

Perfection of the Prophet's Mercy

It is argued by many scholars that the central ethos of Islam is mercy, as it takes precedence over all other values and virtues such as justice, peace, knowledge, and benevolence. In his momentous work *Mercy: The Stamp of Creation*, Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah establishes the transcendence as well the epitome of mercy in God actions, attributes, and creation as well as in the Prophet, his life and example, and how is this translated in Islam into an existential, theological, legal, moral, and spiritual commitment and accountability to mercy.

But if this is so, how can we perfect mercy with an example to relate to and emulate?

IslamOnline.net is pleased to offer its readers a translation of a section of the valuable work by Dr. Sayyid Muhammad `Alawi al-Maliki *Muhammad: The Perfect Human (Muhammad Al-Insan Al-Kamil)*. In this translated section, "The Perfection of Prophetic Mercy," a great Islamic voice revisits and recounts the realization of perfection in being merciful with the Prophet as an exemplar for Muslims and all mankind on all levels.

The Perfection of Prophetic Mercy

God Almighty says, "[And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.](#)" (Al-Anbiyaa' 21:107). Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) is the Prophet of mercy, sent by God as a mercy to all mankind; believers, non-believers, and hypocrites. His mercy sheltered all humanity: men, women and children. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) was merciful to all creatures including animals and birds. God almighty describes Muhammad's pity, kindness, and mercy to all the creatures:

"Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate," (At-Tawbah 9:128).

It was even perceived by some that God favored Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) by describing him by two of His names

It was narrated that a man asked Prophet Muhammad for charity. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) gave it and then asked the man, “Have I dealt with you rightfully?” The man answered, “no, and you have not dealt with me in a beautiful manner either.” The Muslims then got angry and rose up. Then he (the Prophet) waved them to stop. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) went home and sent him something. He then asked him once more, “Are you content?” the man answered, “Yes, I am. May Allah reward you with kindness in your family and kin.” The Prophet then said, “You said what you said and it left something in my companions’ hearts. So, what if you repeat what you have just said now before them, to take away what is in their hearts towards you?” The man agreed. In the evening or the day after, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) told his companions, “This man showed his dissatisfaction so I increased what I gave him to let him be satisfied.” He turned then to the man and asked him “isn’t that right?” The man answered: “Yes, may God reward you with kindness in family and kin.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) then commented, “The example of me and this (man) is like that of a man whose camel went astray. People following the camel only increased its unwillingness. The man called to them, ‘leave me and my camel alone. I am more gentle and knowledgeable about it.’ He then turned to the camel, offering it some vegetation from the earth. He then called it back until it came forth, kneeled down, put the saddle on it and rode it away. Had I left you with what the man said you would have killed him and he would go to Hellfire” (Ahmed).

It was also narrated that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “I do not want any one of you to tell me off about any of my Companions. I want to go out to (meet) you with a free heart.” (Abu Dawud).

His pity and mercy to his people were manifested in lightening their load, making their obligations easy, in avoiding certain things for fear that they would become obligations upon the people. Among his sayings in this regard is, “was it not for fear of tiring my nation, I would have asked them to use a miswak (tooth stick) with each ablution.” His mercy was reflected in what he said about the Qiyam-Al-Layl (Night Vigil Prayer), meaning that one should not do it all night long; continuous fasting; and his disliking to enter the [Ka`bah](#) so that his nation would not become obstinate [about following him in that]. His mercy was also manifested in his prayer that God might turn his cursing of any one of them unto mercy. Whenever he heard a child crying during prayers, he used to shorten the prayer¹.

Prophet Muhammad prayed to God, “O Allah! Whoever I insulted or cursed, turn this into charity, mercy, a prayer, cleansing, and an immolation with which you bring him closer to You on Doomsday.” When his people did not believe him, Jibreel (the Archangel) came to him and said, “God Almighty heard the sayings and accusations of your people and He, Almighty, asked the angel of the mountains to obey any order from you against them. The angel of the mountains called Prophet Muhammad and said, “Ask for whatever you want, and I would crush them with the akhshabin (surrounding mountains).” Yet, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “No, but I hope that Allah will bring out of their offspring people who worship Allah alone with no associates.”

Ibn Al Monkader narrated that Jibreel told Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house), “God commanded the sky, the earth and the mountains to obey your orders.” The Prophet answered, “I delay my nation and Maybe Allah will induce them to repentance.” A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “Never was the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) left to make a choice between two matters but he would prefer the easier among them.” [Ibn Mas`ud](#) (may Allah be pleased with him) told us that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) preferred “positive” preaching to preclude pessimism and boredom

A’ishah narrated that she once found difficulty in riding a horse, so she kept reining it in repeatedly. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) then said, “You must have gentleness2.”

Among the examples of his general mercy is his mercy with the hypocrites by saving them from death and captivity for their outward following of Islam in this life.

From his comprehensive mercy is his mercy with the non-believers by lifting the punishment of annihilation in this world. As for past nations, when Allah, majestic in His praise, sent them a messenger and they disbelieve him, they would be and tortured and annihilated. God almighty tells us how nations of Noah, `Aad, Thamoud, and Lout and others were tortured and how were they rewarded for their mockery.

As for the [infidels](#) among the nation of Muhammad, their general chastisement by annihilation was lifted in honor of this gracious Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) whom Allah, majestic in His praise, has sent as mercy for the worlds.

The Mercy of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with Family and Children

In his Hadith, [Imam Moslem narrates](#) that `Amr Ibn Sa`id reported that `Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I have never met one more merciful with children. He also said, “Ibrahim (the Prophet’s son) was being breastfed by a wet nurse in a village on the outskirts of Madinah. He (the Prophet) used to rush to enter the house with smoke coming out of it (the wet nurse’s husband was a metal smith). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) would take his grandson, kiss him, and then return him. So when Ibrahim died, the Prophet said, “Ibrahim is my son. He died while still suckling. Verily, he will have two wet nurses to breastfeed him in Paradise.” Meaning they will complete his two-year weaning period, as he died at sixteen or seventeen months of age.” (An-Nawawi)

His mercy with his family was shown in the way he used to assist them with housework.

Al-Aswad mentioned that he asked `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) what the Prophet did at home. She answered, “He was humble in the common service of his family. But, when time for prayer came, he used to go and pray.” He (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) was not like tyrannical men. A lot of times, he (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) used to serve himself. It’s mentioned in Ahmad’s Mosnad and others that `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) used to sew his clothes, mend his sandals, and do what other men do in their homes.”

His Mercy With Children, Orphans, Widows, and the Sick.

The two sheikhs (Bukhari and Muslim) narrate on the authority of `Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “I start the prayers, intending to lengthen them. I then hear a child crying so I make them shorter, knowing how emotional a child’s mother gets.”

An example of his mercy (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) with the children is that he used stroke their heads and kiss them. It was mentioned in the two books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim that `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) kissed Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (his grandsons) while Al-Aqra' ibn Hobis Al Tamimi was present. So Al Aqra' said, "I have ten children. I have never kissed any of them!" Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) looked at him and said, "He who does not have mercy will not have mercy upon him."

It is in the two authenticated books that `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "A nomad once told Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house), "you kiss the children and we never do!" Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, "Has Allah withdrawn mercy out of your hearts?" Meaning that he who has mercy in his heart for children drives him to kiss them. And he who gets mercy withdrawn from his heart withholds from kissing them.

The two sheikhs and At-Tirmidhi narrate that Al-Bara' (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I saw the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) carrying Al-Hassan on his shoulder, saying, "Oh Allah! I love him so love him."

At-Tirmidhi narrates that `Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) was asked, "Which member of your family do you love the most?" He said, "Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein." He used to tell Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her), "Bring me my two sons" and then he would embrace them closely, may Allah be pleased with them.

Among the examples of his mercy and his love to please children happy that whenever he (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) was given the first of the harvest of fruits, he would give it to give it to the children in his circle. At-Tabrani, said that Ibn ` Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said that the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) used to hold the first of any seasonal harvest, he used put it on his eyes then on his lips and say “Oh Allah! Like you have made us see its beginning (of the season), allow us to see its end.” Then he would give it to any child sitting around him³.”

An example of his mercy was his crying on the passing of his son Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with him). On the authority of ` Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), “The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) entered the room while Ibrahim was dying. Upon that, his eyes started dropping tears. Then ` Abdur-Rahman ibn ` Awf said, ‘Even you, messenger of Allah!’ Then he said ‘Oh Ibn ` Awf! It is but mercy.’ He continued (crying) some more and then said, “The eyes weep, the heart is full of grief, and we are nothing but that which does not please our Lord. Verily, we are sorrowed for your departure O! Ibrahim.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

On the authority of Osama Ibn Zaid (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) when the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) was handed his daughter’s son who was dying, his eyes flooded with tears (peace and blessings be upon). Sa` d then told him, “What is this, Prophet of Allah!” He said, “This is a mercy that exalted Allah has made in the hearts of His servants. And surely Allah has mercy to merciful ones among His servants.” (Agreed upon)

From his mercy is that he (peace and blessing be upon him and his house) never used to disdain from walking along with a widow or with a poor person and fulfill their needs 4. He used to visit weak and sick Muslims and attend their funerals 5. He used to treat orphans well and charitably. He used to commend people to sponsor them and treat them with excellence and he also used to announce the consequent virtues of that saying, “I and a patron of an orphanage are as close in Paradise (while waving with the index and middle finger and parting them 6.” He also said that the best house in Muslim houses is the one with an orphan being treated well in it.7”

Of his mercy is when he used to see any of his companions in a state of stress or misfortune, he would feel deep sorrow for that, have pity, and cry, being affected by the circumstances. He went once with `Abdur-Rahman ibn `Awf and others to visit Sa`d Ibn `Obabah. Upon seeing him, he cried and everyone with him then cried 8. He cried and kissed `Othman Ibn Maz`oun after he died. `A'ishah then said that she saw the tears of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) flow on `Othman's cheeks 9. In another version, it was narrated that The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) kissed `Othman between his eyes and cried for a long time 10.

His Mercy With Animals

He (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) used to commend having mercy on animals. He used to forbid his companions from hurting them, tiring them, overburdening them with heavy loads for long periods, torturing them, or pushing them beyond their limits, for that is a form of suffering.

Once the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) passed by a camel that was so emaciated its back was one with its abdomen. Upon that, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “Fear Allah with regard to livestock. Ride them in a fitting way and eat them when they are in good condition.11”

He once entered the garden of man from the Ansar (Muslims of Madinah) and there was a camel. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) saw the camel it froze and its eyes started watering. Then the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) came to it and rubbed its ears so it calmed down. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “Who is the owner of this camel? Whose camel is this?” A young man from the Ansar told him (peace and blessings be upon him and his house), “O Messenger of Allah, it belongs to me.” Then he told him (peace and blessings be upon him and his house), “Do you not fear Allah with regard to this beast which Allah has let you own? It complained to me that you starve it and tire it by overworking it and using it beyond its capacity.”¹²

He (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) used to forbid burdening an animal by keeping it standing or sitting on it for a long time unnecessarily. He saw some people sitting on animals so he commented, “Keep them safe and sound when riding them and when leaving them, don’t use them as chairs for your side talks in the streets and markets. A ridden animal might be better than its rider and might remember and mention God more than its rider does.”¹³

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) called not to kill even a frog and he said, “Its croaking is tasbeeh (praising God).”¹⁴

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) once said, “A woman was doomed to enter the Fire because of a cat. She imprisoned it and neither fed it nor set it free to eat the rodents of the earth.”¹⁵

Prophet Muhammad also called for not harassing animals by goading them to hurt or cause harm to each other.

Prophet Muhammad warned against any human being causing a bird to feel panic about its little offspring. Someone took two chicks of a bird (hamra), which came in panic searching for its chicks. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him and his house) then asked, “Who has distressed it by taking its chicks?” Then he asked them to return the chicks. The Prophet once passed by a burned out anthill. When the Prophet saw it he asked, “Who has burned it?” When he was informed of who had done it, he said, “Only the Lord of Fire has the right to punish with fire.¹⁶”

It was also reported that Prophet Muhammad prohibited the killing of a bird for the sake of pleasure and not for a specific beneficial need, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) said, “Anyone who would kill a bird, this bird would come on Doomsday and say, “God, this person killed me for pleasure and not for benefit.¹⁷”

It was also reported that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) called for mercy and perfection in slaughter. He saw a person preparing a lamb, laying it down while he was still sharpening his knife. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his house) then commented, “Do you want to kill it twice? Sharpen your knife before you lay it down.”¹⁸

He prohibited taking any animal or any living creature as a target for shooting.¹⁹

By Sayyid Muhammad Alawi al-Maliki

1– All of this is mentioned in sahih (authentic) Hadith books.

2– Mentioned in the Sahih by Muslim

3– Narrated by Ibn Al- Sanii from [Abu Hurairah](#), A-Hafez Al Haithami said it was narrated by Al-Tabarani in Al-Kabeer and As-Sagheer and the narrators of As-Sagheer are the narrators of authentic hadith.

4– Narrated by Al-Nasa'i

5– Narrated by Abu Ya`li and at-Tabarani.

6– Narrated by Al-Bukhari.

7– Narrated by Ibn Majah.

8– Narrated by the Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

9– Narrated by at-Tirmidhi.

10– Narrated by Ibn al-Jouzi.

11– Narrated by Abu Dawud and Ibn Khozimah in his Sahih.

12– Narrated by imam Ahmed and Abu Dawud and Al Hakim in the Mustadrak.

13– Narrated by Imam Ahmed and Abu Yali and At-Tabarani.

14– Narrated by An-Nas'ai.

15– Narrated by Al-Bukhari.

16– Narrated by Abu Dawud.

17– Narrated by Al-Nasa'i.

18– Narrated by Al-Tabarani.

19– Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim.