



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

RAMADAN 1440 AH – DEVELOPING GOOD MANNERS

Besides performing good deeds in Ramadan, this Blessed month gives us an opportunity to develop an important aspect which has largely been ignored by Muslims – akhlaq or good manners. You see sisters wearing hijab or brothers with a nice long beard but completely lacking in good manners. Allah Assists us to perfect our manners in Ramadan on the following basis:

1. Shaytan is locked up

Shaytan is always sowing dissensions among brothers. Even prophet Yusuf (AS) blamed shaytan for the horrible things which happened to him which started by his brothers:

“And he raised his parents to the throne and they fell down before him prostrate. And he said: "O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream aforetime! My Lord has made it come true! He was indeed good to me, when He took me out of the prison, and brought you (all here) out of the bedouin-life, after *Shaitan* (Satan) had sown enmity between me and my brothers....” 12: 100

Jabir reported: I heard Allaah's Messenger (way sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) as saying: The throne of Iblis is upon the ocean and he sends detachments (to different parts) in order to put people to trial and the most important figure in his eyes is one who is most notorious in sowing the seed of dissension. (Muslim)

This Hadeeth was recorded by Imaam Muslim رحمته الله. An-Nawawi رحمته الله commented on the Hadeeth as follows, “[The Hadeeth means that] Satan despaired of him ever being worshipped by the people of the peninsula of Arabia, but he is hopeful that he would sow the seeds of dissension, discord and dispute among them, causing wars, conflicts, and so on.” [Explanation of Saheeh Muslim]

2. How should we react when someone annoys us during fasting

The Prophet, SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam, forbade the fasting person from displaying bad morals, clarifying that it is not suitable for him to say foul words or raise his voice when arguing with someone or retort to the curse or abuse of others with the same words, and so on. Rather, he should say, "I am fasting." By doing so, he reminds himself and others of the good morals that the fasting person should have. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "When anyone of you is observing fast, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice; and if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him, he should say: 'I am fasting.'"

Therefore Ramadan should gives us plenty of opportunity to inshaAllah improve our manners. Certain common misconception about good manners:

1. I am from a certain culture and we always do this.

Culture must conform to Islam and NOT Islam conforming to culture. Speaking in a loud voice, especially in the mosque, is completely forbidden.

2. Forgive him/her or let him do what he/she likes...he is still young

Good manners MUST BE INCULCATED at a young age. Bad habits will develop and will only get worse they are not corrected.

3. The school is responsible for conducting classes on etiquette and manners

Good manners begin at home. Parents with poor manners/akhlaq will usually produce children who follow the same traits and characters as the parents.

4. The poor has good manners and rich has bad manners

On the contrary, in general, manners do not recognise wealth. I have encountered many children from rich background in the UK with impeccable manners

What is meant by manners?

Linguistically, scholars say that the word 'Khalq' which means creation, and 'Khuluq' which means manners are inter-related. The first word refers to the physical appearance of a person that can be seen, while the second stands for the deep inner self that can be realized by insight, and both have good and bad characteristics. Al-Imaam Al-Qurtubi رحمه الله defined manners by saying, "It is a person's way of dealing with others, and it is either to be praised or dispraised. Praised manners are generally achieved by being [good] with others [even] against yourself, and following justice even it is against yourself. In particular, it includes forgiveness, patience, tolerance, generosity, compassion, leniency and so on. On the contrary, dispraised manners include lying, deception, lack of mercy and so on." Now we are only concerned with the good manners.

Allah (SWT) speaks about the importance of good character in the Noble Qur'an where HE says:

1. And say to My servants (that) they speak that which is best. (17:53)
2. Worship Allah, and do not associate partners with him. And be good to your parents, and the relatives, and to the orphans, and to the poor people, and the neighbour that is close to you and the neighbor that is not close to you, and your companion on the journey. (4:36)
3. Allah (SWT) speaks about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as, "And most certainly you are on sublime morality (exalted standard of character)." (68:4)

Importance of Good Manners

1. It is related by Abdullah Ibne Amr radhiyallahu anhu that the Apostle of Allah sallallahu alayhi wasallam said: "The best of you are those who possess the best of manners." (Bukhaari and Muslim)
2. Abu Hurayrah radhiyallahu anhu related to us that the Apostle of Allah sallallahu alayhi wasallam said: "Muslims who possess better morals are the most perfect in Faith". (Abu Dawood and Daarami)
3. It is related by Abu Dardaa radhiyallahu anhu, that the Apostle of Allah sallallahu alayhi wasallam said: "On the Day of Reckoning, the most weighty item in the Scales of Deeds will be good manners". (Abu Dawood and Tirmizi)

Commentary

It would not be correct to assume from the above Traditions that good morals were even superior to faith or the principal tenets like Imaan, Salaat, Sawm(fasting), Zakaat and Hajj. The Holy Companions to whom these sayings were directly addressed had already learnt from the Prophet sallallahu alayhi wasallam that among the various branches of Islaam, the most important were Imaan (faith) and the doctrine of Divine Unity, and, then, came the fundamental duties. As for the rest of the departments of religious life, some of them take precedence over others in various ways, and the place of moral virtues, undoubtedly, is very high, and in the attainment of success and salvation in After-life and the gaining of the countenance of the Lord, their significance is beyond question.

4. Aaishah radhiyallahu anha relates that she heard the Apostle of Allah sallallahu alayhi wasallam say: "A Believer with good manners and a good moral disposition gets the same reward as he who fasts (permanently) and spends his nights in prayer". (Abu Dawood)

Commentary

It shows that a person who is a true Muslim, both in Belief and Action, and, also, possesses good manners, but does not engage himself much in nafl (supererogatory) fasts and prayers attains the same degree of excellence, through moral goodness, as the one who, generally, stands up in prayer throughout the night and fasts all day long.

5. Anas (RA) said, “I served Rasulullah (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) for ten years. During that time, he never once said to me as much as ‘Oof’ if I did something wrong. He never asked me, if I had failed to do something, ‘Why did you not do it?’, and he never said to me, if I had done something wrong, ‘Why did you do it?’” (*Al-Bukhari*)
6. Abu Hurairah (RA) said that Rasulullah (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “If one has good manners, one may attain the same level of merit as those who spend their nights in prayer.” (*Al-Bukhari*)
7. Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “And what is most likely to send people to Paradise? Being conscious of Allah and good manners.” (*Al-Bukhari*)
8. Rasulullah (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “He who does not show mercy to our young or show esteem for our elders is not one of us.” (*Al-Bukhari*)

HOW TO GAIN GOOD MANNERS

Firstly:

A good attitude is the characteristic of the best of the Messengers and is the best action of the righteous. It is – no doubt – half of religion, the fruit of the efforts of the pious and the practice of the devoted worshipper. Bad characteristics are lethal poison and lead to shameful consequences.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I have only been sent to perfect good characteristics.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* (273) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah* (45).

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about that which will admit most people to Paradise. He said: “Fear of Allaah and a good attitude.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2004); he said it is saheeh ghareeb. It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Tirmidhi*.

Hence Islam paid a great deal of attention to laying down guidelines for treating diseases of the heart (i.e., spiritual diseases) and ways of acquiring good characteristics, which is regarded as one of the most important duties, because no heart will be free of sicknesses. If the heart is neglected, sicknesses will accumulate. No soul is free of inclinations which, if they are given free rein, will lead it to doom in this world and in the Hereafter.

This kind of medicine requires profound knowledge of reasons and causes, then it needs hard work to remedy it and set things straight, in order to reach a successful outcome. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Indeed he succeeds who purifies his ownself”

[al-Shams 91:9]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray for a good attitude, saying, “O Allaah, You have made my outward form beautiful so make my attitude good too.” Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his *Saheeh* (3/239) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Irwa’ al-Ghaleel* (75).

Secondly:

If a person knows what his shortcomings are he can do something to remedy them, but many people are unaware of their faults and shortcomings. A person may see the speck in his brother’s eye and not see the log in his own. The person who wants to know what his own faults are may do four things:

1. He may sit before a Shaykh who has insight into people’s faults and knowledge of the subtlety of some problems and learn from him knowledge, good attitudes and manners.
2. He may ask a sincere friend who has insight and is religiously committed to keep watch over him and take note of his actions, so that he can draw attention to whatever he dislikes of his attitude, actions, and inward and outward faults. This is what the best and greatest imams of Islam used to do. ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) used to say: “May Allaah have mercy on a man who shows me my shortcomings.”
3. He can learn about his faults and shortcomings from the lips of his enemies, because the eye of one who is resentful will always notice bad things about you. A man may benefit more from an enemy who wants to cause trouble and mentions his faults than from a friend who wants to flatter him by praising him and concealing his faults.
4. He can mix with people. Everything that he sees as blameworthy among people, he should guard against in his own self, because the believer is the mirror of his fellow believer, and in the faults of others he can see his own faults. It was said to ‘Eesa (peace be upon him): “Who taught you?” He said: “No one taught me; I saw the ignorance of the ignorant as something bad and I avoided it.”

Thirdly:

Attitude reflects how a person thinks and the way he is inside. Just as, in general, a person’s outward form cannot be beautiful if only the eyes are beautiful and not the nose, mouth and cheek, and everything must be beautiful in order for the entire outward form to be beautiful, so too there are four requirements of inward beauty which must all be met in order for one’s attitude to be good or beautiful. If all four requirements are met and balanced then a good attitude is acquired, the characteristics of which are: strong knowledge, control of anger, control of desire, and a proper balance between these three aspects.

With regard to strong knowledge, good and sound knowledge means understanding in such a way that one can see the difference between telling the truth and telling lies in speech, between truth and falsehood in beliefs, between beauty and ugliness in actions. If this strength becomes sound, there will result from it wisdom, and wisdom is the head of a good attitude.

With regard to strength of anger, its beauty is that it is used in accordance with what is dictated by wisdom. The same applies to desire; its beauty and strength should be controlled by wisdom, meaning under the control of reason and sharee'ah.

With regard to balance, it means proper control of desires and anger, under the control of wisdom and sharee'ah.

Reason is like a sincere adviser. Justice and balance is power, and it is like one who does what is dictated by reason. Anger is to be subjected to control.

The one who acquires and balances these characteristics is a man of good character in general, and from it stem all good qualities.

No one achieved perfect balance of these four characteristics except the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); people after him vary in how close or distant they are to him in character. Everyone who is close to him in these characteristics is close to Allaah, to the extent that he is close to the Messenger of Allaah.

Fourthly:

This balance may be achieved in two ways:

1 – By the blessing of Allaah, as part of one's inherent nature

2 – By acquiring these characteristics through effort and training, i.e., pushing oneself to do the actions dictated by the desired characteristic.

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Knowledge is acquired by seeking it, and patience is acquiring by striving to be patient. The one who strives to attain good will be given it, and the one who strives to protect himself from evil will be protected. Narrated by al-Khateeb and others from the hadeeth of Abu'l-Darda'; classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

If a person wants to attain the characteristic of generosity, the way to attain that is by pushing himself to do the actions of one who is generous, which is giving away wealth. So he keeps pushing himself and persisting in that, striving against his own inclinations, until that becomes second nature and it becomes easy for him, thus he becomes generous.

Similarly, if a person wants to attain the characteristic of humility, when he is inclined to be arrogant, the way he does it is by persisting in doing the actions of the humble for a long time, striving and pushing himself until that becomes one of his characteristics, and it becomes second nature to him and easy for him.

All praiseworthy characteristics that are prescribed in Islam may be acquired in this way. Religious characteristics will never become entrenched in the soul unless the soul gets accustomed to doing all good habits, unless it gives up all bad habits, and unless it persists in doing good deeds like one who loves good deeds and enjoys doing them, and hates bad deeds and is pained by them.

This may be explained by means of examples:

The one who wants to become proficient in writing, so that this becomes one of his characteristics and writing beautifully becomes second nature to him, has no other way but to hold in his hand that which the proficient writer holds, and persist for a long time, trying to imitate beautiful hand writing, and keep on doing so until it becomes well established in him, then finally beautiful writing will become second nature to him.

Similarly, if a person wants to become a faqeeh, he has no choice but to do what the fuqaha' do, which is to keep studying issues of fiqh until his heart develops a love of the subject.

And if a person wants to become generous and refrain from asking people, and become patient and humble, he has to keep on doing the actions of those people until they become second nature to him. He should not despair of attaining those characteristics if he fails to study for one night, for he will not be able to attain it with one night's study. Perfecting the soul and adorning it with good deeds will not be attained by worshipping for one day, and he will not be deprived of it if he sins for one day. But slacking off for one day may lead to another day, then slowly one becomes accustomed to laziness.

Fifthly: PURIFY THE SOUL

The likeness of the soul and the way to treat it to rid it of bad characteristics and make it attain good characteristics is that of the body, when treating it to rid it of disease and bring it good health.

Although the humours are usually in balance, the stomach may become sick due to food, drink or circumstances. Similarly, everyone is born with a balanced nature, but his parents make him a Jew, Christian or Magian, i.e., by training and teaching one acquires bad characteristics.

Just as the body is not created perfect in the first place, rather it is made perfect by rearing and food, similarly the soul is also created imperfect but with the potential to become perfect, and it can only be perfected by means of education, discipline and nourishment with knowledge. If the body is sound, the doctor's role is to show one the way to maintain good health; if it is sick, then the doctor's job is to restore health. The same applies to the soul; if it is pure and sound then one should strive to preserve it and bring it more strength and acquire more good characteristics; if it is imperfect then one should strive to perfect it and purify it.

Sickness that causes imbalance in the body can only be treated by its opposite, so if it is caused by cold it is treated with heat and vice versa. Similarly, bad characteristics, which are diseases of the heart, are treated by applying the opposite. So the remedy for the disease of ignorance is seeking knowledge, and the remedy for the disease of miserliness is pushing oneself to be generous, and the remedy for the disease of arrogance is pushing oneself to be humble, and the remedy for the sickness of eating too much is imposing self restraint.

Just as it is essential to put up with the bitterness of the remedy and show patience in refraining from what one desires when treating physical sickness, so too it is essential to put up with the bitterness of striving and being patient when treating diseases of the heart; rather it is more important, because one gets rid of physical sickness when one dies, but the sicknesses of the heart – Allaah forbid – may persist after death and continue forever and ever.

These examples show you the way to treat diseases of the heart, and demonstrate that the holistic way is to treat them with the opposite of whatever one is inclined towards and likes. Allah has summed up all of that in His Holy Book, when He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts.

41. Verily, Paradise will be his abode”

[al-Naazi'aat 79:40-41]

Finally:

What matters with regard to striving is fulfilling what one resolves to do. If a person resolves to give up a desire, then he must show patience and persist, because if he gets used to giving up what he resolved to do, that will lead to corruption. If it so happens that he falls short of what he resolved to do, then he must impose some punishment on himself because of that, because if he does not scare himself with that punishment, his evil inclinations will overwhelm him and he will be attracted to indulging in desires, and all his efforts will be spoiled.

IF WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT GOOD MANNERS, LET US LOOK AT THE MANNERS OF THE BEST PERSON IN THE WORLD – OUR BELOVED PROPHET MUHAMMAD SALLALLAHU ‘ALAYHI WA SALLAM:

Some of the Prophet's Manners & Characteristics

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1. Sound Intellect

The Messenger (pbuh) had an excellent, complete and sound intellect. No man has ever had an intellect as complete and perfect as his. Qadhi Iyaadh¹⁶, may God have mercy on him, said:

This becomes clear to an individual when the researcher reads the Prophet's biography and understands his state of affairs, and his meaningful and inclusive utterances and traditions, his good manners, ethics and moral character, his knowledge of the Torah and Gospel and other Divine Scriptures, and his knowledge of statements of the wise, and knowledge of by-gone nations, and ability to strike examples and implement policies and correct emotional manners. He was an example and paradigm to which his people could relate to in all branches of knowledge; acts of worship, medicine, laws of inheritance, lineage, and other matters as well. He knew and learned all of this without reading or examining the Scriptures of those before us, nor did he sit with their scholars. The Prophet had no formal schooling, and was without knowledge of the above before being commissioned as a Prophet, nor could he read or write. The Prophet (pbuh) was wise to the fullest extent of his mental capacity. God, the Exalted, informed him of some of what had taken place (in the past) and of that which would take place in the future. This is a sign that the Dominion belongs to God, and that He is capable over all things.¹⁷

2. Doing Things for the Sake of God

The Prophet (pbuh) would always do deeds through which he would seek the pleasure of God. He was harmed and abused when he invited and called people to Islam; yet he was patient and endured all of this, and hoped for the reward of God. Abdullah b. Masood said:

"The Prophet (pbuh) resembled a prophet who was harmed by his people. He wiped the blood from his face and said: 'O God! Forgive my people, for they know not!'" (Bukhari #3290)

Jundub b. Sufyaan said that the Messenger's finger bled during one of the battles, and he said:

"You are but a finger which has bled; which suffers in the path of God." (Bukhari #2648)

3. Sincerity

The Prophet (pbuh) was sincere and honest in all his matters, as God had ordered him. Allah, the Exalted, says:

"Say, Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded and I am the first (among you) of the Muslims." [6:162-163]

4. Good Morals, Ethics and Companionship

The Prophet (pbuh) was a living example for all humans to follow. His wife A'ishah was asked about his manners, and she said,

"His manners were the Qur'an."

In this statement, A'ishah meant that the Prophet (pbuh) abided by its laws and commands and abstained from its prohibitions, and observed the virtuous deeds mentioned in it. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"God has sent me to perfect good manners and to do good deeds." (Bukhari & Ahmed)

Allah, the Exalted, described the Prophet (pbuh) saying:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character" [68:4]

Anas b. Malik served the Prophet (pbuh) for ten years; He was with him day in and day out, both when the Prophet (pbuh) traveled and when he was a resident in Madeenah. He was knowledgeable of the Prophet's manners. He said:

"The Prophet (pbuh) did not swear at anyone, nor was he rude, nor did he curse anyone. If he desired to reprimand someone, he would say: 'What is wrong with him, may dust be cast in his face!'" (Bukhari #5684)

5. Politeness and Good Manners

The Prophet (pbuh) showed good manners and was courteous to all, even to children. Once when the Prophet was in a gathering, a drink was brought to the Prophet (pbuh) and he drank from it. On his right side there was a young boy and on his left side were elderly men. Feeling obliged by the respect of elders, and not wanting to hurt the feelings of the child, he asked the young boy:

"Do you mind if I give the drink to them?" The young boy said: 'O Prophet of God! By God! I would not prefer anyone to drink from the place you drank. This is my fair share¹⁸.' The Messenger of God (pbuh) handed the boy the drink." (Bukhari #2319)

6. Love for Reformation and Reconciliation

Whenever a situation occurred which called for reconciliation, the Prophet (pbuh) would hurry to resolve it. Once when he heard that the people of Qubaa¹⁹ disputed with each other about a matter, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Let us go to resolve the situation and make peace between them." (Bukhari #2547)

7. Ordering with the good and forbidding evil

If the Prophet (pbuh) saw an act which opposed a tenet of the religion, he would reprimand it in a suitable manner. Abdullah b. Abbas said: The Messenger of God pbuh saw a man wearing a gold ring²⁰, so he reached for it, [and] removed it.... He then said:

"Would one of you seek a burning charcoal and place it on his hand?!"

The man was later told, after the Prophet pbuh left: 'Take your ring! Make good use of it [by

selling it].’ The man said: ‘No, by God! I will never take it after the Messenger of God pbuh cast it away.’ (Muslim #2090)

Abu Saeed al-Khudri said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah say: "Whoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart..." (Muslim)

8. Love of Purification

A companion passed by the Prophet (pbuh) while he was not in a state of purification. He greeted him with God’s name, but the Prophet (pbuh) did not return the greeting until he performed ablution and apologized saying:

"I disliked that I should mention God’s name while I am not in a state of purity." (Ibn Khuzaimah #206)

9. Safeguarding and Minding One’s Language

The Messenger of God (pbuh) would busy himself with the remembrance of God; he would not talk in vain. He would lengthen his prayers and shorten the speech, and he would not hesitate to help and take care of the needs of a needy, poor or widow. (Ibn Hib’ban #6423)

10. Excelling in Acts of Worship

A’ishah said that the Prophet of God (pbuh) used to pray during the night until his feet would swell. She said, ‘Why do you do this, O Messenger of God, while God has forgiven your past and future sins?’ The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

"Shall I not be a grateful slave (of God)?" (Bukhari #4557)

11. Forbearance

Once some companions came to the Prophet (pbuh) complaining about a tribe, namely the Daws, who refused to accept Islam, asking him to curse them. The Prophet (pbuh) raised his hands in prayer and instead said:

"O Allah guide the tribe of Daws and bring them to Islam!"

12. Good Appearance

The companions knew the Prophet (pbuh) to be the most beautiful of people. One companion said:

"The Prophet (pbuh) was a person of average height. His shoulders were wide. His hair reached his earlobes. Once I saw him adorned in a red garment; I never saw anything more beautiful than him." (Bukhari #2358)

13. Asceticism in Worldly Affairs

There are many examples in the Prophet’s life which prove that he had no concern for the pleasures of this life. Abdullah b. Masood said:

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) went to sleep on a mat. He stood up and he had marks on his side due to the mat that he had slept on. We said: 'O Messenger of God, shall we not make [a proper] bedding for you?' He said: 'What do I have to do with this world? I am only like a wayfarer upon a mount that stopped to take shade and rest under a tree, and then leaves it behind and continues on the journey.'" (Tirmidhi #2377)

Amr' b. al-Haarith said:

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) did not leave any gold or silver currency, or a slave, male or female, after his death. He only left behind his white mule, his weapons and a piece of land which he declared as Charity." ((Bukhari #2588)

14. Altruism

Sahl b. Sa'd said: The Prophet (pbuh) had more care for those around him than for his own self.

"A woman gave the Messenger of God (pbuh) a Burdah (gown). The Prophet (pbuh) asked his Companions: 'Do you know what a Burdah is?' They replied, 'Yes, O Prophet of God! It is a piece of woven cloth [similar to a shawl]. The woman said: 'O Prophet of God! I have woven this shawl with my own hands, for you to wear.' The Messenger of God (pbuh) took it while he direly needed it. After a while, the Messenger of God (pbuh) came out of his home wearing it, and a Companion said to the Messenger of God (pbuh): 'O Prophet of God! Grant me this shawl to wear!' The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: 'Yes.' He then sat for awhile, and headed back home, folded it and gave it to the person who asked for it. The Companions scolded him saying: 'It was not appropriate for you to ask for his shawl; especially since you know he does not turn anyone down or send them away empty-handed! The man said: 'By God! I only asked him to give it to me because I want to be shrouded in this shawl when I die.' Sahl, the narrator of the Hadeeth said: 'The shawl was used as a shroud for that man when he died.'" (Bukhari #1987)

15. Strong Faith and Dependence on God

Although the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions faced severe trials from the disbelievers, he always reminded them that the end was for the believers, and that the Will of God will come to pass. When Abu Bakr and the Prophet hid in a cave after they had left their homes in order to migrate to Madeenah, the disbelievers of Makkah had sent scouts in search of them. They came so close to the cave that Abu Bakr could see their feet. Abu Bakr said:

"I looked at the feet of the pagans while we were in the cave [of Thawr]. I said, 'O Prophet of God! If anyone of them looks down at his feet he would see us!' The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: 'O Abu Bakr! What do you think of two with whom God, the Exalted, is their Third?'" (Muslim #1854)

16. Kindness and Compassion

The Prophet was the kindest of people, and this was also apparent in his treatment of infants.

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) performed Salah (prayer) while he was carrying an infant girl named Umaamah, daughter of Abul-Aas. When he bowed, he put her on the ground, and when he stood up, he would carry her again." (Bukhari #5650)

17. Simplification and Ease

The Prophet (pbuh) always sought to make things easy for people. The Messenger of God (pbuh) said:

"I start the prayer with the intention of lengthening it, but when I hear a child crying, I shorten the prayer, as I know its mother would suffer from his screams!" (Bukhari #677)

18. Fearing God, being Mindful to not trespass His Limits

The Messenger of God (pbuh) said:

"Sometimes, when I return to my family, I would find a datefruit on the bed. I would pick it up to eat it; but I would fear that it was from the charity²¹, and thus, throw it back [on the ground]." (Bukhari #2300)

19. Spending Generously

Anas bin Malik said:

‘The Messenger of God (pbuh) was never asked for something when a person accepted Islam, except that he granted that person what he asked. A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and he gave him a herd of sheep that was grazing between two mountains. The man returned to his people and said: ‘O my people accept Islam! Muhammad (pbuh) gives out generously like one who does not fear poverty.’ (Muslim #2312)

Ibn Abbas said:

‘The Prophet (pbuh) was the most generous of people. He was most generous during Ramadhan when he met Gabriel (pbuh); he would meet him every night during Ramadhan to practice and review the Qur’an with him. The Messenger of God (pbuh) was so generous, that he was faster than the swiftest wind in this regard. (Bukhari #6)

Abu Dharr said:

‘I was walking with the Prophet (pbuh) in the Har’rah (volcanic region) of Madeenah and we faced the mount of Uhud; the Prophet (pbuh) said: ‘O Abu Dharr!’ I said: ‘Here I am O Messenger of God!’ He said: ‘It would not please me to have an amount of gold equal to the weight of Mount Uhud, until I spend and give it out (in the sake of God) within a night or within three nights. I would keep a single silver piece of it to help those who are in debt. (Bukhari #2312)

Jabir b. Abdullah said:

‘The Prophet pbuh did not refuse to give anything which he had to someone if he asked for it.’ (Bukhari #5687)

20. Cooperation

The Prophet (pbuh) was not a king who commanded his followers to carry out his orders. Rather he always carried out his own affairs and helped others in collective duties. A’ishah was once asked about how the Prophet (pbuh) behaved with his family. She said:

"He helped and assisted his family members with their chores; but when the call to prayer was heard, he would [stop everything and] leave to attend the prayers."

Al-Baraa bin 'Azib said:

"I saw the Messenger of God (pbuh) on the Day of the Trench carrying dirt [that was dug from the trench] until his chest was covered with dirt." (Bukhari #2780)

21. Truthfulness

A'ishah said:

"The trait and characteristic which the Prophet (pbuh) hated most was lying. A man would tell a lie in the presence of the Prophet (pbuh) and he would hold it against him, until he knew that he repented." (Tirmidhi #1973)

Even his enemies attested to his truthfulness. Abu Jahl, who was one of the harshest enemies of Islam, said: 'O Muhammad! I do not say that you are a liar! I only deny what you brought and what you call people to.' God, the Exalted, says:

"We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you, but surely they do not call you a liar; but the unjust deny the verses of God." [6:33]

22. Aggrandizing the limits set by Allah, and Always Seeking the Moderate Path

A'ishah said:

"The Prophet (pbuh) was not given a choice between two matters, except that he chose the easier of the two, as long as it was not a sinful act. If that act was a sinful act, he would be the farthest from it. By God! He never avenged himself. He only became angry when people transgressed the limits and boundaries of God; in that case he avenged [for the sake of God]." (Bukhari #6404)

23. Pleasant Facial Expression

Abdullah bin al-Harith said:

"I have never seen a man who smiled as much as the Messenger of God (pbuh)." (Tirmidhi #2641)

24. Honesty, Trustworthiness and Reliability

The Prophet (pbuh) was wellknown for his honesty. The pagans of Makkah -who were openly hostile towards him- would leave their valuables with him. His honesty and reliability was tested when the pagans of Makkah abused him and tortured his companions and drove them out of their homes. He ordered his cousin, Ali b. Abi Talib to postpone his migration for three days to return to people their valuables.²²

Another example of his honesty, trustworthiness and reliability is demonstrated in the Truce of Hudaibiyah, wherein he agreed to the article in the treaty which stated that any man who left the Prophet (pbuh) would not be returned to him, and any man who left Makkah would be

returned to them. Before the treaty was concluded a man named Abu Jandal b. Amr had managed to escape from the pagans of Makkah and rushed to join Muhammad (pbuh). The pagans asked Muhammad to honor his pledge and return the escapee. The Messenger of God (pbuh) said:

"O Abu Jandal! Be patient and ask God to grant you patience. God will surely help you and those who are persecuted and make it easy for you. We have signed an agreement with them, and we certainly do not betray or act treacherously." (Baihaquee #18611)

25. Bravery and courage

Ali said:

"You should have seen him on the Day of Badr! We sought refuge with the Messenger of God (pbuh). He was the closest among us to the enemy. On that Day, the Messenger of God (pbuh) was the strongest one among us." (Ahmed #654)

As for his courage and bravery under normal circumstances - Anas b. Malik said:

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) was the best of people and the most courageous. One night, the people of Madeenah were frightened and headed towards the sounds they heard during the night. The Messenger of God (pbuh) met them while coming back from the place of the sound, after he made sure that there was no trouble. He was riding a horse that belonged to Abu Talhah without any saddle, and he had his sword with him. He was assuring the people, saying: 'Do not be frightened! Do not be frightened!'" (Bukhari #2751)

He met up with people riding a horse with no saddle, and he carried his sword, for there might be a reason or need to use it. He did not wait for others to investigate the source of trouble as is usually done in these situations.

26. Bashfulness and Modesty

Abu Ayoub al-Ansari said that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"Four (traits) are from the practice of the Messengers; modesty, using perfume and siwak (tooth stick) and marriage." (Tirmidhi)

A'ishah said:

"A woman asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the bath which is taken at the end of the menstrual period. The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Purify yourself with a piece of cloth scented with musk.' The Prophet (pbuh) felt shy and turned his face. A'ishah said: 'I pulled her to myself and told her what the Prophet (pbuh) meant.'" (Bukhari #313)

27. Humbleness

The Messenger of God (pbuh) was the most humble person. He was so humble that if a stranger were to enter the mosque and approach the Prophet's sitting place while he was sitting with his Companions, one would not be able to distinguish him from his Companions. Anas bin Malik said:

"Once, while we were sitting with the Messenger of God (pbuh) in the Masjid, a man on his camel approached. After he tied it with a rope, he asked: 'Who amongst you is Muhammad?' The Messenger of God (pbuh) was sitting on the ground while he was leaning, with his Companions. We directed the Bedouin, saying: 'This white man leaning on the ground.' The Prophet (pbuh) did not differ nor distinguish himself from his Companions."

The Prophet (pbuh) would not hesitate to help the poor, needy and widows in their needs. Anas b. Malik said:

"A woman from the people of Madeenah who was partially insane said to the Prophet (pbuh): 'I have to ask you [your help] about something.' He helped her and took care of her needs." (Bukhari #670)

28. Mercy and Compassion

Abu Masood al-Ansari said:

"A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: 'O Messenger of God! By God! I do not pray Fajr prayer because so and so lengthens the prayer.' He said: 'I have never seen the Messenger of God (pbuh) deliver a speech in such an angry state.' He said: 'O People! Verily there are among you those who chase people away! If you lead people in prayer, shorten the prayer. There are old and weak people and those with special needs behind you in prayer.'" (Bukhari #670)

Once when the Prophet (pbuh) went to visit his grandchild he shed some tears.

"The Messenger of God (pbuh) sat with the child while he was on his deathbed. The child's eyes froze in their places like stones. Upon seeing that, the Messenger of God (pbuh) wept. Sa'd said to him, 'What is this 'O Prophet of God?'' He said: 'This is a mercy that God, the Exalted, places in the hearts of His slaves. Truly, God is merciful to those who are merciful towards others.'" (Bukhari #6942)

29. Patience and Forbearance

Anas bin Malik said:

"Once, I was walking with the Messenger of God (pbuh) while he was wearing a Yemeni cloak with a collar with rough edges. A Bedouin grabbed him strongly. I looked at the side of his neck and saw that the edge of the cloak left a mark on his neck. The Bedouin said, 'O Muhammad! Give me [some] of the wealth of God that you have.' The Messenger of God (pbuh) turned to the Bedouin, laughed and ordered that he be given [some money]." (Bukhari #2980)

Another example of his patience is the story of the Jewish Rabbi, Zaid bin Sa'nah. Zaid had given something as a loan to the Messenger of God (pbuh). He himself said,

"Two or three days prior to the return of the debt, the Messenger of God (pbuh) was attending the funeral of a man from the Ansar. Abu Bakr and Umar, Uthman and some other Companions were with the Prophet (pbuh). After he prayed the funeral prayer he sat down close to a wall, and I came towards him, grabbed him by the edges of his cloak, and looked at him in a harsh way, and said: 'O Muhammad! Will you not pay me back my loan? I have not

known the family of Abdul-Mutalib to delay in repaying debts!'

I looked at Umar b. al-Khat'taab - his eyes were swollen with anger! He looked at me and said: 'O Enemy of God, do you talk to the Messenger of God and behave towards him in this manner?! By the One who sent him with the truth, had it not been for the fear of not entering the Heavenly Gardens, I would have beheaded you with my sword! The Prophet (pbuh) was looking at Umar in a calm and peaceful manner, and he said: 'O Umar, you should have given us sincere counseling, rather than to do what you did! O Umar, go and repay him his loan, and give him twenty Sa'a (measurement of weight) extra because you scared him!'

Zaid said: 'Umar went with me, and repaid me the debt, and gave me over it twenty Sa'a of dates. I asked him: 'What is this?' He said: 'The Messenger of God (pbuh) ordered me to give it, because I frightened you.' Zaid then asked Umar: 'O Umar, do you know who I am?' Umar said: 'No, I don't - who are you?' Zaid said: 'I am Zaid b. Sa'nah.' Umar inquired: 'The Rabbi?' Zaid answered: 'Yes, the Rabbi.' Umar then asked him: 'What made you say what you said to the Prophet (pbuh) and do what you did to him?' Zaid answered: 'O Umar, I have seen all the signs of prophethood in the face of the Messenger of God (pbuh) except two - (the first) his patience and perseverance precede his anger and the second, the more harsher you are towards him, the kinder and more patient he becomes, and I am now satisfied. O Umar, I hold you as a witness that I testify and am satisfied that there is no true god worthy of being worshipped except God alone, and my religion is Islam and Muhammad (pbuh) is my Prophet. I also hold you as a witness that half of my wealth - and I am among the wealthiest people in Madeenah - I give for the sake of God to the Muslims.' Umar said: 'you will not be able to distribute your wealth to all the Muslims, so say, 'I will distribute it to some of the followers of Muhammad (pbuh).' Zaid said: 'I said, then I will distribute (the apportioned) wealth to some of the Muslims.' Both Zaid and Umar returned to the Messenger of God (pbuh). Zaid said to him: 'I bear witness that there is no true god worthy of being worshipped except God alone, and that Muhammad (pbuh) is the slave of God and His Messenger.' He believed in him, and witnessed many battles and then died in the Battle of Tabook while he was encountering the enemy - may God have mercy on Zaid.' " (Ibn Hibban #288)

A great example of his forgiveness and perseverance is apparent when he pardoned the people of Makkah after its conquest. When the Messenger of God (pbuh) gathered the people; who had abused, harmed and tortured him and his companions, and had driven them out of the city of Makkah, he said:

"What do you think I will do to you?' They answered: 'You will only do something favorable; you are a kind and generous brother, and a kind and generous nephew!' The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Go - you are free to do as you wish.'" (Baihaqi #18055)

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30. Patience

The Messenger of God (pbuh) was the epitome of patience. He was patient with his people before calling them to Islam; for they would worship idols and do sinful acts. He was patient and tolerant with the abuse and harm the pagans of Makkah inflicted on him and his

Companions and sought the reward of God. He was also patient and tolerant with the abuse of the hypocrites in Madeenah.

His patience was severely tested when he lost his loved ones. His wife, Khadeejah, died during his lifetime, as did all his children, save his daughter, Fatimah. His uncle Hamzah and Abu Talib passed away as well. The Prophet (pbuh) was patient and sought the reward of God. Anas b. Malik said:

"We entered the house of Abu Saif - the blacksmith - with the Prophet (pbuh). Abu Saif's wife was the wetnurse of his son, Ibraheem. The Messenger of God (pbuh) lifted his son Ibraheem, and smelled and kissed him. After a while he went and saw his son again - he was dying. The Prophet (pbuh) started to cry. Abdurrahmaan b. Auf said: 'O Prophet of God, you too cry!' The Messenger (pbuh) said: 'O Ibn Auf, this is a mercy' - the Prophet (pbuh) shed more tears and said: 'The eyes shed tears, the heart is saddened, and we only say what pleases our Lord, and we are saddened by your death, O Ibraheem!'" (Bukhari #1241)

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31. Justice and Fairness

The Messenger of God (pbuh) was just and fair in every aspect of his life and in the application of the religion. A'ishah said:

'The people of Quraish were extremely concerned about a Makhzoomi woman (i.e. the woman from the tribe of Makhzoom) who committed a theft. They conversed among themselves and said, 'Who can intercede on her behalf with the Messenger of God (pbuh)?'

They finally said: 'Who dares to speak to the Messenger of God (pbuh) in this matter except Usamah b. Zaid, the most beloved young man to the Messenger of God (pbuh).' So Usamah spoke to the Messenger of God (pbuh) regarding the woman. The Messenger of God (pbuh) said:

'O Usamah! Do you intercede (on their behalf to disregard) one of God's castigations and punishments!'

The Messenger of God (pbuh) got up and delivered a speech, saying:

'People before you were destroyed because when the noble among them stole, they would let him go; and if the poor and weak stole they would punish him. By God! If Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut her hand off.' (Bukhari #3288)

The Messenger of God (pbuh) was just and fair and allowed others to avenge themselves if he harmed them. Usaid b. Hudhair said:

'A man from the Ansar, was cracking jokes with people and making them laugh, and the Prophet (pbuh) passed by him and poked his side lightly with a branch of a tree that he was carrying. The man exclaimed: 'O Prophet of God! Allow me to avenge myself!' The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Go Ahead!' The man said: 'O Messenger of God, you are wearing a garment, and I was not when you poked me [i.e. you jabbed my exposed skin, so it is only fair I do the same to you]!' The Messenger of God (pbuh) raised his upper garment [to expose his side],

and the Ansari [merely] kissed it, saying: 'I only meant to do this, O Messenger of God!' (Abu Dawood #5224)

32. Fearing God, and Being Mindful of Him

The Messenger of God (pbuh) was the most mindful person of God. Abdullah bin Masoud said:

"[Once] the Messenger of God (pbuh) said to me: 'Recite to me from the Qur'an!' Abdullah b. Masood said: 'Shall I recite it to you, while it was you to whom it was revealed?!' The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Yes.' He said: 'I started to recite Surat an-Nisaa²³, until I reached the verse:

"How then if We brought from each nation a witness, and We brought you as a witness against these people!" (4:41)

Upon hearing this verse, the Messenger of God (pbuh) said: 'That is enough!' Abdullah b. Masood said, 'I turned around and saw the Messenger of God (pbuh) crying.' " (Bukhari #4763)

A'ishah said:

'If the Messenger of God (pbuh) saw dark clouds in the sky; he would pace forwards and backwards and would exit and enter his house. As soon as it rained, the Prophet (pbuh) would relax. A'ishah asked him about it, and he said: 'I do not know, it may be as some people said:

"Then, when they saw the (penalty in the shape of) a cloud traversing the sky, coming to meet their valleys, they said: 'This cloud will give us rain! Nay, it is the (calamity) you were asking to be hastened! A wind wherein is a Grievous Penalty!²⁴'" (46:24)

33. Richness and Contentment of the Heart

Umar b. al-Khattab said:

'I entered the Messenger's house and I found him sitting on a mat. He had a leather pillow stuffed with fibers. He had a pot of water by his feet, and there was some clothes hung on the wall. His side had marks due to the mat that he lay on. Umar wept when he saw this, and the Messenger (pbuh) asked him: 'Why do you weep?' Umar said: 'O Prophet of God! Khosrau and Caesar enjoy the best of this world, and you are suffering in poverty?!' He said: 'Aren't you pleased that they enjoy this world, and we will enjoy the Hereafter?' (Bukhari #4629)

34. Hoping for Goodness, Even for his Enemies

A'ishah said:

'I asked the Messenger of God (pbuh): "Did you face a day harder and more intense than the Battle of Uhud?" He replied: 'I suffered a lot from your people! The worst I suffered was on the Day of al-'Aqabah when I spoke to Ali b. Abd Yaleel b. Abd Kilaal (in order to support me) but he disappointed me and left me. I left the area while I was quite worried, and walked - when I reached an area called Qarn ath-Tha'alib, I raised my head to the sky and noticed a cloud that shaded me. Gabriel (pbuh) called me and said: 'O Muhammad! God, the Exalted, has heard what your people have said to you - and has sent the Angel in charge of the

mountains, so you can command him to do what you please.’ The Prophet (pbuh) said: ‘The Angel in charge of the mountains called me saying: ‘May God praise you and keep safe from all evil! O Muhammad, I will do whatever you command me to do. If you like I can bring the Akh-shabain mountains together and crush them all.’ The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: ‘It may be that God raises from among them a progeny who worship God alone and associate no partners with Him.’ (Bukhari #3059)

Footnotes

16. A great scholar of Islam who wrote many works, including on the Biography of the Prophet (pubh).
17. Qadhi Eiyadh, ‘**Al-Shifa bita’reefi Hoquooqil-Mostafa’**
18. According to Islamic etiquette. One should always begin from the right.
19. A town previously on the outskirts of Madeenah.
20. It is prohibited for men to wear gold in Islam.
21. It was forbidden by God for the Prophet (pbuh) or his family to accept any form of charity.
22. Ibn Hisham’s Biography, Vol. 1, p.493 [Arabic Edition].
23. The fourth chapter of the Qur’an.
24. Bukhari #3034.