

## **"Ethical values in Islam: Particular reference with Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) Mission".**

**By Dr Abroo Aman Andrabi**

Before I tell you what I am talking about, let me put in a provision - I am a human, and have flaws - and in a way I am reminding myself about this aspect of Islam just as much as I am reminding you. There is an old saying which I have found to be very true: the best way to learn is to teach or discuss. By teaching something it forces you to compile, realise and reorganise. So if I do make a mistake, I ask you to forgive me.

*"The most perfect believer in terms of belief is the one who has the highest ethics and who treats his family in the nicest way". (Abu Dawood, Sunnah, 14)*

What am I talking about? I am talking about the ethical values in Islam like manners, *adaab*, *akhlaaq* - whatever you want to call it. Just to give you some idea of how seriously Islam takes this issue, let us look at some sayings of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The Prophet said;

*"Verily, I was sent for no other reason, except to perfect the noble traits of character"* (Muwatta Imam Malik)

In other words; one of the Prophet's goals, in fact, the primary mission was the perfection of how people behave - their manners.

The religion of Allah is 100% complete and was brought to us by the best of mankind, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). He appeared in the heart of a desert which was almost the most uncivilized part of the then inhabited world and where people were immersed in the worst kinds of immorality.

He was the last Messenger of Allah who was sent with hundreds of manifest miracles and signs verifying the authenticity of his message and strengthening the hearts of the believers that they may establish the final message of Allah to the far reaches of Earth.

The greatest among the miracles was the Sublime Qur'an, the manifest miracle, the wise reminder, the straight path, the majestic word of Allah; falsehood cannot approach it from before it or behind it. The Quran is very detailed and clearly mentions the significance of good manners, just like it mentions the importance of belief, the importance of worship, and all our daily affairs. The Quran mentions several good acts of ethics repeatedly, for example; dealing with your parents in the best manner, being nice to your relatives and neighbours, taking care of orphans and the poor, telling the truth and being honest, being sincere in all of your intentions, fulfilling your promises, treating all people fairly.

But the Qur'an can be properly understood if one is familiar with the historical context of individual revelations and with the coherent inner thread of the text. Equally important is the knowledge of what the Prophet of Islam (Peace and blessings be upon him), a man of the highest integrity, authority, spirituality, and personality said, did, or consciously did not do (*Hadith*); for as the receiver of the message he was its born interpreter in case of doubt. In addition the Qur'an specifically demands that Muslims follow Muhammad's (Peace and blessings be upon him) example in matters of faith and ethics.

The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) taught us what to do in every stage in life, which is one of the qualities that make the religion of Islam very unique.

The religion of Islam tells us what to do as soon as we open our eyes in the morning and throughout the remainder of the day and night till we close our eyes and go to sleep. Not only is this religion complete on telling us how to live our lives, but there is reward for all the good deeds we do and punishment for all the sins we commit.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was mainly concerned with teaching and disciplining Muslims to have the best manners and the best personal characteristics. The prophet used to emphasize how important good manners are for Muslims. So let us just sample some areas in which we can see how important ethics are, and how we need most at this time when injustice is on the rise.

#### TRUTHFULNESS:

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), said: *“I order you to be truthful, A true action leads to the path of virtue and good deeds, and virtue paves the way of a person to Paradise, and the said person continues to speak the truth till in the sight of Allah he is named Siddiq (Truthful). Lying leads to vice, and vice leads to indecent acts and a person goes on lying till in the sight of Allah he is named a liar.”* (Bukhari and Muslim)

So, truthfulness is something which is to be cultivated till it becomes implanted in a person’s soul and disposition and therefore reflected throughout the person’s character. By practicing truthfulness, a person betters himself, his life is made upright and due to it, he is elevated to praiseworthy heights and raised in ranks in the sight of Allah as well as the people. Ali ibn Abi Talib mentioned the positive reciprocal effect of behaving truthfully with people in this worldly life: *“Whoever does three things with regards to people, they will necessitate three things from him: whenever he speaks to them he is truthful; whenever they entrust him with something he does not betray them; and whenever he promises them something he fulfils it. If he does this, their hearts will love him; their tongues will praise him; and they will come to his aid.”* (Ibn Muflih, *Adaab ash-Shari’a*).

As for the Next Life, through Allah’s Grace and Mercy, the obedient ones - practitioners of truthfulness - will reach a station in Paradise alongside those most fortunate of souls mentioned in the revelation.

*“And whosoever obeys God and His Messenger, such will be in the company of those whom God has blessed: the Prophets, the truthful*

*ones, the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent a company are such people!” (Quran 4:69)*

#### **TRUSTWORTHINESS:**

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was the embodiment of trustworthiness. The Makkans called him ‘the Trustworthy One.’ Even after the declaration of his Prophethood, they continued to entrust their precious goods to him although they regarded him as an enemy.

He warned his people against lying, breaking one’s word and breach of trust. *“Like breaching a trust and breaking one’s word, lying was also, in his words, ‘a sign of hypocrisy’.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 80; I. Hanbal, 3.447)*

He was so meticulous in this matter that once he saw a woman call her child saying, ‘Come on, I will give you something! He asked her whether she would really give the child something. When the woman replied that she would give him a date, the Messenger of Allah warned: If you were not to give something, that would be a lie!

He was not only against deceiving humans, but even warned people against deceiving animals. Once, annoyed at seeing one of his companions call his horse using deception, he said:

*You should give up deceiving animals. You should be trustworthy even in your treatment of them. (Bukhari, Iman, 24; Muslim, Iman, 107)*

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was asked by one of his companions: *“...Are we rewarded for kindness towards animals?” Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, “There is a reward for kindness to every living being.” (Sahih al - Bukhari)*

Once, on the way home from a military campaign, a few Companions took the chicks of a bird from the nest to pet them. The mother-bird

returned after a short while and on finding the chicks gone, began to fly around in distress. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was informed of this, he was so grieved that he ordered the chicks to be returned immediately. By this he demonstrated that it was not befitting for those who should be representatives of trustworthiness to hurt any living creatures. (Abu Davud, Jihad, 112, Adab, 164; I. Hanbal, 1.404)

The heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was utterly closed to all kinds of evil, but open to all sorts of good. He lived in a climate of security, faithfulness and trustworthiness. He never cheated, lied, betrayed, spoke behind anyone's back or slandered anyone. He never harboured evil suspicion of any-one. In return, people relied on him, and confided in him. His enemies spoke all kinds of slander against him but no one ever accused him of lying and disloyalty.

#### **FEW COMMUNICATION MANNERS:**

In today's modern society, talking or speech is not the only method of communication. There are also some others such as phones, chats (YM, MSN), social networks (Facebook), forums and so much more. So therefore, as Muslims, we must always be careful when it comes to communication. In Islam, Muslims are thought with appropriate communication manners; we should always remember that every word is accounted for; means, everything we utter or type might get us sinned or rewarded.

Quran says: Be truthful in your speech and refrain from lying and falsified news. Remember, there is no such thing as a "white lie", so try your best not to come up with small lies. Truthful words are always the best and they are able to save you from unwanted or unnecessary fitnah or matters.

Once a Bedouin entered Madina, and went directly to the Masjid, so that he may get some money or gold from the Prophet Muhammad

(peace and blessings be upon him). When he arrived, he saw the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) sitting among his companions. He asked his need. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) gave him something. He was not content, and moreover he used harsh and inappropriate language against the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The companions became very angry, and were ready to hurt him. But the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) prevented them from haste. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) took the Bedouin to his home, and gave him some more. The Bedouin saw that the residence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was not like those of the heads of governments, and there is no luxury in his home. The Bedouin became content with the share, and thanked the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). At this time, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him: "You said a harsh word yesterday, which caused anger in my companions. I fear that they will hurt you. Would you be willing to show your appreciation in front of them, so that their anger be resolved, and they do not hurt you?" The Bedouin said: "Sure." The next day, the Bedouin came to the Masjid. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) addressed his companions: "This man says, he is content with his share, is it true?" The Bedouin said: yes that is true. Then he repeated the appreciation that he had shared with Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The companions smiled.

#### **FORBIDDING SUSPICION AND BACKBITING:**

*The Qur'an declares: "O you who believe! Avoid much of suspicion for suspicion in some cases is a grave sin. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would surely hate it. And fear God, verily God is the Acceptor of repentance, the Most Merciful. (al-Hujurat, 49.12)*

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), was so sensitive on this point that when once 'A'isha said of a woman, 'How long the neck of that woman is!', he commented:

*You have backbitten against her and thereby eaten of her flesh. (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, 7.359; al-Tarhib ve l-Tarhib, 4.285).*

All Muslims, take extra note on this. Gossiping, backbiting and slander are serious issues for they cause harm to other people and parties, and may lead to many negative things (disputes, hatred, etc). These are basically spreading talk among people to make them hate and to speak bad things about one another.

Wouldn't it be weird if you witness a fellow Muslim shouting or laughing aloud in your presence? Of course it would be weird! As Muslims, we must always keep our "cool" and keep our manners at par. In fact, speaking loudly, yelling or shouting are not qualities of a Muslim. Cursing, or using foul language are sadly, the trend in today's modern society; even little kids have started to pick up these immoral language. But that is not an excuse for us to follow this unhealthy trend, right? In fact, whichever foul language you utter, will go back to you. So say no to lewdness, foul language and cursing.

Now there is a question, Does having Fun or teasing friends by joking (which include a lie) is disbehaving..?

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) used to make jokes but his jokes were purely based on truth. And according to Islamic teachings, it is not permissible to make jokes which include lying.

People should not laugh at, or make fun of, another people, because those who are being laughed at may be better, in Allah's view, than those who laugh.

*“O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.” – Al Quran, 49: 11*

This verse of the Qur'an makes it clear that, even such trivial things, making fun of others or calling names, are so much disliked by Allah that He considers such sins as “injustice”. And He surely does not like the unjust people!

Islam wants you to think positively about others. Spying on your brother or sister and trying to find their weak points and secrets is not allowed in Islam. “Backbiting” ghibat means talking about the hidden bodily defects or secret inappropriate behavior of someone behind his/her back. The reason why ghibat is forbidden in Islam has been explained by Allah in the next sentence of the verse: “Does any one of you like to bite the flesh of his dead brother?! Surely you dislike it.” Ghibat is just like biting the dead body of your own brother: he cannot defend himself. Saying bad things about someone in his absence is almost the same - he is not present to defend himself. In this sense, the term “backbiting” is very close to the meaning of “ghibat”.

The last three sins - suspicion, spying and backbiting - are connected to each other. If you avoid the first one, you will be able to stay away from the other two sins. But if you always suspect others, then you will be tempted to spy on them or find bad things about them. If you find out anything negative about others, then you are tempted to gossip about them. So keep your mind clean and try to think good of others. These are some ethical rights which Muslims have over each other.

*“The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.”– Al Quran, 49: 10*

*“Beware of suspicion, for it is the most deceitful of thought.” (Sahih Al Bukhari and Muslim)*

**PATIENCE:**

**“Allah surely loves those who are the Sabireen (patient).” (3:146)**

Everything Allah chooses for you; from good or evil, is for your benefit. Whatever occurred to you could not have missed you and what missed you could never have reached you. Rewards are only for those who are patient with the Decree of Allah.

Panic and impatience cannot prevent Allah’s Decree. Complaining is contradictory to patience. Allah alone can protect you from harm and ease your difficulties.

If the affliction results from acts of obedience to Allah, such as injury on the battlefield, losing money during Hijrah (migrating for the sake of Allah), losing a job because of accepting Islam or because one attempts to follow the Sunnah of Allah’s Messenger. Then the affliction is a trial. Whoever bears it with patience will be rewarded and whoever exhibits annoyance may invoke the wrath of Allah upon himself.

If the affliction befalls due to sinful actions, such as illnesses caused by drinking alcohol and using drugs etc, then the affliction is a punishment from Allah. Hasten to avoid all sinful acts and turn towards Allah in repentance and ask his forgiveness. Otherwise, know that the punishments of the Hereafter are far more severe and unbearable.

If the affliction is neither connected to neither a good deed nor a sin, such as other kinds of disease and sickness, losing a child, or failing in business, then you should evaluate your actions. If you are involved in some kind of disobedience to Allah then the affliction is a punishment for you and a reminder to leave your evil deeds. Otherwise, Allah has caused this affliction to test your patience.

Allah says in the Quran:

*“Nay, seek (Allah’s) help with patient perseverance and prayer: It is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit, Who bear in mind the certainty that they are to meet their Lord, and that they are to return to Him.” (Quran 2:45-46)*

### The Virtues of Patience

The story takes place in the city not far away from Mecca, known as Ta'if. The Prophet went there to preach Islam to the locals. The Prophet approached the leaders of Ta'if and called them towards Islam. Not only did the leaders reject the call to Islam but they reacted in such a way that they set young children upon the Prophet to taunt him, stone him and chase him out of Ta'if. The Holy Prophet bled till his footwear was drenched in blood. The Angel Jibra'eel came to the Prophet and said, “If you wish, then I will give the order for two angels to crush the residents of Ta'if between the two mountains in which it lies.” The Prophet replied in the negative and said, “I am hopeful that their descendants will accept Islam.” This was the patience of the Prophet

Let us put ourselves in that position, an innocent man leaving his young children and wife at home to present the gift of Islam to strangers; risking life and limb in the hot desert. What would we do if we had been beaten so severely that our feet were soaking in our blood? Will we be able to control our anger to the extent that we don't attempt to frighten the perpetrators in the slightest or even show

them deterring effects when given complete control and resources to do so?

He did not have to turn the other cheek as numerous rocks were hitting both and cutting the rest of his blessed body also. Showing impeccable foresight his response was prayer for the generations to come.

Back to the topic in hand, Allah mentions in the Qur'an:

*“Indeed Allah is with those who are patient.”*

Patience is of three types:

(i) Patience upon obedience – To be patient when finding it hard obeying Allah's rules.

(ii) To be patient when a trouble befalls you.

(iii) To be patient when finding it hard to abstain from sins.

*Every believer should have the above types of patience. The Prophet mentioned in a Hadith that patience is from Allah and hastiness is from the Devil.*

The first type of patience is when obeying Allah and finding it difficult to do so. For example, waking up early for the fajr prayers. We should be patient and show gratitude when carrying out these deeds.

The second type of patience is when a trouble befalls you. For example, a vehicle accident or the loss of property. We should be patient at these times.

The third type of patience is when finding it hard to abstain from sins. For example, when a person listens to music and then finds out it is not allowed in Islam to listen to music, this person tries his

utmost best to refrain from listening to music, even if he has the urge to do so.

Being patient is a great virtue and comes with a great reward.

In this way, by the kindly favour of the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) guidance, man has not only obtained an immutable law embodying permanent moral values, but also an unshakable foundation on which to build individual and national moral character. Man, therefore, does not require the agency of a government, a police force or a court of law to deter him from crimes and keep him on the right path.

When human conscience is permeated with such a stupendous moral force, it will be as if every human being were being guarded by a sentinel who challenges every evil thought that enters one's mind and hinders all action that may arise from an evil thought. Irrespective of the existence or non-existence of a vigilant police force and a retributive government in the external world, a censor will always preside over the human soul, and fear of seizure will deter a person from transgressing the Will of God even in privacy, in darkness or in a deserted wasteland. No greater means than this can be devised for the moral degeneration of man and for the forging of a stable human character. All other means which purport to reform the moral aspects of human character do not go beyond the dictum that is in this world "Good begets good and Evil begets Evil " and " Honesty is the Best Policy." Carried to the logical conclusion it clearly implies that if evil and dishonesty be found profitable for policy reasons, these should be freely practiced without compunction. It is in consequence of this philosophy of life that the same person who behaves well in his private life turns to being faithless, deceptive, rapacious, callous and ruthless in the conduct of his public life-nay, even in their private life, such people are good only in certain respects and very wicked in many other ways. You will find that, on the one hand, these people are fair and courteous in their business dealings, while on the other hand they are the worst drunkards, fornicators and gamblers, being

the most depraved and wicked of people. Their motto is that a man's public life and his private life are two different spheres, distinct from each other. To one who accosts them on some faults in their private life, they offer a tailor-made answer, "Mind your own business." Contrary to this, there is the belief in Eternity which enjoins that evil remains evil in all circumstances, regardless of whether it proves profitable or disadvantageous in the world. The dichotomy between public and private spheres cannot exist in the life of a person who has a sense of accountability to God. This person does not adopt honesty just because it is the best policy, but because the person has cultivated honesty in his soul and nothing could be more distant from his thoughts than the practice of dishonesty. His belief teaches him that dishonesty must debase him to a level inferior to that of animals. As the Qur'an observes:

*"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, Then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low. Except such as believe and do righteous deeds: For they shall have a reward unailing."- Al Quran, 95: 4-6*

During his lifetime, once it was a usual meeting, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was in his place and his companions gathered around him to hear the words of wisdom and guidance. Suddenly a poor man in rags appeared, saluted the assembly: "Salamun Alaikum" (Peace be on you). And finding a vacant place comfortably sat down. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) had taught them that all Muslims were brothers and in an assembly one should sit wherever one finds a place, regardless of any status. Now, it so happened that this poor man was seated next to a very rich man. The rich man felt very disturbed and tried to collect the edges of his dress around himself, so that the poor man did not touch them. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) observed this and addressing the rich man, and said:

"Perhaps you are afraid that his poverty would affect you?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)," he said.

"Then perhaps you were anxious about some of your wealth flying away to him?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)," he replied.

"Or you feared that your clothes would become dirty if he touched them?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)."

"Then why did you draw yourself and your clothes away from him?"

The rich man said:

"I admit that was the most unwanted thing to do. It was an error and I confess my guilt. Now to make amends for it I will give away half of my wealth to this Muslim brother so that I may be forgiven."

Just as he said this, the poor man rose and said,

"O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), I do not accept this offer."

People present were taken by surprise, they thought that the poor man was a fool, but then he explained:

"O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), I refuse to accept this offer because I fear that I might then become arrogant and ill-treat my Muslim brothers the way he did to me."

It was only through this blessed guidance that those whom the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had found to be thieves at the beginning of his Prophethood were transformed into trustworthy

protectors of life, prospect and honour of the common people by the time the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) departed from the mortal world; those whom he had found usurpers of rights were remoulded by him into upholders, protectors and champions of the rights of the people.

#### **EQUALITY:**

Relationships are based on common race, language or country. People of the same race, same language or same country feel a special fraternity towards each other. But in Islam the brotherhoods go beyond all these boundaries of race, language, country, colour and wealth. All Muslims believe in Allāh, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and the Qur'ān, and they all pray towards the same Ka`bah.

*“O you mankind! We have created you from a male and a female; and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other [more easily]. Indeed, the most noble among you in view of Allāh is the most pious of you.” – Al Quran 49:13*

*“All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.” (Sahi Al Bukhari)*

It is a fact that every Muslim helps the other Muslim, his neighbour friend, or even a Muslim country. All Muslims are brethren of each other even if they are from different families, races, and countries, or have different skin colour and language.

The brotherhood of Muslims is a very deep and wide concept that guarantees the safety and well being of the Society at large. Islam being a complete way of life is primarily for the society, it promotes a healthy and a well disciplined life style in every sense of the word. For

example, it is forbidden for two Muslims to start a whispering conversation in the presence of the third person. This might offend the one left out and weaken the Brotherhood. It is not permissible for a Muslim to sever relations with his brother for more than three days.

Brotherhood is synonymous with Islam. It is a force for good, a purveyor of peace and justice for everyone. It provides stability in a quarrelsome world. To the downtrodden and oppressed everywhere in the past, it provided freedom. When it was powerful, it even saved the Jews and Christians in Palestine and Spain from each other. Muslims are not allowed to kill the women and children of their enemies even in war. A Muslim is not really a believer if he eats his full while ignoring the plight of a hungry neighbor.

*“None of you will have faith until he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself.” (Sahih Muslim)*

#### **RIGHTS FOR ALL MEMBERS:**

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), advocated rights for all members of the family and especially ties to the parents, both mother and father, also rights for infant girls, orphaned girls and certainly for wives, as well. It is known from the Quran, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), ordered his followers to be kind and respectful to their parents. They were told not to even say, "Ooh" to them while caring for them in their old age.

*“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor.” - Al Quran, 17:23*

*“A kind word is charity.” (Sahih al Bukhari and Muslim)*

He ordered the care of orphans and feeding of the poor as the means to enter Paradise and if anyone held back the rights of those who were destitute, they could forget about ever seeing Paradise.

*“Each one of you should save himself from the fire by giving even half of a date (in charity). And if you do not find a half date, then (by saying) a pleasant word (to your brethren).” (Sahih Al Bukhari)*

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings be upon him) said: Allah (Mighty and Sublime be He) will say on the Day of Resurrection: ((O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that (the reward for doing so) with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me to drink and you gave Me not to drink. He will say: O Lord, how should I give You to drink when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant So-and-so asked you to give him to drink and you gave him not to drink. Had you given him to drink you would have surely found that with Me.)) (Hadith Qudsi 18, it was related by Muslim)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) also forbade the killing of new born girls, as was a custom of ignorance according to primitive Arab traditions. This is referred to in the Quran; when, on the Day of Judgment those who practiced the evil deed of terminating the life of their own infant daughters, will have it exposed, the Quran says:

*"And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) is going to be asked; about what sin could she (as an infant) have possibly committed." - Al Quran, 81:8*

**Conveyed the Message of Peace:**

A major part of the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) mission was to bring peace to the world. One of the ways in which he strove towards this end was to attempt to convince people that all men and women, though inhabiting very different regions of the world, and different from one another in colour, culture and language, were in fact blood brothers and sisters. His message was crucial, for a proper relationship of love and respect can be established only if that is how human beings regard one another. To promote such feelings, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) preach to his followers, *"You are all Aadam's offspring and Aadam was made of clay." (Sahih al Bukhari)*

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) advised his followers to live in peace with their fellow men, saying, "A true believer is one with whom others feel secure," one who returns love for hatred. He used to teach the believers that anyone who would return love only when love was given belonged on a lower ethical plane. The true believer never reasons that only if people treat him well that he will treat them well in return. He is accustomed rather to doing good to those who mistreat him, and to refrain from harming those who do him injury. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) himself set the example. All his recorded words and actions reveal him as a man of great gentleness, kindness, humbleness, and excellent common sense, with a great love for all people and even for animals.

Despite his position as leader, Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never believed himself to be greater or better than other people. He never made others feel small, unwanted or embarrassed. He urged his followers to behave kindly and humbly, releasing slaves whenever

possible, and giving in charity - especially to very poor people, orphans and prisoners - without any thought of reward.

In setting this example, his aim was to approach souls that were God-oriented, that found Allah so great that everything else paled into insignificance. He wanted everyone to have such boundless peace of mind that nothing could disturb him. Such balanced individuals would never then become prey to worldliness. Totally free from negative reaction, they would then be able to turn everything in this world, whether material or spiritual, into food for more profound thought, rather than into pretexts for rash and vengeful action.

The peace treaty of al-Hudaibiyah is a clear example of this, when Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) agreed to every demand his opponents made on the sole assurance that peace would subsequently prevail. And this treaty teaches us that Allah only chooses the best for his believing slaves, even though they might look unfavourable outwardly. Allah says in the Qur'aan:

*"...it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows (what is best for you) and you do not." - Al Quran, 2: 216*

*The Messenger of Allah said: "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, Allah does not ordain a Decree for a believer but for his good; and this merit is for no one except a believer..." [Sahih Muslim]*

Islam does not approve of monastic life. It came to secure justice and the wellbeing of mankind, but warns people against over-indulgence.

*"The offerings given for the sake of Allah are [meant] only for the poor and the needy, and those who are in charge thereof, [I.e., the officials entrusted with the collection and administration of zakah funds.] and those whose hearts are to be won over, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage, and [for] those who are over-burdened with*

*debts, and [for every struggle] in God's cause, and [for] the wayfarer: [this is] an ordinance from God - and God is all-knowing, wise."*

- *Al Quran 9:60*

#### **GAMBLING AND INTOXICATING DRINKS:**

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), forbade usury and interest on money lending. Usury eats away wealth and destroys the economic systems throughout history. Yet, just as in the teachings of the prophets of old, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), held that such practices were most evil and must be avoided in order to be at peace with the Creator (Allah). Those who eat usury (deal in interest) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Satan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like usury," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden usury. So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating usury shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns to dealing in usury, such are the dwellers of the Fire - they will abide therein. Allah will destroy Riba (usury) and will give increase for charity, alms, etc. And Allah likes not the disbelievers, sinners. Truly those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and perform Salat, and give Zakat, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

*"You who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from usury, if you are believers. And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly."*

- *Al Quran, 2: 275-279*

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), did not allow gambling and intoxicating drinks (alcohol). The idea of getting something for nothing is not the proper way of life prescribed by the teachings of Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It is well established the damage gambling causes to families and even mental health. The alcohol causing diseases, losing the consciousness, and ruining a person's health is often attributed to be the cause of many traffic accidents resulting in property damage, injuries and deaths. The first order was for the followers of Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to leave off drinking while engaged in worship, then came stronger orders to leave drinking all together. Thus, offering a time for the early Muslims to break off from their addiction to strong drink.

*"People ask you (Muhammad) about alcohol and gambling. Say, 'There is great sin in both of them and (some benefit) for humans, but the sin is greater than any benefit from them.' And they ask you what they should spend (for charity, etc.). Say, 'Whatever is above your basic needs.' So, Allah makes it clear to you His Laws in order for you to give thought."*

- Al Quran 2:219

*"O you believers! Intoxicating drinks, gambling, fortune telling, etc. is the work of the devil. So stay away from all of that horrible stuff, that you will be successful." "The devil only wants to create hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks, etc.) and gambling and to keep you from the remembrance of Allah and from your proper worship (prayers). So, why won't you away from them?"*

- Al Quran 5:90-91

#### **ACTS OF FORGIVENESS AND HUMBLENESS:**

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), was extremely merciful toward all the creatures of Allah. In Makkah, his people inflicted on him every kind of suffering, eventually forcing him

to emigrate to Madina, and then waged wars on him for five years. However, when he conquered Makkah without bloodshed in the twenty-first year of his Prophethood, he forgave all of his enemies. His mercy even encompassed hypocrites and unbelievers. Although he recognized the hypocrites of his time, but he never disclosed them so that they could enjoy the rights of full citizenship to which their outward confession of faith and practice entitled them. While there were many attempts of assassination made on Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, (most famous was the night that Ali took his place in bed while he and Abu Bakr escaped to Madinah), he did not allow his companions to slaughter any of those who had been involved in these attempts. Proof for this is when they entered Makkah triumphantly and his first words were to command his followers not to harm such and such tribes and so and so families. This was one of the most famous of his acts of forgiveness and humbleness.

According to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), the world is like a tree under which people sit to be shaded during a long journey. No one can live forever in the world, so people must make in the world the necessary preparation for the second part of the journey which will end either in Paradise or Hell. The mission of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), was to guide people to truth, so he would spend whatever he had, his life, and his possessions, to this end. In human history no one has ever been able to combine in himself all of the virtues and good qualities as perfectly as the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). He was perfectly balanced in his virtues and good moral qualities, and was perfectly courageous where to show courage was necessary, while he was perfectly mild, forgiving and humble among people. He was perfectly dignified but also very gracious. There was no one more generous than him but he was also thrifty and condemned extravagance. All virtues and good qualities existed in him in a well-balanced combination.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) turned the sinner into the saint: once Fadala bin Umar wanted to kill the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He skipped his plan to attack the Prophet when he would be busy in the circumambulation of the Kabbah. When he drew near, the Prophet called out, Fadala to call his attention. He replied, Yes, O Prophet of Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then asked him, what are you thinking about? Nothing, replied Fadala, I was recollecting God. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) smiled and said, Seek forgiveness from Allah, and at the same time he put his hand on Fadala's chest. His heart was at once set at ease and, as Fadala related later on, The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had not yet removed his hand from my chest that I found him dearer to my heart than every creature of Allah. Fadala further says, Then I went back to my house and passed by a woman with whom I used to converse. She asked me to sit down and talk with her, but I replied, No, Allah and Islam do not permit it now.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) guided people in every aspect of life: It is very difficult for one, to be able and intelligent, to be both an able statesman and commander and a brilliant scientist and successful educator at the same time. No one can guide people in every field of life. However, Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings be upon him), was the most perfect spiritual and intellectual master, the most able statesman and commander, the most efficient educator, and the greatest scholar history has ever seen.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) removed numerous ingrained habits from large obsessed communities with a little effort over a very short period of time and in their place implanted and inculcated exalted qualities in such a way that they became inherent in their being. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), conquered minds and hearts and promised his followers only Allah's good pleasure and Paradise. His followers

sacrificed themselves in his way willingly and preferred to live a poor life in return for gaining Allah's good pleasure and Paradise.

*"Allah does not regard your externals or your riches but rather your hearts and your deeds." (Sahih Muslim)*

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