

# The Prophet of Universal Mercy

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*As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”*

*“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.*

*Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.*

*May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”*

**In the name of Allah most merciful, most compassionate**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week’s khutba is linked to the concept of the Prophet of Universal Mercy.

The beginning of existence was an act of mercy and compassion. Without mercy the universe would be in chaos. Everything has come into existence through compassion and by compassion it continues to exist in harmony. For this reason, while mentioning His blessings upon mankind in the sura al-Rahman (the All-Merciful) in the Qur’an, He begins:

**“Ar-Rahman (the All-Merciful). He taught the Qur’an. He created man. He taught him speech”.** (al-Rahman, 55:1-4)

All aspects of this life are a rehearsal for the afterlife and every creature is engaged in action to this end. In every effort order is evident and in every achievement compassion resides. Some ‘natural’ events or social convulsions in the human order which seem to man disagreeable at first sight should not be regarded as incompatible with compassion. They are like dark clouds or lightning and thunder, which, although frightening for man, bring us good tidings of rain. Thus, the whole universe, from minutest particles to gigantic galaxies, sings the praises of the All-Compassionate.

This Qur’an states that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was **“..sent as a Mercy to the worlds** (Anbiya 21:107); that he was **“..sent as a bearer of good tidings and a warner”** (Furqan 25:56 and Baqara 2:119) **And lo! You are of a tremendous character.** (Qalam 68:4)

When the companions asked His wife Aisha, **“What is his character like?”** She replies, **“His character is that of the Qur’an.”** His followers referred to him as a walking, talking Qur’an.

He states that his true duty is to complete the exalted character. He declares, **“I am not the prophet of one tribe but the prophet of the people of all colours.”** The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is like a spring of pure water in the heart of a desert, or like a source of light in the darkness enveloping the universe. Whoever appeals to this spring can take as much water as he needs to quench his thirst and is purified of all his dirt or pollution, spiritual or intellectual, and illumined with the light of belief.

Mercy was a like a magical key in the hands of God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. He opened with this key the doors of hearts so hardened and rusty

that one would think it impossible to open them, and lighted a torch of belief in them.

The compassion of God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, encompasses every creature. Indeed, he was also an invincible commander and an able statesman. He knew that to leave the world to blood-stained, blood-thirsty people would be tyranny of the most terrible kind to all oppressed and wronged people. His compassion therefore required that lambs should be able to live in the utmost security against the attacks of wolves. He desired, of course, the guidance of everyone. This was his greatest concern, as stated in the Qur'an:

**“Yet it may be, if they believe not in this Message, you will consume yourself, following after them, with grief.”** (al-Kahf, 18.6)

## **His Compassion Towards Disbelievers**

But what could he do for those who persisted in unbelief and actually waged war against him in order to destroy him and his Message? He had to fight against his enemies out of his universal compassion that encompasses every creature.

After the Qurayshi unbelievers were defeated at Badr, they had spent a whole year preparing for a deadly retaliatory blow against the Muslims. Meeting at the foot of Mount Uhud, a few miles from Madina, the Muslims at first were victorious and the Quraysh began to flee. At this crucial point, the archers whom God's Messenger had positioned at 'Aynayn pass left their positions, against the Prophet's command, and pursued the enemy. Khalid ibn Walid, commander of the enemy's cavalry, took this opportunity to surround the Muslims from behind. As a result, the Muslims experienced a reversal of their situation. Such leading figures as Hamza, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, 'Abd Allah ibn Jahsh, and Anas ibn Nadr were martyred. Even the Prophet was wounded. Let us note here that during the battle, God's Messenger, the Prophet of forgiveness and mercy who was sent as a mercy for creation, raised his hands toward God and, while bleeding profusely, asked for the enemy to be forgiven: **“O God, forgive my people, for they do not know.”** (Bukhari, Muslim)

In the tenth year of Prophethood, following a three year boycott and trade embargo imposed on the Muslims, God's Messenger went to Taif to seek help and refuge for the believers. They refused to embrace Islam and instead men, women and children stoned him out of the city. Despite his companion trying his utmost to act as a human shield against the rocks thrown at Allah's Messenger, they were both covered in blood and injuries.

Eventually, they managed to rest under the shade of a tree on the outskirts of Taif, where the angel Gabriel (as) appeared to them. **“O Messenger of Allah! Grant me permission and I will crush the people of Taif between these two mountains!”** However, the prophet refuses and instead says, **“I have been sent as a mercy to mankind, they would not have done so, if only they knew!”** In Makka, his people inflicted on him every kind of suffering eventually forcing him to emigrate to Madina, and then waged war on him for five years. However, when he conquered Makka without bloodshed in the twenty-first year of his Prophethood, he asked the Makkan unbelievers, awaiting his decision about them: **“How do you expect me to treat you?”** They responded unanimously: **“You are a noble one,**

**the son of a noble one.'** He announced to them his decision: **"You may go away! No reproach this day shall be on you; may God forgive you. He is the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate."** (Ibn Hisham, Ibn Kathir)

## **His Compassion Towards The Believers**

The Messenger's compassion towards the believers was of the utmost degree. The Qur'an describes his compassion in the following verse:

"There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, compassionate". (al-Tawba, 9.128)

He lowered unto believers his wing of tenderness through mercy (al-Hijr, 15.88), and was the 'guardian' of believers and nearer to them than their selves (al-Ahzab, 33.6).

When one of his Companions died, he asked those present at the funeral whether that Companion had left any unpaid debt. On learning that he had left a debt, he mentioned the above quoted verse and announced: "I am his guardian. Let the creditors appeal to me to collect their debt." (Muslim, Bukhari)

The compassion of God's Messenger even encompassed hypocrites and unbelievers. Although he recognized the hypocrites of his time, he never disclosed them so that they could enjoy the rights of full citizenship to which their outward confession of faith and practice entitled them. Since they lived among Muslims, their unbelief in eternal life after death may have been reduced or changed to doubt, and therefore their fear of death and the pain caused by the assertion of eternal non-existence after death might have been diminished. As for unbelievers, God removed the collective destruction from them. He had eradicated many peoples before. God says:

**"But God would never chastise them while you were among them; God would never chastise them as they begged forgiveness."** (al-Anfal, 8.33)

This verse refers not only to the unbelievers in the time of God's Messenger, but also to all those coming later. God will not destroy peoples altogether so long as people who follow the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, continue to live in the world. Besides, He has left 'the door of repentance' open until the Last Day. Anyone can accept Islam or beg God's forgiveness, however sinful he is. For this reason, a Muslim's enmity towards unbelievers is, in fact, in the form of pitying them. When 'Umar, the second Caliph, saw a priest of eighty years, he sat down and sobbed. When asked why he was sobbing, he replied: 'God assigned him so long a life span, but he has not been able to find the true path.'

One day Abu Hureyrah (ra) asks the Messenger of Allah to curse all the disbelievers for the suffering and persecution that they have caused to the believers. The Messenger's response to his request is: **"I was not sent as one to call down curses on people, but I was sent as a mercy."** (Muslim)

He also said: **"I am Muhammad, and Ahmad (praised one), and Muqaffi (the Last Prophet); and I am also Hashir (the final Prophet in the presence of whom the dead will be resurrected); and the Prophet of**

**repentance (the Prophet for the cause of whom ‘the door’ of repentance will always remain open), and the Prophet of mercy.”** (Ibn Hanbal, Muslim)

When Ma‘iz was punished for fornication, one of the Companions reproached him saying: “He disclosed the sin he had committed secretly and died like a dog.” God’s Messenger frowned at him and said: **“You have backbitten your friend. His repentance and asking God’s pardon for his sin would be enough for the forgiveness for all the sinners in the world.”** (Muslim, Bukhari)

*Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen. Was-salaatu was-salaamu alaa Khayril mursaleen. Muhammadin-nabeey-yil Ummiy-ye, wa-‘alaa aalihee, wa sahbihee, aj-ma’een.*

*Ammaa ba’ad:*

*Innalláha wa malaaiikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, wa alaa áli Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”*