**FORUM**

**INFINITE MERCY - Hz. MUHAMMAD S.A.W**

**Umit Goker [[1]](#footnote-1)**

**PREAMABLE**

*The contemporary societies at the moment are going through a crisis of intolerance and bigotry. In this scenario, the teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad(may peace be upon him) become all the more relevant not just for the Muslims but for the entire mankind. He laid the foundation of a pluralistic society and introduced the concept of tolerance in an otherwise regressive set up of Arabia. His message being based on the principle of mercy hugely influenced the socio-economic and political context; leaving an incredible mark on all the times to come.Keeping in view the essence of his message based on mercy and the most pressing need of applying this message in every aspect of our lives, the Humanities Department in collaboration with Rumi Forum organized a seminar on the theme The Infinite Mercy Hazrat Muhammad( S.A.W.)This theme was interpreted by the Turkish Scholar Umet Goker in a way which highlighted the significance of Holy Prpophet’s role as Allah’s Messenger and at the same time touched upon the fact that Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) despite being from amongst us; Allah had endowed him with special qualities and assigned him the huge responsibility of guiding the makind.The speaker very interestingly pointed out that the very concept of Infinite Mercy was exempilified by Hazrat Muhammad(S.A.W.)in such a manner and fashion that it became a test for the unbelievers who simply failed to rationalize that how a human could be so full of compassion asking forgiveness from Allah even for his enemies? In a sense he took the idea of mercy to an “incredible level”. The speaker from this very basic idea of mercy tried to give an interpretation to different aspects of Holy Prophet(may peace be upon him)’s life and message. In the last , the speaker reminding the audience that how Holy Prophet(may peace be upon him)made us to realize the temporal nature of the world by cultivating in his followers an inclilination towards a spiritual life ; where exists a “deep awareness of God’s existence.Thus mercy emerged as the dominant theme in the way the Holy Prophet(may peace be upon him) communicated and dealt with the people.The Scholar concluded his talk on a very thought provking suggestion that the teachings of Holy Quran and Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) should serve as a mirror for allof us.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Undertaking such a task of writing about Muhammed (peace be upon him) would be better served if the discussion begins with the views of Hassan ibn Thabit. Hassan ibn Thabit was one of the companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and was also known to be Prophet’s poet. He defended the Prophet through his poems when hewas under verbal attack. His words certainly had a heartening and stimulating effect on the companions.

*In one of his poems he says: “Ve ma medahtü Muhammaden bi mekaleti; velakşn medahtü mekaleti bi muhammed.”
“With all those words I haven’t, in fact, praised Muhammed (SAV) but rather I prasied my words* *about Him* (*sav and added value to them through my mention*).”

This explains the essence of this write up quite well that anything that one finds beautiful or of value in the idea or thought of this aricle that is because of Him*.*

In *Surat-ul Fussilat* Allah draws our attention to the fact that Muhammed is mortal just like ourselves:

*“Kul innemâ enâ beşerun miślukum yûhâ ileyye ennemâ ilâhukum ilâhun vâhidun festekîmû ileyhi vestaġfirûh(u)(k) ve veylun lilmuşrikîn(e)”
“Say : "I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me by inspiration, that your God is One God. So take the straight path unto Him, and ask for His Forgiveness." And woe to those who join gods with Allah”*

This should not of course mislead us to think that he is just like one of us. Obviously ,tawhid, the principle of unity of Allah is the most essential and central in Islam. Associating partners with him is of Allah.

In *Surat-ün Nisa* Allah says: *“Allah forgive not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgive whom He please other sins than this: one who joins other gods with Allah, has strayed far, far away (from the right).”*

After having established this principle of tahwid, original point to be noted here is that assuredly Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) is a human being but at the same time he is not an ordinary one. He is not like one of us. He is equipped with special qualities.

A very special task of being the guide for humanity is put on his shoulders by Allah. There are so many verses from Qur’an that refers to this very special status of him.His special status has been beautifully described by Imam al-Busiri of 13th century in his beautiful Kaside. As he puts it ,

*Muhammedün seyyidül kevneyni ves sekaleyni
Vel ferîkayni min urbin ve min acemi”
“Muhammad ( Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) is the leader of both worlds and both creations (man and jinn).
And of both groups, Arabs and non Arabs.”*

*"Fe inne fadle Rasûlillâhi leyselehû
Haddün fe yu’ribe anhü nâtıkun bi femi"
“For verily excellence of the Messenger of Allah has no (limits)
Bounds, that a speaker might (be able to ) express with his mouth.”*

*"Lev nâsabet kadrahû âyâtühü ızâmen
Ahyesmühû hıyne yüd’a dâriser rimemi"
“If his miracles were proportionate (according ) to his rank, in greatness,
Then his name would have, when called out brought decaying bones back to life.”*

*“Fe innehû şemsü fadlin hüm kevâkibühâ
Yuzhirne envârahâ lin nâsi fiz zulemi”
"For verily he is the sun of virtue (and ) they (Anbiyaa) are its stars.
Which show their lights to people in the dark."*

**A MESSENGER FROM AMONGST US**

In *Surat-ü Al-i Imran* Allah (cc) says:
*“Lekad mennallâhu alâl mu’minîne iz bease fîhim resûlen min enfusihim yetlû aleyhim âyâtihî ve yuzekkîhim ve yuallimuhumul kitâbe vel hikmete, ve in kânû min kablu le fî dalâlin mubîn(mubînin).”
“Assuredley Allah has done the believers a great kindness by raising among them a Messenger of their own, reciting to them His revelations, and purifying them (of false beliefs and doctrines, and sins and all kinds of uncleanness), and instructing them in the Book and the Wisdom. Whereas before that, they were lost in obvious error.”*

Part of this great kindness was that Allah sent a Messenger from among us. Otherwise how would he set an example and how could we take him a model and follow his footsteps and emulate him in our lives.

In fact some unbelievers tried to use this as a justification for their rejection of His messengerhood. They tried to cover up their vain glory with these futile efforts of rationalisation. His being human became a test for them andthey failed the test.

*Allah says in Surat-ül Furkan:
“Ve kâlû mâli hâzer resûli ye’kulüt taâme ve yemşî fîl esvâk(esvâkı), lev lâ unzile ileyhi melekun fe yekûne meahu nezîrâ(nezîren).”
"And they say: "What sort of a messenger is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him?"*

He did not live an extraordinary life in the sense that he did not face the challenges and dificulties. In fact, he faced and endured the most unbearable ones. In order to shed light on at least part of this significant reality; one need to take into account the following narration of events. The life of Muhammed (peace be upon him) was so simple that once Hazrat Umar, upon seeing him lying on a rough mat, could not help but weep and say: *“O Messenger of Allah, kings sleep in soft, feather beds, while you lie on a rough mat. You are the Messenger of Allah and thereby deserve an easy life more than anyone else.” Allah’s Messenger answered: “Do you not agree that the luxuries of the world should be theirs and those of the Hereafter ours?” (Bukhari, Muslim).*

The simplicity of his life could further be guaged from the pessage below.

*“Allah’s Messenger, like all prophets, expected no reward for performing his mission. He suffered hunger, thirst, and every other hardship and persecutions. He was forced into exile and made the target of many assaults and traps both from within and without when he had emigrated. He bore all of these simply for the good pleasure of Allahand the good of Humanity.” (Ali Ünal, Annotated Interperation of Holy Qur’an)*

His devotion to Allah could be explained in the sense that one of his companions Abu Hurayra once saw him performing the Prayer in a seated position and asked if he were ill? The messenger’s reply caused Abu Hurayra to cry; when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him said,*“I am hungry Abu Hurayra. Hunger has left me no strength to stand up forthe prayer(Abu Nuaym).*

In addition to receiving no worldy benefit, as mentioned above, Allah’s Messenger underwent much torture. He was beaten many times and left on the ground covered with dust and only Hazrat Fatımah, his daughter, ran to his aid. Once he was being beaten at the Ka’bah , one of his companions, Hazrat Abu Bakr ran to help him, shouting to those beating him*, “Will you kill a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah’?” (Bukhari).*

**AS A MESSENGER**

With regards to the fact that Allah surely had been kind enough to the entire mankind when he sent Prophet Muhammed (may peace be upon him) as a Messenger, to quote from Fethullah Gülen’s article with the title of ‘The Last Messenger of the Unseen’.

*“The final Word about God, the universe, and the humanity was spoken by Prophet Muhammed (sav). …*

*He is the interpreter who never misleads, the one who teaches the true relationship between humanity and God, (the one) who clarifies our responsibilities. …*

*Because of the light he has spread, humanity can see things as they really are. … Mist is lifted from the eyes of those who consider him, and rust is dissolved from their souls. …*

*He teaches us about God; He introduces us to the divine attributes and names, and such intimate knowledge stimulates in us a sense of our responsibility to God. In this respect, he is a master teacher who makes known the unknowable and helps us understand the incomprehensible. He announces religious rules, preaches human virtues, and describes moral principles. He speaks with the authority of God on religious and moral questions; he is a lawmaker and the embodied explanation for the truth of truths. …*

*Thanks to him, humanity transcends its corporeal nature and turns toward the spiritual life of the heart. …*

He was a monument of faith who lived strictly and carefully practiced what he taught. He always behaved in accordance with the world to come and lived in a deep awareness of God’s presence. He was more concerned and sensitive than anyone around him and deeply aware of his responsibility. Always in pursuit of a beautiful end, he embraced his lofty task, never taking his eyes off his goal for a single moment, and he offered the treasures of his deep relationship with Allah to everyone. It is he who explains the meaning of existence and relates it to its true Creator. It is he who reveals the wisdom. He constantly reminds us that we are not alone and makes our souls feel known. Thus, he brings relief to our hearts and removes our desolation; we taste the pleasures of being at home in the world.

*Indeed, if we can live in the universe as in a warm house, if our hearts pulse with the love of truth, if we understand the nature of reality, it is because of the torch his words have lit in our minds. Our knowledge of existence is nothing but the unfolding of his inspiration in our souls. …*

He (sav) came with a message that concerns everyone and relates to everything. People everywhere were attracted to the profundity of his mission. His temperament was distinguished by utmost perfection, his behavior by exceptional trust, and his attitudes by his constant interaction with the Divine.

He inspired confidence in everyone, he was always trustworthy. …

As a family leader, he was peerless.
He was a perfect mentor to his friends and knew how to win hearts with his mild manners.
He was a matchless guide, never misleading his followers.
He was a master of speech, a godly man of the heart.
Despite being the peak of perfection, he always considered himself just one man among many. He did not wish to be praised or honored as he surely deserved, and he advised his friends not to show him excessive respect.

Although he was the greatest sultan of the spiritual realm, he lived exceptionally modestly. Instead of eating, he fed others; instead of adorning himself, he clothed others.
He always acted out of a deep gratitude, giving thanks to Allah a hundred times for even the smallest blessing.
He surpassed the angels in his knowledge, love, and awe of Allah.
He was in the world but was not worldly.
His heart was with his Lord, and his eyes were fixed on the works that manifest His names.
He was as generous as the wind, which carries seeds across the world and leaves them there to grow. He looked after the poor and fed the hungry, often going hungry himself. When he died, he had no palace or estate, no wealth or riches. Nor could he leave possessions to his family. He lived in the world humbly and left it humbly. Surely, he did not abandon the world, just as he never indulged it. Instead, he judged this life according to its true worth, and regarded the next world according to its infinite value.

 Despite his dignity, nobility, and relationship with God, he was so humble that newcomers would barely notice him. It was as if he held these two opposites together.Ignoring any reverence shown to him by his friends, he continued to share the ground with them, share his meals with them, and disguise his uniqueness as if it was a great secret.He joked with those around him to make them feel comfortable. He adorned his dignity with humility, balanced his majesty with compassion, and always privileged his humanity over the eminence of his task.

He was moderate, calm, and balanced at all times. He acted gently, even in the face of great affliction. He knew how to calm the rage and fury of those around him and how to soften the fiercest enemies with a single word.
When he was forced into combat, he quickly sought mediation. As long as the rights of people were not violated, he would treat his aggressors with forgiveness and tolerance, as the historical literature on his life abundantly demonstrates.
His trustworthiness was without precedent. He never broke his promise or went back on his word, neither before his prophethood nor after. He lived as a monument of fidelity, never speaking falsely or even alluding to untruth. …

His expressions were so fluent, his statements so clear, and his style so rich that he could reveal a world of truth to his audience with a mere sentence or two. Sometimes he spoke volumes of wisdom in a single word, volumes that he entrusted to the interpretation of later masters of exegesis. “I have been given comprehensive words,” he said, referring to this divine blessing in him. …

He addressed the people in a style they could understand. He avoided confusion and clarified his intentions with succinct expressions so that all could benefit from his teachings and be satisfied, whether learned or ignorant, young or old.
He delivered many sermons, addressed various concerns, analyzed different subjects, and always spoke the truth. Even his fiercest enemies never accused him of a single lie. …

He spoke of faith, set rules regarding worship, and made pronouncements on social, economic, military, and administrative topics.
He practiced what he taught and harvested the fruits of his practice.
History has certified the truth of his proclamations, and thousands of commentators, philosophers, and scholars after him have acknowledged the wisdom of his words. Truly he stands unique among human history; his magnificent legacy of knowledge and wisdom encompassing all aspects of existence ( Gülen, So That Others May Live)

**MERCY FOR ALL**

Allah made it clear in *Surat-ül Enbiya* that he sent Muhammed (peace be upon him) as a mercy for all. The verse is as follows: *“We have not sent you (O Muhammed) but as an unequalled mercy for all the worlds.”* In more specific terms, while he was fulfilling his mission and communicating his message, he showed mercy to people at an incredible level.

Much can be said on this but it would be sufficient here quotethe two following verses from the Holy Quran, *In Surat-ut Tevbe* Allah says:
*“Lekad câekum resûlun min enfusikum azîz(azîzun), aleyhi mâ anittum harîsun aleykum bil mu’minîne raûfun rahîm(rahîmun).”
“There has come to you (O People) a Messenger from among yourselves; extremely grievous to him is your suffering, full of concern for you and for the believers full of piety and compassion.*- In *Surat\_ul Kehf:
“Fele’alleke bâḣi’un nefseke ‘alâ âśârihim in lem yu/minû bihâżâ-lhadîśi esefâ(n)”
“Yet it may be that you (O Muhammed) will torment yourself to death with grief, following after them, if they do not believe in this message.”*

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) recounts the situation of a prophet in which his people beats him up severly. His face bleeds, he wipes his face and at the same time implores Allah by saying “O Allah, forgive them because they don’t know.” This is the spirit in which he communicated with his people. This is the attitude and mercy he showed to his people.

**PRACTISING THE MESSAGE FULLY**

Allah says to Muhammed (peace be upon him):
*“Yâ eyyuhâ-rrasûlu belliġ mâ unzile ileyke min rabbik(e)(s) ve-in lem tef’al femâ bellaġte risâleteh(u)(c) va(A)llâhu ya’simuke mine-nnâs(i)(k) inna(A)llâhe lâ yehdî-lkavme-lkâfirîn(e)”
“O Messenger (you who convey and embody the message in the best way)! Convey and make known in the clearest way all that has been sent down to you from your Lord. For if you do not, you have not conveyed His Message and and fulfilled the task of His Messengership. And God will certainly protect you from the people.”* As it has been put,

*“This dedication and determination is a general characteristic for all prophets. A prophet considers all circumstances and does everything permitted in order to perform his duty.
Many prophets lived and died with no one accepting their message. However, they didn’t lose heart, weaken in resolve, or resort to means not permitted by Allah like violence, terror, or deception, despite having to suffer every kind of hardship and torture of the most pitiless sort.
Every Prophet conveyed Allah’s message to his people without becoming weary or daunted. The harsh reactions of people couldn’t hinder a Prophet from his duty.”* (Ali Ünal, Annotated Interperation of Holy Qur’an)

Prophet Muhammed not only communicated His message in such a determined way but also he practiced it fully.

**MAKİNG MORAL QUALITIES PERFECT AND COMPLETE**

Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) says that He was sent to make moral qualities perfect and complete.In *Surat-ul Kelam* Allah says to Muhammed (peace be upon him) :
*“Ve-inneke le’alâ ḣulukin ‘azîm(in)”
 “You are surely of a sublime character and do act by sublime pattern of conduct.”*

With his every Word and act He represented the Qur’an. As His wife A’ishah said, he was a perfect embodiment of the Qur’an.

He was exceptional in his moral commitments, his trustworthiness, honesty, truthfulness, and integrity. He never told a lie; even his worst enemies never accused him of lying on any occassion during his life. He used to talk politely, and never used obscene or abusive language. He had a charming personalityand excellent manners with which he captivated the hearts of those who came into contact with him.
In his dealings with people he always followed the principle of Justice, altruism, and fair-play.
He never deceived anyone and never broke his promise. He remained engaged in trade and commerce for years but he never entered into any dishonest transaction. Those who dealt with him in business had full confidence in his integrity. The entire nation called him “Al-Amin” meaning the truthful and trustworthy. Even his enemies would deposit their precious belongings with him for safe custody and he scrupulously fulfilled their trust. He would help orphans, widows, and the poor; he was hospitable to travelers.He harmed no one rather he exposed himself to hardships for the sake of others. He kept aloof from the feuds in his tribe andwasforemostinbringingaboutreconciliation. (With some changes from al-Mawdudi, Towards Understanding İslam)

**ROLE MODEL**

In *Surat-ul Ahzab* Allah(cc) clearly states that Muhammed (peace be upon him) is a role model for us.:
*“Lekad kâne lekum fî resûlillâhi usvetun hasenetun limen kâne yercûllâhe vel yevmel âhıre ve zekerallâhe kesîrâ(kesîren).”
“You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exempler for him who hopes in Allah and the Final Day, and who remembers Allah.”*

On the other hand; it’s the way to become a beloved servant of Allah. The following verse from *Al-i Imran* makes that point clear:
*“Kul in kuntum tuhibbûnallâhe fettebiûnî yuhbibkumullâhu ve yagfir lekum zunûbekum, vallâhu gafûrun rahîm(rahîmun).”
“Say (to them O Messenger): If you indeed love God, then follow me so that God will love you and forgive you / your sins. God is All-Forgiving, All-Compasinate.”*

Love of God requires loving His most beloved servant and Messenger; because the door to love of God opens through him. Loving him shows itself by following him and designing one’s life according the religion he preached. People cannot be sincere in their claim of love unless they follow the practices of the Prophet Muhammedi (peace be upon him)n their daily life and practice Islam.

**LOVE OF MUHAMMAD(peace be upon him)NOT EXTRA BUT ESSENTIAL**

Another critical point to underline here is that love of Muhammed is not extra but essential. It has a lot to do with having a perfect and strong iman.Two related sayings of the Prophet, could be brought here to support this point:

*“By Him in whose hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children, and all mankind.”*

*“Whoever posseses the following three qualities will have the sweetness (delight) of faith:
1- The one to whom Allah and His Messenger become dearer than anything else.
2- Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah’s sake.
3- Who hates to revert to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the fire.”*

**CONCLUSIONS:**

Teachings of Qur’an and Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him)should serve as mirrors for us on which we see ourselves, recognize what is wrong, go ahead and fix it.
In order for us to take them as mirrors, some examples of His teachings taken from Bukhari could be described here.

* “There are two blessings which many people lose: Health and free time for doing good.”
* “Ibn Umar said, Allah’s Messenger took hold of my shoulder and said: Be in this World as if you were a stranger ora traveller.”
* “The prophet was asked: ‘what deeds are loved most by Allah?’ He said: ‘The most regular, constant deeds even though they may be few.”
* “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming muslims with his tongue and hands.”
* “None of you will have faith till he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.”
* Whoever has the following four characteristics will be a püre hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up.
1- Whenever he is entrusted he betrays (proves dishonest).
2- Whenever he speakes he tells a lie.
3- Whenever he makes a covenant he proves treacherous.
4- Whenever he quarrels he behaves in a very prudent, evil and insulting manner.

These teachings and sayings of the prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) could certainly be a guide for us(Muslims) as the arguments presented through out this article vividly explain that the best example of infinite mercy is Prophet Muhammad(SAW).

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From a talk at a seminar organized by Humanities Department, NED University of Engineering and Technology Karachi in collaboration with Rumi Forum on 20th January 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)