rewarded for sustaining his wife and children. He also said, “*He is rewarded even for a mouthful of food he puts in his wife’s mouth.*”⁵

He (PBUH) instructed any man who is tempted by a woman other than his wife to have intercourse with his wife, saying, “*This would repel what he feels.*”⁶

It was narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*When a man has intercourse with his wife and has satisfied his desire, he should not withdraw from her until she has fulfilled her desire.*”⁷

He (PBUH) also forbade a man who was away from his wife for a long time—on a journey, for example—from coming home without informing her, doubting her fidelity and spying on her.¹

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 654, no. 3563; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1632, no. 2064.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1621, no. 2051.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 503, no. 322 from the narration of Um Salamah; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 776, no. 1106 from the narration of `A’ishah.

⁴ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 245, no. 300.

⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 5, p. 427, no. 2742; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1250, no. 1628.

⁶ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 2, p. 1021, no. 1043.

⁷ Narrated by `Abdul-Razzaq in *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 6, p. 194, no. 10468; and Abu Ya`la as Ibn Hajar mentioned it in *Al-Matalib Al-`Aliyah*, vol. 2, p. 30, no. 1569.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never used obscene language with his family² or any other person. Rather, he treated `A'ishah kindly and give her nickname, saying, "O `A'ish", and sometimes he called her, "O *Humayra*"³ (i.e., a woman who has a bright white complexion).

If Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) wanted to go out when `A'ishah was asleep, he moved slowly, and opened and closed the door quietly so she would not feel frightened.⁴ Among his teachings is that he used to offer greetings in such a manner so as not to disturb those who were asleep and was heard only by those who were awake."⁵ In addition, he permitted one of his Companions to excuse himself from important work to give medical treatment to his sick wife.⁶ He liked to joke and have fun with his wives, and once said to one of his Companions, "*Why do you not marry a virgin so that you may play with her and she may play with you, and you may amuse her and she may amuse you?*"⁷

¹ Its origin was mentioned by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 251, no. 5243; and the hadith was entirely narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1528, no. 715.

² This is well known and famous about his biography, and we have cited the part relevant to the wife, quoting his saying to `A'ishah, "O `A'ishah, have you ever seen me speaking a bad language?" This hadith was previously referenced in the footnote of another hadith.

³ Anyone who believes that every hadith in which the word "*Al-Humayra*" is mentioned is *Batil* (false) is mistaken; perhaps two hadiths containing this word are classified as *Sahih*.

⁴ This is clearly stated in the narration of `A'ishah, as she narrated that Allah commanded Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to visit Al-Baqi` at night, as stated in Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 2, p. 670, no. 974.

⁵ This is clearly stated in the narration of Al-Miqdad, as stated in Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 3, p. 1625, no. 2055.

⁶ As he permitted `Uthamn not to join the Battle of Badr in order for him to give medical treatment to his wife Ruqayyah (may Allah be pleased with them).

⁷ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 24, no. 5079; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 1087, no. 1466, and this is the wording of Muslim.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once called `A'ishah and said to her, “*Come and race with me.*” When he raced with her, she outstripped him, and after a period of time he raced with her again, and he outstripped her. Then, he said, “*This is for that outstripping.*”¹

The following is a beautiful image narrated by `A'ishah: “Some Ethiopians were dancing and playing with their spears, so the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said to me, ‘*O Humayra, do you want to see the display?*’ I said, ‘*Yes.*’ I stood behind him with my chin on his shoulder and his face parallel to my face until I moved away.”²

O husbands, this is an expressive image. Have I not told you that I feel negligent towards my wife when I remember how merciful Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was with his wives?

Some husbands may say, “You have shown women how merciful the Prophet (PBUH) was with his wives; hence, such mercy turns their leaves green and produces fruit. However, our (husbands) leaves are still in autumn!” The Prophet, who was sent by Allah, was as merciful to husbands as he was to wives. If I mention everything I know about the rights that the husband demands of his wife, I will find a great deal to mention. However, I will only mention the comprehensive and concise words, which Prophet Muhammad directed to wives, when a person came to him and asked, “Which woman is best?” He said, “*The one who makes him happy when he looks at her, obeys him when he*

¹ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 7, p. 174, no. 2575; and Ibn Majah, vol. 1, p. 636, no. 1979.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 510, no. 950; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 609, no. 892.

commands her, and does not go against his wishes with regard to herself or her wealth.”¹

In this regard, there is still a question that remains to be answered: Do spouses who apply these prophetic instructions to their marital life still have problems that may cause divorce? I emphasize that if spouses apply these instructions, their marital home will be encompassed with mercy, which will make both spouses happy and will allow them to enjoy a pleasant marriage.

Spouses should know that happiness is not attained only by taking, but will be enhanced by giving. Thereupon, the marital life will glow with happiness.

22- Journey of flowers

The colors of flowers depict in our minds the beauty of life, their leaves convey to our souls the meaning of delicacy, their beauty stirs contemplation along with hope, and their fragility reminds us of innocence and serenity.

Let us pack our bags to go out in a bright morning and enjoy its breeze, leaving behind life’s noise, arduous work, and the sounds of vehicles and planes. We will head towards the countryside where we can find beautiful gardens, and hold each flower and ask it about its story with human beings.

I did not know that this simple question would stir such strong emotions. My intention was only to know the truth. The flower said, “You have asked about my story with human beings; there is a long history and many tales about human beings and flowers. Can you not see our status today, and what human beings have done to us? They have set us on fire, turning our pleasant

¹ Narrated by Al-Nasa’y, vol. 6, p. 68, no. 3231; and Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 251, no. 438.

fragrance into smoke, and our nectar into ashes. They have wiped out many of us with their iron machines, which have afflicted us with grief and distress, even though we have given them feelings of love and compassion. They have spoilt our soil with their vain desires. However, we flowers still feast our imaginations on the image of a man who, whenever he passed by the orchards, the tree branches smiled at him, and the colored leaves swayed with his love, causing people to smell our sweet scent and see our fragranced beauty from a distance. He loved us, so we love him; he honored us, so we will never forget him.”

This man was Muhammad (PBUH), when he used to kiss and smell children. Children are the “*flowers of earth*”, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was merciful to them.

A Bedouin came and sat with the Prophet (PBUH). When the Prophet kissed a little boy, the Bedouin remarked, “I have ten children and I have never kissed any one of them.” The Messenger of Allah said, “*He who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy.*”¹

Another Bedouin came and asked the Companions, in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH), “Do you kiss your children? We do not kiss them.” The Prophet said, “*Can I put mercy in your hearts after Allah has removed it from them?*”² When a baby was sitting on Muhammad’s lap and urinated on him, he did not feel annoyed, but called for water and cleaned himself.³

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 440, no. 5997; and Muslim, vol., 4, p. 1808, no. 2318.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 440, no. 5998; and Muslim, vol., 4, p. 1088, no. 2317.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 448, no. 6002; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 237, no. 286 from the narration of `A’ishah.

Once Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) was sitting a boy on one of his thighs and another one on his other thigh. He embraced them and said, “*O Allah, be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them.*”¹

Whenever he passed by children, he greeted them.² When he met children, he patted the cheeks of each one of them.³ He also had fun with a little child, saying, “*O Abu `Umayr, what did the Nughayr do?*”⁴ (He was showing kindness to the child, asking him about his little bird.)

A little girl came with her father to the Prophet (PBUH), and began to play in between the Prophet’s shoulders while he was sitting. Her father rebuked her harshly, but the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*Leave her.*”⁵ The Prophet’s merciful attitude towards the little girl and her father demonstrates the perfect approach to dealing with children. Parents frequently become frustrated with their children’s fighting, yelling, and playing, and the only solution they can find is to accept it, which makes them feel that their children have defeated them. Therefore, it is better for parents not to fight with their children. I know this advice is easy to say and hard to implement, but there is no other choice.

Sometimes our acceptance of things as they are instead of insisting on changing them to suit our wishes is the way to enjoy peace of mind. Thereupon, you will realize the educational and social significance of the phrase, “*Leave her*” when children behave in an innocent manner, even if they are irritating. However, when their behavior involves impoliteness or harm to others, we should provide guidance.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 448, no. 6003, and the two boys were Usamah ibn Zayd and Al-Hasan ibn `Ali.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 11, p. 34, no. 6247; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1708, no. 2168.

³ The referencing of the Hadith was previously mentioned in another footnote.

⁴ The referencing of the Hadith was previously mentioned in another footnote.

⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 439, no. 5993.

ʿAmr ibn Abu Salamah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “I entered the Messenger’s (PBUH) room while he was eating, so he said, ‘Sit down, O son.’ While I was eating, my hand was wandering around in the dish, so he said to me, ‘Mention Allah’s Name (i.e., say Bismillah when you start to eat), eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.’”¹ (i.e., from the direction closest to you when you share the dish with other people.)

Necessary reflection

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) found an intelligent or extraordinarily discerning boy, he took care with his education, because he expected him to be of benefit to other people. This is illustrated by the guidance he gave to Ibn ʿAbbas (may Allah be pleased with him), the boy who was called ‘*Al-Bahr wal Habr*’ (the person who has extensive knowledge) after he grew up. Ibn ʿAbbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I was riding behind the Prophet on the same mount and he said, ‘O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]: Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah [alone]. And know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.’”² Thus, he (PBUH) taught him these words.

He (PBUH) was keen to protect children from falling into *Shirk* or disbelief (by considering Allah equal to other things), so he

¹ Narrated Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 431, no. 5376; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1599, no. 2022.

² Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 7, p. 185, no. 2635; and Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 293.

loved being a source of mercy for them or a guide for them, saving them from the Hellfire in the Afterlife.

When a Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet (PBUH) fell sick, the Prophet visited him. He sat down by his head and said to him, “*Embrace Islam.*” The boy looked at his father, who was sitting beside him. The father said, “Obey Abul-Qasim (i.e., the Messenger of Allah).” Therefore, the boy said, “I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet said, “*Praise be to Allah Who has saved him from Hell-fire.*”¹

The incident involving the Jewish boy shows how merciful the Prophet (PBUH) was with his servants.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “If the servant of any of you prepares food for him, and brings it to him, he should let him sit with him to eat. If the food is scant, he should put one or two morsels in his hand.”²

The Prophet’s (PBUH) wife, `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), said, “Allah’s Messenger never beat anyone with his hand, not a woman nor a servant. He never took revenge for anything unless things made inviolable by Allah were made violable; he then took revenge for the sake of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).³ Whenever the Prophet was given an option between two things, he would select the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful.”⁴

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 259, no. 1356; and Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 8, p. 249, no. 3093.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 494, no. 5460; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1284, no. 1663.

³ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, vol. 1814, no. 2328.

⁴ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 541, no. 6126; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1813, no. 2327.

One of the Prophet's (PBUH) Companions, who remained in his service for ten years, said, "He never told me 'Uff' (an expression of disgust)." When I did something, he never asked me why I did it. When I did not do a certain task, he never asked me why I did not do it."¹

The following is an incident that happened to the Companion who used to serve the Prophet (PBUH) when the Companion was a boy. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet's servant, said, "Allah's Messenger had the best disposition amongst people. He sent me on an errand one day, and I said, 'By Allah, I will not go.' However, I had this idea in my mind that I would do as Allah's Messenger had commanded me to do. I went out and happened to come across some children who had been playing in the street. In the meantime, Allah's Messenger came up behind me and grabbed me by the back of my neck. As I looked towards him, I found him smiling and he said, '*Unays (a nickname he gave him), did you go where I commanded you to go?*' I said, 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah.'²

Now, we will return to the topic of little children.

Resumption of the journey

Although the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) held *Salah* in high esteem, he used to cut it short³ if he heard a child crying in the company of his mother, out of mercy for him and his mother. Once the Prophet offered *Salah* while carrying a little girl. When

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 471, no. 6038; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1804, no. 2309.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1805, no. 2310.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 236, no. 709; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 342, no. 470.

he bowed, he put her down; and when he stood after prostration, he carried her again.¹

Consider the following witty form of mercy:

One of his Companions, Shaddad ibn Al-Had (may Allah be pleased with him), said, “Once the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) offered *Salah* and prolonged the prostration (contrary to his habit during this *Salah*), so I raised my head and saw a child on the back of the Messenger of Allah while he was prostrating, so I went back to my prostration. When the Messenger of Allah had finished praying, the people said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you prostrated during the *Salah* for so long that we thought something had happened (that he might be afflicted by some harm) or that you were receiving a revelation.’ He said, ‘*No such thing happened, but my son was riding on my back and I did not like to disturb him until he had had enough.*’²

How amazing! What great mercy! How could humans use tanks to burn children and forget Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) merciful attitude towards children? How could they use planes to crush them and hatch plots to displace and eliminate them? Humans have lost their morals while craving materialistic gains.

After making this journey, we come back filled with overwhelming love and reverence. The Prophet’s (PBUH) mercy encompassed all people, including children, young men, servants, women, wives, fathers, mothers, relatives, and neighbours. Do you know why? Because it is from the Mercy of the Most Merciful that He chose Prophet Muhammad to be a mercy to the worlds, and Allah certainly knows the most suitable person to deliver His Message.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 440, no. 5996; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 385, no. 543.

² Narrated by Al-Nasa’y, vol. 2, p. 229, no. 1141; and Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 494.

23- Nourishment of souls according to the Isra' and Mi`raj

A person mentioned facts about his personal life, saying: "I used to be absorbed in my work while waiting eagerly for the weekend, which was marked by wine, women, red nights, a pleasure trip, and physical exercises on an ongoing basis. I was not preoccupied with money, as I am a rich man who has wealth that will last me and even a whole district for many years. However, in a moment of reflection, I was pondering my life; I had tried all types of pleasures, done everything a person may wish to do, and let my eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and all senses enjoy these pleasures. I enjoyed all these pleasures in order for my heart to feel pleased; however, I felt that there was a real pleasure that I had not yet tried. This idea obsessed me for a long time. One quiet night, during a journey to a beautiful tourist country, I heard a voice from afar that attracted me; when I got closer to this voice, I found it saying in Arabic, '*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*' (Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest). Upon hearing this, I had a strange feeling that agitated me and reminded me of the question that had consumed me. I asked myself: 'Is it possible that the Muslims have an answer to my question?' Therefore, I then had at that moment two questions instead of one. I purchased a book on Islam, as I like reading. While paging through the book, I read that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, '*Allah does not look at your faces and your wealth but He looks at your heart and your deeds.*'¹ I kept these words in mind and was encouraged to purchase another book to give me more information about the man who had said them. I read that when this man felt worried or distressed, he would offer *Salah*.²

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 1987, no. 2564.

² Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 4, p. 142, no. 1315; and Ahmad in *Al-Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 388.

Moreover, when he heard news that made him happy, or for which one should be happy, he would fall down prostrating in gratitude to Allah.¹ He also said, *‘My comfort has been provided in Salah.’*²

Upon reading this, I found that there is a close relationship between the *Salah* which is performed for the sake of Allah and the heart at which Allah will look. Is it possible that the *Salah* comforts the heart and makes it happy? Is what I have read true? I thought of trying to offer *Salah*, but it seemed to me that this would be a unique experience, as it needed rebellion against myself and my previous culture; it also needed seriousness, resolution, and determination. Moreover, offering *Salah* entails that I should be a Muslim. I talked to a Muslim friend whose opinion I appreciate and respect, and he guided me to an Islamic center where I uttered the Two Testimonies of Faith: I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Then, I started to offer *Salah*.

In time, I experienced a new taste for life, and found the goal of persistent searching, as I have attained the sweetness of worship and the unparalleled delight of communication with Allah. Today, I am completely different from the person I used to be, praise be to Allah.”

This is the experience of a person who found mercy in the acts of worship legislated by Allah and conveyed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which are the nourishment for the soul. People do not perform these acts to attain physical pleasure; they are part of a spiritual journey in preparation for a longer journey: death and the afterlife.

¹ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 5, p. 167, no. 2626; and Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 7, p. 327, no. 2771.

² It was previously referenced in another footnote.

Out of Allah's mercy for people and to prepare them for this spiritual journey, He willed, in His Wisdom and Mercy, to distinguish His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with a journey that had not been made by any other Messenger or person and will never again be made by any person. This is the miraculous journey, the *Isra'* (Night Journey), and *Mi'raj* (Ascension to Heaven), which started in Mecca and passed by Jerusalem, the prophets' home. It is also the journey in which the Prophet ascended to the seven heavens and stopped near *Sidrat-ul-Muntaba* (a lote tree on the utmost boundary of the seventh heaven beyond which none can pass). None of Allah's created beings can describe its beauty. During this journey, the five obligatory *Salahs* were enjoined; Allah ordained fifty *Salahs* to be performed during the day and night, but Prophet Muhammad asked Him several times to reduce them out of mercy for his *Ummah* until they settled at five *Salahs*. Then, Prophet Muhammad said, "*I went back to my Lord so that I feel too shy before Him.*"¹

As we are amazed by Muhammad's (PBUH) mercy for his *Ummah*, our souls and entities at every moment attest to and glorify the Mercy of the One Who created Muhammad and us, and sent him with His *Shari'ah*. This is the great Mercy of the All-Mighty, the Compeller Whose Mercy has encompassed everything, and Muhammad represents only a part of His Mercy. However, Allah showed His Mercy and that of His Prophet via this obligation (*Salah*). Our Great Lord enjoined five *Salahs* but they are worth fifty in reward. Therefore, may all mercies pine away before His Mercy, all deities perish before His Divinity, all creatures submit to His Lordship, and all slogans be silenced before His Justice and *Shari'ah*. This is because He is the One Who has created everything, and has measured it exactly

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 547, no. 349; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 145, no. 162 and 163.

according to its due measurements. Glorified be the One Who has marked everything with a sign that proves His Oneness. Our Lord's Mercy ordained that Muhammad would be the Prophet of Mercy, so Allah has legislated the purifying acts of worship, which Prophet Muhammad conveyed, to serve as nourishment for the soul. Moreover, they include alleviation and mercy, and anyone who knows Islamic rulings understands this point well.

For example, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*If anyone of you leads the people in the prayer, he should shorten it, for amongst them are the weak, the sick, the old, and those who have business to attend.*"¹

Allah has not laid on His slaves a burden greater than they have the strength to bear. In His Mercy, He has commanded them not to overburden themselves in order to deserve His Mercy and Paradise. Moreover, we are all encompassed at all times by Allah's Mercy, and seek Paradise (the dwelling of mercy), which has bounties that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has ever perceived. There (in Paradise) will be the real happiness, bestowed by the Sovereign on the heart and body, which will not be disturbed by the weight of one atom of distress.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 2, p. 233, no. 703; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 341, no. 467.

24- Who caused this bird to grieve for its young ones?

Some years ago, satellite channels reported that twenty-four people in Australia were living in cages next to the animals in a zoo, and they would remain in these cages for a month so that people could visit them along with the animals. The amazing thing is that the doctor who prescribed medicine for them was a veterinarian! Did these people want to cede their minds, with which Allah has honored them, to hens and ewes?

This indicates a spiritual and moral vacuum accompanied by an adventurous atmosphere, and motivated by a monotonous life and a desire for fame.

The following lines will delight us with brilliant images of the Prophet's (PBUH) mercy and kindness towards animals, without the need for man to treat himself like an animal or sleep in the barns of cows and hens.

When I was young, I saw nestling pigeons near our neighbor's window, so I went with one of my friends to take these nestling pigeons. When their mother came, it grieved over their loss. When my mother (my great educator) saw this scene, she asked me to return the nestling pigeons to their mother. Then she told me about a time when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was on a journey in the company of his Companions, and he went to relieve himself. The Companions saw a small red bird (like a sparrow) with its two young ones, which they captured. The red bird came and began to spread its wings. The Messenger of Allah returned and said, "*Who caused this bird to grieve for its young ones?*" A man answered, "I have done so." He said, "*Return the young ones to*

it.”¹ Therefore, I returned the nestling pigeons to their mother. It was the first time I had heard this hadith.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “*A woman got into Hell-Fire because of a cat which she had tied up, and thus it could not eat, and she did not let it free so that it could devour the vermin of the earth, until it died.*”²

He (PBUH) also said, “*While a man was walking on his way, he became extremely thirsty. He found a well and went down into it to drink water. Upon leaving it, he saw a dog, which was panting in thirst. His tongue was lolling out and he was eating moist earth from extreme thirst. The man said to himself, ‘This dog is extremely thirsty, as I was.’ So he descended into the well, filled up his leather sock with water, held it in his teeth, climbed up, and quenched the dog’s thirst. Allah appreciated his action and forgave his sins.*” When the Companions heard about this incident, they asked, “O Messenger of Allah, shall we be also rewarded for showing kindness to the animals?” He said, “*A reward is given in connection with every living creature.*”³

A camel complaining

Extraordinary events (miracles) are supported by clear proof, and do not occur to any person other than a Messenger sent by the Lord of the worlds. The following is an incident that included one of the signs of the prophecy of the person who showed great mercy: Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) entered an orchard belonging to an *Ansari* (one of the supporters of Prophet Muhammad from among the inhabitants of Medina) and saw a camel. When the camel saw him, it began to groan, and its eyes shed tears. The Messenger of Allah approached it and patted its

¹ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 3, p. 55, no. 2676; and Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 404.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 594, no. 3482; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1760, no. 2242.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 1, p. 333, no. 173; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1761, no. 2244.

head until it quieted down. Then he asked, “*Who is the owner of this camel? To whom does it belong?*” A young *Ansari* man stepped forward and said, “It is mine, O Messenger of Allah.” He said, “*Do you not fear Allah with respect to this beast which Allah has placed in your possession? This camel is complaining to me that you starve it and put it to toil.*”¹

The Prophet (PBUH) saw an ass with a brand on its face. Thereupon, he said, “*I inform you that Allah curses the one who has branded it (on the face).*” He forbade people from doing this.”²

When Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) entered Al-Hakam ibn Ayyub’s house, he saw some boys shooting at a tethered hen. Anas said, “The Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden the shooting of tethered or confined animals.”³ (i.e., tethering animals to shoot them to death.)

When the Prophet (PBUH) heard a woman cursing her she-camel, he forbade her from doing this.⁴ He showed great mercy towards animals intended for eating. He also said, “*Verily, Allah has prescribed Ihsan (proficiency, perfection) in all things. Therefore, if you kill, kill in the best manner; and if you slaughter, slaughter in the best manner. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and give ease to the animal he slaughters.*”⁵ (i.e., the knife should be sharp in order not to cause unnecessary pain to the animal.)

Scientists have mentioned that the blood that pours forth when slaughtering an animal contains toxins that have been in its body; as such, the *Shari`ah* considers this blood to be impure.

¹ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 7, p. 158, no. 2546; and Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 204.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1973, no. 2117; and Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 7, p. 166, no. 2561.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 9, p. 558, no. 5513; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1549, no. 1956.

⁴ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2204, no. 2595.

⁵ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1548, no. 1955.

O Allah, what a wise Mercy is associated with animals to the last drops of their blood! At the same time, it has not neglected the human beings for whom Allah has subjected these animals. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) mercy gives us guidance concerning the proper way to show mercy to animals and humans. This does not mean showing mercy to animals while killing humans, an approach that is sometimes adopted by modern man! When the meaning of proper mercy—which Allah has instilled in people—becomes confused, some people find that animals are closer to their hearts than some humans who do not know the meaning of mercy.

This prompted an Arabian poet to say:

*A dog is better than a friend who betrays me,
And who flirts with my wife and deceives me,
I will deal with my dog as an intimate friend,
And grant him love and sincerity with no end.*

Accordingly, when people do not follow the guidance of prophetic mercy, the modern civilized human's mercy becomes similar to the mercy of the pre-Islamic Arabian, although there may be some differences in form. However, it is the reality and purport that should be taken into consideration.

25- When you prepare a broth or buy fruits, think about the neighbor

O honorable spouses, your home furniture with its good design, apt choice, and harmonious colors causes happiness in your home. When we trim the trees of our garden and organize its flowers, we feel pleased. However, I wish to draw your attention to someone that you do not consider belonging to your home, although he is more important than anything else in your home. Actually, he is next to your home. You should know him; he is your honorable neighbor, who is given rights in Islam that are not given by any other religion.

Some of the Prophet's (PBUH) sayings with regard to neighbors are as follows:

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbor with kindness.”

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should do good to his neighbor.”¹

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor.”²

He (PBUH) emphasized this point, warning against the evil neighbor whose neighbors are not safe from his evils. He said, *“By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!”* It was said, *“Who is that, O Allah’s Messenger (PBUH)?”* He said, *“The person whose neighbor does not feel safe from*

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 460, no. 6019 with the wording *“falukrim”* (treat with kindness); and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 69, no. 48 with the wording *“falyuhsin”* (do good to).

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 460, no. 6018; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 68, no. 47.

his evil.”¹ (i.e., the Muslim’s belief considerably decreases if he is an evil person whose neighbors fear him.)

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught us the following, “None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his neighbor that which he loves for himself.”²

He (PBUH) also advises us, saying, “Whenever you prepare a broth, add plenty of water to it, and have in your mind the members of the household of your neighbors, and give them from it with courtesy.”³

He (PBUH) also advises women, saying, “O Muslim women, never belittle any gift you give your neighbor even if it is a hoof of a sheep.”⁴ (i.e., a woman should give a gift to her neighbor even if only a bone with little meat.)

The Prophet’s (PBUH) wife, `A’ishah, asked him, “O Allah’s Messenger, I have two neighbors; to whom shall I send my gifts?” He replied, “To the one whose door is nearer to you.”⁵

What an intelligent questioner, and what a brilliant answer, from which we know that the nearer the neighbor’s door is, the more he is entitled to rights. Neighbors do not only include those who are near our homes, but also include neighbors surrounding our work, places of gatherings, etc.

It was narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “When Allah wants good for a slave, He lets him do righteous deeds before his death, so that the people surrounding him become pleased with him.”⁶ The people surrounding him include his neighbors.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 457, no. 6016.

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 1, p. 67, no. 45.

³ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2025, no. 2625.

⁴ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 459, no. 6017; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 714, no. 1030.

⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 4, p. 512, no. 2259.

⁶ Narrated by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 224; and Ibn Hibban as stated in *Al-Ihsan*, vol. 1, p. 278, no. 343 and 344.

In fact, many great hadiths assign endless mercy to neighbors, so they make us feel regretful for failing to give our neighbors their due rights. If you reflect on the wisdom for which Islam legislates performing the five obligatory *Salahs* in congregation at the *Masjid*, you will find that those who perform *Salah* with you at the *Masjid* are your neighbors. How great are mercy, benevolence, and purity. We should offer all types of benevolence to our neighbors, and abstain from all types of harm, even if the neighbors are not Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entitled them to all the neighbors' rights and kind treatment.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had Jewish and non-Muslim neighbors; however, he exchanged presents with them, visited the sick among them, and treated them kindly without any cheating, deception, or oppression.

One of the Prophet's (PBUH) disciples, the Companion `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), slaughtered a sheep and said to his family, "Have you gifted my Jewish neighbor with part of this sheep? I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, '*Jibril kept enjoining good treatment of neighbors until I thought he would make neighbors heirs.*'¹ (i.e., entitle them to inheritance, as he frequently advised the Prophet to treat neighbors kindly.)

Civilization and civility spread all over the world, causing people to be too absorbed in their work and too preoccupied with their worries to concern themselves with other people's circumstances. People no longer enquire about their neighbors or know anything about their circumstances, whether they need anything, have a sick person among them to visit, suffer a

¹ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy as stated in *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhy*, vol. 6, p. 61, no. 2007; and Abu Dawud in his *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 338, no. 5152.

bereavement so that they need consoling, or celebrate a happy event so that they should be given a gift.

The whole world, O people, has a dire need to let human society resort to prophetic guidance; it has not become a matter of choice. By Allah, without Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we would not know the neighbors' great rights and considerable merit. Therefore, salute with me the Prophet of peace, the Prophet of Islam.

26- The Prophet's mercy for his opponents and enemies

People were and still are different in many ways, and if Allah willed, all people on earth would believe in Him. However, Allah's Wisdom willed that not all people would believe in Him. Without lying, the beauty of truthfulness would not appear.

Although Allah is the Greatest and Most Exalted Entity ever, some people disbelieve in Him and worship one of His created beings, or make it parallel to Him (Exalted by Allah far above what the oppressors say). Despite the clear instructions, sound religion, and great morals conveyed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he had opponents and enemies who attacked his *Da`wah* (calling to Allah). Some of them continued to be stubborn and fiercely hostile to him, while Allah willed good for other opponents of the Prophet and caused them to regret and repent when they realized their misdeeds. Let us see how Prophet Muhammad triumphed over them with his tolerance, forgiveness, and mercy.

The Prophet's (PBUH) opponents, the *Mushriks* of Quraish, used any words they could to distort reality, spreading rumors that he was a madman, a magician, and a soothsayer. Moreover, they inflicted physical harm on him; they threw thorns on the path where he walked, and what is more harmful and irritating is

that they put filthy and impure material on his back when he was offering *Salah* at the *Ka`bah*. In addition, his opponents' tyranny and oppression extended not just Prophet Muhammad, but also his followers, when they besieged them in Banu `Amir Mountain Pass, so they were forced to eat tree leaves. His opponents were so afraid of the wide reach of Muhammad's *Da`wah* that they gathered in *Dar Al-Nadwa* to discuss the matter of Muhammad, and concluded that he should be killed. However, they decided that members of different tribes should accomplish this mission, so that Muhammad's tribe could not take revenge on a certain tribe for his death. Moreover, they offered a prize of one hundred camels to the person who could bring him to them alive or dead. They started to pursue him from that moment. Years after these incidents, they proceeded to fight Prophet Muhammad next to the walls of Medina, which he entered in love and peace; hence, battles such as the Battle of Uhud and the Battle of Al-Ahzab took place. Prophet Muhammad suffered from all forms of terrorism on the part of the Quraish, so how did he overcome them?

The Treaty and the Conquest

Muhammad (PBUH) concluded Al-Hudaybiyah Treaty with the Quraish, but the allies and followers of the Quraish did not abide by the terms of this treaty. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah was entitled to attack them. By this time, his followers had increased, so he proceeded towards Mecca and many tribes joined him on his way. While he was proceeding towards the Quraish, some of the masters of the Quraish came to him, including Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, who said to him what Prophet Yusuf's brothers had said to Yusuf: "*By Allah! Indeed Allah has preferred you to us, and we certainly have been sinners.*" (Yusuf 12:91) The Prophet replied, "*No reproach on you this day; may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!*" (Yusuf 12:92)

Then, Muhammad (PBUH) liberated Mecca and Allah enabled him to conquer it without any resistance. In this moment, his enemies from among the disbelievers of Quraish were yielding to him, so what do you think his reaction would be after they had inflicted harm on him for such a long time? Did he kill them and punish them severely? Did he destroy them and declare killing them lawful? No, he did not do any of these things; rather, he declared a general pardon and offered security to anyone who adopted a peaceful attitude. He said, “*He Who enters a Masjid will be safe, he who lays down arms will be safe, he who locks his door will be safe, and he who enters Abu Sufyan’s house will be safe.*”¹ He did not use the sword to cut off their heads, but used it to destroy their idols, which the disbelievers used to worship, and were the symbols of their *Shirk* and misguidance.

O Mounts of Mecca, O Mount Paran, inform history of what you know and bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showed his enemies generous mercy and conferred upon them the favor of his pardon and kindness.

Victory should not be gained by force and violence or by killing people and shedding their blood. Rather, victory should be gained by a person’s sound principles, which can achieve what bombs and tanks cannot achieve.

When the Arab tribes heard about the victory of truth, mercy, and forgiveness over mutiny, falsehood, and oppression, they pledged allegiance to Muhammad (PBUH) and embraced Islam in droves. Accordingly, this historical achievement will last forever, reminding people that Allah said to Prophet Muhammad: “*Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e., don’t punish them).*” (Al-A`raf 7:199)

Do not kill her

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1405, no. 1780; and Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 292.

The following is about cunning and deceitful people, among whom was a Jewess who wanted to kill Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). She came to him showing love and offered him a mutton that she had cooked and filled with poison. The Prophet accepted the gifted mutton and ate from it. When he felt the effect of the poison, he called for her and asked her about it. She said, "I intended to kill you." He said, "*Allah will never give you the power to do it.*" The Prophet's Companions said, "Should we not kill her, O Messenger of Allah?" Thereupon, he said, "No."¹

The Prophet's (PBUH) biography is full of great incidents that reveal he did not want any worldly gains and did not take revenge for himself.

A people's master was captivated

Before the Conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) sent a cavalry towards Najd, where they arrested a man named Thumamah ibn Uthal from the tribe of Banu Hanifah. They tied him to one of the pillars of the *Masjid*. The Prophet went to him and asked, "*What have you got, O Thumamah?*" He replied, "I have got a good thought, O Muhammad. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has already killed somebody, and if you set me free, you will do a favor to a grateful person. If you want property, then ask me for whatever wealth you want." He was left there till the next day, when the Prophet again asked him, "*What have you got, O Thumamah?*" He said, "What I told you before." He repeated what he had said the previous day. The Prophet left him till the next day, and again asked him, "*What have you got, O Thumamah?*" He said, "I have got what I told you." Then the Prophet said, "Release Thumamah." After he was released, Thumamah went to a garden of date-palm trees near the *Masjid*, took a bath, entered the *Masjid*, and said, "I testify that none has

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 5, p. 272, no. 2617; and Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1721, no. 2190.

the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger. By Allah, O Muhammad, there was no face on the surface of the earth more disliked by me than yours, but now your face has become the most beloved face to me. By Allah, there was no religion more disliked by me than yours, but now it is the most beloved religion to me. By Allah, there was no town more disliked by me than your town, but now it is the most beloved town to me. Your cavalry arrested me at the time when I was intending to go to the Ka`bah; what do you think now?" The Prophet gave him good tidings and ordered him to perform `Umrah. When he came to Mecca, someone said to him, "You have renounced your religion?" Thumamah replied, "No. By Allah, I have embraced Islam with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. No. By Allah, not a single grain of wheat will come to you from Al-Yamamah unless the Prophet gives his permission."¹

Al-Yamamah used to send grain to Hijaz, and Thumamah ibn Uthal was the master of his people in Yemen. The few days that Thumamah spent at the *Masjid* caused him to understand the facts that he had not previously understood. When he recognized the Prophet's (PBUH) great morals, he uttered the Two Testimonies of Faith. Accordingly, this implies the success attained by the instructor (the Prophet) rather than the student (Thumamah). What a great success! How glad Thumamah was and how wonderful the Prophet was!

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 688, no. 4372; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1386, no. 1764.

27- Attempts to extinguish the light

The Western world is now trying fiercely to distort what I have written and what you have read here. It accuses Muhammad (PBUH) of being a terrorist and an unsavory person, and claims that Islam was spread by the sword. Accordingly, some people in the West mix the truth with falsehoods.

I am not surprised by these claims, because they have been made for a long time; however, they are found every day in new forms. It is not a prerequisite for the Prophet (PBUH) to be followed by all people and not be opposed by anyone. Rather, Prophet Muhammad informed us that on the Day of Judgment, one prophet will be followed by only one or two people, another prophet will be followed by a great number of people, and another prophet will not be followed by anyone.¹ This means that the prophets differ with regard to their number of followers.

Once, after Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had divided and distributed the war booty, one of the *Ansar* said, "By Allah, Muhammad, by this distribution, you did not intend to please Allah." The Prophet's face was overcome with anger and he said, "*May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses, for he was hurt with more than this, yet he remained patient.*"²

There are still opponents to prophets and messengers. For example, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Benedict XVI, said about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), "Muhammad spread the faith he preached by the sword ... God is not pleased by blood—and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature."

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 222, no. 5752; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 199, no. 374.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Al-Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 289, no. 3150; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 739, no. 1062.

I hold the opinion that such misrepresentation, falsification, and distortion are devilish methods that prejudiced people tend to use when they wish to turn people against someone.

Consider how Benedict XVI chose a name given to previous popes known for calling for expansionary wars. Thus, he tried to place himself in the spotlight and appear well qualified for his position. The previous pope, John Paul II, performed a role in fighting communism and overthrowing the communist regime in his home country of Poland. It seems that Benedict XVI wanted to perform a certain role by attacking Islam in order to attain an outstanding status among the priests. However, how impossible this is! There is a vast difference between Islam and communism, like the difference between heaven and earth. It also seems that some writers and intellectuals are more fair-minded and closer to the truth than these popes.

This is what they said

The following are some quotations and brief points that clarify the historical and political dimensions of Pope Benedict XVI:

(1) Isabelle Chemla, a French political analyst specializing in the affairs of the Middle East, said that Muslims will be the first target upon the election of the new pope. Then she reminded us of the religious and political stance adopted by the Pope during his first mass the day after his appointment, when he announced that he rejected the accession of Turkey to the European Union, as it is a Muslim country.¹

(2) Karen Armstrong, the famous historian, wrote a refutation of the Pope's lecture, in which she denied that Islam was spread by the sword. In addition, she wrote a book in English entitled '*A Short History of Islam*' in which she attempted to remind the Pope that some of the former crusaders started their journey to the

¹ *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Islamy Magazine*, issue no. 185, pp. 24-29.

Holy Land (Jerusalem) by slaughtering the Jewish groups dwelling on the banks of the Rhine River. She also stated that the crusaders ended their wars in 1099 after they had slaughtered more than thirty thousand Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem.

(3) In his book '*Clash of Civilizations*', Samuel P. Huntington stated: "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas, values, or religion [which was followed only by the people of other civilizations], but by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do."

(4) In his book '*American Theocracy*' (Viking, 2006), Kevin Philips cited astonishing facts about the strong relationship between religion and US foreign policies. He also mentioned that the religious drives of Bush and his followers unquestionably influenced their foreign and domestic policies. Moreover, he mentioned that it is established that Bush said he is speaking for God, and except for this fact, he would not be able to accomplish his mission. He also mentioned that Tom DeLay stated that God always uses him everywhere in order for him to defend the global status attained by the Bible in everything he does and wherever he is. It is God Who trains him.

(5) Uri Avnery, the Head of the Israeli Peace Activism Group, who describes himself as an atheist, wrote a scholarly refutation of the Pope's position. He mentioned that Pope Benedict XVI's lecture complemented President George Bush, who was trying to unite the Christian world against the axis of evil, which mostly refers to Muslims, and against the accession of Turkey to the European Union.¹

¹ See all the previously mentioned quotations in *Al-Bayan Magazine*, issue no. 230, pp. 48-50 from an article written by Dr. Ja'far Sheikh Idrin.

In addition, the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv described Pope Benedict XVI as “an intimate friend of the Jewish people” and Silvan Shalom, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, stated that upon considering the past of the new pope, the Jews concluded that he would fiercely fight anti-Semitism.

What is most disturbing is that Benedict XVI belonged to the Hitler Youth (a Nazi youth movement) from 1941 to 1944, when he was a young man, and was consequently subjected to continuous pressure from Zionist organizations to yield to their instructions.

The Zionist Lobby, which has penetrated the Catholic Church, tries to rupture relations between the Islamic world and the Vatican City State, and to sow discord between Christians and Muslims. This took place when the Zionist Lobby allied with the conservative right wing in Washington against Muslims. Consequently, the conservatives followed the agendas set by the Zionist pressure groups against Arabs and Muslims, describing them as the axis of evil, especially when the conservatives have occupied positions in the White House and controlled the decision-making process.

During the periods of both its prosperity and decline, Islamic civilization has never been concerned with feelings of hatred towards the symbols of any other religion, and Islamic heritage does not contain any writings that reveal hostility towards the symbols of other religions as we find in Western heritage. Moreover, it is strange to find that Western heritage does not contain any examples that demonstrate hatred for any person throughout the previous ten centuries other than the honorable Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

In fact, it is a morbid phenomenon that is not shared by any civilization other than the West. Thus, it deserves consideration, examination, and analysis. The world still contains people who get disturbed by genuine light and guidance, and wish for people

to remain in the darkness of ignorance. Whenever they find any light of guidance, they hasten to extinguish it. However, Allah will only allow His Light to be perfected, even though the disbelievers fight against it.

28- The sword fell from his hand

During the Battle of Dhat Al-Riqa`, the army of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) rested in an area. Prophet Muhammad rested under a tree, and suspended his sword from the branch under which he was resting. One of the *Mushriks* was observing the Muslims and the Prophet from a distance, and saw that the sword was suspended and the Messenger was asleep. He also saw that none of the Muslims were near the Prophet, so he slipped into the Prophet's place of rest and took hold of the suspended sword. He stood upon the Prophet's head with the sword was in his hand. He said, "Who can protect you from me?" The Messenger said, "*Allah.*" As soon as he said this, the sword fell from his hand. The Messenger of Allah caught the sword and asked him, "*Who will protect you from me?*" He said, "Please forgive me." The Prophet said, "On the condition that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am His Messenger." He said, "No, but I promise you that I shall not fight against you, nor shall I be with those who fight with you." The Messenger let him go. Then the man went back to his companions and said, "I have come to you from one of the best of mankind."¹

This story is not fictional, but a real incident that is stated in numerous Islamic compilations as narrated by Muslim scholars through a respected chain of narrators. This incident is the greatest proof of the truthfulness of the Prophet's (PBUH)

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 490, no. 4135; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 576 and vol. 4, p. 1786, no. 843.

prophecy, as he was under Allah's protection. Therefore, He protected him from this man. When you read the title for the first time, you did not know about this incident. However, when you read it in its entirety, your mind depicted a story that has a beginning and an end. Opponents of Prophet Muhammad tend to conceal the truth by telling only parts of it and mixing it with fake tales so the whole matter appears fabricated. Among these fabrications is the claim that Prophet Muhammad spread his religion by the sword, and that his religion calls for violence and killing.

To clarify this matter, we should first ask ourselves: why did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) fight? When and how did he fight? What is the effect of fighting?

First:

If we understand properly the fact that he is the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), we will not have any such questions; he was simply carrying out Allah's command to strive in His cause and fight. This is emphasized by the fact that the basis of the Islamic system differs from the bases of all man-made systems; the Islamic system is based on the fact that Allah is the only One Who gives judgment and legislates. However, the other systems state that man is the one who gives judgment and legislates for himself; thus, these bases are not in line with each other.

Second:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strove in the cause of Allah in order to repel the harm and ordeals by which Muslims were afflicted, and to ensure security for Muslims, their money, and creed. He also established a great principle, which states that sedition is graver than killing. He considered transgression against the creed, the harm inflicted by it, and attempts to cause followers to renounce it to be graver than transgression against

life; according to this great principle, creed is considered to be the greatest thing of value in life.

Third:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strove in the cause of Allah because he conveyed from his Lord the perfect perception of existence and life, and the most sublime system that ensures the development of life. Prophet Muhammad conveyed and bestowed this goodness upon mankind. Whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve, as there is no compulsion in religion.

However, before doing this, the obstacles that hinder the conveyance of this goodness (religion) and the *Da`wah* and hold people back from listening to the Prophet (PBUH), being persuaded by his religion, and following his guidance, must be removed. Among these obstacles are the tyrannical systems that hold people back from accepting the guidance conveyed by the Prophet, and continue to tempt those who become rightly guided. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad strove in the cause of Allah to destroy all the tyrannical systems and replace them with a just system that ensures freedom for the *Da`wah* everywhere, and for those who call to Allah.

Fourth:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strove in the cause of Allah in order to establish justice and remove oppression, which reached its peak when humans worshipped other created beings instead of the One Who created them.

Muhammad's (PBUH) religion enjoins that the only One Who should be worshipped is Allah, the Most Great and the Most High. It also forbids polytheism and worship of other created beings. Accordingly, there is no person, class, or nation that legislates rulings for people and demeans them. Rather, there is only one Lord for all people Who legislates rulings for them;

thereby, humans have become free and are no longer enslaved by one another.

Fifth:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not use the sword to force people to embrace his religion and believe in his creed. The religion did not spread by the sword in the sense intended by the accusations made by the Prophet's opponents. However, he used the sword in order to establish a secure system under which the followers of different creeds enjoy security, abiding by its rules, even if they do not follow its creed.

Uri Avnery said, "The treatment of other religions by Islam must be judged by a simple test: How did the Muslim rulers behave for more than a thousand years, when they had the power to 'spread the faith by the sword'? ... Well, they just did not.

"For many centuries, the Muslims ruled Greece. Did the Greeks become Muslims? Did anyone even try to Islamize them? On the contrary, Christian Greeks held the highest positions in the Ottoman administration. The Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians, Hungarians and other European nations lived at one time or another under Ottoman rule and clung to their Christian faith. Nobody compelled them to become Muslims and all of them remained devoutly Christian.

"THERE IS no evidence whatsoever of any attempt to impose Islam on the Jews. As is well known, under Muslim rule the Jews of Spain enjoyed a bloom the like of which the Jews did not enjoy anywhere else until almost our time. Poets like Yehuda Halevy wrote in Arabic, as did the great Maimonides. In Muslim Spain, Jews were ministers, poets, scientists. In Muslim Toledo, Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars worked together and translated the ancient Greek philosophical and scientific texts. That was, indeed, the Golden Age. How would this have been

possible, had the Prophet decreed the ‘spreading of the faith by the sword’?

“When the Catholics re-conquered Spain from the Muslims, they instituted a reign of religious terror. The Jews and the Muslims were presented with a cruel choice: to become Christians, to be massacred or to leave. And where did the hundreds of thousand of Jews, who refused to abandon their faith, escape? Almost all of them were received with open arms in the Muslim countries. The Sephardi (Spanish) Jews settled all over the Muslim world, from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, from Bulgaria (then part of the Ottoman Empire) in the north to Sudan in the south.

“Every honest Jew who knows the history of his people cannot but feel a deep sense of gratitude to Islam, which has protected the Jews for 50 generations, while the Christian world persecuted the Jews and tried many times ‘by the sword’ to get them to abandon their faith.”¹

Sixth:

The most remarkable characteristic that marks people who embrace Islam is that they are convinced of and content with it. Therefore, when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sent Mu`adh to Yemen, he said to him, “*You are going to some people from among the People of the Book. Call them to bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they obey you in this regard, teach them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers every day and night. If they obey you in this regard...*”²

The Prophet (PBUH) instructed the Muslims to convince people of the Truth. Hence, several Arabian tribes interacted with

¹ Uri Avnery, *Muhammad's Sword*, September 27, 2006.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 307, no. 1395; and *Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 50, no. 91.

Muhammad and came to embrace Islam. Moreover, there are countries—such as those in East Asia—that embraced Islam via the Muslim merchants at that time after seeing how truthful and well-mannered they were. How can we explain the speed with which Islam has spread, even given the fact that Christians spend much more for the sake of their religion than Muslims spend? The reason is that Islam is the birthright religion and the religion of *Tawhid*.

Sword and mercy

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showed mercy even on the battlefield; he pardoned the man who wanted to kill him, even though he had the opportunity to kill him, so the man was left feeling that Prophet Muhammad was a better person than him. Then, he continued to reflect on this pardon until he decided to embrace Islam and call his people to Islam.

The Prophet (PBUH) said to his Companions, “O people, do not long for encountering the enemy and supplicate to Allah to grant you security. But when you face the enemy, show patience and steadfastness.”¹

This indicates that Muslims should wish for their adversaries to embrace Islam, as this is the greatest objective. What is meant is not the love of evil and blood shedding; rather, it is the love of goodness and circulation of the Divine Message.

Whenever a battle took place, the Prophet (PBUH) instructed the army leaders and all the soldiers not to kill women or children.²

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 181, no. 3026; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1362, no. 1741-1742.

² Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 6, p. 172, no. 3015; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1364, no. 1744.

It was also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said during the time of *Jihad*, “Do not kill a decrepit old man, a young infant, a child, or a woman.”¹

Therefore, the Rightly Guided Caliphs and their followers gave the soldiers the same instructions, so killing was confined to fighters on the battlefield. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prohibited acting treacherously towards other fighters or mutilating their bodies before or after their death by cutting off their limbs, mutilating their noses, etc.²

This clarifies how merciful Muhammad (PBUH) was to any human. When Sahl ibn Hanif and Qays ibn Sa`d were in Al-Qadisiyyah, a funeral procession passed by them, so they stood up. Someone told them, “It is one of the local people.” (i.e., it is the funeral of a *Dhimmi* [protected non-Muslim living under Islamic rule].) They said, “When a funeral passed the Messenger of Allah and he stood up, it was said to him, “It is a Jew.” He said, “*Did he not have a soul?*”³

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stood exalting Allah Who created this soul and willed it to return to Him. Moreover, he was sent as a source of mercy for this soul, but it refused to accept it, so he felt pity for any soul that did not believe in Allah or did not attain goodness from this belief. In fact, he wished good even for the *Mushriks* whom he fought. It was said to the Messenger of Allah, “O Messenger of Allah, invoke a curse upon the

¹ Narrated by Abu Dawud as stated in *`Awn Al-Ma`bud*, vol. 7, p. 196, no. 2611; and Al-Bayhaqy in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* through the same chain of narrators, vol. 9, p. 153, no. 18153.

² The prohibition of these acts was narrated by Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1357, no. 1731; and see *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 7, p. 524, no. 4192.

³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 3, p. 214, no. 1312; and Muslim, vol. 2, p. 661, no. 961.

Mushriks.” Whereupon, he said, “*I have not been sent as the invoker of curses, but I have been sent as a mercy.*”¹

¹ Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2007, no. 2599.

29- Towards a happy society

We make a grave mistake when we give attention to things made to give a pleasant outward appearance (like perfumes or fragrances), and neglect our inner reality (i.e., innocence, good morals, and good conduct), forgetting about the difference between the first, which vanishes with time, and the second, which is implanted in our souls. There is a great difference between things used by evil and ill-natured people to give them a pleasant appearance, and the good traits possessed only by those who rise above the shortcomings of humans. We can build a happy society, which can boast good morals, while other people should feel ashamed of themselves due to their bad morals.

In this regard, we will mention what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, and will find that he attached special importance to morals, as there are many hadiths in this respect. One of these hadiths is, “*I was sent to perfect good character.*”¹ This topic is easy to tackle. However, the matter, which we may not excel in, and which is considered to be the secret and main reason behind achieving distinction, is to show good behavior that makes people love us. It was said, “Have good morals and you will feel happy; and if you do not feel happy, at least you have made the people surrounding you happy.”

This topic gives me a feeling of sorrow, as it reminds me that I am about to finish writing about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and bid farewell to my honorable readers. However, I will wipe away my tears in order to enjoy with you some incidents that I have chosen haphazardly, and which had a great effect on the happiest society ever.

¹ Narrated by Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 381, and this is his wording; and Malik in *Al-Muwatta'*, vol. 3, p. 97.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to gather frequently with people so that he would talk and listen to them. These gatherings witnessed many incidents that displayed the Prophet's morals and the stance he adopted on education. This society was happy due to the presence of Muhammad, and the whole world has become happy with this society.

Once Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sitting with his Companions and a drink was brought to him, so he drank some of it. A boy was sitting on his right and old men were sitting on his left. The Prophet said to the boy, "*If you permit me, I will give (the rest of the drink) to these old men first.*" The boy, who was intelligent, said, "I will not give preference to anyone over myself with regards to my share from you, O Messenger of Allah." Then the Prophet put the container in the boy's hand.¹

This great incident reveals how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) seated children and old people in one gathering, and how he dealt with all of them. He used to give the drink to the one who sat on his right, even if he was young, but when he saw old men on his left, he asked the boy for permission to give the drink to them. As the boy loved the Prophet very much, he gave him a wonderful reply that showed his respect for the old men, but that his love for the Prophet was greater.

Specialists in psychology have stated that the youth usually boycott older people's gatherings and tend to form their own environments and cultures, which are marked by special language and symbols, in addition to a system of values that differs from that of older people.

Some researchers have added that some adolescents tend to gain security and support from intimate companions who are of the

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 89, no. 5620; and Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1604, no. 2030.

same age, and avoid older people who are far away from their world, feelings, and problems.¹

Therefore, adolescents suffer from psychological siege, which they impose on themselves due to the influences of this age or certain actions of older people. However, the Prophet (PBUH) removed this siege and gave them the support they needed, as he was close to their world, feelings, and problems when he drew close to their hearts and those of their parents.

A rash youth, who had a burning desire for women, came to the Prophet (PBUH), saying, "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to commit adultery." The people rebuked him, saying, "Quiet! Quiet!" The Prophet said to him, "*Come here.*" The young man came close to the Prophet and sat down. The Prophet said, "*Would you like that for your mother?*" The young man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their mothers." Then, he said, "*Would you like that for your daughter?*" The young man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their daughters." The Prophet said, "*Would you like that for your sister?*" The young man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their sisters." The Prophet said, "*Would you like that for your aunts?*" The young man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. People would not like it for their aunts." The Prophet placed his hand on him and he said, "*O Allah, forgive his sins, purify his heart, and guard his chastity.*" After that, the young man never turned to anything sinful again.²

The Prophet (PBUH) did not rebuke him, but instead used persuasion and discussion, then supplicated to Allah to purify his

¹ *Al-Murahiqun (The Adolescents)*, by Dr. `Abdul-`Aziz Al-Naghimishy, p. 65.

² Narrated by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 257; and Al-Albany classified it as *Sahih* in *Al-Silsilah Al-Sahihah*, vol. 1, p. 645, no. 370.

heart and guard his chastity. Therefore, the Prophet's method had a great effect on the young man's heart and soul.

Extreme humbleness and deep love

The honorable Companion, Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Once the Prophet (PBUH) was riding a donkey called Ya`fur and said to me, 'Ride, O Mu`adh.' I said, 'Move on, O Messenger.' He said, 'Ride.' When I rode behind him, the donkey fell over. The Prophet stood up laughing, but I felt bad for him. The donkey did the same twice more, then moved on. The Prophet moved his arm backward and hit my back with a lash (Mu`adh was riding behind the Prophet and the Prophet hit him lightly with a lash, having fun with him). Then he said, 'O Mu`adh, do you know what is the right of Allah upon His slaves?' I replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'The right of Allah upon His slaves is to worship Him Alone and never to associate anything with Him.' He continued his ride on the donkey, then hit my back slightly with his hand, saying, 'O Mu`adh, O the son of Mu`adh's mother, do you know the right of Allah's slaves if they do so?' I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'The right of Allah's slaves upon Allah is to admit them into Paradise.'"¹

What great humbleness is shown in this lovely incident. The Prophet (PBUH) called us to worship Allah Alone while smiling, then bid us farewell while smiling.

On the day of his death and while sick, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) suddenly appeared before the Muslims. He lifted the curtain of `A'ishah's home and looked at them while they were offering the Fajr (Dawn) prayer, smiling with pleasure. Abu Bakr started to retreat to join the row on the assumption that the Messenger wanted to come out for the prayer. The attention of

¹ Narrated by Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 238 with this wording, and its origin is found in the Two *Sahih* Books of hadith, as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 10, p. 412, no. 5967; and Muslim, vol. 1, p. 58, no. 30.

the Muslims was diverted from the prayer because they were delighted to see the Messenger of Allah, but he waved his hand to them to complete their prayer, then went back into the room and let the curtain drop.¹

*O my eyes, shed tears over Allah's Messenger,
I do not want to see you with no tear,
How can you stop crying for the one,
Whose graces encompass everyone,
Shed tears and show grief over losing him,
Have you ever heard of anyone like Him!
The predecessors did not lose a person like Muhammad,
Until the Day of Judgment, such a loss will never be experienced.*²

What a great Message! It flows with love, happiness, humbleness, and cheerfulness, and is filled with glad tidings and mercy for everyone.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated vol. 7, p. 750, no. 4448.

² It was previously referenced in another footnote.

30- Acknowledgement and conclusion

Readers, I would like to express my warmest thanks to you for granting me your trust by reading my writings. I have become like a guest in your home who receives honorable treatment and good hospitality from you. I express my thanks to you, as I do not know how to reward you properly; the honorable Messenger (PBUH) taught us to return the favor to those who did us a favor. If this is not available, we should at least express thanks.

Reading enables us to communicate with each other via the bridges of knowledge and love. In addition, the first eternal *Ayah* that was revealed is, “*Read...*” (Al-`Alaq 96:1)

The morals of Muslims today do not represent Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) morals, as some of these morals were lost with the passage of time. However, anyone who seeks good and pure morals that have not been affected by the impurity of life should follow the great morals of Prophet Muhammad, about whom his Lord says, “*O Prophet! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner. And as one who invites to Allah [Islamic Monotheism, i.e., to worship none but Allah (Alone)] by His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light (through your instructions from the Qur’an and the Sunnah—the legal ways of the Prophet).*” (Al-Ahzab 33:45-46)

Allah also says in the Torah, “O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a giver of glad tidings, a warner, and guardian of the *Ummiyyeen* (illiterate people). You are My slave and My messenger. I have named you ‘*Al-Mutawakkil*’ (the one who depends upon Allah). You are neither discourteous, harsh, nor a noise-maker (the Arabic word ‘*Sakhab*’ refers to loud voices and disputes) in the markets. You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you forgive and pardon them. Allah will not let him (the Prophet, PBUH) die till he rectifies the affairs of the crooked people by making them say, ‘There is no god but Allah,’

with which will be opened blind eyes, deaf ears, and enveloped hearts.”¹

The Messenger (PBUH) gave himself several names, saying, “I am Muhammad, Ahmad, Muqaffi (the last in succession), Hashir, the Prophet of Repentance, and the Prophet of Mercy.”²

All the Prophet’s (PBUH) names describe aspects of his personality and are not merely proper nouns that are mentioned for the sake of identification. Rather, they are derived from some of his attributes that encompass perfection.

One of the attributes with which Allah favored the Prophet (PBUH) is that his names involve praising him, and mentioning his name includes expressing great thanks to him. When his enemies and opponents mention his name, they implicitly praise him without realizing it. Among the wonderful signs is that Allah protected his names ‘Ahmad’ and ‘Muhammad’ and did not let anyone before him be given these names, although the Divine Books and Prophets gave glad tidings of his coming. There is no one among the Arabs known to have been given the name ‘Ahmad’ before the Prophet. As for the name ‘Muhammad’, some narrations state that a small number of Arabs had given their sons this name, hoping that one of them would be the coming prophet. However, Allah knows best the one who would deliver His Message.

The meanings of these names are as follows:

Muhammad: The one who has so many praiseworthy traits that he is more praised than any other person; he is the most

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari as stated in *Fat-h Al-Bary*, vol. 8, p. 449, no. 4838 from the narration of `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with him).

² Narrated by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1828, no. 2355 from the narration of Abu Musa Al-Ash`ary. It is also found in Al-Tirmidhy’s book, *Al-Shama’il*, p. 306, no. 368 from the narration of Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him).

honorable person ever to have praised his Lord, and the best person to have been praised by people.

Ahmad: He is the best one to have praised Allah and the best one who has ever been praised; the dwellers of Heaven and earth, as well as people of the worldly life and the Hereafter, praise him due to his countless good traits.

Al-Muqaffi: The one who followed in the footsteps of the Messengers who preceded him; hence, he is the last Prophet (PBUH).

Al-Hashir: The one after whom the people will be resurrected, and the last Prophet, who will not be followed by any other Prophet until the Day of Resurrection. It also means the first one for whom the earth will be split on this day, and the one who will intercede for people when Allah calls them to account.

The Prophet of Repentance: Allah has opened the gate of repentance to all people on earth by sending him as a messenger, and He has accepted their repentance in a manner that had never been granted to people before the coming of the Prophet (PBUH). It also means that the Prophet asked Allah to forgive him and to accept his repentance more than anyone else.

The Prophet of Mercy: He was sent by Allah as mercy for people, so Allah has shown mercy to all people on earth, including both the believers and the disbelievers. His religion and teachings have been a source of mercy for all people, and anyone who reads his biography and knows about his teachings will find guidance therein.¹

¹ Judge `Iyad, *Al-Shifa*, vol. 1, p. 288; and Ibn Al-Qayyim, *Zad Al-Ma`ad fi Hady Khayr Al-Ibad*, vol. 1, pp. 86-97.

As mentioned previously, when the Prophet (PBUH) was asked to supplicate to Allah against the *Mushriks*, he said, “*I have not been sent as the invoker of curse, but I have been sent as mercy.*”¹

People may have realized why Muhammad’s (PBUH) opponents wish to conceal this fact.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. I also bear witness that `Isa is Allah’s slave and Messenger, His Word (“Be!” and he was) which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary), and a spirit created by Him.

¹ It was previously referenced in the footnote of another hadith.