

## *The Holy Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to the nations*

**Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 15 October 2021**

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

“And We have not sent you (O Prophet) but as a mercy to the nations (*rahmat-un lil-‘alamīn*),” — ch. 21, v. 107.

I have chosen this topic — *the Holy Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to the worlds* — because these days the birthday of the Holy Prophet is being commemorated. This verse tells us that the very mission of the Holy Prophet, for which he was sent, was to act as a mercy to all the nations: *rahmat-un* means “a mercy”, *lil* means “to the”, and *‘alamīn* means all nations or worlds. This includes all religions, races and countries of the world. It includes also non-human worlds, such as the animal world. The Quran also describes the Holy Prophet in the following words:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٦٨﴾

“And surely you (O Prophet) have sublime (or great) morals (*khuluq-in ‘azīm*),” — ch. 68, v. 4

This means that the Holy Prophet displayed the best qualities in the world that a human being can possibly do. The Quran adds that it was the Holy Prophet’s gentle dealing with his followers that made them passionately loyal to him:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِن حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

“Thus it is by Allah’s mercy that you (O Prophet) are gentle to them. And if you had been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and ask (God’s) protection for them, and consult them in (important) matters. But when you have determined, put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust (in Him).” — ch. 3, v. 159

This verse was revealed in connection with the events of the battle of Uhud, when a group of Muslims had disregarded the strict instructions given by the Holy Prophet to remain in their positions under all circumstances, but they, thinking that the enemy forces were running away, left their positions to chase them. This proved disastrous for the Muslims, placing all of them, including the Holy Prophet, in great jeopardy. But after the battle, he did not even speak a harsh word to those who were guilty of disobeying his orders. The Quran here approves of his leniency, and in fact it calls his leniency as a mercy from God. It informs him that his gentleness was the reason why his followers stuck to him, through thick and thin. If he had been rough and uncaring to those around him, then when they saw him in great trouble and in danger of being killed by his enemies, they would run away from him to save themselves. He would not have been able to exercise any authority over his followers and order them to stop. What stopped them from deserting him was not any power or control he had over them but the great force of attraction that they felt towards him. This verse, after approving of his leniency, then tells the Holy Prophet to pardon them himself and to ask God to forgive them. Moreover, the disobedience they had committed should not be held against them in future and he should continue to consult their opinions when making decisions.

Muslims are told in the Quran about the Holy Prophet:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.” — ch. 33, v. 21

Whoever hopes to attain nearness to God, to have the best from God, to be accepted by God, and to be judged well on the Day of Judgment because of his good deeds, he should take the Holy Prophet as his model. The person who “remembers Allah much”, who always keeps God at the forefront of his mind, will find that the best example he can follow is that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The proper and best remembrance of God is as it is seen in the life of the Holy Prophet, and it is not

by other invented methods such as what whirling dervishes do. The meaning of taking the Holy Prophet as our exemplar and model is **not only** that we follow his example in how he carried out the practices of Islam, such as how he prayed physically, what he said aloud in prayer and what he said inaudibly, his exact postures, etc., or how he began and ended his fast, etc., but also we should follow his example in qualities which he showed and in how he behaved towards other people.

Another verse in the Quran is as follows:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

“Say (O Prophet to people): If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” — ch. 3, v. 31

It is generally thought that Islam does not recognise the concept of love between God and human beings, but that it only presents God as the Master Who is to be obeyed and humans as His servants who have to obey Him. But this verse clearly mentions, first, a person’s love for God, and, second, how God can love him. If a person feels love for God in his heart, it cannot be left as just a feeling. To put the love into practice, it says here that he should follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad. As long as he or she tries to follow him to the best of their ability, God will love them and forgive them their faults and shortcomings. The concept of love for God as taught by Islam is **not** that a person says that he loves God, and he claims that God loves him, and then he does whatever he wants.

Now I will mention some statements of the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself, and some events of his life, which show that he came as a mercy for humanity. It is reported:

“It was said to the Messenger of Allah (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him): Invoke curse upon the *mushrikīn* (idol-worshippers or those who worship anything other than God). He replied: **I have not been sent as the invoker of curse, but I have been sent as a mercy**” (Sahih Muslim, hadith 2599)

The Holy Prophet expressed his worry and concern that he might, as a human being, become angry and express a bad wish or curse for someone. Would that be considered as his prayer and his desire for that person in the eyes of God? He said: “I have made this arrangement with my Lord, that I said to Him: I am a human being and I become pleased just as a human being becomes pleased and I lose my temper just as a human being loses temper. So for any person from amongst my followers whom I curse and who in no way deserves it, let that, O Lord, turn into a source of purification and purity and nearness to Allah on the Day of Resurrection.” (Sahih Muslim, hadith 2603). So if he were to curse one of his followers undeservedly, God would not take his words as expressing what he wants to happen to that follower, but He would convert them into a prayer for the good of that person.

Another incident about a dispute between a Jew and a Muslim is reported in Sahih Bukhari in several different versions. One version is as follows: “Two men, a Muslim and a Jew, quarrelled. The Muslim said: ‘By Him Who gave Muhammad superiority over all the people!’ The Jew said: ‘By Him Who gave Moses superiority over all the people!’ At that the Muslim raised his hand and slapped the Jew on the face. The Jew went to the Prophet and informed him of what had happened between him and the Muslim. The Prophet sent for the Muslim and asked him about it. The Muslim informed him of the event. The Prophet said: **Do not give me superiority over Moses**” (Bukhari, hadith 2411).

According to another version, it was the Jew who started the dispute because he was selling something and a Muslim offered him only a low price that made him unhappy. So the Jew said: “No, by Him Who gave Moses superiority over all mortals!” Hearing him, a man from among the Ansar got up and slapped him on the face and said: “You say, By Him Who gave Moses superiority over all mortals, while the Prophet (Muhammad) is present amongst us!” The Jew went to the Prophet and said: “O Abu-l-Qasim! I am under the assurance and contract of security (with you), so what right does so-and-so have to slap me?” The Prophet asked the Muslim: “Why have you slapped him?” He told him the whole story. The Prophet became angry, till

anger appeared on his face, and said: **Do not give superiority to any prophet amongst Allah's Prophets**" (Bukhari, hadith 3414).

Whether the Muslim started the argument, or he reacted to what the Jew said, he was wrong to indulge in this dispute and slap the Jew. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet is telling Muslims not to regard him as superior to all other prophets. It means that we should not make it a matter of having cheap, point-scoring arguments and disputes which result in hurting the feelings of others and even violence against them. In this incident, the Holy Prophet was fulfilling his role as a mercy to all nations, in that he was stopping Muslims from having feuds with followers of other religions, and was showing respect towards the founders of other religions. We may also ask the question: Did the Muslim prove the Holy Prophet's superiority by slapping the Jew and did this convince the Jew? Obviously not. It is the Holy Prophet's response to the Muslim, and his judgment in this dispute, which is more likely to convince the Jew of the greatness of the Holy Prophet. Notice also that the Jew, who was living under the protection of the Muslim rule of Madinah, took his complaint to the Holy Prophet Muhammad because he had confidence in the Holy Prophet that he would do justice.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Imran Khan, has said repeatedly that he wants to turn Pakistan into the state of Madinah as it was under the Holy Prophet. If this incident occurred in Pakistan today, between a non-Muslim and a Muslim, the Muslim would become a national hero for standing up for the honour of the Holy Prophet and slapping the non-Muslim. In fact, in our current times, the Muslim would be more likely to kill the other person than just slap him. Which court in Pakistan would dare to declare the Muslim as being in the wrong?

We pray that may Allah enable us to follow the true teachings of His Holy Book and His Holy Prophet—*Ameen*.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَكُمُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعْنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِالآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، إِنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ  
مَلِكٌ بَرٌّ رَوْفٌ رَحِيمٌ-