

**Glimpses from
the Prophet's Life**

(peace and blessings be upon him)

Part 1

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INTRODUCTION

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger, his household, and those who followed his path until the Day of Judgment.

The month of Rabee` Al-Awal evokes a memory that is dear for Muslims all around the world, namely, the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Many Muslim seize this month to read more about the Prophet and tell their children stories about his life; some Muslims make celebrations and sing songs praising his noble qualities and sublime traits.

True love for Prophet Muhammad goes far beyond celebration and praise; true love is demonstrated through faithful dedication to his guidance and sincere adherence to his teachings. After all, Prophet Muhammad is the example chosen by Allah to be followed by all the humanity until the end of times.

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Every aspect of the Prophet's life merits admiration; every detail of his teachings is beneficial; every character of him is worthy of following.

This book presents some glimpses of the Prophet's life and teachings. It is interesting, indeed, to observe the relevance of these glimpses to today's life, fourteen centuries after his passing (peace and blessings be upon him)

This book is not meant to provide a biography of the Prophet (which we have already an e-book for), nor does it present an extensive discussion of certain themes or aspects related to his person. As the title puts it, this book is a compilation of assorted glimpses from his life.

So you will read in this part about such various topics as the Prophet's gratitude to Allah, his guidance regarding environment, a negotiation session between him and a Makkan leader, his strategies to correct mistake, how he cherished his wives, his treatment to new Muslims and his care for the elderly.

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We hope that you will find this journey enlightening and inspiring. We ask Allah Almighty to guide Muslims to the straight path and to make them good representatives of their beautiful *deen*.

We pray to Him Almighty to gather us together with our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) on the Day of Judgment. Ameen.

Shari`ah Team, Onislam.net

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THE PROPHET'S GRATITUDE TO ALLAH



THE PROPHET'S GRATITUDE TO ALLAH

Rendering Gratefulness into Real Life Actions

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THE PROPHET'S GRATITUDE TO ALLAH

THE PROPHET'S GRATITUDE TO ALLAH

Rendering Gratefulness into Real Life Actions

By Osamah Salhia

In common use, gratitude to Allah is defined as devoting all that Allah has bestowed upon you to that for which He has created you. Hence, gratitude transcends speech to a state of being that manifests in one's character. Allah Almighty clarifies that this rare quality of spiritual devotion is not at all limited to speech:

{Work, O family of David, in gratitude. And few of my servants are grateful} (Saba' 34: 13).

Gratitude has been mentioned on over seventy different occasions in the Qur'an as it praises its beholders, promises them a pleasant reward, prohibits us of its opposite and commands us to internalize it. This emphasis on gratitude

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brings to light its crucial significance. (*Akhlaq an-Nabi fil Kitab was-sunnah*)

It is a quality that Allah mentioned to distinguish His prophets (peace be upon them) and favored servants. Allah said of Noah (peace be upon him):

{O descendants of those We carried [in the ship] with Noah. Indeed, he was a grateful (*shakur*) servant.} (Al-Isra' 17: 3)

The verse uses the form "*shakur*" to indicate affirmed emphasis of this quality in Prophet Noah (peace be upon him).

He also described Ibrahim (peace be upon him):

{[He was] grateful for His favors. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path} (An-Nahl 16: 121)

He also says of Luqman:

{And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], "Be grateful to Allah." And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself.} (Luqman 31: 12)

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Imam ibn Kathir interpreted:

"That is, we commanded him to be grateful for the grace that We bestowed upon him that distinguished him from the people of his time" (Ibn Kathir, *Tafseer Al-Qur'an Al-Azeem*).

Hence, these examples indicate that gratitude is a primary quality conveyed and enacted by all Prophets, especially the beloved seal of Prophets, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who said: "**Indeed, I was sent to perfect the honorable manners**" (Ahmad).

"As for the believers, they are at varying degrees in fulfilling their duty of expressing gratitude. This variance in degree correlates with their awareness of these blessings and their actualization of the essence of servitude to Allah. Thus, whosoever performed this quality in a fashion that is pleasing to Allah has achieved the honor of falling under the general divine praise **{And few of my servants are grateful}**." (Akhlaq an-Nabi fil Kitab was-sunnah)

The entire life of our dearly beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) can be viewed as a manifestation of

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utmost gratitude. One who observes his character, his sayings, his actions and his entire lifestyle will be obliged to concur that he was a truly grateful servant of his Creator.

ʿA'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

The household of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) never filled their stomachs of wheat bread two consecutive days to the day he passed away" (*Shama'il At-Tarmidhi*).

Ibn ʿAbbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away without leaving a *dinar* (gold coin) or a *dirham* (silver coin)...

By Allah, nights would pass in the household of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and they would not find dinner" (Ahmad).

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported:

We were by the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) while ʿUmar was in his presence. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was lying

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on a bed made of palm leaves, and beneath his head was a pillow; there wasn't a barrier between his side and the palm leaves. When he made a slight movement, it was evident that the palm affected his sides.

So, `Umar began to weep, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) inquired, "**Why do you weep?**" He said:

"How can I not weep when I know that you are dearer to Allah than Kaiser and the Caesar, and they are living such lavish lives in this world".

So the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"O `Umar wouldn't you be pleased if the hereafter is ours and this life is for them?" (Al-Hafiz Al-Asbahani, *Akhlaq An-Nabi wa Adabuh*. The last excerpt of the hadith is also found in Sahih Muslim)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) showed utmost gratitude in his worship to Allah. He would pray a large part of the night throughout the year, and his gratitude

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would even increase in times of special divine bounty.
`A'ishah reported:

When the last ten nights of Ramadan entered, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would revive the night in worship and awake his family..." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

`A'isha also reported:

When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prayed (the night prayers: *Qiyam-ul-layl*), he would stand until (the skin of) his feet swelled. So, I said: "O Prophet of Allah, do you do as such while Allah has forgiven you all mistakes?" He responded: "**Should not I be a grateful servant of Allah?**" (Muslim)

Imam ibn Hajar commented on the hadith:

"The meaning is that since I have been forgiven all of my mistakes, this is a reason for night prayers being a form of gratitude towards Allah, so how can I abandon it? Imam Al-Qurtubi clarified:

Those who asked him this question assumed that he withstands such burdens in worship to Allah from fear of sins

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and hope of forgiveness. So, he clarified to them that there is another path of worship which is to express gratitude for forgiveness. The scholars said: The prophets have maintained such deep fear of Allah because of their knowledge of His immense blessings upon them." (Ibn Hajar, *Fath El-Bari*)

Ibn Battal said:

"This hadith is indicative that the individual should take upon himself a stricter path in servitude, even if that may take a toll on his body because if the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did that while being certain of having been forgiven, what should be the condition of one who does not have that certainty, let alone one who is insecure of deserving hellfire." (Ibid)

However, it should be noted that Imam Ibn Hajar modified the understanding of the statement of Ibn Battal:

"This mindset should be in a case that it will not lead the individual to boredom and retreat from worship because the condition of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was most complete, and he never retreated from worshipping his Lord.

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So, if one fears boredom and retreat, he should not force himself upon such acts. Hence the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said "**Take of the actions that which you can withstand...**" (Ibid. With a slight abridgment of the original quote)

Another example of the Prophet's gratitude is that he would seek forgiveness of Allah after performing the five daily prayers:

"Some have raised a query as to how he seeks forgiveness while being forgiven, and Imam ibn Sayyid An-Nas responded:

"This displays his loyalty to the duties of servitude and his practice of gratitude, and so that he may clarify his Sunnah by action just as he has done so in speech." (Al-Mubarkaafuri, *Tuhfat Al-Ahwazi Sharh Sunan At-Tirmizi*)

Similarly, it was reported that he sought refuge in Allah from the punishment of the grave. If the query is raised as to why he would seek refuge while he is already assured protection, the response is:

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"He did so to display his need of Allah, to acknowledge His blessings and to express his gratitude for continually renewed blessings.

One who has immense blessings from Allah Almighty must receive such blessings with immense gratitude. The subservience of individuals to Allah is in accordance with their knowledge of Him." (Ibn Battal, *Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*, with a slight abridgement)

Gratitude was not just something our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) practiced and professed; rather, it was a quality he instilled within his companions.

On one occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), Abu Bakr and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) left their homes hungry. They were hosted by a man from *Al-Ansar* who offered them a stem of dates and they ate from it until they quenched their hunger. At that point the beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) recited:

{Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure} (At-Takathur 102: 8).

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He said to Abu Bakr and Umar:

"This is of the blessings you will be asked about"
(Al-Hafiz Al-Asbhani, *Akhlaq An-Nabi wa-adabuh*).

These prophetic examples ingrained within the companions the realization of divine blessings. Such blessings may often be overlooked as necessary or expected in the eyes of those less spiritually conscious, but it is that realization that will facilitate the route to higher degrees of gratitude and will ultimately lead to the believer living a life of excellence (*ihsan*); that is, to consistently feel that Allah is overseeing us in our affairs, or to even witness Him in His countless blessings in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Thus, our path to embodying the prophetic example is to first realize the comprehensive scope of gratitude, and its merit in the eyes of Allah, and its relation to other religious teaching.

Our gratitude may be enhanced by building our awareness of Allah and His sovereignty over our affairs. The fruits of such esteemed realization should become apparent in one's personal and social life as it was evident in the life of Allah's favored servants. Allah says:

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{And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'} (Ibrahim 14: 7)

And He also said:

{So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me} (Al-Baqarah 2: 152)

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10 GREEN HADITHS



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By Muhammad Fathi

Did the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say anything about saving our planet? Did he promote any ideas or practices relevant to the world's growing concern about the future of the earth and its resources?

Today, with the increasing awareness of the dangers facing our planet and the great interest in green ideas, a reflection on the guidance of the Prophet in this area proves helpful and relevant. What is distinctive about the Prophet's approach to environmental issues is the connection he establishes between green practices and the Hereafter reward, which represents for Muslims an incentive greater than any worldly gain or reward and, as a result, prompts a greater care for the earth and more effort to conserve its resources.

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10 GREEN HADITHS

Below is a collection of the Prophet's *hadiths* that, although said 14 centuries ago, are so relevant today. The green ideas are not novel, they are as old and well established as the religion of Islam is.



Plant a tree even if it is your last deed:

1. Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it."** (Authenticated by Al-Albani)



Planting trees is a renewable source of *hasanat*:

2. Anas also reported that the Prophet said,

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (*sadaqah*) for him." (Bukhari)

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10 GREEN HADITHS



Conserve resources even when used for rituals:

3. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-`Aas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet passed one day by Sa`d ibn Abi Waqas (May Allah be pleased with him) while he was performing *wudu'* (ritual cleaning of body parts in preparation for prayer). The prophet asked Sa`d, "**Why is this wastage?**" Sa`d replied "Is there wastage in *wudu* also?" The Prophet said, "**Yes, even if you are at a flowing river.**" (Ahmad and authenticated Ahmad Shakir)



Keeping environment clean is important:

4. Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet warned,

"Beware of the three acts that cause you to be cursed: relieving yourselves in shaded places (that people utilize), in a walkway or in a watering place." (Ranked sound, *hasan*, by Al-Albani)

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10 GREEN HADITHS

5. Abu Zarr Al-Ghafari (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity (*sadaqah*).**" (Authenticated by Al-Albani)



No for over-consumption! Consider recycling and fixing before buying new items:

6. Abdullah ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet said,

"The believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry."(Authenticated by Al-Albani)

7. Asked about what the Prophet used to do in his house, the Prophet's wife, `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), said that he used to repair his shoes, sow his clothes and used to do all such household works done by an average person. (Authenticated by Al-Albani)

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8. The Prophet said, "**Whoever kills a sparrow or anything bigger than that without a just cause, Allah will hold him accountable on the Day of Judgment.**" The listeners asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is a just cause?" He replied, "**That he will kill it to eat, not simply to chop off its head and then throw it away.**" (An-Nasa'i)



Animals should be cared for:

9. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said,

"A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did."

So, he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, held it with his mouth and watered the dog. Allah appreciated him for that deed and forgave him."

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The Companions said, "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied:

"There is a reward for serving any living being."
(Bukhari)

10. Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said,

"A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth." (Bukhari)

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QURAIISH NEGOTIATES WITH THE PROPHET



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QURAIISH NEGOTIATES WITH THE PROPHET

By Safiur Rahman Al-Mubarakfuri

Shortly after the conversion of the two powerful heroes, Hamzah ibn `Abdil-Muttalib and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with them), the clouds of tyranny and oppression against Muslims in Makkah started to clear away and the Makkah polytheists realized that it was no use meting out torture to the Muslims. They consequently began to direct their campaign to a different course.

The authentic records of the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) show that it had occurred to the Makkan leaders to appeal to Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) ambition. They, therefore, time and again plied him with temptation.

One day some of the important men of Makkah gathered in the enclosure of Al-Ka`bah, and `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, a chief among them, offered to approach the Prophet (peace and

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QURAIISH NEGOTIATES WITH THE PROPHET

blessings be upon him) and contract a bargain with him whereby they give him whatever worldly wealth he asks for, on condition that he keep silent and no longer proclaim his new faith. The people of Quraish endorsed his proposal and requested him to undertake that task.

So, `Utbah approached Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) with the following offer:

If you are doing all this with a view to getting wealth, we will join together to give you greater riches than any Quraishite has possessed.

If ambition moves you, we will make you our chief; we will never decide anything without referring to you.

If you desire kingship we will readily offer you that.

If you are under the power of an evil spirit which seems to haunt and dominate you so that you cannot shake off its yoke, then we shall call in skilful physicians to cure you.

"Have you said all?" asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him); and then hearing that all had been said, he spoke forth, reciting verses from Surat Fussialt:

Ha Meem. [This is] a revelation from Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

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QURAIISH NEGOTIATES WITH THE PROPHET

A Book whereof the verses are explained in detail; — a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know.

Giving glad tidings and warning; but most of them turn away, so they listen not.

**And they say: "Our hearts are under coverings (screened) from that to which you invite us ..." }
(Fussilat 41: 1-5)**

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) went on reciting the Chapter while `Utbah sitting and listening attentively with his hand behind his back to support him. When the Messenger reached the verse that required prostration, he immediately prostrated himself. After that, he turned to `Utbah saying:

"Abu Al-Waleed! You have heard my reply, you are now free to do whatever you please."

`Utbah then retired to his company to give them his feedback. When his compatriots saw him, they swore that he had returned to them with a countenance unlike the one he had before meeting the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

He immediately communicated to them the details of the talk he gave and the reply he received, and commented saying:

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I have never heard words similar to those ones he recited. They definitely relate neither to poetry nor to witchcraft nor do they derive from soothsaying. O people of Quraish! I request you to heed my advice: Let the man alone and grant him full freedom to pursue his goals. I swear that his words will have formidable consequences. Should the other Arabs rid you of him, they will then spare you the trouble. On the other hand, if he accedes to power over the Arabs, then you will share him his kingship and might."

These words of course fell on deaf ears, and did not appeal to the polytheists, who jeered at 'Utbah and claimed that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had bewitched him. (Ibn Hisham 1/293,294)

In another version of the same event, it is related that 'Utbah went on attentively listening to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) until the latter began to recite Allah's words:

**{But if they turn away, then say (O Muhammad):
"I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the
thunderbolt that (overtook the peoples of) 'Aad
and Thamud} (Fussilat 41:13)**

Panicked and stunned, 'Utbah stood up putting his hand on the Prophet's mouth and begged him in the Name of Allah and the kinship ties to stop lest the calamity should befall the people of Quraish. He then hurriedly returned to his

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compatriots and informed them of what he had heard.
(Tafseer Ibn Kathir 6/159- 161)

Source:

Taken, with some modifications from, the author's *The Sealed Nectar*

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7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES



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By Maha Ezzeddine

Mistakes are the consequences of life and being human. They help us repent, learn and grow wiser. Mistakes can be catalysts of self-improvement and reminders of our imperfections. Still, we tend to interpret mistakes more as disaster than opportunity.

Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of God and the most brilliant educator of humanity, approached mistakes not as cause for shame, but as teachable moments. Even though the Prophet taught his companions to strive for excellence and conquer their flaws, mistakes were inevitably made, some minor and some very serious. Prophet Muhammad corrected people's missteps with gentleness, empathy, and creativity.

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7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

He used mistakes as opportunities to empower people, not break them.

Studying Prophet Muhammad's example gives us insight on how to help people in their moments of error. In this part we discuss four lessons that highlight some aspects of how Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) mended mistakes:

1. Address the mistakes.

Because mistakes make us uncomfortable, we may ignore them or think they are not our business. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not leave mistakes to stand on their own without guiding people towards a solution. He was sincere toward his companions, and at the center of his attitude toward mistakes was a deep love and compassion. He may have chosen to correct a mistake discreetly, delay his reaction, or withhold a response, but he did so with the individual's best interest in mind.

Sometimes, the Prophet did not even have to use words to correct a mistake. He once left the company of his companions to express disapproval of an action. A change in his posture would indicate to his companions that something

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was not right. When a mistake was truly grave, he would emphasize his words and repeat them several times.

The young Usamah ibn Zaid was narrating to the Prophet the events of an armed conflict with their enemy. He described one soldier who had cried out, "There is no God but Allah!" out of hope that he would be spared. Usamah told the Prophet that he then killed the soldier with his sword. When the Prophet heard this, his face changed. He said,

"(How could) you kill him when he said, 'La ilaha illa Allah'? (How could) you kill him when he said, 'La ilaha illa Allah'?..."

The Prophet kept repeating these words, until Usamah wished that he could erase all his deeds. He said that he wished he could embrace Islam all over again that day, so that he could start his life afresh. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

2. Be gentle.

The Prophet was extremely perceptive toward the people around him. He knew when someone was sensitive or vulnerable, and he often approached mistakes with utmost gentleness.

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Bedouins were known at the time of the Prophet for being gruff and somewhat uncivilized. Once a bedouin entered the Prophet's mosque for the first time. He raised his voice in supplication, "O Allah, forgive me and Muhammad, but *don't forgive anyone else!*" The Prophet smiled at him and remarked gently, "You are limiting something that is vast."

Later, to everyone's horror, the man urinated on the masjid floor. The Prophet calmed the dismayed onlookers, and told them to leave the man alone. He reminded his companions that they were sent to make things easy on people, not difficult. The bedouin later recounted his experience with the Prophet:

May my mother and father be sacrificed for him. He did not scold or insult me. He just said,

'We do not urinate in these mosques-they were built for prayer and remembrance of Allah.'

Then he called for a bucket of water to be poured on the ground. (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

So deep was the empathy the Prophet had for his people that he did everything possible to make things easy for them. He

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removed every obstacle that stood between the people and Allah's forgiveness, and he searched out solutions to individual's unique circumstances. A man once confessed he was doomed because he slept with his wife while fasting in Ramadan. The Prophet asked if he was able to free a slave. The man said no.

- **"Can you fast two consecutive months?"**

- "No."

- **"Can you feed sixty poor people?"**

- "No."

The Prophet stayed quiet. Soon, a basket of dates was presented to him. The Prophet took the dates, and looked for the man.

"Take these dates and give them in charity."

The man said dejectedly, "No one is poorer than me, Messenger of Allah. By Allah, there is no family in all of Madinah poorer than mine."

At this, the Prophet's face broke into a smile.

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"Take it and feed your family," he said. (Al-Bukhari)

3. Connect people with Allah.

Sometimes, we are mortified by the social embarrassment mistakes cause when they really may not be so serious in the sight of Allah. Other times, we overlook mistakes because we've gotten used to them and have made so many excuses. But it might be that those mistakes turn out to be mountains in the hereafter. With the remembrance of Allah, we gain a better perspective on our mistakes.

When Abu Bakr had spoken roughly to Salman Al-Farisi, Bilal ibn Rabah, and Suhaib Ar-Rumi, the Prophet reminded him that his action may have angered Allah:

"Perhaps you have made them angry. By the One in whose Hands lies my soul, if you have made them angry you would have angered your Lord."

Abu Bakr rushed to his three brothers, who assured him that they had not been angry. (Muslim)

Once the Prophet came across Abu Mas`ud Al-Ansari beating a slave. The Prophet said only one sentence: **"Allah has**

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

more power over you than you have over him (the slave)." Abu Mas'ud freed the slave immediately. (Muslim)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would use the power of supplication to help people overcome their faults. He placed his hands on the chest of his companion, or made a special *du`aa'* for them in their absence. A distressed boy came before the Prophet and requested permission to commit adultery. The companions were shocked at this bluntness, but the Prophet beckoned the boy to come closer. Instead of responding harshly, the Prophet asked him if he would like to see someone in an adulterous relationship with his mother, aunt, or daughter. After the boy responded no to each question, the Prophet simply put his hand on the boy's head and prayed for him, "**O Allah, forgive his sins, purify his heart and make him chaste.**" (Authenticated by Al-Albani)



Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

4. Don't go looking for mistakes.

The Prophet often used his role as leader and community educator to correct mistakes for the benefit of all listeners, but in a discreet way that hid the identities of involved parties. He would say, **"What of people who commit such an action..."** This way, he generally warned people of pitfalls while discreetly alerting the people involved in the mistake to repent and rectify their wrongdoing.

Prophet Muhammad forbade gossip and backbiting, and rejected any broadcast of people's mistakes. He asked people not to report anything negative about the companions to him. The Prophet accepted people's words for what they were, and did not probe to uncover hidden flaws. He did not put people under a magnifying glass and guess at their motives. We should avoid searching out people's mistakes in order to uncover more and greater faults. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever searches out the shortcomings of a brother, Allah will search out his shortcomings."

(At-tirmizi and authenticated by Al-Albani)

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7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

Although there were many hypocrites in Madinah—people pretending to be Muslim but secretly undermining the community—the Prophet did not confront or accuse them. On the other hand, when a companion who had fought in the Battle of Badr, Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah, committed an act of outright treason against the Muslims, the Prophet refused to condemn the man without speaking to him first. Hatib admitted that he made a terrible mistake, but professed a heart full of belief. That was good enough for the Prophet, peace be upon him.

5. Be Strategic.

We cannot read about the gentleness and empathy of the Prophet without also noticing his astuteness in helping people move forward. He weighed priorities, prescribed solutions to people's problems, and knew when to be forceful and when to be soft. He knew when people had the strength to bear the consequences of their mistakes and when there were other priorities to consider.

By following the Prophet's footsteps, we can discern the best way to treat underlying problems that lead to mistakes.

Glimpses
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7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

When a young man behaved insolently during the call to prayer, the Prophet redirected his negative energy to benefit society.

Abu Mahdhurah, a Makkan teenager, and his friends mocked Bilal ibn Rabah while he made the call to prayer after the Muslims had conquered Makkah. When the Prophet saw this, he summoned the boy who trembled in fear at that point. Instead of scolding him, the Prophet asked if the boy had a strong voice. When the boy affirmed, the Prophet spent some time with him reciting the words of the adhan with him until they were memorized. The Prophet rested his hand on the boy's chest and prayed for him. Abu Mahdhurah, now enamored with the Prophet, asked that *he* be allowed to call people to prayer. And so, Abu Mahdhurah walked away with the new job title of *mu'dhin* of Makkah. (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

6. Use firmness when appropriate.

Gentleness is beautiful, but firmness can sometimes be more effective in prompting personal reform and purification. The Prophet knew when to be firm, and when to be soft. When two companions had been backbiting, the Prophet responded with formidable words, warning them that they had eaten the

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flesh of their brother to the point that it could be seen between their teeth. When they asked the Prophet for forgiveness, he ordered them to ask their brother for forgiveness instead.

On another occasion, the mistake was a simple one hardly needing words, only a gentle nudge. The young Al-Fadl ibn Al-`Abbas was riding with the Prophet when a beautiful woman came to ask a question. Al-Fadl could not stop himself from staring. The Prophet took the boy's chin in his hand and turned his face in another direction.

The companions were willing to bear the difficult ramifications of their mistakes. The Prophet held to a high standard those who held themselves to a high standard of accountability. Abu Lubabah was sent by the Prophet as an emissary to the besieged Banu Quraydha, and while negotiating he made a gesture that disclosed what the plans of the Muslims might be. It immediately occurred to Abu Lubabah that he had betrayed the Prophet's trust by the gesture. He went straight to the Prophet's Mosque, tied himself to a tree, and vowed not to move until Allah forgave him. Abu Lubabah remained tied to the tree for many days. His wife untied him for prayers,

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and then bound him up when he was finished. Finally, this verse was revealed,

{And there are others who have confessed their wrongdoing, who have done some righteous deeds and some bad ones: God may well accept their repentance, for God is most forgiving and merciful.} (At-Tawbah 9: 102)

Abu Lubabah insisted that the Prophet untie him with his own hands.

Perhaps one of the greatest stories of accountability is the truthful confession of the three companions who failed to accompany the Prophet during the Battle of Tabuk. Unlike the hypocrites who made up excuses for their absences and were pardoned by the Prophet, the three companions confessed they had no good excuse. The three companions were shunned by everyone for more than a month, an anguishing ordeal. Those three companions may have endured the painful ramifications of their wrongdoing, but they also went through a purifying process that was rewarded with revelation confirming that Allah had forgiven them.

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7 PROPHETIC STRATEGIES OF CORRECTING MISTAKES

7. Spare people's dignity.

When correcting mistakes, we must be respectful and sensitive to people's sense of dignity. There is no room for mocking or belittling. The Prophet criticized mistakes without condemning the person. On one occasion, people cursed a man who failed to overcome his alcoholism. The Prophet said, **"Do not curse him...what I know of him is that he loves Allah and His messenger."** (Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet acknowledged good intentions, even if they led to improper results. Once a man entered the mosque and since he was about to miss the first *rak`ah*, he bent down in *ruku`* while he was still walking and had not yet reached the line. When the man told the Prophet what he had done, the Prophet said, **"May Allah increase your enthusiasm--but don't do it again."** (Al-Bukhari)

In order to help a young man who was neglecting his night prayers, the Prophet mixed some encouragement `in with the correction. He said, **"What an excellent man `Abdullah is! If only he would pray at night..."** `Abdullah never neglected the night prayer after that (Muslim)

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The Prophet never reminded people of their lapses in the past, but was quick to recall their previous good actions. When Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah sent a letter to the enemy detailing the movements of the Prophet's army before the conquest of Makkah, `Umar was prepared to execute him as a traitor. The Prophet warned him to desist, reminding `Umar that Allah had forgiven all sins of those who attended the Battle of Badr, among whom had been Hatib. Tears fell from `Umar's eyes upon hearing this reminder.

Prophet Muhammad once said,

"All human beings make mistakes often. The best of those who make mistakes often are those who repent [to Allah]." (At-Tirmidhi)

Can you imagine what it would be like to have your mistakes and shortcomings corrected and shaped with the guiding hand of the Prophet? Would he be gentle, or firm, and what priorities would he consider? What would it feel like to have his attention, and to be looked upon with eyes overwhelmed with mercy? If we adopt just some of his amazing techniques in mending the mistakes of people, we will become better teachers and better callers to Allah.

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY (10+ HADITHS)



**CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY
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Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
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CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY (10+ HADITHS)

CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY (10+ HADITHS)

By Muhammad Fathi

In Islam, the relationship between husband and wife is a strong bond to be nurtured with kindness, love and mercy. It is so significant that Allah Almighty mentions it in the Qur'an as one of His great signs in the world:

{And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought} (Ar-Rum 30:21)

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is the role model for every Muslim in all aspects of life. When you read about the Prophet's treatment of his wives, you will be

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amazed by the great level of care, gentleness, love and compassion he showed them. The following collection of *hadiths* highlight glimpses of his guidance in this regard:

✚ She Deserves the BEST Treatment

1. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character. And the best of you are those who are best to their women."(At-Tirmidhi and authenticated by Al-Albani)

2. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The best among you is the best towards his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives." (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

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(peace and blessings be upon him)

CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY (10+ HADITHS)

3. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said :

"A believer must not hate a believing woman (i.e., his wife); if he dislikes one of her traits he will be pleased with another." (Muslim)

4. `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (May Allah be pleased with them) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The world is but a (quick passing) enjoyment; and the best enjoyment of the world is (to have) a pious wife." (Muslim)

Express Your Love

5. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, which of the people is most beloved to you?'

He answered: "**`A'ishah.**"

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CHERISH YOUR WIFE THE PROPHET'S WAY (10+ HADITHS)

He was asked, 'And among men?'

He said: '**Her father.**' (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

6. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "Never did I feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet except for Khadijah, although I have never seen her."

She added, "When Allah's Messenger slaughtered a sheep, he said: Send it to the friends of Khadijah."

One day `A'ishah mentioned Khadijah in a way that made the Prophet upset. He told `A'ishah, "I have been granted her love (by Allah)".

Render Love into Deeds

7. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Messenger of Allah would give her a vessel to drink, when she was menstruating, then he would look for the spot where she had put her lips on and put his lips on the same spot. (An-Nasa'i and authenticated by Al-Albani)

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8. Anas narrated that the Prophet had a Persian neighbor who was good in cooking soup. One day he prepared some soup and invited the Prophet to it. `A'ishah was present so the Prophet suggested to the neighbor that she should join them. The neighbor refused to include her in the invitation. The Prophet, therefore, declined the invitation.

The Persian repeated the exclusive invitation for the Prophet who, once again, declined the invitation.

In the third attempt, the Persian neighbor invited both the Prophet and his wife, `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). Then, the Prophet accepted his invitation and went with `A'ishah to the man's house. (Muslim)

9. Al-Aswad asked `A'ishah about what the Prophet used to do at home. She replied. "He used to serve his household but when it was time for the prayer, he would get up for prayer." (Al-Bukhari)

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✚ Have Fun with Her

10. `A'ishah reported that she accompanied the Prophet in a travel when she was still slim. The Prophet told people to move forward and then he asked `A'ishah to race with him. They had a race and `A'ishah won.

In a later travel, when `A'ishah had forgotten the race and had already gained weight, the Prophet told her to race with him again. She declined, "How can I race with you while I am in such a condition?" The Prophet insisted and they did have a race. The Prophet won this time. He laughed then and said "tit for tat". (Authenticated by Al-Albani)

11. `A'ishah reported:

It was the day of `Eid and some Ethiopians were playing with shields and spears. Either I requested Allah's Messenger or he himself asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then he let me stand behind him; my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying, "**Carry on, O Bani Arfida (i.e., Ethiopians)!**" When I got tired, he asked me if that was

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enough. I replied in the affirmative and he told me to leave. (Al-Bukhari)

+ Love that Transcends Time

12. Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that when something was brought to the Prophet, he would say,

"Take it to so-and-so because she was a friend of Khadijah (his deceased wife)..." (Authenticated by Al-Albani)

13. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported:

Once, Halah bint Khuwailid (the sister of the Prophet's first wife, Khadijah) sought permission to enter. The Prophet recognized and recalled the manner of Khadijah when she sought permission to enter. So, he was deeply moved and said, **"O Allah, may she be Halah bint Khuwailid!"** (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS



**HOW THE PROPHET
TREATED NEW MUSLIMS**

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

By Mohannad Hakeem

We all like this moment, when a brother or sister enters the masjid on a Friday, and announces the *shahada*(declaration of faith), and the whole masjid start saying "Takbir, Allahu Akbar"; I cannot deny that this is such an amazing moment, to witness someone who just found the right path, and took that extra step closer to God.

The bitter question is: What is next? How will the Muslim community welcome that new Muslim? What advice(s) will be given to them and how are they going to start their long journey in learning the *Deen* of Allah.

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
(peace and blessings be upon him)

HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

I tried to search the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to examine what approach he used with newly converted companions *after* they became Muslims. Sometimes this aspect is overlooked when we focus on the event itself (saying the *shahadah*) and consider it to be the ultimate goal of *da`wah* (Islamic outreach), and we neglect – or consider it to be less important – the post-*shahadah* advice or curriculum given to new Muslims.

1) Recognition of newcomers' talents

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“The best among you in the days of ignorance are the best in the days after accepting Islam, provided that they acquire true knowledge and understanding of Islam (*Fiqh*)”. (Bukhari and Muslim).

Every human being has their unique sets of talents and skills, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) recognized that fact and motivated people from the moment they accepted Islam. Two legends of the Muslim history, Khalid ibn Al-Waleed and `Amr ibn Al-`As, embraced Islam at the same day and gave a huge boost to this *deen*. Khalid was the one who led the Muslim army to conquer `Iraq, Persia

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HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

(Iran), Armenia, and Shaam (Syria & Lebanon). `Amr ibn Al-`As was the one who spread Islam in Palestine and Egypt.

Imagine the huge impact that these two men gave to Islam, and how many people were introduced to Islam and later on contributed to it and to humanity. All that was influenced by those new (and in comparison to other companions, late) converts. It is interesting to note that both fought the Prophet and the Muslims fiercely in their early days; both had Muslim blood on their hands, especially Khalid ibn Al-Waleed, who was a main reason behind the defeat of the Muslims in the battle of Uhud. Despite all that, look at how the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) welcomed the two new additions to the Muslim family:

- **"O Allah, he (Khalid) is one of your swords, so support him"**. From that time on, Khalid used to be called the Sword of Allah. (ranked as *hasan*, sound hadith, by Al-Albani)

- **"All people became Muslims, but as for `Amr ibn Al-`As he became a believer"** (indicating that he immediately entered into a higher rank of faith than other new Muslims. The Hadith is reported by At-Termizi and ranked as *hasan*, sound hadith, by Al-Albani)

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HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

Khalid was given the leadership of the Muslim army in many battles, without this being a concern to those companions who knew more Qur'an than him and embraced Islam years and years before him. The *Seerah* (Prophet's biography) tells us about some battles where Khalid did take a wrong decision, due to his lack of knowledge; this did not discredit him or let the Prophet overshadow his talents and potential contribution to the Muslim nation.

2) Giving them special attention

`Amr ibn Al-`As was amazed by the special attention that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave him. He actually thought that he is the most beloved companion to the messenger of Allah, and asked him a direct question one day: "Oh Prophet of Allah, who is the most beloved person to you" and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: " **A'ishah** (the Prophet's wife)";

- From the men?
- **Her father** (Abu Bakr As-siddique)
- Then who?
- Then `Umar, .

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from the Prophet's Life
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HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

In `Amr's words: "After that, the Prophet started listing names and names of people, and this made me remain silent, fearing that he will place me at the end of the list..." (Al-Bukhari)

The messenger of Allah had this gentle effect on all those around him, especially the new comers to Islam that made `Amr seriously think he is the best companion in the eyes of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

3) *Da`wah* mission from day one

Some companions were commissioned to preach Islam from day one, and were given "ad-hoc" *da`wah* courses for that purpose. At-Tufail ibn `Amr Ad-Dawsi accepted Islam in the early days of Makkah, and immediately went back to his tribe to deliver the message of truth. He had a tough way of preaching Islam where he tells people: you either follow Islam or I will never talk to you again! While this method may not work in year 2013 in downtown Manhattan or Paris, apparently it worked for some members of his tribe but not to all of them.

He came back to the Prophet (literally this was his second meeting with the Messenger after accepting Islam) and

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HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

complained about his people. The Prophet made *du`aa'* for Daws (his tribe) and told him: **"Go back to your people, call them to Allah and be lenient with them"**. (Ibn Ishaq)

4) Gradual Change in people's behavior

People might accept the idea of submitting to the one God, but they might have problems in some of the commandments (such as Hijab, fasting the long days of Ramadan, etc...). The tribe of Tha'qif agreed to embrace Islam but told the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "We will not give out any charity, and we will not fight in the way of Allah (Jihad)". The Prophet accepted that from them, and he told his companion: **"They will (willingly) pay charity and perform Jihad when they embrace Islam"** (Abu Dawud and authenticated by Al-Albani). Again, we note his wisdom in recognizing the weaknesses in people and dealing with them based on that.

Other companions had certain demands, such as praying with *sujud* but no *ruku`* (Ibn Rajab, *Jami` Al-'Ulum Wal-Hikam*), and others requested permission to pray only two prayers a day instead of five.

It is really important here to note that the Prophet did not "customize" the religious teachings for those individuals; he

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HOW THE PROPHET TREATED NEW MUSLIMS

rather considered that to be an introductory stage that was given to a particular person in their new journey in Islam. Such exceptions were not given during a Friday sermon, for example, and were not taught and spread by other companions; All those incidents and others teach us how the messengers of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) (i.e. us) should have wisdom in inviting people to this great *deen*.

Sometimes and in certain situations with certain people, raising the bar and challenging people will produce the best out of them. In other occasions, we have to understand the human weaknesses and give people a gradual plan while they get up to speed, of course without compromising the basics and essentials of our *deen*.

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THE PROPHET'S MERCY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY



**THE PROPHET'S MERCY
TOWARDS THE ELDERLY**

Glimpses
from the Prophet's Life
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THE PROPHET'S MERCY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY

THE PROPHET'S MERCY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY

By Muhammad Mus`ad Yaqut

In the last years, the world has witnessed a remarkable interest in the elderly. Many international conferences and symposiums were held to deal with the issues and problems they encounter. In 1982, the first initiative to care for the elderly was declared as the United Nations declared the ninth decade of the 20th century "the decade of the elderly." In 1983, the World Health Organization adopted the slogan "Add Life to Years." In addition, the UN conference held in Madrid in 2002 adopted a plan of action to solve the problems of the elderly in various countries around the world. The outcome of these conferences, however, was just sweet promises and plans without any actual application.

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THE PROPHET'S MERCY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), on the other hand, was a pioneer in this field. He taught caring for the elderly irrespective of sex, color, or religion, and he himself set a great example in practicing the principles he taught. This article highlights Islamic teachings related to treating the elderly, and gives glimpses of how the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) put them in effect.

✚ A Duty of the Young

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

"If a young man honors an elderly on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to honor him in his old age." (At-Tirmidhi; ranked *hasan* by Al-Albani)

The Prophet here advises the young of the Muslim society, who will be tomorrow's elderly, to honor the elderly. Continuous application of this Prophetic advice helps bridge the gap between generations and spreads an atmosphere of love and understanding between the young and the old. Consider here also the generalization in the Prophet's words:

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THE PROPHET'S MERCY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY

"If a young man honors an elderly;" the hadith requires honoring the elderly regardless of their color or religion.

In another hadith Muslims are told to be merciful to all people, Muslim and non-Muslim:

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"By Him in Whose hand my soul is, Allah does not bestow His mercy except on a merciful one."** They (the Companions) said, "All of us are merciful." The Prophet replied, **"Not only that each of you has mercy upon the other, but to have mercy also upon all people."** (Abu Ya`la; authenticated by Al-Albani)

A Sign of Reverence for Allah

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"It is out of reverence to Allah to respect the white-headed (aged) Muslim."** (Abu Dawud; ranked *hasan* by Al-Albani)

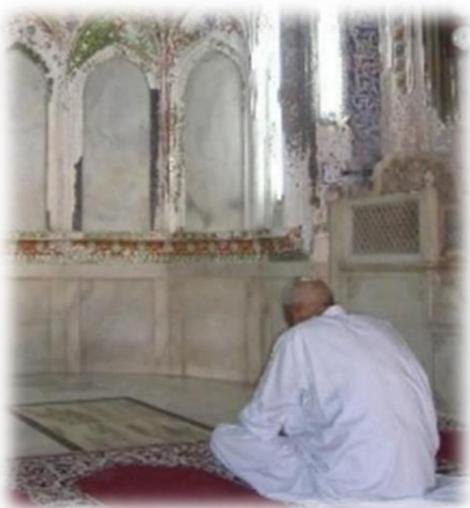
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In the hadith above, the Prophet considered respecting the elderly a way to show reverence for the Almighty. He linked reverence for the Creator and His creatures with veneration of the All-Powerful and the weak elderly. The hadith implies all kinds of respect and care for the elderly: Health care, psychological care, social care, economic care, ending illiteracy, providing education, and other forms of care that the international community calls for today.

In one hadith, the Prophet disavows those who do not venerate the elderly and considers them alien to the Muslim society:

"He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young ones and esteem to our elderly."



(At-Tirmidhi and Ahmad; authenticated by Al-Albani)

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Practical Examples

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

"The young should (initiate) salutation to the old, the passerby should (initiate) salutation to the sitting one, and the small group of persons should (initiate) salutation to the large group of persons."

(Al-Bukhari)

In the hadith above, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gives practical examples of Islamic etiquette and starts with a token of respect to the old. Thus the young should take the initiative toward the aged in greeting and also helping, showing kindness, visiting, advising, phoning, and so on.

Similarly, giving priority to the elderly in different situations is a token of respect and honor to them. It was narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"Jibreel ordered me to give priority to the elderly."** (Al-Fawa'id, Abu Bakr Ash-Shafi'i; authenticated by Al-Albani)

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The Prophet also ordered Muslims to **"start with the elderly"** when serving a drink or the like (Abu Ya`la; authenticated by Al-Albani).

In addition, the Prophet ordered that priority be given to the old concerning leading prayers. Malik ibn Al-Huwayrith (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said,

"When the time for prayer is due, one of you should announce Adhan and the oldest among you should lead the prayer." (Al-Bukhari)

This hadith does not contradict the other hadith that gives priority in leading the prayer to one who is distinguished in recitation and memorization of the Qur'an. The two criteria are to be considered, as reported in the hadith of Mas`ud Al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet said,

"The person who is best versed in the recitation of the Book of Allah should lead the prayer; but if all those present are equally versed in it, then the one who has most knowledge of the Sunnah; if they are equal in that respect, then the one who has immigrated (to Madinah) first; if they

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are equal in this respect, then the oldest of them." (Muslim)

Furthermore, according to Prophetic guidance, the elder are worthier to start conversation. Once, Huwayyisah and Muhayyisah, the sons of Mas`ud ibn Ka`b, and `Abdur-Rahman ibn Sahl came to the Prophet to discuss a certain matter with him. `Abdur-Rahman, who was the youngest of them all, started talking. Thus, the Prophet said, "**Let the eldest (among you) speak first**" (Al-Bukhari).

Easy Rulings for the Elderly

Shari`ah always adopts leniency and ease with persons having excuses, such as the elderly. This can be noticed in expiations and obligations required from them.

The best evidence of easing expiations for the elderly is the story of Khawlah bint Tha`labah, which was mentioned at the beginning of Surat Al-Mujadilah. Her aged husband, Aws ibn As-Samit, who was also her cousin, pronounced *zihar* (declaring her unlawful to him as a wife, while at the same time not divorcing her so she can remarry). Thereupon the general Islamic ruling concerning *zihar* was revealed:

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{Those who put away their wives (by saying they are as their mothers) and afterward would go back on that which they have said, (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a slave before they touch one another [that is, have intercourse]. Unto this you are exhorted; and Allah is Informed of what you do. And he who finds not (the wherewithal), let him fast for two successive months before they touch one another [that is, have intercourse]; and for him who is unable to do so (the penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones.} (Al-Mujadilah 58:3-4)

After this revelation the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) spoke to Khawlah:

The Prophet said to Khawlah, "**Let him free a slave.**" She said, "O Messenger of Allah, he does not have the means to do that." The Prophet said, "**Then let him fast for two consecutive months.**" She replied, "By Allah, he is an old man; he is not able to do that." So the Prophet told her, "**Then let him feed sixty poor people with a *wasaq* (a measure equal to approximately 132.6 kilograms) of dates.**" She said, "O Messenger of Allah, he does not have that

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much." The Prophet then promised to help him by giving him an amount of dates; after all this he did not forget to advise the lady, "**Take care of your cousin properly.**" (Tafsir of Ibn Kathir, vol. 8)

Concerning obligations, Islam exempts the elderly who cannot bear fasting the month of Ramadan from observing this obligation, but requires them to feed a poor person for each day that they miss. Also, the elderly who cannot pray standing up are allowed to pray sitting down; if they cannot pray sitting down, they are allowed to pray lying on a side.

In addition, it is authentically reported that the Prophet once rebuked Mu`adh ibnJabal when he led people in prayer and prolonged it:

The Prophet said to him, "O Mu`adh! Are you putting the people to trial? [Thrice] It would have been better if you had recited *Sabbihisma Rabbika-l-a`la* [Surah 87], *Wash-shamsi wa duhaha* [Surah 91], or *Wal-layli idhayaghsha* [Surah 92], for the old, the weak, and the needy pray behind you." (Al-Bukhari)

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Also, Islam allowed the elderly who cannot perform Hajj to delegate another person to perform it on their behalf. Al-Fadl narrated that a woman from the tribe of Khath`am came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, "O Allah's Prophet! The obligation of Hajj has become due on my father while he is old and weak, and he cannot sit firm on the mount; may I perform Hajj on his behalf?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, **"Yes, (you may)"** (Muslim)

+ Examples of the Prophet's Mercy

Having discussed the Islamic code of treating the elderly, it is now appropriate to give some practical examples from the Prophet's life. We will see him listening politely and respectfully to an elderly polytheist, seeking to release an elderly man captured by Quraish, and honoring an elderly person and ordering him to improve his appearance.

Listening to an elderly polytheist respectfully.

Ibn Kathir, in his biography of the Prophet, narrated that `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, one of the chiefs of Makkah's polytheists, came to the Prophet trying to dissuade him from his call. He addressed the Prophet in a ridiculing manner,

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"Are you better than `Abdullah (the Prophet's father)?
Are you better than `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's
grandfather)?"

But the Prophet did not respond to those degrading remarks.
`Utbah continued,

"If you say that they are better than you, then they
worshiped the gods you criticize; and if you claim that
you are better than they, you can proclaim this loudly
in order to be heard. You exposed us before the Arabs
until it was spread among them that the Quraish has a
magician or a monk. Do you want us to unsheathe the
sword and engage in a bitter war until annihilation?"

When `Utbah noticed the politeness of the Prophet, he
changed his offensive tone and continued,

"Oh my nephew! If you desire money and wealth by
preaching what you are preaching, we will collect
enough for you from our own. We will make you the
wealthiest of all of us.

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If it is chieftainship that you desire, we are ready to make you our paramount chief, so that we will never decide on a matter without you.

If you desire rulership, we will make you our ruler. And if this condition that you call revelation is a jinn whose grip you cannot escape from, we are ready to call the most distinguished physicians of time to examine you, and we will spend generously till you are completely cured. For sometimes a jinn seizes hold of a victim totally till the former is exorcised."

When `Utbah finished his impudent speech, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him politely, **"Is that all, Abu Al-Walid?"** "Yes," he replied. **"Then listen to me,"** the Prophet said to him. "I will," agreed `Utbah. Then the Prophet recited the beginning of Surat Fussilat (41).

Seeking to release an elderly captive.

In his biography of the Prophet, Ibn Hisham reported that when the Muslims captured `Amr ibn Abi Sufyan ibn Harb in the Battle of Badr, it was said to Abu Sufyan, "Pay for the ransom of your son `Amr." However, Abu Sufyan answered, "Must I lose twice! They have killed Handhalah and now I

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must pay for the ransom of `Amr! Let him stay with them, they can keep him as long as they wish."

Afterwards an old man called Sa`d ibn An-Nu`man of the tribe of Banu `Amr ibn `Awf departed for Makkah to perform `Umrah. In spite of the critical political conditions, especially after the Battle of Badr, Sa`d ibn An-Nu`man thought that he would not be captured in Makkah since the Quraish did not harm pilgrims.

However, Abu Sufyan attacked him and held him hostage until the Muslims in Madinah released his son. Some people of the tribe of Banu `Amr ibn `Awf went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and told him what had happened to their relative. They asked him to give them the son of Abu Sufyan to free Sa`d ibn An-Nu`man from captivity. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) released the son of Abu Sufyan without a ransom and then sent him to his father who, consequently, released the old man.

Treating the elderly gently.

Ibn Kathir tells the following in his biography of the Prophet. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) entered Makkah in Ramadan AH 8 (January 630) and entered the Sacred Mosque, Abu Bakr brought his father, Abu Quhafah, to

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the Prophet to embrace Islam. When the Prophet saw him, he said to Abu Bakr, **"Why didn't you leave the old man at his house and I would've gone to him there?"**

Abu Bakr said, "You are more deserving of him coming to you than he is of you going to him."

The Prophet seated Abu Quhafah in front of him and honored him. Then he passed his hand on Abu Quhafah's chest and asked him to embrace Islam and Abu Quhafah did. The Prophet, noticing that Abu Quhafah's hair was white, directed that his hair be dyed.

These are just few examples of the Prophet's gentleness, mercy, and respect towards the elderly. These examples, and many others, translate the sublime Islamic code of ethics for treating the elderly and provide Muslims, generation after generation, with a practical model that they should follow. Such care for the elderly is in line with the Islamic principle of the dignity of the human being and with the spirit of solidarity and mercy that pervades the Muslim society.