



Muhammad: *The Wise Leader*

(Peace Be Upon Him)

Get to know God's Last Prophet who changed history by his wisdom, leadership and excellent manners.

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INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah. We thank Him, the Most High, and seek His Help and Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils within ourselves and that of our bad deeds. He whom Allah guides, is truly guided, and whom Allah leaves to stray, none can guide him.

We bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His final Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). We ask Allah to bless our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and all his followers, from the beginning of his call to the Day of Judgment.

We Muslims believe that Muhammad was the best man who ever lived on this planet. He was a role model in all aspects of life; as a leader, as a husband, as a friend, as a Prophet and as guidance to humanity through his unsurpassed perfect manners.

{You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for

anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.}

(Quran, Al-Ahzab 33: 21)

{And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal.}

(Quran, Al-Hashr 59: 7)

To attain God-consciousness and the great reward of Allah, a Muslim needs to learn the morals and lessons from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

OnIslam.net produces this book to help Muslims, and also non-Muslims, understand who Muhammad (peace be upon him) was and what he did to impact our lives.

We ask Allah Almighty to guide us all to what is best in this world and in the Hereafter, Amen.



C H A P T E R O N E

Muhammad: A Man Much Needed



- **An Anonymous Religion**
- **A Dangerous Business**
- **Is this Just the Beginning?**



An Anonymous Religion

Islam is now the second largest religion in the world in terms of number of adherents, and is still arguably the fastest growing religion in the West. Despite this, its final messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him) appears to remain unknown in any real way to the masses of non-Muslims.

A poll conducted in the U.S. indicated that nearly 60% of those surveyed admit knowing 'little or nothing' about Islam (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2006). If this is the prevailing level of ignorance about Islam itself in the West, how much can we expect people to know about Muhammad?

As Muslims, we should first and foremost blame ourselves as the primary cause of this gap in understanding, for it is our religious duty to spread the message brought by this beautiful man. Clearly, however, the Danish cartoon controversy as an example indicates that we have not upheld our religious responsibility.

As a community numbering over one billion people living in the age of information that also retains a large portion of the world's vast oil reserves,



Muslims have no excuse for the overall level of ignorance about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Ignorance of who he was, what he represented, why he is so dear to Muslims and why, based on his teachings, religious beliefs should be universally respected, even those that are not our own, still prevails.

Our present world needs to know Muhammad (peace be upon him). At this time in history humanity needs inspiration from exceptional people whose teachings transcend race, sex, religion, culture and even time by speaking directly to the human heart.

With globalization forcing people of different backgrounds and religions to integrate economically, socially and politically, it is time for humanity to learn more about an individual who is described in one of the world's great holy books, the Quran, as "a mercy to all the worlds," and about whom George Bernard Shaw, the great Western literary figure and Nobel Prize winner, said:

...I have studied him — the wonderful man
and in my opinion far from being an anti-

Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness...

Shaw, George Bernard, *The Genuine Islam*.
Vol. 1 No. 8, 1936.



A Dangerous Business

Over the past several years Islam has been implicated with the actions of certain groups and individuals who, in response to perceived injustices by Western powers, have waged their own personal 'holy war' targeting non-Muslims, civilians, women, children and even Muslims that do not agree with their worldview.

These misguided attempts at 'defending Islam' using any means available, even if such means go against the core teachings of Islam have created confusion and prejudice in the minds of non-Muslims and Muslims alike as to the real essence of Islam as a religion.

However, those who know Islam and its Prophet (peace be upon him) and know what he stood



for, believe that one cannot mistake the misdeeds of men for the teachings of religion.

Religion, Islam included, should never be used for the purpose of fulfilling one's political agenda. The Prophet's mission was a spiritual one first, not a political one. Nowhere in the Quran is he or his mission referred to in political terms.

Rather, he spent 23 years spreading the good news of one All-Merciful and All-Forgiving Creator and Sustainer inviting all of mankind to the vast oceans of divine bounty and mercy for anyone who deems himself worthy of such an invitation.

Through his call, the Prophet showed us why we need to overcome worldly ambition rather than how to become a slave to it.

Through Muhammad (peace be upon him) Islam was sent to guide humanity to its created purpose and highest potential; it is a roadmap, a light, a beacon pointing the way home to that pure state from which we all came.

Muslims, on the other hand, are the community of individuals that strive to follow this

body of knowledge and path; but being human, we often fall short.

That is why the Prophet himself said that when a believer commits a sin, at the moment of commission he is not in a state of belief, but rather he is in a state of forgetfulness of God and his own true nature:

“An adulterer, at the time he is committing illegal sexual intercourse is not a believer; and a person, at the time of drinking an alcoholic drink is not a believer; and a thief, at the time of stealing, is not a believer.” (Al-Bukhari).

One of the ways to begin to understand that there is a difference between the reality of Islam and the reality of its very human adherents is to learn about its Messenger, and what he means to those who choose to follow him.

In a time of tribalism and ignorance, Muhammad's way, peace be upon him, was to seek understanding and truth and teach it to others, for he taught that only truth can set man free. It was narrated that the Prophet said:



“Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you; and speak the truth even if it be against yourself.” (Ahmad)

So are we, the global community of Muslims, personifying these lofty standards and values that Muhammad, peace be upon him, personified and taught? Arguably not.

Moreover, at the final reckoning we will be unable to offer the excuse that we had no model, guide or example to follow. For he, Muhammad, is with us every day in our hearts, in the stories and annals of history and in the great works of Islam's erudite scholars.

By far, no other prominent religious figure in history has such a vast library of authentic accounts about his life and words than Muhammad.

Islamic scholars, particularly those of the early generations of Islam, devoted their entire lives to preserving the life and teachings of Muhammad with a passion and commitment to detail never seen before and never to be seen again. The sciences that have evolved from this labor of love are unparalleled in human literary or historical tradition.



Is This Just the Beginning?

The current world is going through a period of massive flux and increasing insecurity. This is causing much fear and anxiety among people who are being forced to accept changes that are foreign to them, above all those who are being directly victimized by violence and war.

The vast and growing inequalities in wealth, power and influence between the world's haves and have-nots are leading to increased tensions between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Though there may be little that one man or woman acting alone can do to alter the tide of change, the time is now for people of understanding and tolerance everywhere to come together in both body and spirit to forge alliances of peace and cooperation on those issues that are most fundamental to human progress and well-being.

The underlying driver behind the current age of globalization is excessive competitiveness, which, unlike healthy competition, exploits differences. Competition, when tempered with justice and concern for the greater good, is healthy. The current global economic environment is far from healthy.



The gaps between rich and poor are growing at lightning speed, governments are becoming less able to ensure peace and even their own sovereignty, and people are turning to extremes in all aspects of life in their attempt to cope with change.

We, as a human family, have reached a defining moment in our mutual history. A few years ago, the Danish cartoon issue further highlighted this through its intensification of the buy-in by the masses to a perceived 'clash of civilizations' between the Western and the Muslim worlds.

This theory, first penned by Samuel Huntington, a Harvard intellectual whose views have been associated with the extreme right-wing in America, is far from inevitable, but is being stoked by an international financial and corporate ruling elite that is determined to use religious differences, economic inequality, social turmoil, ultra-competitiveness and even war to pit people against one another and loot the world's sovereign nations of their valuable resources.

The influence and power these international

elites now wield is massive, and globalization is their modus operandi to expand their power grip.

The importance of Muhammad (peace be upon him) at this crucial time in human history is the guidance his teachings provide on how to respond to situations like the ones in which we currently find ourselves.

Far from overly idealistic approaches to such challenges, Prophet Muhammad provided men and women with practical and universally appealing methods for living lives of harmony and peace.

In a world that has lost its equilibrium, the teachings of Muhammad are a cure for regaining that all-important sense of balance that so many of us seek in life.

His example gives us confidence that whatever obstacles we might face nothing is insurmountable. For his own life was the ultimate example of how a simple, humble and honest man can become the leading example for billions of people all over the world.



CHAPTER TWO

Muhammad A Human Being

- **Getting to Know Him**
- **Missed by Friends When Absent**
- **People of Other Faiths**
- **Dealing With His Enemies**
- **The Prophet's Humility: Sharing Chores**
- **The Prophet's Mercy with Mankind**
- **His Mercy with Family and Children**
- **His Mercy with Orphans, Widows, and the Sick**
- **His Mercy with Animals**

Getting to Know Him

Apart from seeing Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the Messenger of God gifted with divine revelation, one can remarkably see him as an ideal example of a perfect human character.

Prophet Muhammad is a person who strove hard for the well-being of his community and of humanity at large. His farsightedness and ability to correctly read events of his time and to anticipate results helped him, along with divine wisdom from God, to address people's emotions and to win their hearts before their minds. His human touch was inescapable, and his personal appeal and gentle approach won the hearts of enemies before those of friends.

In short, he always found his way to his target audience. His cousin and Companion Ali is reported to have asserted this distinctive aspect of the Prophet's character:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to win the hearts of his Companions with his kind approach. He was never harsh or hardhearted. In his meetings,



he used to treat all equally; listening to them all and giving all equal chance to participate in the ongoing discussions. He was a very patient negotiator, and he never withdrew himself from the discussion unless the negotiators themselves leave first. Whenever someone asked him for something, he was keen to fulfil his wish. If not, then he will please his heart with kind words. Among people, he was known by good manners and to them all he was like an affectionate father.

Missed by Friends When Absent

A man like Muhammad was the solace to his friends' souls. They would miss him very much if he went to mind personal matters, even if for a short while. This is the feeling you might have when your soul mate is absent; you always wait in anticipation for him or her to come back. That was the case with the Companions and Prophet Muhammad.

Abu Mohammad Al-Hussein Al-Baghawi in his *Ma`alim At-Tanzeel* (Landmarks of Revelation) mentions that Thawban, one of the Companions who showed this real love, once came to the Prophet with

sadness portrayed on his face. Upon seeing him, Muhammad inquired about this noticeable sadness and very pale face.

This reflects how close the Prophet was to his friends and Companions. He would even ask about these things that we may consider trivial or unnecessary. Thawban replied, "O Messenger of God, I do not suffer from any disease. When our daily meetings come to an end, I miss you a lot until we meet the next day. Now, I remember the Last Day where you will be granted a very special status along with the other prophets and messengers. If God destined me to enter Paradise, then we will not meet due to different degrees, as surely my degree in Paradise will be lower than yours. If God destined me to enter the Hellfire, then we will not meet."

Hearing this, the Prophet remained silent for a while to receive the following revelation shortly afterwards:

{And whoever obeys God and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom God has bestowed favors from among the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a



goodly company they are.} (An-Nisaa'
4:69)

Situations like the above should not pass unnoticed. The human touch of the Prophet and the way he approached his Companions and people in general did wonders. It ended up with people declaring that Muhammad is dearer to them than their wives, sons, daughters, parents, and selves.

The Prophet was once with his Companions, he then stretched his hand to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. To that kind act, `Umar responded saying, "O Messenger of God, you are the most beloved to me after myself." The Prophet replied, "No, by Him in Whose Hand is my soul, you can't be a real believer until you love me more than yourself." To this, `Umar replied: "Now you are more beloved to me than myself." Then, the Prophet said, "Now, `Umar, your faith is complete." (Al-Bukhari)

These and many other countless events from the Prophet's biography demonstrate that Muhammad was a highly respectable, reputable, beloved, and kind character. Even before being divinely ordered by God to carry the divine message, he was called by his

own tribesmen "*As-Sadiq Al-Amin*" (Arabic for "the truthful and the trustworthy").

People of Other Faiths

Muhammad's good manners were not confined to his close friends and Companions. His manners exceeded them to encompass different nationalities and creeds. He taught his Companions how to respect others regardless of their faith, race, color, or creed.

One day, he was sitting among his Companions. A funeral of a Jew from the people of Madinah was passing by, and upon seeing it, the Prophet stood up. His astonished Companions said, "O Prophet of God! He is a Jew." The Prophet taught them how to be respectful Muslims considerate to others' feelings by saying, "Isn't he (the dead Jew) a soul created by God?"

How far do we go in our hasty judgments on others? How many quick decisions do we make unknowingly and unwisely about our fellow humans? Don't we learn from the above example the respect Muhammad extended to a dead soul? He never derided or cursed a human being or even an animal. He was a caring and lovable character. Violence and harshness are never found in his dictionary.



+ Dealing with His Enemies

Many are the false, horrible stories one can hear and read about Prophet Muhammad being bloodthirsty and war-loving. Had those who study his character attempted to be objective in their studies, they would have realized that he was really a war-hating and merciful commander. He addressed his Companions on the night of the Battle of Badr saying, "Don't ever wish to meet the enemy, but if you are forced to, then be patient." (Al-Bukhari) "If you are forced to do that" means that confrontation was an option he did not prefer.

He was never offensive in his wars and military campaigns. His enemies ask for confrontation, and he enters wars for solely defending his beliefs and his community. He won the hearts of his enemies on the day he victoriously entered Makkah, without wasting a single soul.

One of the Companions, Saad ibn `Ubadah, once felt conceited on that day and raised his voice saying, "Today is the day of fierce war, a day in which inviolable rules will become violable, and a day to let Quraish taste humiliation." Upon hearing him, the victorious leader declared, "No, Saad! This day is the

day of mercy. This is a day when honor cannot be transgressed. This is an honorable day for Quraish.”

He never denied his enemies their dignity or honor. He never stripped them of their human characteristics.

He was someone who declared general amnesty before Amnesty International came to existence in today's world. He declared it before all and in broad daylight saying, “Go, you are free.” These very people are those who drove the Prophet and all followers of Islam in Makkah out of their homeland (Makkah). They are the ones who relentlessly and fiercely oppressed him and his followers for more than 21 years.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been and will always be a human being from whom Muslims learn how to love and deal with one another, and form healthy relationships in today's global village. He left his personal impact on people as a human being before God entrusted him with His message.



✚ The Prophet's Humility: Sharing Chores

The Prophet ate with his people — he shared the same bread and drank from the same flask — and when his people went hungry, he starved too. He lived with his Companions as one of them and their problems were his own: He laughed with them when they were happy, and he cried with them when they were sad. On the battlefield, he was always with his soldiers, and at home he helped his wives with their chores.

The Prophet was once travelling with a group of people and it was time to rest and cook food. As work was divided and everybody was assigned a task, the Prophet insisted he would contribute too and began to collect firewood. His Companions argued that there was no need for the Prophet to work; after all, he was the Prophet of God, how could they let him collect firewood! But he remained adamant saying that since he was part of the travelling party, he too would participate in the work to be done, for he hated to be privileged.

For most of his followers, the high status of the Prophet is unquestionable. While he lived, he was considered even by his detractors to be a man of truth and honesty. The genuineness of the message

he brought was authenticated by the millions who accepted the new faith he preached with such great passion, willing to sacrifice all they had for their religion and for the man who led them to it. He was their leader not just in all spheres of life in this world but in the life of the hereafter too — a man of religion, a general, a father, an elder brother, a husband, a friend, and also a Prophet of God.

He could have used this passion that his followers had for him in whatever manner he pleased. He could have had luxury and deserved it too. Yet he slept on a crude straw mat that left his back marked, he prayed on the bare earth which left his forehead stained, and he wore clothes that had torn many times over and that he himself had mended. (Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet's Mercy with Mankind

God Almighty says, "And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds." (Al-Anbiyaa' 21:107). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Prophet of mercy, sent by God as a mercy to all mankind. His mercy sheltered all humanity: men, women and children. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was merciful to all creatures including animals



and birds. God almighty describes Muhammad's pity, kindness, and mercy to all the creatures:

{Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate.}
(At-Tawbah 9:128).

His pity and mercy to his people were manifested in lightening their load, making their obligations easy; in avoiding certain things for fear that they would become obligations upon the people. Among his sayings in this regard is, "Was it not for fear of tiring my nation, I would have asked them to use a *miswak* (tooth stick) with each ablution." His mercy was reflected in what he said about the *Qiyam-Al-Layl* (Night Vigil Prayer), meaning that one should not do it all night long; continuous fasting; and his disliking to enter the Ka`bah so that his nation would not become obstinate [about following him in that]. His mercy was also manifested in his prayer that God might turn his cursing of any one of them unto mercy. Whenever he heard a child crying during prayers, he used to shorten the prayer.

Prophet Muhammad prayed to God, "O Allah! Whoever I insulted or cursed, turn this into charity, mercy, a prayer, cleansing, and an immolation with which You bring him closer to You on Doomsday." When his people did not believe him, Jibreel (the Archangel) came to him and said, "God Almighty heard the sayings and accusations of your people and He, Almighty, asked the angel of the mountains to obey any order from you against them. The angel of the mountains called Prophet Muhammad and said, "Ask for whatever you want, and I would crush them with the *akhshabin* (surrounding mountains)." Yet, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "No, but I hope that Allah will bring out of their offspring people who worship Allah alone with no associates."

Ibn Al Monkader narrated that Jibreel told Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "God commanded the sky, the earth and the mountains to obey your orders." The Prophet answered, "I delay my nation and maybe Allah will induce them to repentance." Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "Never was the Prophet (peace be upon him) left to make a choice between two matters but he would prefer the easier among them." Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) told us that Prophet



Muhammad (peace be upon him) preferred "positive" preaching to preclude pessimism and boredom.

Aisha narrated that she once found difficulty in riding a horse, so she kept reining it in repeatedly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said, "You must have gentleness."

His Mercy with Family and Children

His mercy with his family was shown in the way he used to assist them with housework. Al-Aswad mentioned that he asked Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) what the Prophet did at home. She answered, "He was humble in the common service of his family. But, when time for prayer came, he used to go and pray." He (peace be upon him) was not like tyrannical men. A lot of times, he (peace be upon him) used to serve himself. It's mentioned in Ahmad's *Musnad* and others that Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to sew his clothes, mend his sandals, and do what other men do in their homes."

At-Tirmidhi narrates that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, "Which member of your family do you love the most?" He said, "Al-Hassan and Al-

Hussein.” He used to tell Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her), “Bring me my two sons” and then he would embrace them closely, may Allah be pleased with them.

In his Hadith, Imam Muslim narrates that Amr ibn Said reported that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I have never met one more merciful with children”. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “I start the prayers, intending to lengthen them. I then hear a child crying so I make them shorter, knowing how emotional a child’s mother gets.”

An example of his mercy (peace be upon him) with the children is that he used to stroke their heads and kiss them. It was mentioned in the two books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim that Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) kissed Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (his grandsons) while Al-Aqra’ ibn Habis Al-Tamimi was present. So Al-Aqra’ said, “I have ten children. I have never kissed any of them!” Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) looked at him and said, “He who does not have mercy will not have mercy upon him.”



At-Tirmidhi narrates that Al-Bara' (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I saw the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) carrying Al-Hassan on his shoulder, saying, "Oh Allah! I love him so love him."

On the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), "The Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) entered the room while Ibrahim (his son) was dying. Upon that, his eyes started dropping tears. Then Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf said, "Even you, messenger of Allah!" Then he said "Oh Ibn `Awf! It is but mercy." He continued (crying) some more and then said, "The eyes weep, the heart is full of grief, and we say nothing except what pleases our Lord. Verily, we are sorrowed for your departure O! Ibrahim." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

On the authority of Usama ibn Zaid (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) when the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) was handed his daughter's son who was dying, his eyes flooded with tears (peace and blessings be upon). Saed then told him, "What is this, Prophet of Allah!" He said, "This is a mercy that exalted Allah has made in the hearts of His servants. And surely Allah has mercy to merciful ones among His servants." (Agreed upon)

✚ His Mercy with Orphans, Widows, and the Sick

From his mercy is that he (peace be upon him) never used to disdain from walking along with a widow or with a poor person and fulfill their needs. He used to visit weak and sick Muslims and attend their funerals. He used to treat orphans well and charitably. He used to commend people to sponsor them and treat them with excellence and he also used to announce the consequent virtues of that saying, "I and a patron of an orphan are as close in Paradise (while waving with the index and middle finger and parting them)." He also said that the best house among Muslim houses is the one with an orphan being well-treated."

Of his mercy is when he used to see any of his companions in a state of stress or misfortune, he would feel deep sorrow for that, have pity, and cry, being affected by the circumstances. He went once with Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf and others to visit Saad ibn Ubabah. Upon seeing him, he cried and everyone with him then cried. He also cried and kissed Uthman ibn Maz'un after he died. Aisha then said that she saw the tears of the Prophet (peace be upon him) flow on Uthman's cheeks. In another version, it was narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) kissed Uthman between his eyes and cried for a long time.



His Mercy with Animals

He (peace be upon him) used to commend having mercy on animals. He used to forbid his companions from hurting them, tiring them, overburdening them with heavy loads for long periods, torturing them, or pushing them beyond their limits, for that is a form of suffering.

He once entered the garden of a man from the *Ansar* (Muslims of Madinah) and there was a camel. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw the camel it froze and its eyes started watering. Then the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) came to it and rubbed its ears so it calmed down. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Who is the owner of this camel? Whose camel is this?" A young man from the *Ansar* told him (peace be upon him), "O Messenger of Allah, it belongs to me." Then he told him (peace be upon him), "Do you not fear Allah with regard to this beast which Allah has let you own? It complained to me that you starve it and tire it by overworking it and using it beyond its capacity."

He (peace be upon him) used to forbid burdening an animal by keeping it standing or sitting on it for a long time unnecessarily. He saw some people sitting on animals so he commented, "Keep

them safe and sound when riding them and when leaving them, don't use them as chairs for your side talks in the streets and markets. A ridden animal might be better than its rider and might remember and mention God more than its rider does."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said, "A woman was doomed to enter the Fire because of a cat. She imprisoned it and neither fed it nor set it free to eat the rodents of the earth."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned against any human being causing a bird to feel panic about its little offspring. Someone took two chicks of a bird, which came in panic searching for its chicks. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) then asked, "Who has distressed it by taking its chicks?" Then he asked them to return the chicks.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) once passed by a burned out anthill. When the Prophet saw it he asked, "Who has burned it?" When he was informed of who had done it, he said, "Only the Lord of Fire has the right to punish with fire."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prohibited the killing of a bird for the sake of pleasure



and not for a specific beneficial need. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Anyone who would kill a bird, this bird would come on Doomsday and say, "God, this person killed me for pleasure and not for benefit."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) called for mercy and perfection in slaughter. He saw a person preparing a lamb, laying it down while he was still sharpening his knife. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) then commented, "Do you want to kill it twice? Sharpen your knife before you lay it down."

He prohibited taking any animal or any living creature as a target for shooting.

CHAPTER THREE

Muhammad: A Conqueror of Hearts



- **Conquering the Hearts of Makkans**
- **No Bloodshed**
- **Above Revenge**
- **Winning Over**



✚ Conquering the Hearts of Makkans

Although history books related the events which led to the surrender of Makkah to the Prophet to 'The Conquest of Makkah', as the word 'conquest', which suggests a hard military battle, yet there was very little fighting to speak of in that particular conquest.

Indeed, it is more appropriate to speak of the conquest of the people of Makkah. That was the real objective of the campaign. What that campaign achieved was unparalleled in history. The story was that of the homecoming of a person who was rejected by his own people, driven out of his home town with a rich reward on his head, but was able to flee and establish a base elsewhere. He then acquired power and moved gradually to a position of overall supremacy in the land surrounding the area from which he was driven out. Would that person not entertain visions of what sort of vengeance he would finally inflict on those who drove him out of his home town once they had fallen into his hands?

History books are full of reports and stories of atrocities committed by conquerors after subjugating their old enemies. Such atrocities were never the monopoly of one race of humankind in any period.

The process begins immediately after victory has been achieved: a period of lawlessness in which everything of value is looted; killings, rape and theft become perfectly acceptable when committed by the victors; summary execution of war criminals; courts formed for war crimes committed by the vanquished, but not by the victor ... the list is endless. The ferocity of all such actions is much greater when personal grudges are involved.

Yet the idea of vengeance was far from the Prophet's mind.

No Bloodshed

With his thoughts moving in the opposite direction, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was thinking hard about how to reduce casualties, how to preserve the lives of the people of Makkah and how to achieve victory without bloodshed. Two years earlier, when the Prophet and his companions had tried to visit Makkah for offering a Umrah, and when he had realized that the Quraysh were not going to allow him into Makkah, he had declared his readiness to accept any formula which ensured that no blood was shed.

One would have thought, however, that the fact that the Quraysh violated the peace agreement



which was made between the two sides at Al-Hudaybiyah would have exhausted the patience of the Prophet and his companions to the extent that they would be in no mood to forgive the Quraysh's treachery. The Prophet was not a person to leave matters unresolved when they called for decisive action. He would not overlook hostile actions if that would result in giving the enemy a feeling that the Muslims were weak. Nor would he resort to the use of force where a kind gesture would be sure to bring better results. Hence, the Prophet was certain that the Quraysh should be brought face to face with the consequences of their treachery. The price they would be made to pay, however, would depend on how they viewed that price in that particular situation.

One thing which was abundantly clear right from the start was that the Prophet wanted to avoid bloodshed as much as he could. As his army began to prepare, he prayed God to enable him to take the Quraysh by surprise in their own land. The purpose of that prayer was not the launching of a surprise attack which would have resulted in mass killings among the Quraysh in return for very few casualties among the Muslims. Rather, the Prophet wanted to face the Quraysh with a situation in which they would feel themselves no match for him. In such a situation, they might choose not to put up any resistance and

victory for the Muslims would be achieved without bloodshed.

Above Revenge

Had Prophet Muhammad been an ordinary commander or leader of any victorious army or nation, Abu Sufyan, the Quraysh's leader, would have been the first to pay dearly for his past hostility to the cause of Islam, which had cost the Muslims over the years many martyrs and several war campaigns. Instead, Abu Sufyan was pardoned and sent back to his people with a position of honor. His house was made a haven of safety for anyone who wished to stay there.

And what's more, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard that one of his commanders, Saad ibn 'Ubadah, was threatening revenge, he replaced him with his son. He made it absolutely clear to all his commanders and his soldiers that they were not to fight unless attacked. But who were those people whose lives the Prophet was keen to spare?

They were indeed the very people who turned him out of their city after repeatedly plotting to destroy his life. When he called on them to believe in God they answered, as the Quran tells us: "Our hearts are insulated against what you are calling on



us to believe in, our ears are sealed, and a heavy curtain is drawn between you and us.” They stopped at nothing in their hostility to him personally and to his cause. They accused him of being a liar, a sorcerer and a madman. They schemed against him and urged others to be hostile to him and to his companions. They forged alliances to meet his peaceful call with the force of arms. When he gained complete victory and all of them were at his mercy, he was much more merciful to them than they dared hope.

At the height of his victory, the Prophet did not forget for a single moment the fact that he was a prophet and that his message came first. Those very people were there to be won over to the cause of Islam, and that was his top priority. What could win them over more than a general pardon, which he readily gave? All that was required of anyone to be safe was to stay at home.

Even those individuals whom the Prophet sentenced to death in any circumstances were not all killed. Any one of them who came to him, in any way, regretting his earlier misdeeds was given a free pardon. One must not forget that those people were sentenced to death because they had committed unpardonable crimes. But in spite of those crimes, a

pardon was not difficult to arrange once they showed their willingness to live with the new situation.

To appreciate the attitude of the Prophet fully, it is worth reflecting on the following incident. As the Prophet was going round the Ka'bah in his *tawaf* (circumambulation), a man from the Quraysh called Fudalah ibn `Umayr was watching him with a burning grudge in his heart. He thought to himself: "Why do I not kill Muhammad now that he feels safe? I do not care what happens to me afterwards if I can avenge our defeat." With this thought in mind, Fudalah maneuvered himself into a position which enabled him to walk right behind the Prophet. The Prophet suddenly turned to him and said: "Is that Fudalah?" The man answered, "Yes, it is Fudalah, Messenger of God." The Prophet asked him again: "What have you been saying to yourself?" Fudalah answered: "Nothing. I was only praising God." The Prophet laughed and said: "Seek God's forgiveness." He put his hand on Fudalah's chest and pressed it a little until he calmed down. Fudalah used to say later: "I swear by God that when he lifted his hand off my chest, there was no one on earth dearer to me than he was."

Apparently, Fudalah used to be a playboy. On the way home, he passed a woman with whom he



had an illegitimate relationship. She invited him in, but he refused and told her that he was now a Muslim. He accepted the faith and believed in God alone, and renounced idolatrous worship.

This symbolizes the Prophet's attitude. It was an attitude based on giving a complete, total pardon which erased all hostilities and all bad feelings. In this way, the Prophet won over the hearts of the Quraysh. It was only a matter of hours or days before they started to declare their acceptance of Islam. The maxim on which the Prophet's attitude was based is best expressed by the Quranic verse: **{A good deed and a bad one can never be alike. Repel the latter with the one which is best and you will find that the person with whom you have a long hostility behaving to you as an intimate friend.}** (Fussilat 41: 34) The Prophet's attitude pulled down all those barriers which stood between the Quraysh and Islam. The conquest of the hearts of the Quraysh was absolutely complete.

Winning Over

The Prophet was very eager to win every heart in Makkah; he, as already seen, pardoned the majority of those people whom he had earlier sentenced to death for their unpardonable crimes. Indeed, he was keen to win over the very person who

was contemplating his assassination. The Prophet's actions in Makkah suggest that he would have been prepared to sit with every individual to explain the message of Islam to him personally and show him the benefits of Islamic life.

No military commander in the position of the Prophet, at the moment of his complete victory over his most hostile enemy, would have bothered himself about what might have happened to any individual soldier, officer or commander of the enemy army. But the Prophet, peace be upon him, cared for every single one, because he treated them as human beings to whom God's message was addressed.

The Prophet's attitude towards such individual cases was appropriate to the overall objective he had set for himself with regard to Makkah – namely, that Makkah should become a solid base of Islam.

The changeover was to be complete. The city which housed the most ancient temple built for worshipping God alone must always remain a cornerstone in the structure of Islam and a base in which Muslims would always enjoy total security. For Makkah to be a Muslim city was to establish a strong link between Islam and former Divine religions and to make this link felt by every Muslim in every age.



On the other hand, for Makkah to remain an un-Islamic city was unthinkable. The Prophet was, therefore, working for a definite and most honorable aim realizing that God wanted him to win Makkah over, rather than to defeat the Quraysh in a military confrontation. It is generally agreed by Muslim scholars that two years earlier, at the time when the Prophet concluded the peace agreement at Al-Hudaybiyah, he was acting on clear and direct instructions from God. For a certainty, God told the Muslims, shortly after the peace agreement was concluded against the express wishes of most of them, that had there been a confrontation between them and the unbelievers of Makkah, they would certainly have scored a remarkable victory: **{Had the unbelievers fought against you, they would indeed have turned their backs in flight, and would have found none to protect them and none to bring them succor.}** (Al-Fath 48: 22)

What the Prophet achieved two years later was a conquest which brought about the total transformation of Makkah, from a city which was profoundly hostile to Islam to the city which has continued to be ever since, and will continue to be forever, the solid base of Islam.

That sort of victory could have been achieved only with the remarkable attitude shown by the Prophet to his old enemies: an attitude of clemency, love, mercy and a profound desire to show these old enemies the way to their own happiness. No ordinary human being could have behaved in such a manner at such a time, after such a long history of hostility. Muhammad was able to do so, because he was God's Messenger and Prophet.



CHAPTER FOUR

Muhammad: The Wise Leader

- **The Challenge**
- **Recognizing His Companions' Skills**
- **Seeking His Companions' Opinions**
- **Dealing Gently with His Companions**
- **Correcting His Companions Mistakes**
- **Respecting the Feelings of His Companions**
- **Muslims' Duty Today**



The Challenge

Human resources experts say that successfully leading a small group of people is not an easy task.

Imagine for a moment the challenge Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) faced when he established the foundations of the first Muslim community first in Makkah, then in Madinah.

When Islam started to gain publicity, the few people who had embraced it in Makkah formed the nucleus of the first Muslim community. This small community was put to persecution at the hands of the people of Quraysh.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had to do something about this challenging situation. When the persecution intensified, he asked some of them to leave Makkah and migrate to Abyssinia where its king, Negus, gave them protection and welcomed them in his country. As a responsible leader, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a serious concern for his followers' safety and he took wise measures to ensure that at least some of them were safe, far away from danger.



After the death of the Prophet's wife, Khadijah, and his uncle, Abu Talib, the persecution of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions in Makkah increased, and his personal safety was at risk as the tribes joined hands to kill him. At that point, God commanded the Prophet (peace be upon him) to leave Makkah and migrate to Madinah where he started a new phase in establishing the new Muslim state.

In Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that both the migrants (*Al-Muhajirun*) and the helpers (*Al-Ansar*) were brothers, and that they formed one community. The Prophet's main goal in building this community was to strengthen their bonds of brotherhood in Islam.

He also wanted to ease the pain of the migrants and wanted the helpers to extend their hands to the new members of the community who had left their houses and properties behind in Makkah for the sake of Islam. This healthy and positive atmosphere was an important factor that led to the long-term success of the new Muslim community in Madinah.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) loved his companions and cared for them a lot. His

care and concern covered even those who had died, as he was very keen for example to pay off their debts. When God made the Prophet wealthy through conquests, he said:

"I am more rightful than other believers to be the guardian of the believers, so if a Muslim dies while in debt, I am responsible for the repayment of his debt, and whoever leaves wealth (after his death) it will belong to his heirs." (Al-Bukhari)

In what follows, I will shed more light on some other aspects of the Prophet's wise leadership.

✚ Recognizing His Companions' Skills

A good leader is one who sees the positive traits of his team members and invests in them. This is exactly what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did with his companions. There are many examples that show how the Prophet (peace be upon him) discovered where his companions excelled and how he utilized their potentials and wisely invested in them.

One of the famous companions, Bilal ibn Rabah, had a very beautiful voice, and the Prophet being aware of this gift declared Bilal to be his official *mu'adhin* (one who calls Muslims to prayer). On the



other hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) refused to offer another distinguished companion, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, an administrative responsibility because he lacked the required skills.

Out of appreciation and motivation, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) conferred some titles to his companions. For example, he told Abu `Ubayhdah ibn al-Jarrah:

"You are the protector of this nation."

He said to Khalid ibn al-Walid:

"You are one of the swords of Allah."

In a third occasion, he told Mu`adh ibn Jabal:

"By God, I love you O Mu`adh." (Abu Dawud)

After embracing Islam, the family of Yasir was put to persecution and torture. In recognition of their sacrifice, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to comfort them, and he promised them that their final abode will be in Paradise.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) remained faithful and thankful to those who helped him at the beginning of his mission. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

"There is no one who had done more favor to me with life and property than Abu Bakr." (Al-Bukhari)

✚ Seeking His Companions' Opinions

In line with the divine command: **{... and consult with them in the matter...}** (Al `Imran, 3: 159), Prophet Muhammad used to consult with his companions before taking any decision. The Prophet's counseling with his companions were so common that Abu Hurairah is reported to have said:

"I never saw anyone consult his companions more often than the Messenger of Allah." (Ahmad)

The consultations had to do with matters on which there was no divine guidance in the Quran or the Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not go to the battle of Badr and the battle of Uhud for example without consulting his companions.

In some cases, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sought his companions' opinions as what happened in the aforementioned example and this is called "positive consultation". In some other cases, the companions took the initiative and expressed their views on certain issues and this is called "negative consultation". For example, the location of the



battlefield of Badr was decided after Al-Habbab ibn al-Mundhir proposed it. The usual term used by Prophet Muhammad in these cases is: "Give me your opinion, O people." This practice became a key characteristic of the nascent Muslim community for which they are praised in the Quran: **{...and whose affairs are a matter of counsel...}** (Ash-Shura, 42: 39)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) consulted his companions even regarding personal issues, like what happened when the news of the slander against his wife Aisha spread in Madinah.

"O people, give me your opinion regarding those people who made a forged story against my wife..." (Al-Bukhari)

+ Dealing Gently with His Companions

Gentleness is a key quality of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). When he wanted to teach his companions, he used a very wise method which entailed both respect for the recipient of such knowledge without embarrassing him. One day a Bedouin urinated in the mosque, and the people ran to beat him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Do not interrupt his urination (i.e. let him finish). Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked

for a tumbler of water and poured the water over the place of urine." (Al-Bukhari)

In another version, the Prophet (peace be upon him) called the man and explained to him that the mosques are not places for urine, but they are for offering prayer and worshipping God. This example takes us to the following point.

Correcting His Companions' Mistakes

Correcting people's mistakes is a Quranic guidance. The Quran has many references to situations in which a certain conduct is blamed and corrected. These situations apply to Muslims in general and to the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. (see 80: 1-10; 33: 37; 8: 67; 3: 128; 60: 1; 3: 152; 4: 97)

Let us first clarify that because we are human it is normal that we make mistakes. What is more important is learning from our mistakes and not repeating them. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) confirmed this meaning in his famous *hadith* which reads:

"Every son of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent." (At Tirmidhi)



Following the Quranic guidance, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) applied the same methodology when correcting his companions' mistakes because he felt that it is his duty to do so, being the chosen Prophet (peace be upon him) to guide people to God.

While correcting his companions' mistakes, the Prophet (peace be upon him) considered different factors. The approach differed from one situation to another and from one person to another. Dealing with someone who often makes mistakes is different from dealing with one who makes a mistake for the first time. The kind of mistake is also determinant in the kind of treatment. Priority is given to mistakes which have to do with peoples' belief. Situations which involve everyday life or etiquette come in second place.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted to teach his companions something, he used to introduce the topic by telling them that:

"I am like a father to you." (Abu Dawud)

Here is an example of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) corrected his companions. Umar ibn Abi Salamah said: I was a boy under the care of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and my hand used to go

around the dish while I was eating. So the Prophet said to me:

"O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you".

Since then I have applied those instructions when eating." (Al-Bukhari)

Persuasion was a fundamental tool that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to correct his companions' mistakes. It is reported that a man from Banu Fazarah came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: 'My wife has given birth to a black boy' - and he wanted to disown him. He said:

'Do you have camels?'

He said: 'Yes.'

He said: 'What color are they?'

He said: 'Red.'

He said: 'Are there any gray ones among them?'

He said: 'There are some gray camels among them.'

He said: 'Why is that do you think?'



He said: 'Perhaps it is hereditary.'

He said: 'Perhaps this is hereditary.' And he did not permit him to disown him. (An-Nasa'i)

+ Respecting the Feelings of His Companions

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was aware of the details of every single companion's social status and managed to deal with every one according to his circumstances. Once a poor man invited the Prophet and served him vinegar. The Prophet (peace be upon him) comforted him and said:

"The best condiment is vinegar." (Muslim)

This reaction reflects the Prophet's wisdom. He did not want to hurt the man's feeling because of his poor condition.

+ Muslims' Duty Today

It is because of this wisdom and these refined skills that the Prophet (peace be upon him) managed to gain this large number of followers, and to successfully convey God's message to the world. And because of his refined manners and wise leadership, the companions deeply loved the Prophet and were ready to sacrifice their lives to save him.

Once a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the timing of the Day of Judgment. In response, the Prophet asked the man about the good deeds that he had prepared for that day. The man said: "I have not prepared much prayer or fasting or zakah, but I love God and His Messenger." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"You will be with those you love." (Al-Bukhari)

Now, it's our turn. Muslims are told in the Quran that they have in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the most beautiful pattern of conduct:

{Verily there is for you a good example in the Messenger of God for whoever hopes for [the encounter with] God and the Last Day, and remembers God often.} (Al-Azhab 33: 21)

It is now the Muslims' turn to re-live the conduct of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and embrace it in their daily lives. If Muslims claim that they love their Prophet, they have to demonstrate this love by following the Prophet's footsteps and his guidance in all walks of life; at home, at work, with their families, with relatives, with friends, with neighbors regardless of their race, faith, color or status.



If we sincerely love the Prophet (peace be upon him) and follow his guidance, Almighty God will love us, and we will be with him in the Hereafter, and the closer to him in Paradise will be those who follow his example and are best in manners.

CHAPTER FIVE

Muhammad: How to Honor Him?



- **Love Him**
- **Know Him**
- **Learn From Him**
- **Follow Him**
- **Teach About Him**



Love Him

Love of Prophet Muhammad is the honor of every Muslim. His exceptional character and exemplary manners make it very difficult not to love him with all your heart, even without seeing him. It's a pleasure in itself being in awe of his pure heart and soul and his excellence of deeds and character. When we love someone we think about him a lot, we want to know everything about him, and we want him to love us back.

Prophet Muhammad already loves us without seeing us because we believed in him and loved him without seeing him; this is what he told his companions about us 1400 years ago, and he called us his brothers and sisters, and said he longed to see us in Paradise. He said: "I miss my brother", they said: "Aren't we your brothers, O Messenger of God?" He said: "You are my friends, and my brothers are those who believe in me and did not see me." (Muslim)

Know Him

Make it a habit to learn a small piece of information about him every day; there are many books and sites that can provide this kind of

information. Some sites would even send you a daily email with a Hadith (verbal tradition of Prophet Muhammad) or brief story from his life. You can't love someone without knowing him, so this is your first step to making your love for the prophet a practical love: by seeking to know him and developing a thirst for knowing more and a burning need to see him with your heart.

When we were children many of us were told that he is our great-grandfather, and we believed it, and loved him as such, later when we grew up, we found that we loved him even more than a natural grandfather, even without ever meeting him, just through knowing more about him every day.

Learn From Him

As you read about his *Seerah* (tradition) and the story of his life, you will discover you're getting a crash course in Muslim life-skills from the ultimate Muslim, whose life story details how he handled each and every minute situation, even extremely personal ones, he had no secrets so that we may learn by example: how he solved problems and faced challenges, how he worshipped, how he treated his family and friends, how he cared for the environment and the wellbeing of every living thing, how he ran his government and created a new society, and how he



wept late at night confiding in God his innermost feelings.

This is your unique journey of self-discovery, because each of us emerges a different person from this life-changing experience, depending on our unique characters and environments around the world. Many non-Muslims would tell you the same even without being his religious followers, take Michael Hart and Karen Armstrong for example.

Follow Him

Like everything related to Islam, feelings and words are not enough, action has to follow to make them count and turn aspirations into reality. So after you learn to love him genuinely and re-discover yourself in the process, then comes the time of self-transformation to fit his model that awed you and fascinated you. Take it slowly and one step at a time. Change takes time, but love makes it easier, and the promised rewards from God should give you fuel to keep up. This is the time to remind yourself of the verses of the Quran speaking of his exceptional manners, of his love for us, and of following him being a worship which pleases God.

You should start noticing you've become calmer yet stronger, wiser yet humbler, your circle of

care should start widening to encompass more people from every background, and your priorities in life should start rearranging themselves to suit your new self.

Remember that Muslims today are in dire need for good examples to show the world the beauty of Islam, so remember that you are his ambassador to your part of the world. In any trivial everyday situation, you don't know whom you're influencing by your good manners, and that alone is worship worthy of reward.

Teach About Him

As the wisdom goes, the best learning comes from teaching, because as you convey thoughts and feelings to others, you relearn your own and grow in your knowledge through the sum of their individual characters. This is a most enriching and gratifying learning experience.

Actually, only then you would have lived up to his example, for what he was but the greatest teacher; not only to his contemporaries but also to all people of reason from his time until the end of time.

This is a life-long journey, searching, discovery and transformation is ongoing for a true Muslim until



his last breath, because even then, he has an example of how to exit this world still following in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhammad, may Allah grant us his company in Paradise, and support us to be his true followers until we meet him. Ameen.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has taught:

“He is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbor beside him is hungry”; and: “He does not believe whose neighbors are not safe from his injurious conduct.”

(May you receive the blessings of applying the Prophet’s way and following his conduct!)

