

Fast 8: The Prophet's great concern for a fallen humanity

- The Holy Quran says to Muslims about the Prophet Muhammad:

“Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; very painful for him is your falling into distress, most concerned (he is) for you; to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful. But if they turn away, say: Allah is sufficient for me — there is no god but He. On Him do I rely, and He is the Lord of the mighty Throne.” — 9:128–129

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾
فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

This is the true picture of the heart of the Holy Prophet. It grieved, not for his followers alone, not for one nation or country, but for all humanity. He grieves for the burdens **of all**, and he is most concerned for the welfare **of all**. The whole of humanity is meant here because there are additional words referring to the believers. There is a special relation he bears to those who follow him; to them he is, in addition, compassionate and merciful.

But if people turn away from him, not accepting his message, he does not need them for his own benefit. He already has God, Who is sufficient for him, on Whom he relies. Only a preacher who wants his followers to worship him stands in need of having followers to make him feel successful and secure. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad has all that he needs from God and he relies on God completely.

- The Holy Prophet had the deep desire that people should believe in the truth which he had brought. But he is informed that it would happen by God's own plan:

“And if your Lord had pleased, all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them. Will you (O Prophet) then force people till they are believers?” — 10:99

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ﴿٩٩﴾
أَفَأَنْتُ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

“And most people do not believe, though you (O Prophet) desire it eagerly. And you ask them no reward for it. It is nothing but a Reminder for the nations.” — 12:103–104

وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾
وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا دُكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

“We know best what they say, and you are not one to compel them. So remind by means of the Quran him who fears My threat.” — 50:45

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ ﴿٤٥﴾
فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

The verses above are talking about the great zeal of the Holy Prophet and his over-

exerting himself in preaching the Truth. He almost wished to force them to believe, so much did he feel that it was in their interests to do so. But the Truth would succeed only in accordance with God’s plan and design. Even prophets cannot have their desires fulfilled in the manner they wish except according to God’s plan, even though their only desire is to bring about the reform of people. The Holy Prophet’s mission was limited to reminding people by means of the Quran, the Reminder for all the nations. We, too, must not become disillusioned or frustrated when our mission to propagate Islam does not apparently succeed at the time and in the manner that we wish.

- The great pain and distress of the Holy Prophet at people not accepting his message is mentioned in the Quran:

“Then perhaps you (O Prophet) will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement.” — 18:6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاحِعٌ تَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا
بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿١٨﴾

“Perhaps you (O Prophet) will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.” — 26:3

لَعَلَّكَ بَاحِعٌ تَفْسَكَ إِلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

“Now surely Allah leaves in error whom He pleases and guides aright whom He pleases, so (O Prophet) do not let your soul waste in grief for them. Surely Allah is Knower of what they do.” — 35:8

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ فَلَا
تَذْهَبُ تَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا
يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

The first two verses mention the anxiety which the Holy Prophet felt on account of a fallen humanity, which was so great that it says that he was almost killing himself with grief. His was a life of absolute devotion to the cause of humanity, and his only concern was that human beings should rise to the true dignity for which God had made them. The last verse again makes it clear that people’s rejection or acceptance of the Prophet’s message happens according to the law and plan of God. So there is no point in the Prophet being aggrieved about it.

Jesus is reported to have said: “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John, 15:13). It is this kind of feeling in the Holy Prophet’s mind that is indicated in the above verses. And his sorrowing mentioned here was primarily for those who rejected him.