

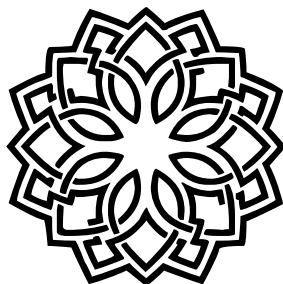
THE PROPHET'S
صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
NON-MUSLIMS



MAULĀNĀ KHĀLID SAYFULLĀH RAḤMĀNĪ

TRANSLATED BY
MAULĀNĀ MAḤOMED MAḤOMEDY

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Jamiatul Ulama South Africa

Floor 2, Baitul Hamd,
32 Dolly Rathebe Road,
Fordsburg, 2092,
Johannesburg
South Africa
Tel: +27 11 373 8000
E-mail: info@jamiatsa.org
Website: www.jamiatsa.org

Al Mahadul Aali Al Islami Hyderabad

Taleemabad, Quba Colony
Post: Pahadi Shareef, Hyderabad
500 005 (T.S)
India
Phone: +91 40 20022098 / +91 995 9642747
Email: ksrahmani@yahoo.com / ksrahmani@hotmail.com
Website: www.almahad.org / www.khalidrahmani.com

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Introduction

The picture which the Qur'ān presents of the one who brought it is that Muḥammad ﷺ is a mercy for the entire world. His mercy is not specifically for Muslims, Arabs, or any specific race or colour. In fact, his mercy and compassion are not restricted to the human race. Rather, he taught mercy and kindness to other creations as well. Unfortunately, non-Muslims are not aware of this aspect of the life of Muḥammad ﷺ. They assume that he is a messenger and benefactor for Muslims alone. The most leniency and concession Western writers will accord to him is that they will say that he is a Prophet to the Arabs.

In the light of this background, a three-day international seminar on the Life of the Prophet ﷺ is being held from the 12-14 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1437 A.H. / 21-23 February 2016 under the auspices of al-Ma'had al-Ālī al-Islāmī, Hyderabad. It was decided to prepare 16 booklets for this occasion which will demonstrate the universal mercifulness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and a correct introduction to the Prophet will be presented to our fellow countrymen. An effort was made to ensure that each booklet was concise, written in a simple language, and penned from authentic sources. Allah ﷻ willing, we will try to have them translated into English and all the other regional languages of India by Rabi' al-Awwal 1438 A.H., and have large numbers of these booklets distributed among our fellow countrymen.

One of these booklets is titled, *The Prophet's ﷺ Relationships with Non-Muslims* which I have compiled. Its object is to present to non-Muslims those statements and teachings of the Prophet ﷺ which teach sound character and love, and which provide excellent guidelines for leading an honourable and upright life.

I pray to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى to make this effort beneficial to the purpose for which it was written. May it serve as a means for fulfilling the responsibility of enlightening the world about the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ which rests on the shoulders of the Muslim nation. O Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى! Accept this effort from us. Surely You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Khālīd Sayfullāh Raḥmānī
al-Ma‘had al-‘Ālī al-Islāmī, Hyderabad
12 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1437 A.H.
21 February 2016

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Islam presents two fundamental points with regard to relationships with non-Muslims. One is that all humans are the children of one father and one mother.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى
وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

*O people! We created you from a male and a female. And We made you into groups and tribes so that you may recognize each other.*¹

The Messenger of Islam ﷺ explained and clarified this point in various statements. He said:

كلکم من آدم و آدم من تراب²

All of you are from Ādam, and Ādam was created from clay.

In the sermon which he delivered on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ presented the core of his teachings in two sentences:

إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ³

Your deity is one and your father is one.

When thinking about the fact that all humans were created from one father and one mother, it creates the concept of human brotherhood. In other words, all human beings - no matter which religion they follow, which family they belong to, and what their colour is - are brothers to each other. The Messenger of Allah

¹ Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 13

² مجمع الزوائد ، رقم: 13089

³ كنز العمال ، رقم: 5652

ﷺ explained this on one occasion by saying that all humans are brothers.⁴

The second fundamental point is that all human beings, on the basis of being humans, are worthy of respect and dignity. All humans have a right over the countless bounties in this world, whether on land or in the oceans, and all the pure foods which Allah ﷻ created in this world. They are not reserved for Muslims alone.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ

*We have honoured the progeny of Ādam and carried them on the land and sea. And We provided them with wholesome things.*⁵

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ too spoke about the innate nobility and dignity of the human race.⁶ Thus, it is an accepted fact, according to Islam and the Messenger of Islam ﷺ that every person – whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim – is worthy of dignity and respect on the basis of being a human. Furthermore, the bounties which Allah ﷻ has provided in the universe are not for Muslims alone. Rather, all humans have a right in them.

According to Islam, these are the two fundamental principles on which Muslim and non-Muslim relationships are to be based. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ presented a practical example of these through his character and principles.

Respect and Reverence

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ always interacted in a respectful and courteous manner with non-Muslims. He wrote letters to several

⁴ أبو داؤد ، كتاب الوتر ، رقم: 1510

⁵ Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 70

⁶ كنز العمال ، رقم: 34261

non-Muslim kings and chiefs. He addressed them with the same titles which their respective subjects addressed them. For example, when he wrote to the Roman Emperor, Hercules, he addressed him as 'Azīm ar-Rūm – the great one of the Romans. When he wrote to Kistrā, the Persian Emperor, he addressed him as 'Azīm al-Fāris – the great one of the Persians. When he wrote to Najāshī, the Abyssinian ruler, he addressed him as 'Azīm al-Ḥabash – the great one of the Abyssinians.⁷ The word 'Azīm refers to a personality possessing greatness, or an honourable person. This obviously demonstrates respect to the addressee.

Abū Jahal was a bitter enemy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who left no stone unturned in trying to cause pain to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and hurling verbal abuses to him. Abū Jahal had a talent for arbitrating and resolving disputes of people. This is why the people of Makkah referred to him as Abul Ḥakam. Rasūlullāh ﷺ too would address him with the same title.⁸

Abū Sufyān was a chief of Makkah and had not yet embraced Islam when Makkah was liberated. On that occasion, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced a general amnesty. He said:

من دخل داره فهو آمن

The one who remains inside his house will be safe.

The house of Abū Sufyān was included in this announcement of amnesty. However, to demonstrate additional esteem for him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

من دخل دار أبي سفيان فهو آمن⁹

⁷ صحيح البخاري، باب كيف كان بدء الوحي، رقم: 1. كنز العمال، رقم: 11302. نصب الراية: 4/500

⁸ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 1/389

⁹ صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجهاد، رقم: 1780

The one who enters the house of Abū Sufyān will be safe.

Before his emigration from Makkah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to perform two rakā'ah of ṣalāh in the Ka'bah. The key to the Ka'bah used to be in the custody of the Banū Shaybah tribe. At the time, the key was in the hands of 'Uthmān ibn Ṭalḥah Shaybī. It was considered a glorious accolade for the key to the Ka'bah to be in the hands of any person. The family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the Banū Hāshim, were desirous of the key coming into their possession so that it would be an additional feather in their cap. 'Alī رضي الله عنه who was a cousin and son-in-law of Rasūlullāh ﷺ spoke on behalf of the Banū Hāshim and requested for the key to be given to them. The Banū Hāshim already enjoyed the honour of *siqāyah* (providing water to the pilgrims), and now wanted the honour of *hijābah* (custodianship of the key to the Ka'bah) to come to them as well. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ came out from the Ka'bah, he called for 'Uthmān ibn Ṭalḥah, returned the key to him, and said: "Today is a day of reconciliation and fulfilment of covenants."¹⁰

This was an unprecedented honour in Arab society. It was an act of honour and reverence which was displayed to a person who had not as yet embraced Islam, and that too, to a man who had refused to allow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to perform two rakā'ah of ṣalāh when he was emigrating from Makkah.¹¹

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not confine the honour which he conferred to 'Uthmān ibn Ṭalḥah to his lifetime alone. Instead, he secured it for after his demise as well.

¹⁰ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 412/2

¹¹ الخصائص الكبرى: 1/446

It is related that Sahl ibn Hunayf رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Qays ibn Sa'd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ were once sitting together in Qādisiyyah (a place in Iran), when a funeral procession passed by. Both of them stood up. Someone said to them: “This is not a funeral of a Muslim; it is that of a non-Muslim.” They replied: “When a funeral procession passed by the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, he too stood up.” When he was informed that it was the funeral of a Jew, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

أَلَيْسَتْ نَفْسًا¹²

Is he not a human?

In the same way, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed us to show respect and reverence to the elderly.¹³ This instruction includes Muslims and non-Muslims.

Non-Muslim Relatives

Maintaining sound and cordial relations has been impressed upon Muslims who have non-Muslim relatives. There are 12 different places in the Qur’ān where consideration to relatives and kinsmen is instructed. Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “There is a double reward for charity towards one’s relatives. One is for the charity and the other is for maintaining ties of kinship.”¹⁴

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “The one who desires expansion in his sustenance and a long life-span should show concern for his relatives.”¹⁵

¹² صحيح البخاري، كتاب الجنائز، رقم: 125. صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجنائز، باب القيام للجنائز، رقم: 961

¹³ سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر والصلة، رقم: 1921

¹⁴ سنن الترمذي عن سليمان بن عامر، رقم: 618

¹⁵ صحيح البخاري عن أنس، رقم: 991

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “A person who reciprocates in a similar manner as he was treated is not really the one who is maintaining ties of kinship. Rather, the one who maintains ties of kinship even with those who sever them, is the one who is really maintaining ties of kinship.”¹⁶

The foundation of maintaining ties of kinship is not based on religion or creed. Whether a person is a Muslim or not, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed us to treat him in a cordial and friendly manner. Asmā' bint Abī Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was the sister of 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. Her mother came to visit her in Madīnah. Asmā' رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “Can I give anything to my mother, bearing in mind that she is a polytheist?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered her to treat her mother with compassion and warmth.¹⁷

Several Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ had either one or both of their parents who were non-Muslims. For example, Quḥāfah who was the father of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had not embraced Islam until the Conquest of Makkah. Despite this, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ continued a cordial relationship with him. The mother of Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had not accepted Islam and she used to hurl verbal abuses at Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Despite this, he ordered Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to treat her well.¹⁸ The same can be said about the mother of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered him to continue treating her with kindness and affection. Many of the Anṣār of Madīnah used to extend financial assistance to their non-Muslim relatives. These Muslims invited their non-Muslim relatives to Islam but they declined. So, the

¹⁶ صحيح البخاري عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص ، رقم: 5946

¹⁷ صحيح البخاري: كتاب الجزية ، رقم: 3012

¹⁸ الدر المنثور: 521/6

Muslims stopped extending financial assistance to them. The Qur'ān prohibited them from doing this¹⁹ and said that they are not accountable for the guidance of their relatives. Rather, Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى guides whomever He wills.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*You are not responsible to bring them onto the path. But it is Allah who brings to the path whomever He wills.*²⁰

Abū Ṭālib did not embrace Islam but he continued helping and supporting Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. In fact, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ shouldered the responsibility of taking care of his son, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and advised 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to take care of his other sons, 'Aqīl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Almost all the people of Makkah were related to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in some way, and he always showed consideration to them and treated them well. This will be detailed further on. When Makkah experienced a severe drought, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ helped the people of Makkah financially.

Non-Muslim Neighbours

Just as ties of kinship are closely linked, so is the relationship with neighbours. The Qur'ān makes mention of two types of neighbours: (1) a neighbour who is a relative, (2) a neighbour who is a stranger.²¹ The Qur'ān refers to the latter as *al-jār al-junub*. Some exegetes are of the view that it refers specifically to non-Muslim neighbours,²² and that we are instructed to maintain sound relations with both. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ laid special emphasis on this. He said: "That person is not a believer whose neighbour is not safe from his

¹⁹ تفسير القرطبي: 3/337

²⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 272

²¹ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 36

²² *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* in the verse under discussion.

mischief.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ repeated this statement three times by taking an oath.²³ A neighbour refers to a person whose house is near your own. In this narration, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not differentiate between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. It was by virtue of these very teachings that the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ used to pay particular attention to maintaining good relationships with their non-Muslim neighbours. A goat was slaughtered at the house of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. When he entered his house, he asked: “Did you people send any meat to such and such Jewish neighbour of mine?” He then said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to stress the maintaining of good relationships with one’s neighbours.”²⁴

Another type of neighbour is a “temporary neighbour”. For example, the one who sits next to you when you are travelling by train, plane, bus, etc. In the verse under discussion, the Qur’ān refers to him as *ṣāḥib al-janb* – the companion by your side. Muslims are ordered to maintain cordial relations with this neighbour as well. This order includes Muslims and non-Muslims.

Occasions of Joy and Sorrow

Maintaining mutual and cordial relations demands that we join each other on occasions of joy and sorrow. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was mindful of this as well. If a non-Muslim fell ill, he would go to visit him. There was a Jewish youngster who used to frequent the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and would serve him with love. The youngster fell ill on one occasion, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went to visit him.²⁵

²³ صحيح البخاري عن أبي شريح، كتاب الأدب، رقم: 5670 و 6016

²⁴ سنن أبي داود عن ابن عمر، كتاب الأدب، باب في حق الجوار، رقم: 5154

²⁵ صحيح البخاري، باب عيادة المشرك، رقم: 5657

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also attended the final customs of non-Muslim associates. He attended the funeral procession of Abū Ṭālib up to his place of burial.²⁶ In like manner, he instructed ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to see to the funeral preparations and enshrouding of his father [Abū Ṭālib] who had not accepted Islam.²⁷ It was also in the light of these teachings that the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم used to attend the funerals of their non-Muslim relatives.

The word *ta'ziyah* means to console, to offer condolence, or to pacify. This is also permitted. Although there is no explicit action of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in this regard, he taught us to maintain cordial relations with non-Muslims in general. In the light of this teaching, the scholars of the Islamic Sharī'ah permit offering condolences to non-Muslims.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Visit those who are sick. The person who visits a sick person is like a person living in one of the gardens of Paradise.”²⁸ In this instruction, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not differentiate between Muslim and non-Muslim. The order to visit the sick applies to all kinds of sick people.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ encouraged us to console and inquire about the one who has been afflicted by a calamity. He said:

من عزي مصابا فله مثل أجره²⁹

*The person who consoles the afflicted shall receive a reward
similar to his reward.*

²⁶ سنن البيهقي، كتاب الجنائز، رقم: 6459

²⁷ إعلاء السنن: 242/8، باب ما يفعل المسلم إذا مات له قريب كافر

²⁸ صحيح مسلم، باب فضل عيادة المريض، رقم: 2568.

²⁹ سنن الترمذي، كتاب الجنائز، رقم: 1073.

In this teaching to console and to pacify, there is no differentiation between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. These orders apply to everyone – Muslim and non-Muslim.

Fulfilling Promises and Covenants

The moral and ethical rulings which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ issued are general in nature, and include Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, an important order of the Sharī'ah is to fulfil a promise. It is essential to fulfil a promise which was made to a Muslim, while it is a sin to break such a promise. In the same way, it is obligatory to fulfil a promise made to a non-Muslim, and a sin to break it. We find clear examples of this in the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He gave due consideration to the fulfilling of promises in situations when they are generally not fulfilled. He also fulfilled promises in situations where the fulfilling of those promises could have been disadvantageous and detrimental to the Muslims.

Two examples in this regard are most appropriate. During the Battle of Badr, the Muslims numbered only 313, while the idolaters who had come to attack them numbered about 1 000. In such a situation, every single person was important to the Muslims. Before the battle commenced, Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his father, Ḥusayl, approached from the rear of the enemy army so that they could join the Muslims in the battle. The Makkans learnt of this, captured these two and released them on condition they do not join the Muslims in the jihād. The two came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and expressed their desire to join the Muslims in the battle. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “No matter what happens, we cannot go back on our word.” Subsequently, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not allow them to join in the battle.³⁰

³⁰ صحيح مسلم ، باب الوفاء بالعهد ، رقم: 1787

A second incident of this nature took place on the occasion of the peace treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. One of the conditions of the treaty was that if any Muslim leaves Makkah and goes to Madīnah, the Muslims would return him to Makkah. This condition was still being drawn up when Abū Jandal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came in chains, presented himself to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and requested him to take him with. The Muslims too were overcome by emotions of compassion when they looked at his condition and heard his pleas. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ pleaded with Suhayl ibn ‘Amr [the Makkan envoy] by reminding him of their mutual relationship but he refused to consent. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent him back [to Makkah] and said: “Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى will provide a way out for him.”³¹

Extending and Accepting Invitations

The extending and accepting of invitations are one of the ways in which mutual bonds are displayed in a social environment. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to invite non-Muslims. When he was commissioned as a messenger, he invited the Banū Hāshim to a meal and assembled all of them. It is said that they numbered thirty. After feeding them, he introduced them to Islam.³²

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed ‘Umrah al-Qaḍā’ in 7 A.H. On this occasion, he married Maymūnah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. He invited the people of Makkah to the *walimah*³³ feast but they did not accept the invitation.³⁴

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ encouraged hospitality and explained the virtues of honouring guests. He did not differentiate

³¹ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 2/302

³² البداية و النهاية: 3/40

³³ An after-marriage meal hosted by the groom or his family.

³⁴ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 2/372

between Muslim and non-Muslim in this regard. Chiefs and delegations of various tribes used to come to him, and he would host them. Those who were captured after the Battle of Badr had actually come to attack the Muslims in the battle. Despite this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ encouraged his Companions to make good arrangements for feeding these captives. The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would therefore suffice with simple and ordinary food for themselves, while they would give the best of foods to these captives.³⁵

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also accepted invitations from non-Muslims. A Jewish woman invited him on one occasion. She had poisoned the shoulder portion of the meat of a goat. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to like this portion of the goat. The effect of that poison remained with him until his demise.³⁶

Greeting

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prescribed the following greeting when meeting each other:

الْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

*May you enjoy peace. May Allah's mercy and
blessings descend on you.*

The word “peace” in this context refers to remaining protected. It includes every type of protection – from sins, from illnesses, from disobedience to Allah ﷻ. The word “mercy” includes all types of bounties and favours – wealth, children, salvation in the Hereafter. The word “blessings” means that whatever bounties a person is currently enjoying – he should acquire many more and they should last much longer.

³⁵ مجمع الزوائد: 6/ 115 . رقم: 10007

³⁶ صحيح البخاري ، كتاب المغازي ، رقم: 452

In short, this is a prayer and it is permissible to pray for Muslims as well as for non-Muslims. It is therefore permissible to offer salām to non-Muslims as well. The father of Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was not a Muslim. Despite this, Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام made salām to him. The Qur’ān makes mention of this:

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ ج سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي

*He said: “Peace be to you. I shall seek pardon [for your sins] from my Sustainer.”*³⁷

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ offered salām to a gathering which included Muslims, idolaters and Jews.³⁸ When salām is offered to a group of people, and the person offering the salām does not specify anyone in particular, then all those who are present are addressed.

When the Jews of Madīnah used to meet the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ or the Muslims, they used to twist their tongues and say: “As-sām ‘alaykum.” The one who was addressed assumed that the person was offering salām to him but in reality, he was saying “As-sām ‘alaykum” which means: “May death come upon you.” Based on this mischief of the Jews, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to the Muslims: “You must not offer salām to them. And if they say: ‘As-sām ‘alaykum’, you must merely say: ‘wa ‘alaykum’ (let it – death – come upon you).”³⁹

This prohibition was specifically for those Jews who misused the words, “as-sām ‘alaykum”. There is no prohibition to offer salām to non-Muslims in general or to reply to their salām.

³⁷ Sūrah Maryam, 19: 47

³⁸ صحيح البخاري، باب التسليم في مجلس فيه...، رقم: 5899

³⁹ صحيح البخاري، باب كيف الرد على أهل الذمة بالسلام، رقم: 5902

Exchanging Gifts

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Exchange gifts with each other and this will engender love between you and remove dislike.”⁴⁰ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims. Instead, he encouraged the giving of gifts in a general sense. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave two sheets as a gift to ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ which he himself did not like for himself because they were quite expensive. ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked him: “Why did you give it to me when you did not like it for yourself?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: “I did not give it to you so that you may use it for yourself. Rather, you must sell it or give it to someone else.” ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ gave it to a brother of his who was still living in Makkah and had not embraced Islam as yet.⁴¹

The Makkans had left no stone unturned in persecuting the Muslims. Despite this, when the Makkans suffered from a drought and were forced to eat carrion, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent 500 dīnārs (gold coins) for them. This, notwithstanding the fact that the Muslims of Madīnah were themselves in financial difficulties. The value of 500 dīnārs can be gauged from the fact that 20 dīnārs equal 86,5 grams of gold. Five hundred dīnārs is therefore an astronomical amount. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent this amount to two chiefs of Makkah, Abū Sufyān and Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah, so that they could distribute it. These two were for the leaders of Makkah who, at that time, were at the forefront in persecuting the Muslims.⁴²

A woman singer came from Makkah to Madīnah to seek financial assistance from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He himself assisted her, and encouraged his other family members to render

⁴⁰ المعجم الكبير للطبراني: 162/25 ، رقم: 313 ، عن أم حكيم

⁴¹ صحيح البخاري ، كتاب الهبة ، رقم: 2476

⁴² رد المحتار: 302/3 ، باب المصروف.

whatever help they could. He extended help to her even though she was not a Muslim and was a singer, both of which are disapproved in Islam.⁴³

The reason for all this is that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught the lessons of mercy and good treatment. He said: “Show mercy to those who are on earth, and the One [Allah] who is in the heavens will show mercy to you.”⁴⁴ Muslims, non-Muslims, and even animals are all included in this teaching.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said on one occasion: “There is reward in serving and doing good to every living creature.”⁴⁵ He also said: “When a Muslim plants a tree, and any human or animal eats of it, then it will certainly be a charity in his favour.”

فَأَكَلَ مِنْهُ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ دَابَّةٌ إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ⁴⁶

In comparison to the above, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَا يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ النَّاسَ⁴⁷

Allah ﷻ does not show mercy to the one who is not merciful to people.

It was mentioned previously that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to give gifts to non-Muslims. In like manner, he used to accept gifts from them. The Roman king, Heraclius, sent some gifts for him. They included expensive clothing⁴⁸ and dry ginger.⁴⁹ The Messenger

⁴³ صحيح البخاري، رقم: 3939.

⁴⁴ سنن الترمذيين، رقم: 1924.

⁴⁵ صحيح البخاري، رقم: 6009.

⁴⁶ صحيح مسلم، كتاب الأدب، باب رحمة الناس والبهائم، رقم: 5666.

⁴⁷ صحيح البخاري، كتاب التوحيد، رقم: 6941.

⁴⁸ سنن أبي داود، كتاب اللباس، رقم: 4039.

of Allah ﷺ accepted these gifts and shared them with his Companions. Another chief by the name of Ukaydir Dūmah, sent gifts to him. They included clothing and some other items. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted them and shared them with his Companions.⁵⁰ A narration of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه makes mention of the King of Iran sending a gift which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted.⁵¹

Respect for Life and Property

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ accorded the same respect to the life and property of non-Muslims as he did to the life and property of Muslims. He laid down principles in this regard by saying that their blood is like ours, and their wealth is like ours:

دمائهم كدمائنا و أموالهم كأموالنا⁵²

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said on one occasion:

من قتل معاهدا لم يرح رائحة الجنة وإن ريحها يوجد من مسيرة أربعين عاما⁵³

The person who kills a mu‘ahid (a non-Muslim with whom a covenant is made guaranteeing him his life and property) will not inhale the fragrance of Paradise even though its fragrance can be experienced from a distance of a journey of forty years.

A Muslim murdered a non-Muslim during the era of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Consequently, the Muslim was killed on the basis of the rule of retribution.⁵⁴ The effect of this noble example of the

⁴⁹ ابن أبي حاتم ، رقم: 906

⁵⁰ مسند أحمد ، عن أنس: 46-12245

⁵¹ سنن الترمذي ، باب ما جاء في قبول هدايا المشركين ، رقم: 1576

⁵² نصب الراية: 3/381

⁵³ صحيح البخاري ، عن عبد الله بن عمرو ، رقم: 3166

⁵⁴ سنن الدارقطني ، كتاب الحدود ، رقم: 165

Messenger of Allah ﷺ was that during the caliphate of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, a non-Muslim was murdered, so he issued the same ruling.⁵⁵ ‘Alī رضي الله عنه also applied the same rule during his caliphate.⁵⁶

When a person is murdered, retribution (*qīṣāṣ*) or a fine (*diyyah*) is imposed on the murderer. In other words, the murderer has to be killed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ laid down the same amount of *diyyah* for a non-Muslim as is for a Muslim. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ paid the same *diyyah* for a non-Muslim as was done for a Muslim.⁵⁷

In the same way, the wealth of a non-Muslim is sacrosanct in the same way as that of a Muslim. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

ألا من ظلم معاهدا أو انتقصه أو كلفه فوق طاقته أو أخذ منه شيئا
بغير طيب نفس فأنا حجيجه يوم القيامة⁵⁸

Listen! The one who wrongs a confederate, usurps his right, imposes on him more than what he can bear, takes something from him without his approval; then I will argue on his behalf on the Day of Resurrection.

Even when in battle, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was very particular about not causing any harm to the possessions of the enemy when they laid down their arms or agreed to make peace. On the occasion of the conquest of Khaybar, a few Muslim soldiers slaughtered some animals of the Jews and ate some of their fruit. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was informed of it, he

⁵⁵ سنن البيهقي: 30\8 . رقم: 15702

⁵⁶ سنن البيهقي: 8\15712

⁵⁷ دار قطني ، كتاب الحدود ، رقم: 149

⁵⁸ سنن أبي داود ، رقم: 3053

delivered a sermon, expressed his disapproval, and said: “This is not lawful for you.”⁵⁹

A Jew owned a well by the name of Bīr Rūmah. Drinking water was obtained from it and everyone drew from it. The Jew who owned the well stopped the Muslims from drawing water from it. Bearing in mind the benefit which the general public acquired from this well, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ could have legally confiscated the well. However, he did not do this. Instead, he requested a wealthy Companion, ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, to purchase the well. He bought half the share of the well for 12 000 dirhams and endowed it for free public use.⁶⁰

Trade Relations

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims when engaging in business with them. Abū Sufyān and Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im had not become Muslims as yet. Despite this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to give them his capital for trade. They would then engage in business with it and give the Messenger of Allah ﷺ a share from the profits. The businesses of the Muslims of Madīnah were generally conducted in a market which belonged the Jews, specifically the Banū Qaynuqā’.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to buy and sell from non-Muslims as well. Even at the time of his demise, his shield was mortgaged with a Jew because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had bought three *sā*⁶¹ of barley from him.⁶²

⁵⁹ سنن أبي داود ، رقم: 3050

⁶⁰ زاد المعاد: 5/713-714

⁶¹ One *sā* is equal to about 3kgs.

⁶² صحيح البخاري ، باب ما قيل في ورع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ... ، رقم: 2759

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would also employ non-Muslims. When he was emigrating from Makkah to Madīnah, he needed a reliable guide who would navigate him through the desert. Such a person is also known as a scout. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ hired a non-Muslim for this important and delicate task.⁶³

In short, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions engaged in every form of trade with non-Muslims.

Justice and Equity

The establishment of justice and equity was one of the fundamental teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He did not differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims in this regard. He had a Companion by the name of Ibn Abī Ḥadrad Aslamī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The latter was owing four dirhams to a Jew. The Jew came and complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who then said to Ibn Abī Ḥadrad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: “Pay him his due.” He replied: “I cannot pay him at present.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said a second time: “Pay him his due.” He replied: “I cannot pay him at present. You had said to me that you will send me to Khaybar for some work. I expect that you will pay me something for it, and I will then pay the man whatever I owe him.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said a third time: “Pay him his due.” When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to repeat an order three times, the Companions would remain silent. Ibn Abī Ḥadrad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had a turban on his head and a loin-sheet covering his lower body. He tied the turban as a loin-cloth, took the loin cloth to the market place, sold it for four dirhams, and paid his debt to the Jew.⁶⁴

⁶³ أحكام أهل الذمة لابن القيم ، ص 207

⁶⁴ مسند أحمد ، رقم: 15528 ، عن أبي حذر

The rule of justice and equity was not only applied to his Companions. Rather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ observed it fully in his personal dealings as well. If he owed anything to anyone, he would ask the person to give him respite. If the person spoke harshly to him, he would bear it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ owed something to a Jew by the name of Zayd ibn Sa'nah. He grabbed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by his side and spoke to him in harsh terms. He said: "O Muḥammad! Will you not pay me my due? It is the habit of the Banī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to delay in paying their dues." 'Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was standing nearby, so he pushed the Jew aside. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped 'Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and said: "O 'Umar! You ought to have done something else to both him and me. You should have told me: 'You must pay your debts in an agreeable manner.' And you should have told him: 'You must ask for your due in a kind and affectionate manner.' Go and give him his due, and give him an additional 20 sā' of dates for having terrified him."⁶⁵ Zayd ibn Sa'nah was so impressed by the justice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he embraced Islam there and then.

Religious Interactions

In addition to social relationships, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ showed full consideration to the non-Muslims when it came to religious dealings and interactions. He was never in favour of compelling anyone into embracing Islam. This is why he said to the Makkans: "If you do not want to embrace Islam, do not embrace it. At the same time, do not become obstacles to the call of Islam. Allow everyone to practise their religion." The Qur'ān makes reference to this attitude:

⁶⁵ المستدرك للحاكم ، كتاب معرفة الصحابة ، رقم: 6574

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

For you is your religion, and for me is my religion. ⁶⁶

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ emigrated from Makkah to Madīnah, one of the tasks which he had to accomplish was to make a peace agreement with all the tribes of Madīnah. These included the Muslims, Jews and some polytheists. This covenant was based on two things: (1) collective defence, and (2) each group must acknowledge the other and be free to practise its religion.

This covenant is worded as follows:

The Jews will be counted as a nation like the Muslims. If anyone attacks the Jews, the Muslims will come to the help of the Jews. The relations between Muslims and Jews will be based on mutual good, mutual profit and righteousness. The confederates of the Jews will be included in this covenant. The oppressed will always be helped. ⁶⁷

A delegation of Christians from Najrān came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He entered into a covenant with them as well. The following are some of the conditions which were documented:

The people of Najrān will enjoy Allah's protection and peace from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. The peace will apply to their lives, religion, country and possessions; to those who are present and to those who are not present; to their people and to their followers. Their present condition will not be changed. None of their rights will be altered. No changes will be made to whatever is in their control. ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Sūrah al-Kāfirūn, 109: 6

⁶⁷ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 178\1

⁶⁸ فتوح البلدان للبلاذري: 77\1

The big-heartedness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as regards religious matters can be gauged from the following incident. The same group of Christians [of Najrān] wanted to pray in their own way and in the direction of the East while being in the masjid. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not stop them from doing this. Instead, he granted them permission and instructed his Companions not to stop them.⁶⁹

In like manner, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ abstained from making statements or saying things about senior religious personalities which could offend those who follow them and believe in them. A Jew was taking an oath in the market of Madīnah and saying: “I take an oath in the name of the being who selected Mūsā from all of mankind, i.e. gave him superiority over all of mankind!” It is the belief of Muslims that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has been conferred with superiority over all of mankind and all the Messengers. This is why an Anṣārī Muslim could not bear to hear this. He began castigating the Jew, and in his anger, he slapped him on his face. The Jew went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and complained about the Anṣārī. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to the Anṣārī: “Do not give superiority to one Messenger over the others.” He then mentioned one special virtue of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ which will be demonstrated on the Day of Resurrection.⁷⁰

In short, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ very wisely mentioned one partial virtue of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ on this occasion so that the followers of each group are not offended when superiority is given to one Messenger over the other, and it does not cause disrespect to the seniors of each religion.

⁶⁹ البداية و النهاية لابن كثير: 56/5

⁷⁰ صحيح البخاري ، عن أبي سعيد الخدري ، كتاب الخصومات ، رقم: 2412

Pardon and Tolerance

Pardon and tolerance were one of the most striking qualities of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was already habituated to pardon friends and to overlook the mistakes committed by simple-minded people. However, he went one step further by even pardoning his bitterest enemies and people who caused him every type of torment. A few incidents are related here.

Makkah suffered from a ravaging drought. People were forced to eat carrion. These were the very same people who had imposed such a strict boycott on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims that they had tried to stop even a single grain of food from reaching them. The Muslims had to suffer this boycott for four years. However, when the people of Makkah suffered from a drought and came to him saying: “You teach kindness to relatives, while your own people are being destroyed. We request you to supplicate to your Sustainer to remove the drought from us.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ supplicated in their favour, and Makkah then received abundant rain.⁷¹

Grain used to come from Najd to Makkah. When the chief of that region, Thumāmah ibn Uthāl embraced Islam, he stopped the grain from going to Makkah and said: “I will not allow a single grain to go to Makkah without the permission of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prohibited him from doing this.⁷²

On the occasion of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing the Fajr Ṣalāh with the Muslims. About 70 to 80 people from the Tanīm mountains advanced stealthily in order to attack the Muslims while they were in ṣalāh. However, they were

⁷¹ صحيح البخاري ، كتاب الاستسقاء ، رقم: 974

⁷² السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 638/2

all apprehended. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ released them without meting out any punishment to them and without demanding any ransom from them.⁷³

Abū Jahal was a bitter enemy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His son, 'Ikramah had inherited his father's enmity. He fled to Yemen on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. His wife, Umm Ḥakīm bint Ḥārith was a niece of Abū Jahal. She embraced Islam and sought pardon for her husband [Ikramah]. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ pardoned him. She went personally to Yemen and informed her husband that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had pardoned him. He was astonished and wondered how a bitter enemy like him was pardoned! Nevertheless, he accompanied his wife and presented himself before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who stood up to receive him, and embraced him. He became a Muslim and was now forever included among the Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ.⁷⁴

Habbār ibn Aswad was the one who had tormented Rasūlullāh's ﷺ daughter, Zaynab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, so much when she was emigrating that she aborted her child. He came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ some time after the Conquest of Makkah and said: "I am a sinner and I am at fault. I transgressed." He then read: *Lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh* (There is none worthy of worship except Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and Muḥammad is Allah's Messenger). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ pardoned him for his transgressions and did not mete out any punishment to him.⁷⁵

⁷³ صحيح مسلم ، كتاب الجهاد ، رقم: 1808

⁷⁴ المستدرک للحاکم ، کتاب معرفة الصحابة ، رقم: 5055

⁷⁵ المعجم الكبير: 1051

Wahshī ibn Ḥarb killed and martyred Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the Battle of Uhud. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was intensely grieved by his martyrdom. Wahshī eventually presented himself before him and embraced Islam. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ pardoned him but said: “You must not come in front of me because when I see you, my grief over my uncle is revived.”⁷⁶

Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah was from among the bitterest enemies of Islam. He was one of the leaders of Makkah. On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, he fled towards Yemen. ‘Umayr ibn Wahb requested amnesty in his favour from the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Not only did he accept this request for this fierce enemy, he gave his turban as an indication of his amnesty. ‘Umayr went and brought Ṣafwān to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He asked: “Is it correct that you have pardoned me?” The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “Yes.” He said: “I request two month’s respite before I can embrace Islam.” The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “Not two months, I give you four month’s respite.”⁷⁷

‘Utbah was from among those chiefs of Makkah who were at the forefront in opposing Islam. His daughter, Hindah, seemed to have inherited this animosity from her father. On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, she had chewed the liver of Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and mutilated his body in a most unsightly manner. There was no decrease in her animosity right until the Conquest of Makkah. After the conquest, she concealed her face and came to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. She embraced Islam but still posed certain unpleasant questions. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ pardoned her as well.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ السيرة النبوية لابن هشام: 2/70

⁷⁷ الموطأ للإمام مالك، كتاب النكاح، رقم: 1132

⁷⁸ الرحيق المختوم: 1/393

During one of his journeys, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ hung his sword on the branch of a tree and lied down in its shade. A man approached, took hold of the sword and said to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “Who will save you from me?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ woke up and said: “Allah!” The moment he said this, the man trembled and the sword fell from his hand. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took hold of the sword and asked: “Who will save you from me?” He pleaded for mercy and forgiveness, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pardoned him.⁷⁹

There was a group of hypocrites in Madīnah. These people made a show of being Muslims while they were not in reality. Sometimes they would join the Jews and sometimes the idolaters of Makkah to conspire against the Muslims. The head of this group was ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy. On one particular journey, he tried to incite trouble between the Muhājirūn and Anṣār, and said: “When we reach Madīnah, the noble among us will expel those who are ignoble.” He was referring to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions. His son was a sincere and devoted Muslim, and was highly offended by this statement of his father. When the caravan approached Madīnah, he stood up and addressed his father: “You are not permitted to enter Madīnah until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ permits.” When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ learnt that his son had blocked his way, he asked him to desist, and to permit him to enter Madīnah.”⁸⁰

When ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy passed away, even though he was not a Muslim, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ – acting under the request

⁷⁹ صحيح مسلم ، كتاب المسافرين ، رقم: 843

⁸⁰ السيرة النبوية: 2/290

of Ibn Ubayy's son - removed his own *kurtah* and gave it to him to serve as a shroud for his father.⁸¹

A Jewish woman invited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to a meal. He used to like goat-meat, especially the shoulder part of a goat. She prepared such a piece for him, but poisoned it. The moment he put a morsel in his mouth, he realized that it was poisoned. The effect of the poison lasted until his demise. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her: "Why did you do this?" She replied: "I thought to myself that if you are a true Prophet, Allah ﷻ will save you and inform you of it. But if you had been making false claims, the people would be relieved of you." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ pardoned her. However, there was a Companion of his who had also eaten this meat and passed away because of the poison. The woman was killed in retribution for his death. This is because the issue of pardoning a murderer or not pardoning is left to the heirs of the murdered person. No one else can pardon a murderer.⁸²

Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah prompted 'Umayr ibn Wahb to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. With his sword hanging from his neck, he came to Madīnah to fulfil his vile intention. He appeared to have come with faith and confidence in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When 'Umayr was asked the reason for his coming to Madīnah, he gave some other reason. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then displayed his own genuineness by saying to him: "Did you not conspire with such and such person? Did you not come here with such and such a motive?" 'Umayr had no alternative but to admit. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ could have exercised his full power over him but he pardoned him.⁸³

⁸¹ صحيح البخاري ، كتاب الجنائز ، رقم: 1210

⁸² سنن أبي داود ، كتاب الديات ، رقم: 4512

⁸³ السيرة النبوية: 1\661

Suhayl ibn ‘Amr was captured on the occasion of the Battle of Badr. He used to hurl many abuses and profanities against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Suhayl was a skilled orator. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that he should be released, ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: “His two front teeth should be removed first so that he cannot speak out against you.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “I cannot permit for him to be mutilated. What if Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى orders my mutilation in return?”⁸⁴

There are countless incidents which display the pardon and forgiveness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. If they were to be collated, an entire book will be filled. This was, after all, his most salient feature. The most striking example of his pardon was on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah when he announced a general amnesty.

Just think! Which torment was there which the people of Makkah did not inflict on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions!? They killed weak Muslims, forced them to lie on burning coals, dragged them on the hot desert sand, ignited fires and forced them to inhale the smoke, lashed them, and imposed a boycott on them and on the entire Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib tribes who then had to suffer hunger. Various torments were imposed on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself. He was labelled a lunatic and a magician. Garbage was thrown on him, he was pelted with stones, his daughters were forcibly divorced, his one daughter was attacked in such a manner that she aborted, they tried to crucify him right in the Ka’bah and even conspired to murder him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was left with no alternative but to leave Makkah. Then when the Muslims came to Madīnah, they were forced into a series of battles, the liver of his beloved uncle was

⁸⁴ كنز العمال ، رقم: 37137

chewed upon, his very own teeth were broken in battle and blood flowed from his body. In short, there was no form of torment and torture which was not resorted to.

Today [on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah] all these criminals were before his eyes and under his power. An army of 10 000 dedicated Companions was with him. These Companions were standing by restlessly to carry out every single order of his. Despite all this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not even cast an angry look at these criminals. He did not even mention their shameful and oppressive actions. He only asked: "What do you expect of me today?" They replied: "You are an honourable brother, and from the progeny of an honourable brother." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I say to you what Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام had said to his brothers:

أَنْتُمْ الطَّلَاقُ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ

You are free. There is no blame on you today.

By mentioning the name of Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ subtly made reference to the fact that although your enmity and antagonism have deadened the feelings of brotherhood and kinship, I had always considered you to be my brothers and still consider you to be my brothers.

Is there a similar example in the history of the world where a powerful conqueror treats his conquered subjects with such compassion and clemency?

Compassion in Jihād

It is generally believed that Islam orders the killing of non-Muslims, but this is not correct. Jihād means to strive, to endeavour and try hard. This is why jihād could be through the tongue, the pen and with wealth. The last form of jihād is with the sword. However, jihād

with the sword is not against non-Muslims but against wrongdoers. If a Muslim group commits acts of oppression, jihād will be waged against it. Even in the era of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ there are examples where Muslims waged jihād against Muslims, because they considered the latter to be wrongdoers.

The Qur’ān lays down the following principle:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ط
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

*Fight in the path of Allah with those people who fight with you, and do not commit excesses against anyone. Surely Allah dislikes those who commit excesses.*⁸⁵

In other words, jihād is permitted against those who are primed to do battle against the Muslims. However, even when permission is given for jihād, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ laid down certain principles whose adherence is mandatory. For example, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لا تقتلوا شيخا فانيا ولا طفلا صغيرا ولا امرأة⁸⁶
Do not kill a weak old man, a child, nor a woman.

On one occasion, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ advised the Muslim commander, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as follows:

لا تقتلن امرأة ولا عسيفا⁸⁷
Do not kill a woman nor a labourer.

⁸⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 190

⁸⁶ سنن أبي داود، كتاب الجهاد، رقم: 2614

⁸⁷ سنن أبي داود، كتاب الجهاد، رقم: 2669

On another occasion he said:

لا تقتلوا أصحاب الصوامع⁸⁸

Do not kill those who are associated to their places of worship.

This means that religious personalities were also excluded from being killed in war. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also prohibited attacking a person who is injured, a person who is fleeing the battlefield, those who have been captured as prisoners-of-war, and those who have shut themselves within their homes:

لا تجهزن على جريح ولا يتبعن مدبر ولا يقتلن أسير

ولا من أغلق بابه فهو آمن⁸⁹

An injured one should not be attacked, a fleeing one should not be pursued, a prisoner should not be killed, nor the one who has shut the door of his house. They enjoy safety.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ even prohibited torturing any person with fire.

لا ينبغي أن يعذب بالنار إلا رب النار⁹⁰

None but the Lord of the fire may punish with fire.

In this there is reference to the fact that fiery weapons should not be used unless when absolutely necessary. It was the practice of the Arabs when they were victorious over their enemy, then in addition to killing them, they used to mutilate their bodies. For example, chopping off their body parts. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prohibited this:

⁸⁸ السنن الكبرى للبيهقي، كتاب السير، رقم: 17933

⁸⁹ فتوح البلدان: 47

⁹⁰ سنن أبي داود، كتاب الجهاد، رقم: 2677

نهى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من النهي و المثلة⁹¹

Another Arab practice was to torture and eventually kill an enemy who was captured. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prohibited tying a person in this way, and killing him:

نهى عن قتل الصبر⁹²

To sum up, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ firstly liked peace and security. He wanted to avoid war at all costs, but if the opposition created a situation where there was no alternative but war, then he resorted to war but after laying down very cultured principles and putting a stop to many inhumane methods which were in vogue among the Arabs at the time or among their neighbouring peoples.

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَ ثَبِّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Maḥomed Maḥomed, Durban, South Africa
maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

⁹¹ صحيح البخاري ، كتاب المظالم ، باب النهي بغير إذن صاحبه ، رقم: 2342

⁹² سنن أبي داود ، كتاب الجهاد ، رقم: 2689





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