

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2025

*Produced by:*

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## Study 18:

**Prophet Muhammad** ﷺ

**His extraordinary gentleness towards his  
followers – 1**

- We might be tempted to think that any leader would be gentle towards his own followers. But is it ever actually the case with religious and national leaders or battle commanders, that they deal gently with those under them?
- The Holy Prophet Muhammad was certainly a leader of people, their leader not only as a teacher of religion, but leader also in their worldly affairs relating to social, ethical, economic, political and national matters.
- The Quran says to him:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ 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 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) forgiveness 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.” — 3:159

- This verse was revealed in connection with events of the battle of Uhud. It took place in the year 625, two to three years after his migration to Madinah.
- A group of Muslim archers were posted by the Holy Prophet to protect the Muslim army from the rear, with strict instructions not to leave their positions under any circumstances.
- But when the archers saw the enemy retreating, they joined in pursuing them.

- The enemy forces took advantage of this and were able to attack the Muslims from behind, scattering them and placing them in jeopardy along with the Holy Prophet himself.
- Some Muslims fled the field of battle. The Holy Prophet himself was wounded and rumoured to have been killed.
- The Quran here draws attention to the Holy Prophet's gentle dealing with those around him when speaking of his experience in the field of battle as a general. This position of leadership, of course, required him to be very strict in punishing any disobedience of orders.

- He was the ablest general in leading his troops, yet **his gentle manners and his tolerance** in dealing with his friends as well as enemies stand in remarkable contrast with his position as a commander in the field of battle.
- After the Uhud trouble, he did not speak even a harsh word to those who were guilty of disobeying his orders and abandoning their positions to join in the pursuit, or to those who had fled the field of battle.
- This verse teaches us five lessons that we consider below.

1. “It is by Allah’s mercy that you are gentle to them”:

It was *a mercy from Allah* that the Holy Prophet was gentle to his followers. One might have expected his revelation to say:

It was your gentleness which made them disobey you, so from now on you must be more firm with them, and keep them in check!

Instead of this, the revelation *approves* of his gentleness. It was not weak leadership, the examples of which we see sometimes.

The word for “gentle” here is *lint*, similar to the English word *lenient*.

2. If a leader is rough and uncaring to those around him then he won't be able to keep them together.

Notice how it was the Holy Prophet's gentleness, and not fear of his authority, which attracted his followers to him and made them deeply devoted to him.

At the battle of Uhud itself, when the Holy Prophet became a target of enemy attack, his followers surrounded him in order to shield him from attack with their bodies. This was the time when they would have abandoned him if he had kept them as his followers through force, intimidation or offering them some gain.



3. “So pardon them and ask (God’s) forgiveness for them”:

The Holy Prophet is told by God to pardon them himself, as well as to pray to Allah for them to be forgiven by Allah.

4. “and consult them in (important) matters.”:

This refers to two different points.

(a) Those people who disobeyed and were forgiven should *not* have their disobedience held against them *nor* be excluded from participation in future consultations.

(b) before the battle of Uhud the Holy Prophet had decided, after a consultation, to follow the view of the majority and go out of Madinah to confront and fight the enemy.

His own view was that of the minority, that they should not meet the enemy in the open field but remain in Madinah to defend themselves.

It seemed that by following the majority view the Muslims had faced the trouble they did at Uhud. Yet, at this very point, the Holy Prophet received revelation reaffirming the principle of consultation.

5. “But when you have determined, put your trust in Allah.”

Once a course of action has been determined by means of consultation, the course must be followed, unitedly and whole-heartedly with full conviction, trusting in Allah.

- A verse just prior to the above verse says that Allah forgave those who had fled the field of battle. Allah was forgiving and forbearing towards those who, in the heat of the moment, took the wrong action. The Holy Prophet followed the example of forgiveness set by Allah.
- That verse is as follows.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ<sup>ل</sup>  
إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا<sup>ج</sup>  
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ<sup>ط</sup> إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ<sup>ع</sup>

“Those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met,  
only the devil sought to cause them to make a slip  
on account of some deeds they had done,  
and certainly Allah has pardoned them.  
Surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing.” — 3:155

*END OF STUDY 18*