

gentleness... continued

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised her, "Be gentle and calm, O Aisha, as Allah likes gentleness in all affairs."

He also said, "Show gentleness! For if gentleness is found in something, it beautifies it, and when it is taken out from anything, it makes it deficient."

humbleness

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the epitome of humility, living a life of simplicity despite his lofty status as the final Messenger. He never sought to elevate himself above others, sitting among his companions without distinction and refusing to accept special treatment. He performed household chores, mended his own clothes, and even milked his goats. The Prophet would greet children and elders alike and showing no preference based status or wealth.

Addressing his companions, he said, "Allah has revealed to me, that you must be humble. No one should boast over one another, and no one should oppress another."

Such was his humbleness that he was fearful of being worshipped, a privilege only befitting God:

"Do not exceed bounds in praising me as the Christians do in praising Jesus, Son of Mary. I am only the Lord's servant; then call me the Servant of Allah and His Messenger."

the ideal husband

The Prophet's beloved wife, Aisha, said of her noble husband, "He used to repair his shoes, sew or mend his clothes and do what ordinary men did in their houses."

Not only was he a devoted husband, he also encouraged his companions to follow his example, "The most perfect of the believers in faith are the best of them in morals. And the best among them are those who are best to their wives."

"And the servants of The Most Gracious (God) are those who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: 'Peace.'"

Qur'an 25:63

"And live with them (your spouses) in kindness."

Qur'an 4:19

"Indeed you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character."

Qur'an 68:4

the ideal example

What has preceded is only a glimpse of how Muhammad (peace be upon him) lived his life. The examples of kindness and mercy mentioned may come as a surprise to some people given the portrayal of Islam in the media and its constant misrepresentation.

When seeking to understand Islam, it is important to turn directly to its primary sources: the Qur'an and the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is equally important not to judge Islam based on the misguided actions of a minority of its followers.

comments from non-muslims

Mahatma Gandhi, a major political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement, remarked: "It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle."

George Bernard Shaw, the British playwright, declared: "The world is in dire need of a man with the mind of Muhammad; religious people in the Middle Ages, due to their ignorance and prejudice, had pictured him in a very dark way as they used to consider him the enemy of Christianity. But after looking into the story of this man I found it to be an amazing and a miraculous one, and I came to the conclusion that he was never an enemy of Christianity, and must be called instead the saviour of humanity. In my opinion, if he was to be given control over the world today, he would solve our problems and secure the peace and happiness which the world is longing for."

(Printed in Türkiye)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD

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who is Muhammad?

(peace be upon him)

Muslims believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of God alone ('Allah' in Arabic). Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example to follow for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much."
Qur'an 33:21

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me is like a man who built a house, completed and perfected it except for the place of one brick. People began to walk around the house, admiring its beauty, and saying, 'If only the brick were put in its place!' I am that brick, and I am the Seal of the Prophets."

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) wife, 'A'isha, was once asked to describe the Prophet (peace be upon him), and she replied that "His character was (a reflection of) the Quran" - meaning he meticulously implemented the noble teachings of the Qur'an into his daily life.

mission of mercy

As well as calling people to pray, fast and give charity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught that one's faith in God should also affect one's treatment of others. He said, "The best of you are they who have the best character."

Many sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasise the relationship between belief and action, for example: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbour, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep quiet."

"And We (God) have not sent you (Muhammad) except as a mercy for mankind."
Qur'an 21:107

The final Messenger (peace be upon him) taught humans to show mercy and to respect each other, "He who does not show mercy to others, will not be shown mercy."

In another narration, some people requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to invoke God to punish the disbelievers but he replied, "I have not been sent as one to curse but as a mercy."

forgiveness

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified unmatched forgiveness and kindness. He would readily pardon those who wronged him, responding to hostility with even greater patience and composure. His gentleness and forgiving nature was most evident when he held the power to retaliate but chose mercy instead.

No act of offence against him was too severe to be forgiven. The Prophet set the highest standard of forgiveness and compassion, embodying the divine guidance described in the Qur'an: "Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant." (Qur'an 7:199)

"Let them forgive and overlook: do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
Qur'an 24:22

equality

In the following sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he taught that all humans are equal in the sight of God, "All humanity is from Adam and Adam is from clay. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a black over a white; except through piety."

"God does not judge you according to your appearance and your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds."

It is related that once a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) called another companion in an offensive way, "Son of a black woman!" The Prophet (peace be upon him),

"Indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."
Qur'an 49:13

became angry and replied, "Do you abuse him with the mention (of blackness of his) mother? You still have within you traces of ignorance (from the pre-Islamic period)."

tolerance

"Good deeds and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is best, then he with whom you had enmity shall become as a loyal friend."
Qur'an 41:34

"You should not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you should deal with them with forgiveness and kindness."

This is how the final Messenger of God (peace be upon him) reacted to personal attacks and abuse.

Islamic sources include a number of instances where the Prophet (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to take revenge upon those who wronged him, but refrained from doing so.

He taught us to exercise patience in the face of adversity: "The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger."

The Prophet Muhammad was also a model of justice, ensuring fairness in all matters, regardless of personal ties. He upheld the law impartially, famously saying that even if his daughter were to steal, she would be punished. Guided by Allah's command to judge with justice (Qur'an 4:58), his unwavering fairness earned the trust of all, friend and foe alike.

gentleness

A companion who served Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for ten years said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was always gentle in his dealings with him.

"When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it; and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it. He was the friendliest of all men."

On one occasion, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) reacted angrily after being insulted by a person.

"By the grace of Allah, you are gentle towards the people; if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you."
Qur'an 3:159