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ISSUE 5

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Muhammad's Company

My heart yearns to be in your company,
Proclaim your call, setting shackled minds free,
Defend your person, fulfil every decree,
Fight at your side, repel each enemy,
See your face, with its moon-like quality,
Would that this honour be given to me,
Yet, regret I must, I am not worthy,
Unfit to be in blessed company,
Of those for whom Jannah was destiny,
The chosen few, who were exemplary,
Hand-picked by Ar-Rahman, honoured to be,
Friends travelling with you on your journey,
Companions of your sacred history.
I swear, as long as there is breath in me,
In your footsteps will I traverse patiently,
Defend your name, fulfil your every plea,
Spread your call to all of humanity,
Striving, longing for the day that I may be,
United in your blessed company.

Fatima Barakatullah, Alimiyyah Three



The Pursuit

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

The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often. [33: 21]

Over the years, Muslim and non-Muslim historians have written many books about the Prophet ﷺ as a leader, highlighting the divinely guided qualities of his personality as the final messenger of God. Often, this divinely guided perfection is disregarded, such that we negate emulating our Prophet ﷺ, who has been referred to as the best example by Allah. There is no denying that we can never exceed the rank of our Prophet ﷺ, nevertheless we can strive to emulate his leadership values. Often we take role models from all walks of society - pop stars, business executives, entrepreneurs, politicians, and scholars, and so on - in order to improve ourselves and our lifestyles in an endeavour to attain success, so why not take the role model whom Allah Himself has provided?

Whilst it is true we can not attain perfection, we can however, strive towards excellence. The French writer Voltaire said, “The best is the enemy of the good.” Furthermore, Confucius said, “Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without.” And, of course, when have Shakespeare, “Striving to better, oft we mar what’s well.” In other words, we must not put ourselves off by becoming obsessed with the notion of perfection, for perfection can become the enemy of good. Instead, we can adopt the perception of achieving excellence for that is attainable. Thus, we find a perfect role model in our Prophet ﷺ. One in which we can aim to grasp most of his qualities, if not all. As the saying goes:

ما لا يُدرك كله لا يترك جله



So perceive that which you can achieve, following in His ﷺ footsteps:

- Perfectionists strive for impossible goals. Pursuers of excellence enjoy meeting high standards that are within reach.
- Perfectionists value themselves by what they do. Pursuers of excellence value themselves by who they are.
- Perfectionists, when they run into difficulty, get easily overwhelmed and give up. Pursuers of excellence experience temporary disappointment, but they keep going.
- Perfectionists can be devastated by failure. Pursuers of excellence learn from it.
- Perfectionists remember mistakes and dwell on them. Pursuers of excellence correct mistakes and learn from them.
- Perfectionists want to be number one. Pursuers of excellence can live with not being the best, especially when they know they've tried their hardest.
- Perfectionists hate criticism. Pursuers of excellence see criticism as a way to learn.
- Perfectionists have to win to keep high self-esteem. Pursuers of excellence can finish second and still feel good about their selves.

Effective work and effort is about moving towards the desired destination, and not necessarily about ensuring that nothing gets spilled or knocked over on the way. Mistakes will happen and slip-ups will occur but ultimately, it is keeping the momentum going that really matters.

As John Adair in *The Leadership of Muhammad* states, you can be appointed a commander or a manager, but you are not a leader until your appointment is ratified in the hearts and minds of those who you lead. And so to be a leader in any capacity, we may only prosper if we follow in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Saleha Bukhari, Alimiyyah Five



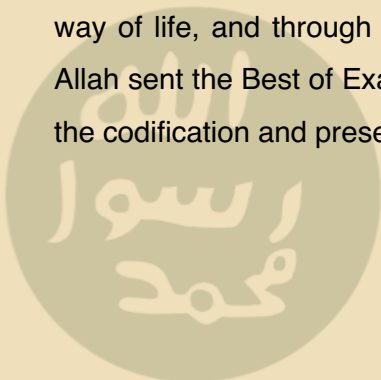
One Life Lived, Infinite Lessons Learnt

Muhammad Ibn Abdullah was, for the first forty years of his life, but a man. He spent his days in the desert city of Makkah as a shepherd and a trader, known and trusted by all. Thereafter, following the event of the first revelation in the month of Ramadan, 610 AD, he became a prophet of Allah, and a messenger sent to all of mankind with the religion of his father before him, Ibrahim عليه السلام.

He was one man, born in one year amongst of billions of years of history, in one small desert city, in a stretch of land un-breached and left undisturbed by a warring world. But his impact has travelled further and has had an effect greater than any one person can comprehend, stretching far beyond his mere sixty three years on earth; his message and his example, to this day, 1438 years later, carry the same power and impact.

Often, people wonder how a love so pure, and a pull so strong can form in someone's heart for a person whom their eyes have never seen, whose voice their ears have never heard and whose presence they have never had the honour of being in. However, this love is not unique. This love and this pull is a feeling which has been shared by millions of people throughout history. From the time of his birth - it began with the love of his family, then as he lived the earlier portions of his life - with love of his community, and thereafter, his entry into Prophethood, and his emergence as a leader - it transposed into the love of his people. Who are these people? Initially, they were small desert tribes, who ultimately transformed into whole nations, who took their love and made it into a fuel for them, allowing it to drive them forward, faster and further down their path to Allah. And this love, this path carved out by the Prophet ﷺ, and followed by the people who love him, it is the same path we seek, and the same path we strive to remain on.

However, for this love to form, and for this path to be sought, one must study the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Such a rare occurrence is the sīrah - an account of one man's life so meticulously recorded and maintained - can only take place by the will of Allah. But why? Islam was sent as a way of life, and through His mercy in making jannah an ever-attainable reward for His servants, Allah sent the Best of Examples so that we may emulate him - his lifestyle and character - allowing the codification and preservation of his sunnah so that we may do so with ease.



This great account has been left for us, to study and to learn, to implement into our lives, so that ultimately, we may journey down the path of the Prophet ﷺ. Only through such a study of the Prophet's ﷺ life - in understanding the world he grew up in and the ways in which he changed it - can we truly understand the sunnah. The sunnah which is the explanation of our divine text, the words of our Lord, our ticket to an eternity of bliss and contentment.

The Prophet ﷺ was sent to mankind, for mankind. Despite being sinless himself, infallible from the pulls of this world, he feared for us, his people, who he knew could not help but succumb to it. So for us he prayed, and he cried, and beseeched his Lord, to whom he is the most beloved, for our refuge. He prayed for his people, for his ummah. It is now our duty to ensure we are of those people. Those people who develop a love for him, and cultivate that love, through knowledge and through action, so that we may meet with him on the day our accounts are read, so that we may drink from his palms and enter into the promised gardens.

Masuma Chowdhury, Alimiyyah Two



The Beautiful Qualities of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the kindest and the most perfect man, his character astounded his friends and enemies alike. His enemies trusted him with their valuable goods despite hating him and his message. He ﷺ was known as 'The Trustworthy' amongst his people.

His courteous behaviour towards others

The Prophet ﷺ would always listen carefully to those who spoke to him and, when called upon, he would turn his whole person towards the caller to show that they had his undivided attention, even with the most wicked of people. When he ﷺ greeted someone and shook his hand, he would not let go until the other man let go first. He was the cheeriest of people in countenance and the quickest to smile; when he smiled it was as though the sun was shining out of his blessed face. The Prophet ﷺ would also be kind to children greeting them and patting their heads. A child who was patted on the head by the Prophet ﷺ would be instantly recognised due to a beautiful scent emanating from the part of his head that the Prophet's hand had touched.

In his dealings with people he ﷺ would be extremely modest and humble, broad-hearted, forbearing and generous, forgiving, merciful and more patient than even the most patient of people. He was the most just of God's creatures in upholding the rights of God and the rights of mankind. He preserved bonds of kinship, maintained covenants, and kept promises even when it was difficult for him to do so. He withstood the harsh behaviour of the Bedouins and treated them kindly, meeting their harshness with sweet-natured speech and conduct.

His Humility

The Messenger of God ﷺ said to his companions, "Do not over-exult me as the Christians over-exulted the son of Mary; I am but a slave, so say God's slave and messenger." The Messenger of God ﷺ would visit the sick, attend funerals, ride donkeys (as opposed to more lavish forms of transport) and answer the invitation of slaves. His wife Aisha رضي الله عنها used to say about him that he would darn his own clothes and mend his shoes. He would do housework,

especially sewing, and milk his goats and generally serve himself. He would not disdain ordinary labour as kings do. God gave him the choice whether to be a prophet-slave or a prophet-king, and he chose slavery in his humility to Him.

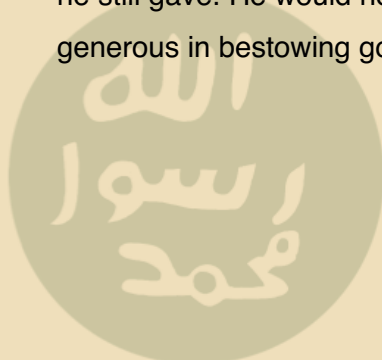
His Mercy

His mercy was portrayed through many spheres of his life; with children for example he would pat their heads and kiss them. A Bedouin saw him kissing his grandsons and remarked, "I have children and I have not ever kissed a single one of them." The Prophet of God ﷺ replied, "Those who show no mercy will not be shown mercy." When leading the prayer one time, he heard a child crying at the back so he shortened the prayer to make it easier for the mother. Often when the first crop of fruits were brought to him he would give them to any children who present. The prophet ﷺ showed kindness to animals and enjoined others to show mercy to them as well. He forbade their owners from starving them, wearing them out, constantly making them carry heavy loads, or treating them in any way that caused them suffering. He ﷺ also forbade the abuse of animals by setting them upon one another as blood sport and provoking them into violence.

He ﷺ said, "If anyone kills a sparrow, it will come forth on the Day of Resurrection saying, "O my Lord, so and so killed me for mere sport and did not kill me for any good reason."" He ﷺ also forbade the use of any animal or anything with a spirit as a target for archery.

His Generosity

The Prophet's ﷺ generosity meant that he would put others ahead of himself and his family and give away things he needed most. He was shy to send a petitioner away empty handed and always gave them something, and even when he had nothing to give he would tell the seeker to buy something using his name and when he obtained some money he would pay for it. The prophet ﷺ was once brought ninety thousand dirhams, which were laid out on a mat. Then he began to divide it, and did not refuse anyone who asked for it until he had gone through it all. The Prophet ﷺ was his most generous during Ramadan - even when he was fasting, hungry and poor he still gave. He would not sleep with money in his house. Indeed the messenger of God was more generous in bestowing goodness than the very wind.



His Asceticism

The Prophet ﷺ was the most ascetic of people; his poverty was a matter of choice not necessity, for despite his many conquests he completely turned away from the life of this world. The Prophet ﷺ lived as a traveller, this world was but a journey and paradise was his home. He ﷺ never took two of anything, not two shirts or two shoes or two cloaks. He and his family never ate their fill of wheat bread for three days in a row until he left this world. A month or two months would pass without a fire being lit in his house, during which times only dates and water would be consumed. He slept on straw mats which left visible marks on his blessed skin and when offered a soft mat to sleep on, he said, “What have I to do with this world? My place in this world is but as that of a wayfarer who travels on a hot day, naps under a tree, and then leaves it behind him.”

A Scribe, Alimiyyah Five

