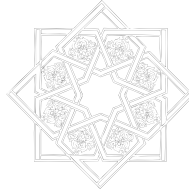


*Reflections on  
the life of*  
**PROPHET  
MUHAMMAD  
S.A.W.**



**Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura**  
(Islamic Religious Council of Singapore)



## CHAPTER I

# Knowing our Prophet

## - Excerpts From 'As-Shamaail Al-Muhammadiyah'

### 1. The Praised One

The name Muhammad means 'the one who is praised exceedingly.'

### 2. The Story Behind His Name

The books of Sirah mention that the Prophet s.a.w. was named by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. When Abdul Muttalib was asked why he named his grandchild and name unknown by his relatives and the people, he responded, "I hope that he will be the one who is praised in the heavens and earth".

### 3. His lineage

Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib (Syaibah) bin Hasyim (Amr) bin Abd Manaf (Al-Mughirah) Bin Qusay (Zayd) bin Kilab bin Murrarah bin Ka'ab bin Lu'ay bin Ghalib bin Fakhr (Quraish) bin Malik bin An-Nadr (Qays) bin Kinanah bin Khuzaymah bin Mudrikah (Amir) bin Ilyas bin Mudar bin Ma'ad bin Adnan.

- SAHIH BUKHARI

## The Physical Description and Beauty of the Prophet

Ali r.a. described the noble features of the Prophet s.a.w.:

*“The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. was neither very tall nor very short, but of a medium stature amongst his people. His hair was neither very curly nor very straight, but had a slight wave in it. He did not have a big body or a round face, but his blessed face was slightly round. His complexion was white with redness in it. His blessed eyes were extremely black. His eyelashes were long. The joints of the body were large, as was the portion between the two shoulders broad and fully fleshed. He has no excessive hair on his body. He had a thin line of hair running from the chest to the navel. His hands and feet were fully fleshed. When he walked, he lifted his legs with vigor, as if he were descending to a low lying place. When he addressed a person he turned his whole body towards that person. The Seal of Prophethood was situated between his shoulders. He was the last of all prophets. He was the most generous and the most truthful. He was the most kind-hearted and came from a most noble family. Any person who saw him suddenly would become awe-inspired. Anyone who describes his noble features can only say, “I have never seen anyone like the Messenger of Allah, not before him, not after him.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Jabir r.a. said:

*“I once saw the Messenger of Allah s.a.w. on the night of a full moon. On that night, he wore red clothing. At times I looked at the full moon and at times at the Messenger of Allah. Ultimately I came to the conclusion that the Messenger of Allah was more handsome, beautiful and more radiant than the full moon.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

# The Etiquette of the Prophet

## 1. The Way The Prophet Walks

Abu Hurayrah r.a. said:

*“I did not see anyone walk faster than the Messenger of Allah. It was as if the earth folded for him. A few moments ago he would be here and then there. We found it difficult to keep pace when we walked with him, and he walked at his normal pace.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

## 2. The Eating and Drinking of the Prophet

- The Prophet s.a.w. said,

*“The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few mouthfuls to keep him going. If he must do that (to fill his stomach), then let him fill one third with food, one third with drink and one third with air.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

- Jabir bin Abdullah reported:

*“Allah’s Messenger s.a.w. took hold of my hand one day (and led me) to his residence. There was presented to him some pieces of bread, whereupon he said: Is there no condiment? They (the members of his household) said: No, except some vinegar. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Vinegar is a good condiment. Jabir said: I have always loved vinegar since I heard it from Allah’s Apostle s.a.w. Talhah said: I have always loved vinegar since I heard about it from Jabir.”*

– SAHIH MUSLIM

### 3. The Speech of the Prophet

‘Aishah r.a. related:

*“The speech of Allah’s Messenger was not quick and continuous as that of yours. He spoke clearly, word for word. A person sitting in his company remembered what he said.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

‘Aishah narrated:

*“A group of Jews entered upon the Prophet and said, ‘As-Samu Alaikum’ (i.e death be upon you). I understood it and said, ‘Wa-Alaikum As-Samu wal-la’an’ (i.e death and the curse of Allah be upon you). Allah’s Apostle said, ‘Be calm, O ‘Aishah! Allah love that one should be kind and lenient in all matters.’ I said, ‘O Allah Apostle! Haven’t you heard what they (the Jews) have said?’ Allah’s Apostle said, I have (already) said (to them) ‘And upon you!’”*

– SAHIH BUKHARI

### 4. The Smiling, Laughing and Jesting of the Prophet

Abdullah bin Harith r.a. reports:

*“I did not see anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah”.*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Abdullah bin Harith r.a. related,

*“The laugh of Allah’s Messenger was but a smile.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Abu Hurayrah r.a. reports:

*“The Sahabah asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you joke with us?’ The Messenger of Allah replied, ‘Yes but only in truth.’”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Hasan Al-Basri said:

*“An old woman came to the Messenger of Allah and made a request, ‘O Messenger of Allah, make dua that Allah grants me entrance into Jannah.’ The Messenger of Allah replied, ‘O mother, an old woman cannot enter Jannah.’ The woman began crying and started to leave. The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Say to the woman that one will not enter in a state of an old age, but Allah will make all women of Jannah young and playful’”.*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

## 5. The Devout Worship of the Prophet

Al-Mughirah bin Shu’bah r.a. reports:

*“The Messenger of Allah performed such lengthy night prayers, that his blessed legs would become swollen. The companions said, ‘You undergo such strife, when Allah has forgiven your past and future sins?’ He responded, ‘Should I not be a grateful servant?’”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Hudhayfah bin al-Yaman r.a. narrated:

*“I prayed the night prayer with the Prophet one night, and he read Al-Baqarah, Al-Nisaa’ and Ali-Imran.” (In another wording, he added Al-Maa’idah and Al-An’aam, but he was unsure of the order).*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI

Aishah r.a. reported:

*“The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. used to perform eleven raka’ah (of Tahajjud) prayers at night. He s.a.w. would prostrate so long as one of you might recite fifty ayat (of the Quran). Thereafter, he would perform two raka’ah before Fajr prayers and would lie down on his right side till the Muadzbin would come and inform him about the time of (Fajr) prayer.”*

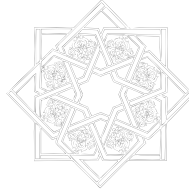
– SAHIH BUKHARI

## 6. The Sleeping of the Prophet

Abu Qatadah r.a. narrates:

*“If Allah’s Messenger s.a.w. slept during the night, he slept on his right side. If he was only able to sleep a short while, he would raise his right arm and then sleep on it.”*

– SHAMA’IL AT-TIRMIDHI



## CHAPTER II

# Harnessing The Legacy of Our Prophet

## Introduction

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w is sent as a mercy to humankind<sup>1</sup>. Allah s.w.t had sent him as a gift to humanity. He was the embodiment of the Quranic message and manifests the values as enunciated in the Quran through his physical actions.

He informed us that he was sent for the perfection of practicing virtue, morality and manners<sup>2</sup>. Allah has granted a special form of guidance for humankind from the beginning of our creations, by

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1 “And We have not sent you except as a mercy to mankind” (Al-Anbiya’, 21:107)

2 One of the most well-known Hadith: “I (Muhammad PBUH) have been sent to perfect noble manners” (Reported by Ahmad and others).



granting us Prophets and Messengers chosen among us to provide continuous guidance for us to lead successful lives in this world, and to achieve eternal victory in the hereafter. He mentioned, *“Get you down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”*<sup>3</sup>

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w is the last in the chain of Prophethood to receive the final guidance by Allah s.w.t. The final guidance bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad s.a.w is meant to be an eternal guidance for humanity, and its relevance and applicability should last until the end of time. We inherit this eternal guidance in the form of al-Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet s.a.w. The Prophet had mentioned that, *“I left you two things that you will never go astray, if you hold tightly to them, they are, the Book of Allah (Kitabullah) and the Sunnah of His messenger (Sunnah al-Rasul)”*<sup>4</sup>. The foundational principles of the Quran and the Sunnah are timeless and remain relevant to be applied in any given geographical locality and socio-cultural context.

The life of the Prophet demonstrates a remarkable example that should propelled us to strive in emulating his virtues and continuing his footsteps of promoting humanity. He was a figure that we could all relate to; he was a father, a husband, a friend, a statesman, a commander-in-chief, a spiritual leader and many other astonishing roles that he had successfully performed. The Quran described that *“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have the perfect example to follow.”*<sup>5</sup>

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3 Al-Baqarah:38

4 Hadith reported by Imam Al-Hakim

5 Al-Ahzab: 21

Indeed, Prophet's life exhibit virtuous traits that can be enlivened in today's socio-cultural context. His life was full of unparalleled challenges. His personal life illustrates extraordinary examples of being resilience in facing with life most difficult challenges. He was born a without a father by his side, orphaned in his childhood years, and had witnessed many bereaved passing of his loved ones, from his beloved grandfather, uncle, wife to his children. His early days of Prophethood marked a largely hostile reception to his message; he was rejected and oppressed by the society that he had contributed tremendously.

He defied all the obstacles lay down before him, with his enduring spirit of resilience and patience which eventually led to a successful quest. His intellectual capability and strong determination enabled him to successfully establish a prosperous nation in cosmopolitan Medina. Due rights are given to all members of the communities, from Muslims to Jews, Christians and the Pagans. His message of justice, humanity and knowledge had led to a paradigm shift in the Arabian Peninsula, turning the Peninsula into one of the most respected civilizations in human history.

In today's globalising world, as we faced with unprecedented challenges, let us to turn to the Prophet's life and reflect its meanings on how best can we emulate his virtuous traits to lead successful life in this world. The modern challenges we face today are not entirely new phenomenon. The issues of human dignity, inequality, knowledge acquisition, religious and racial cleavages are constantly being raised in our contemporary.

The Prophet s.a.w had laid down the fundamental values that should guide humanity in addressing these. His life as a holistic person (*Insan al-Kamil*) had illustrated many lessons that we can extract in dealing with modern challenges, as we strive to remain faithful to the essence of his message.

## Knowledge and Humility

The first revelation that Allah s.w.t revealed to Prophet Muhammad s.a.w was the commandment for his people to seek knowledge, through the spirit of *Iqra'* (reading). This set the foundational basis of the Prophetic message to humanity. The importance of knowledge is clearly expounded by the Prophet. This promotion of knowledge for all humankind had enlightened humanity from the ignorance of the Dark Ages.

Seeking knowledge is one of the major commandments of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. He proclaimed, "*Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim*".<sup>6</sup> For this, one of his salient messages to the people of Mecca was the accessibility of knowledge to all members of the community. He propagated the idea of egalitarianism in seeking knowledge, and that every individual should be given the rights to be educated.

This profound message set the tone for his mission, encouraging more people to be more interested in the faith of Islam. He had opened the door of knowledge to everyone, as they were denied their rights of education in the era of Jahiliyya. Only members of the aristocrats were given the chance to receive education, but Prophet Muhammad s.a.w made education opened to all.

The concept of knowledge as expounded by the Prophet should bring us closer to our Creator (*Malik*), the ultimate Educator (*Rabb*). The message of the first revelation related to us by the Prophet taught that reading is an essential dimension of knowledge. With deep knowledge, we will be able to attain deep faith. It is thus paramount for every Muslim to continue and strives to acquire knowledge, so we can be the best of community created by Allah s.w.t. Knowledge

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6 Hadith reported by Imam Baihaqi

is indeed the tool bestowed by Allah, The Most Knowing for us to utilize and lead successful life.

The Quran that we inherited from the Prophet clearly expressed various form of knowledge. It is an everlasting miracle to humankind with vast contents of different knowledge that are beneficial for the humanity in different eons of time. The Quran clearly made a distinction between a learned person and ignorance. Allah says: *“Say are those equal those who know and those who do not know. It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition”*.<sup>7</sup>

As human beings continue our quest for knowledge, the Prophet s.a.w had reminded us not to be arrogance with the knowledge that we have acquired. Intellectual humility is the way of the Prophet, while intellectual arrogance is the path of satan. It was because of arrogance, Iblis had defied Allah’s order, as he thinks he was the best of God’s creations, and he should not be subjected to prostrate to a being he considered to be of lesser status than he is. His arrogance led to the evil paths. Arrogance had led to self-destructions, as demonstrated in history of humankind, from Pharoah, Qarun to Abu Lahab. Evidently, arrogance is one step closer to disbelieving (*kufr*).

The same applies to intellectual arrogance, as we increase our knowledge, we should be more humble beings of Allah, as we know and realize there are many other knowledge out there that are still far beyond our reach. We should read to get knowledge, but not to worship knowledge. The Prophet s.a.w had demonstrated to us, being a Prophet himself that receive guidance and revelation from God, he still maintained his humility towards others. His consultative nature of seeking views from his companions clearly demonstrates his humility.

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7 Az-Zumar: 9

This can be witnessed in many of his life stories. One of the many episodes that highlight this aspect of his humility can be drawn in the Battle of Uhud. Prior to military mission to safeguard Medina from being attacked, the Prophet had sought the views of his companions, in planning the military strategy. He was inclined to stay in Medina and attack the enemies when they reach the Medinan soil.

Nevertheless, many of his companions had a different thought and suggested for them to go out at the border instead. As many were more inclined to the latter's suggestion the Prophet s.a.w decided to go with the views of the majority, forgoing his own inclination. In the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet had sought the view of a Persian by the name of Salman, who was formerly a slave, and recently freed. He had suggested for them to dig trenches around Medina to prevent the enemies from moving over to attack Medina. The Prophet agreed with Salman's initiative, as that was the war strategy adopted by the Persian. Clearly, these two episodes showed how the Prophet s.a.w maintained his intellectual humility, by rendering his ears to other, and opened his mind for others to share their knowledge, and for him to learn new things from the other people.

His humility is extended beyond the domain of knowledge. He was a leader that never showed any form of arrogance and always led humbly. His life story taught us that we should aspire to be an ummah that exhibit humility in all aspects of our lives, as can be seen in his attire, foods, mannerisms and even his treatment towards other human beings.

## Preservation and Upliftment of Human Dignity

In a society that disregards human dignity, the Prophet s.a.w had championed the preservation and upliftment of human dignity. This becomes an important aspect of his preaching (*da'wah*) to the Meccan Quraish where aristocracy had created an imbalance social system with the absence of liberty, freedom and equality of human beings.

Slavery was rampant, women were denied any rights, female infanticides were widespread and men of prowess were bestowed with excessive control and authority. The coming of Islam in the Arabia set a precedent, where women were bestowed with rights of their own, and they are not the property of anyone, neither their father nor their husband.

At the same time it also acknowledged the different belief systems of others, where nobody was forced to accept the religion. When Islam had flourished in Medina and the Prophet was able to establish a harmonious state, these principles of human rights were put into its practical form. Evidently, the Prophet s.a.w had advocated this proclamation of rights and put it into practice few hundred years before the West were enlightened with the idea of human rights. The Magna Carta of United Kingdom, which was claimed to be one of the earliest document detailing basic human rights were only drawn few hundred years after Islam had clearly postulate the idea of human dignity and fundamental rights of human beings.

The maintenance and establishment of justice (*'adl*) became the focal point of the Prophetic mission. Obliteration of injustices (*zulm*) became his struggle as a just society will lead to a harmonious and victorious nation. Justice becomes the condition for the objective of the Islamic faith. The Prophet had taught that justice

should be applied without fear or favor. He mentioned, *“I swear by God, if Fatimah should steal, I would have her hand cut off”*<sup>8</sup>. He also proclaimed that *“Verily I will be miserable if I did not act justly.”*<sup>9</sup>

The Prophet s.a.w also advocated the concept of fairness and equality before the law for all human beings. He taught us that indeed all human beings are created equal in the sights of Allah. In his final sermon, he mentioned that *“All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action.”*<sup>10</sup> He taught us that all lives are equal, and that they are sacrosanct that should be protected and preserved.

Similarly, the idea of equality of human beings also forbids exploitation of others, including properties. In his final sermon, the Prophet proclaimed that, *“your lives and properties are forbidden to one another till you meet your Lord on the Day of Resurrection”*<sup>11</sup>. In protecting the sanctity of life, he also extends this to people who share different beliefs than Islam. The Prophet brought this commandment of protecting life a step higher when he warned that: *“Whoever killed a Mu’ahid (a person who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years (of traveling).”*<sup>12</sup>

He also uplifts the status of women, where they should be accorded with respective rights. In the same sermon, he mentioned

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8 Hadith reported by Imam Bukhari

9 Hadith reported by Imam Bukhari

10 Hadith reported by Imam Muslim

11 Hadith reported by Imam Muslim

12 Hadith reported by Imam Bukhari

*“Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.”*<sup>13</sup>

## Peaceful Co-Existence

Peaceful co-existence is one of the key fundamentals in ensuring religious stability and harmonious living. It is indeed one of the most important teachings of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. The endeavor for harmony has been expounded clearly throughout the Prophet’s life. Appreciating differences and solidify inter-faith relationships among the teachings of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

One of the early interactions between Muslims and Non-Muslims was established in Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia) during Prophet Muhammad days as stated in Sirah Ibn Hisham. As the Muslims faced prosecutions in Makkah, the Prophet s.a.w. encouraged his followers to immigrate to Abyssinia which was ruled by a Christian King, known as The Negus or Najasyi. Negus was trusted by the Prophet as a just ruler and he was confident that the Muslims will be treated justly and kindly in the Abyssinia.

This episode showed that they recognize the differences and diversity of beliefs. Despite the differences between the two texts, they shared the same values of justice and respect. The brotherhood of humanity was built by the early generations of Muslims. The relationship was built on the basis of mutual respect and trust.

The Prophet s.a.w. was indeed an ultimate role model of equity toward those who did not share his faith. Once a funeral procession

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13 Hadith reported by Imam Muslim



passed by the Prophet s.a.w. in Madinah, he stood up to show his respect for the deceased. When he was informed that this was a Jew's funeral, the Prophet responded, "*Was this not a human soul?*"<sup>14</sup>

The 'Charter of Medina' (*Sabifah Madinah*) on the other hand demonstrates how the Prophet had accord recognition of diverse affiliations and did not demand any conversion. The Document clearly highlights "the principles of justice, equality, and equal dignity for all the signatories, whether Jewish or Muslim, Medina natives or immigrants from Mecca, Aws, or Khazraj."<sup>15</sup>

Lessons from the Prophet's life have outlined ways for us to live and thrive in a plural society. The Prophet had taught us the concept of knowing one other (*ta'aruf*), co-existence (*ta'ayusy*) and co-operation (*ta'awun*).

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14 Hadith reported by Imam Bukhari

15 Tariq Ramadan. *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* (London: Allen Lane: 2007), p.88

# Reflections on the Prophet's Life

*Excerpts from "In the Footsteps of the  
Prophet" by Tariq Ramadan*



## **Reflections on The Prophet's Life**

Excerpts from "In the Footsteps of the Prophet"

by Tariq Ramadan<sup>1</sup>

*Verily, there has come to You a Messenger (Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him) from amongst yourselves, it grieves Him that You should receive any injury or difficulty. He is anxious over You (for your well-being), for the believers (He is) the most kind and compassionate.*

(At-Taubah verse 128)

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) is a source of shining guidance and full of powerful lessons for Muslims in different places and times. Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) exemplifies the strong and profound relationship that each human being ought to have with his Creator, his fellow human beings, and the world around him.

As we commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi'ul Awwal, let us reflect on his shining life and honourable personality, and follow in his footsteps to become religiously profound and socially progressive Muslims who are blessings to all.

In Tariq Ramadan's book, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*, we find examples of the Prophet's life that reinforce the critical values that form the foundation of our Singaporean Muslim Identity (SMI). These values call upon us to be **Religiously resilient, Inclusive, Contributive, Adaptive** and **Progressive**. These are values which will guide us to become the Prophet's ummah that serves as a model community.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramadan, Tariq. *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad*. Oxford University Press. 2007.



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## To Be Religiously Resilient

Throughout the twenty-three years of his mission, the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) sought the way to spiritual freedom and liberation.

He prayed while the world of humans was asleep, he invoked God while his brothers and sisters despaired, and he remained patient and steadfast in the face of adversity and insult while so many beings turned away.

The Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) was able to express love and spread it around him. His wives were gratified by his presence, tenderness, and affection, and his Companions loved him with an intense, profound, and extraordinarily generous love. He gave and offered his presence, his smiles, his being, and if a slave happened to address him or wanted to take him to the other end of the city, he went, he listened, he loved.

He loved, he forgave. Everyday, he begged God to forgive his own failings and oversights, and when a woman or a man came to him burdened with a mistake, however serious, he received that soul and showed her or him the way to forgiveness, solace, dialogue with God, and the Most Gentle's protection. (*pgs. 211-212*)



He was beloved by God and an example among humans. He prayed, he contemplated. He love, he gave. He served, he transformed. The Prophet was the light that leads to Light, and in learning from his life, believers return to the Source of Life and find His light, His warmth, and His love. The Messenger may have left the human world, but he has taught us never to forget Him, the Supreme Refuge, the Witness, the Most Near. Bearing witness that there is no god but God is, in effect, stepping toward deep and authentic freedom; recognizing the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) as the Messenger is essentially learning to love him in his absence and to love Him in His presence. Loving, and learning to love: God, the Prophet, the creation, and humankind. (*pg 216*)



## To Be Religiously Resilient Through A Profound Relationship with The Creator

**T**he Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) hated to let his Companions nurture a pointless feeling of guilt. He kept telling them that they must never stop conversing with the One, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful, who welcomes everyone in His grace and benevolence and who loves the sincerity of hearts that regret their misdeeds and return to Him. This is the profound meaning of at-tawbah, offered to everyone: sincerely returning to God after a slip, a mistake, a sin. God loves that sincere return to Him and He forgives and purifies. The Prophet himself exemplified that in many circumstances. (pg 113)



**T**he Prophet went to the town of Taif and spoke to the leaders of the Thaqif tribe, hoping that they would hear the message of Islam and agree to protect the Muslims from their enemies. He met with a very cold reception, however, and the chiefs mocked his claim to be a prophet. Alone, having found no protection among his fellow human beings, he turned toward the One and prayed:

“O God, to You alone I complain of my weakness, the meagerness of my resources and my insignificance before men. O Most Merciful of the Merciful, You are the Lord of the weak and You are my Lord [Rabb, “Educator”]. Into whose hands do You entrust me? To some remote stranger who will ill-treat me? Or to an enemy to whom You have granted authority over my affairs? I harbor no fear so long as You are not angry with me. Yet Your gracious support would open a broader way and a wider horizon for me! I seek refuge in the light of Your face, by which all darkness is illuminated and the things of this world and the next are set aright, so that I do not incur Your anger and am not touched by Your wrath. Nevertheless, it is Your prerogative to admonish as long as You are not satisfied. There is no power nor strength but in You.” (pgs. 68- 69)



**T**he Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) remained mindful to the small details of life and of the expectations of those around him, constantly allying rigor and the generosity of fraternity and forgiveness. His Companions



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and his wives saw him pray for hours during the night, away from the others, alone with the whispered prayers and invocations that nurtured his dialogue with the One. Aishah, his wife, was impressed and surprised: "Don't you take on too much [worship] while God has already forgiven all your past and future sins?" The Prophet answered: "How could I but be a thankful servant?" He did not demand of his Companions the worship, fasting, and meditations that he exacted of himself. (pg 111)



### **To Be Religiously Resilient Through A Loving Relationship with Others**

**I**n order to tighten the bonds between Muslims, and in particular between those Muslims who were from Medina (the Ansar) and those who had emigrated from Mecca (the Muhajirun), the Prophet decided to set up a formal pact of brotherhood (*al-muakhah*) between the Muslims. This meant that each Muhajir was bound by a pact to an Ansar, who was to help him settle down, share his belongings with him, and enable him to live in Medina in the best possible circumstances.

This pact was to provide the new Muslim community settled in Medina with particular strength and unity. Extremely deep relationships were created between believers who were later to attest to the intensity of their mutual love in God.

Those bonds constituted the Muslim community's spiritual and social strength, and in this lay the secret of their success before God and among men: faith in God, love for parents, fraternity among people, and ethics at the service of the universe and of all beings. (pgs 92-93)



**W**hen the Prophet was at home or in public and his daughter came to him or entered the room, he would stand up and greet her, publicly showing her great respect and tenderness. Both the people of Medina and the Meccans were surprised at this behavior toward a daughter, who in their respective customs did not usually receive such treatment. The Prophet would kiss his daughter, talk to her, confide in her, and have her sit by his side, without paying attention to the remarks or even the criticisms that his behavior could give rise to.

One of them, al-Aqra ibn Habis, expressed his shock and said: "I have ten children and I have never kissed any one of them!" The Prophet answered: "He who is not generous [loving, benevolent], God is not generous [loving, benevolent] to him." (pg 118)



The Messenger (*peace be upon him*) loved children, with their innocence, gentleness, and ability to be present in the moment. Close to God, close to his own heart, he remained attentive to those who primarily understood the heart's language. He kissed them, carried them on his shoulders, and played with them, reaching toward their innocence, which is in its essence the expression of a permanent prayer to God.

The Messenger, moreover, drew from children his sense of play and innocence; from them he learned to look at people and the world around him with wonder. From watching children experience beauty he also more fully developed his sense of aesthetics: in front of beauty, he wept, he was moved, he sometimes sobbed, and he was often filled with well-being by the poetic musicality of a phrase or by the spiritual call of a verse offered by the Most Generous, the Infinitely Beautiful. (pg 213-214)



### To Be Inclusive

The Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) came to humankind with a message of faith, ethics, and hope, in which the One reminds all people of His presence, His requirements, and the final Day of Return and Encounter. Though the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) came with this message, throughout his life he kept listening to women, children, men, slaves, rich, and poor, as well as outcasts. He listened to, welcomed, and comforted them. (pg 214)



The Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) had always retained very strong ties with the members of different clans and with this kin who had not accepted Islam.

It was a similar attitude of trust that had made it possible for Muslim to emigrate to Abyssinia, under protection of a king whom the Prophet trusted



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even though he was not a Muslim. This attitude is to be found throughout the Prophet's life: he established his relationships in the name of trust and the respect of principles, and not exclusively on the basis of similar religious affiliation. His Companions had understood this as well, and they did not hesitate to develop solid ties with non-Muslims in the name of kinship or friendship, on the basis of mutual respect and trust, even in perilous situations. (pgs. 76-77)



The Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) kept distinguishing between situations and the people involved in them, and he showed the utmost respect toward individuals and their beliefs. For many years, a young Jew was his companion and followed him everywhere, for he loved the Prophet's company. The Prophet never asked him to abandon his faith. Eventually the boy fell seriously ill, and on his deathbed he asked his father to allow him to embrace Islam, but during all his time by the Prophet's side he had remained what he was and enjoyed the Prophet's love and regard. (pg 90)



### To Be Contributive

A number of new converts to Islam who had no home and often nothing to eat had settled around the mosque, near the Prophet's dwelling.

The Prophet was most concerned by their situation and showed them continuous solidarity. He would listen to them, answer their questions, and look after their needs.

The faithful felt that he saw, respected, understood, and loved them. Indeed, he did love them, and he told them so. Moreover, he advised them to remember to tell one another of their mutual love: "When someone loves their brother [or sister] let them tell them that they love them." He once took young Muadh ibn Jabal by the hand and whispered: "O Muadh, by God, I love you. And I advise you, O Muadh, never to forget to say, after each ritual prayer: "O God, help me remember You, thank You, and perfect my worship of You." (pg 114)





**T**he Prophet granted his forgiveness to all the women and men who came to him or to a Companion. Wahshi ibn Harb, who had killed Hamzah, was also forgiven.

When Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl came to the Prophet, the latter warned his Companions: "Ikrimah, Abu Jahl's son, is coming to you as a believer. Do not insult his father, for insulting the dead hurts the living without reaching the dead." He thus reminded them not only to forgive but also to always remember that nobody can be held responsible for someone else's mistakes, not even their father's. (pg 178)



**T**he Prophet himself was a model of equity toward those who did not share his faith. Through all the years of his mission, he had continued to receive important deposits from non-Muslims traders who went on dealing with him and wholly trusted him.

On the eve of his departure for Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) asked Ali to give back one by one to their respective owners the deposits he still held; he scrupulously applied the principles of honesty and justice that Islam had taught him, whomever he dealt with, be they Muslims or non-Muslims. (pg 77)



### **To Be Adaptive**

**T**he Prophet's first words on arriving at Quba informed the Muslims of their basic responsibilities: "Spread peace [salam], feed the hungry, honor kinship ties, pray while people sleep, you shall enter paradise in peace [bisalam]." The two references to peace, at the beginning and at the end of his address, point to how the Prophet wished his Companions to understand their settlement in their new city. Caring for the poor and honoring kinship ties appear as reminders of the ethical basis of the Muslim presence, which each believer must pledge to permanently respect. (pgs. 87-88)



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## To Be Progressive

**A**bsolutely everything in his life was an instrument of renewal and transformation, from the slightest detail to the greatest events. (pg 214)



**T**hroughout his mission the Prophet sought his Companions' advice, encouraging them to express their opinions and paying them careful attention. He would often ask questions on various subjects and give the answers only after his Companions had thought by themselves and expressed different conjectures.

For example, he once said: "A strong man is not a man who overcomes his enemy!" The Companions mulled this over among themselves, then asked him: "Then who is a strong man?" The Prophet surprised his audience and led them to a deeper understanding of the question with his answer: "A strong man is a man who controls himself when he is angry!" (pg 102)



**B**oth by asking questions and by formulating paradoxical or seemingly contradictory statements, the Prophet stimulated his Companions' critical sense and their ability to go beyond mere blind obedience or mechanical, mind-destroying imitation. This method developed the intellectual capacities necessary for consultations to be effective. (pg 103)



**H**e had listened to women in his society, who often experienced denial of their rights, exclusion, and ill-treatment. Revelation recalls this listening and this accessibility: "God has indeed heard the statement of the woman who pleads with you concerning her husband and carries her complaint to God. And God hears the argument between both of you. For God hears and sees [all things]." Similarly, he listened to a woman who wanted to divorce her husband because she did not like him anymore; he heard her, looked into the matter, and separated them. He also received another woman who complained that her father had married her off without asking for her opinion; he was ready to separate her and husband, but she informed him that she was actually satisfied with her father's choice but wanted to make it known "to fathers" that "this was not their decision" and that they could not act in such a way without seeking their daughter's consent. (pg 213)













**Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura**  
(Islamic Religious Council of Singapore)