

CONCLUSION

In creation, only humans have a share in all the attributes of Allah – with exception of eternity. Along with this, as a result of His wisdom, Allah has equipped humans with the potential for righteousness as well as corruption. He thus has made humans capable of benevolence and evil.

From this perspective, the purpose of religion is to restrain the animal desires of the human soul, while raising to perfection the good qualities. Yet, for this goal to be realized, humanity needs a perfect as well as a concrete example to emulate. One of the reasons prophets have been sent is to meet this need for a perfect example follow.

Allah, the Most High, says in the Qur'an: "*We sent not a Messenger but to be obeyed, in accordance with the leave of Allah...*" (Qur'an, Nisa, 4/64)

This quality reached its peak in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which is well illustrated in the following verse of the Qur'an: "*You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for those who hope in Allah and in the Final Day, who frequently remember Him.*" (Qur'an, Ahzab, 33/21)

The only prophet in history whose life is recorded in the most minute detail is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). His words, deeds and feelings, which have been ceaselessly recorded, have taken their place in history as pages of great honor and significance. His life will serve as an example to humanity until the last day. The following verse bears witness to this fact: "*And surely you have sublime morals.*" (Qur'an, Qalam, 68/4)

The blessed personality and life of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) constitute that matchless zenith of perfect human conduct needed for the spiritual fulfillment of humanity. Allah, the Most High, created him for this purpose for all people. For this reason, He had him pass through all situations in life, from being a powerless orphan to being prophet and president of state. The wisdom behind this life path is that all people, regardless of their place in life, can find for themselves an ideal example of conduct for application in their lives to the extent of their ability and power.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), with his outstanding personality, was chosen as the last prophet for all humanity. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) might come from his progeny. Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) gave good tidings of his coming, and the Prophet's mother, Aminah, saw him in a dream before his birth. He was raised directly under the supervision of Allah, ornamented by the most beautiful traits of high character and chosen as the most trustworthy guide for humanity.

It is thus necessary for humanity in these times to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to obtain happiness in this world and the Hereafter. Even attaining the love

of Allah depends on following him, as Allah the Most High has explained in the following verse: *“Say, ‘if you do love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* (Qur’an, Al-I Imran, 3/31)

Based on this fact, only those fortunate souls who adopt and internalize the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) can earn the sublime love of Allah.

The first and the most important outcome of loyalty to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), is to learn the love of Allah. Furthermore, following in the footsteps of the best example of morality and conduct results, in sharing in his perfection. Since his is the best morality and conduct, those who follow him and love him will also become excellent. The inner worlds of those who love him reach higher levels, higher even than the angels. Their family lives reflect life in Paradise. A society based on the Prophet’s example gains peace and tranquility with breezes blowing through it from the Age of Happiness (asr al-sa’adah). They taste the authentic joy of closeness to Allah in their worship. If everyone, whether rich or poor, supervisor or subordinate, ruler or ruled, strong or weak, were to live as a servant of Allah implementing His orders, this would eventually bring about an exceptional balance in society.

For instance, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was given the duty of guiding humanity, many who had led immoral and shameful lives became outstandingly virtuous and exceptional personalities through their new education. Consequently, an evil period ended and a new righteous period began. Slaves gained the dignity and honor of being human and many rulers became just and virtuous through learning about how to be a servant of Allah. The words of Najashi, then the Christian king of Abyssinia, are significant:

*“I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is the one whose coming had been foretold by Jesus (peace be upon him). I would go and carry his shoes if I did not have the responsibilities I currently have towards my people.”*¹⁹⁸

As people saw the happiness and salvation in both worlds offered them, they rushed to him as a river rushes to the sea. This was a gift from Allah, as explained in the following verse of the Qur’an:

“When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory, And thou dost see the people enter Allah’s religion in crowds, Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: For He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy).” (Qur’an, Nasr, 110/1-3)

Those who followed his path led righteous, decent, peaceful and blessed lives, even when facing challenges and difficulties. They became like roses growing among countless wild bushes. Their happiness in the Hereafter is to be even greater. This is because there the Great Intercession (*Shafa'ah 'Uzmaa*) of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) will take place on behalf of the sinners from the followers of the previous prophets as well as those sinners from his own community, the Ummah. The following hadith explains how this event is to unfold:

“I will be the first one to be resurrected among people. When humanity comes to the Divine presence, I will be their spokesman. As they lose hope of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, I will give them good tidings. I will carry the Banner of Praise (*liva al-hamd*). I am the most blessed human to approach Allah, yet I do not express this out of self-pride,”¹⁹⁹

The Prophet of Mercy will intercede for the sinners on the Day of Judgment and his intercession will be accepted by Allah. The following Qur’anic verse demonstrates that his intercession on behalf of believers is to be accepted by Allah:

“If they had only, when were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah’s forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an, Nisa, 4/64)

This verse is a divine statement carrying the promise and good tidings that the intercession of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for his community (the Ummah) will be accepted by Allah.

The following is another exceptionally glad tidings from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him):

“On the Day of Judgment, all of humanity will be in state of shock. They will go to Adam (peace be upon him) to seek help and will say to him,

‘Please intercede on our behalf in the Divine Presence!’

He will tell them:

‘I am not in a position to intercede; you should go to Abraham! He is a close friend of the Most Merciful (Khalil al-Rahman).’

People will proceed to Abraham (peace be upon him) and will request him to intercede, but he will respond:

‘I am not in a position to intercede, but you should go to Moses! He is the who has spoken with Allah.’

When they come to Moses (peace be upon him) and express to him their need for intercession, he will in turn tell them:

‘I am not in a position to intercede! You should go to Jesus (peace be upon him). He is called the Word and the Soul of Allah.’

They will finally make their way to Jesus (peace be upon him), but he will tell them:

‘I am not in position to intercede! You should go to Muhammad (peace be upon him).’

They ultimately will come to me and I will say:

‘Yes, this privilege has been given to me.’

Then I will request permission to go before my Lord. This permission will be granted. At that moment, some words of praise, which I do not know now, will be revealed to me. I will praise my Lord with these words and will prostrate before Him. At that moment, Allah will say to me:

“O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

Then I will say,

“O my Lord! I request for my Community, I request for my Community!’

Allah, the Most High, will say:

‘O Muhammad! Walk and bring out those whose faith is as light as grain of barley.’

I will do as I have been told. Then, I will return back and will repeat the same words of praise and afterwards will prostrate. Again, I will be told:

‘O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

Again, I will say:

“O my Lord! I seek for my Community! I seek for my Community!’

Allah will say:

‘Walk and bring out those whose faith is as light as an atom or as a mustard seed!’

I will go and will do as I have been told. Thereafter, I will return again. Using the same words of praise, I will praise my Lord and prostrate. Allah will tell me:

“O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

I will say:

‘O my Lord! I petition for my Community! I petition for my Community!’

Allah, the Most High, will say,

‘Walk and bring out those whose faith is much, much lighter, lighter even than a mustard seed!’

I will proceed to do as I have been told and will come back for the fourth time. I will praise Allah with the same words of praise and will prostrate once again.

Allah, the Most High will say,

“O Muhammad! Raise your head! Speak! Your speech will be heard. Ask! Your wishes will be fulfilled! Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted.’

This time, I will say:

‘O my Lord! Grant me my wish for everyone who has said ‘La ilaha illallah’ (there is no god but God!)

Allah, the Most High says:

‘By My Power, Glory, Highness and Majesty! I will surely bring out those who have said ‘La ilaha illallah!’²⁰⁰

Being able to attain these blessings requires staying away from passions and from animal desires through the internalization of the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

It is related that there was a man who was a Muslim but he did not adopt the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One day he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his dream, yet the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated no affection towards him. The man became upset and asked:

“O, Messenger of Allah! Are you unhappy with me?”

“No!” he replied.

“But why don’t you show me any interest?”

“Because I do not know you!”

“How is this possible, Messenger of Allah? I am one of your community. I have heard from scholars that you recognize every one from your community as a mother recognizes her child.”

“Yes, this is true. However, I do not see any signs on you from my example (i.e. *sunnah*). Besides, no praise (i.e. *salawat*) has reached me from you. You should know that I recognize one from my Ummah to the extent that he adopts my *sunnah*.”

The man woke up with great sorrow and repented for his sins. He adopted the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his life and sent praises to the soul of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One night, he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his dream again. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him:

:I now recognize you and I will intercede for you.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had an exceptional nature, worthy of love in all its dimensions. He is the most virtuous and most beautiful being ever to have lived. He is the most compassionate of those who have cried for humanity. He is the only true guide and only true teacher. He is the one who has transformed into loving and compassionate people those hearts were so hardened that they were able to bury their daughters alive. He has taught them a holy book and has given them wisdom. To hold him above all else and to love him with boundless passion are signs of the perfection of faith. The apex of such love is illustrated in the following hadith: “No one among you will have perfect faith until he loves me more than his parents, more than his children and more than any other human”²⁰¹

This hadith is an excellent warning and a reminder that one can attain perfection in faith only through total love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). The doors of spiritual progress and enlightenment are closed to those who are removed from this love. The seed of divine love can grow only in a soil fertile with his love. He is the spring of divine blessings that nurtures hearts. A heart which loves him compared to a heart which does not is like a piece of gold among crude stones.

The Moon, which reflects light from the Sun, is a sign of the existence of the Sun. In the same way, those saints who have been illuminated with the light of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are witnesses for him. For this reason, whoever says the following words with love in his heart feels a divine spark in his soul:

*Ashadu an la ilaha ilallah,
Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasuluhu.*

That is to say: I bear witness that there is no god but God and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Sometimes spiritual passion becomes so overwhelming that the soul feels the pleasure of the indescribable taste of faith. The story of Bilal of Abyssinia (may Allah be pleased with him) is full of lessons.

Bilal was lonely because he had no one to support him; he had no friend to share in his sorrow. He was a simple slave. Yet, one day he was honored with faith. Afterwards, his faith and his struggle to protect his faith became an outstanding example for future generations of believers.

He met the Prophet (peace be upon him) and entered the garden of his love. It was as if, with his entire existence, he had become part of the Prophet. But his owner who was far removed from the divine light of guidance tied him down on fiery sand and tortured him. His owner mercilessly whipped his naked body. His skin bled. The ignorant crowd around him screamed,

“You dirty slave! Come back to our way and save yourself!”

Yet, Bilal roared like a wounded lion in the sea of the fiery sand and proclaimed over and over again with all his power “God is one, God is one!”

This increased the anger of the uncontrollable crowd and they began beating him more and more... This was not enough to calm them down. So, they tied his neck with a rope and pulled his body around. Against all this, Bilal sought refuge in the love of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was as if he did not feel what was happening to him, as his heart was flooded with the love of Allah and His Messenger. His heart was so happy. Yet, in the physical world he was in a painful situation. He did not even have a hut of his own to sleep in.

Thus, Bilal’s love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) elevated him from slavery to the station of a sultan in the hearts of the believers. He became the *muaddhin* (i.e. the caller to prayer) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and called people to prayer five times a day. He loved the Prophet (peace be upon him) so much that in his last breath he was saying:

“Be happy! Be happy! I am returning to the Prophet!”²⁰² These were his last words before he departed to the other world.

Therefore, as the hadith that states “one is with the ones he loves”,²⁰³ our principle of action on the path to eternity is to follow the Qur’anic verse below:

“So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.” (Qur’an, Hashr, 59/5)

“O Allah! Please make this humble work, which is so limited in its eloquence, a cause for your mercy and your forgiveness and bless us with the truth your Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) has conveyed to humanity. Bless us with the love of your last Messenger (peace be upon him). Bless us with his intercession.

We are aware that our limited words of description about this personality who represents zenith of what it means to be a human are without doubt far from conveying the fullness of his being. We even feel embarrassed to claim we have introduced him. Our words represent only our powerlessness before such a vast task. What we have humbly aimed for is nothing other than the honor of having made such an intention and of having made such an attempt. He is an infinite world that can be penetrated only to the extent of one’s love and one’s sincerity towards him.

May Allah bless us by opening our wings in the skies of this spiritual world.

Amin.

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