

## Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as a prophet of mercy in the light of English books on Sirah

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### ABSTRACT

Mercy is a word that is used in opposition to intolerance, barbarity, inhumanity, and cruelty. People can be merciful when they are weak, poor, and without any authority. But when in power there are hardly a few who can keep the balance right and ensure that even their enemies are forgiven despite of their wrongdoings. Muslims have a belief that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) is mercy for all the worlds. They strengthen their claim through the verses of the Holy Qur'ān and prophetic traditions. To address the minds of common people, irrefutable evidence forms the life of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) needs to be highlighted. History is ruthless and has its parameters of deciding whether anyone is vindicated or is for eternity blamed for any wrongdoing. One of the parameters is that even your critics should accept the authenticity of your claim. This paper discusses the different aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). Special emphasis has been placed on the English books on Sirah. This includes books of some major Orientalists and writers who are also sometimes critical about the life of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and Islam. Allegations such as the incident of Banu Qurayza on the mercy of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) also have been discussed in the light of writings of English and Orientalist Writings.

**Key Words:** Mercy, Enemies, Forgiveness, Compassion, Conquest

### Introduction

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) was born at a time when few people in the world stood for human values such as love, compassion and mercy. It was a society where poor people, slaves and women were treated like animals. But as soon as the true message by the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) gained strength the moral values of these people were changed manifold. It was as if they needed a rightful leader who could have guided them on the right path. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) provided them with a character that

was unquestionable and thus the world saw that Muslims reformed everything and everyone all around the world. Though there are different aspects of mercy of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) we will discuss the most important ones.

### **Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and other Messengers of Allah:**

The objective of Messengers of Allah was to propagate the heavenly message of God. They did everything in their capacity to ensure that people may understand the true message. However, their methods of propagation were different. Moreover we see that there is also a difference in their behavior to the opposition they faced while propagating the message of Allah. The Holy Qur'ān clearly marks the difference. When Hadrat Nuh (A.S) faced severe resistance and there were few who listened to the message of the oneness of Allah, he (A.S) prayed to Allah Almighty:

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكُفْرِينَ دِيَّارًا<sup>1</sup>

Noah had prayed, “My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth. As a result of this prayer the storm came and all disbelievers were destroyed and swept away. Similarly when people of Madyan made complete mockery of the true message, Hadrat Shuayib(A.S) prayed to Allah Almighty:

رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ<sup>2</sup>

Our Lord, expose the truth [and judge] between us and our people, for You are the best judge.

Consequently, the believers were saved while other people were caught by a cry and were found dead in their homes. This has been explained by the Holy Qur'ān:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَاصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جِثِيَيْنَ<sup>3</sup>

When what We had ordained came about, in Our mercy We saved Shuayb and his fellow believers, but a mighty blast struck the wrongdoers. By morning they lay dead in their homes.

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<sup>1</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 71: 26-27

<sup>2</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 7:89

<sup>3</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 11:94

We see that Prophet (P.B.U.H) also faced several hardships at the hands of unbelievers who even tried to take his life on multiple occasions. One such incident is when Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) was pelted with Stones in the Taif and his blood was shedding. Gabriel appeared and stated that if Prophet (P.B.U.H) wished they could be crushed between the two mountains. But Prophet (P.B.U.H) prayed for their guidance. This is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī:

قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عُرْوَةُ، أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا . رَوَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَدَّثَتْهُ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ أَتَى عَلَيْكَ يَوْمٌ كَانَ أَشَدَّ مِنْ يَوْمِ أُحُدٍ قَالَ " لَقَدْ لَقِيتُ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ مَا لَقِيتُ، وَكَانَ أَشَدُّ مَا لَقِيتُ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْعَقَبَةِ، إِذْ عَرَضْتُ نَفْسِي عَلَى ابْنِ عَبْدِ يَالِيلِ بْنِ عَبْدِ كَلَالٍ، فَلَمْ يُجِبْنِي إِلَى مَا أَرَدْتُ، فَأَنْطَلَقْتُ وَأَنَا مَهْمُومٌ عَلَى وَجْهِي، فَلَمْ أَسْتَفِقْ إِلَّا وَأَنَا بِقَرْنِ الثَّعَالِبِ، فَرَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِسَحَابَةٍ قَدْ أَظَلَّتْنِي، فَتَنَطَّرْتُ فَإِذَا فِيهَا جِبْرِيلُ فَنَادَانِي فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ سَمِعَ قَوْلَ قَوْمِكَ لَكَ وَمَا رَدُّوا عَلَيْكَ، وَقَدْ بَعَثَ إِلَيْكَ مَلَكَ الْجِبَالِ لِتَأْمُرَهُ بِمَا شِئْتَ فِيهِمْ، فَنَادَانِي مَلَكُ الْجِبَالِ، فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَقَالَ ذَلِكَ فِيمَا شِئْتَ، إِنَّ شِئْتَ أَنْ أَطِيقَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَخْشَبِينَ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَلْ أَرْجُو أَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَصْلَابِهِمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا"<sup>4</sup>.

Narrated 'Aishah that she asked the Prophet. "Have you encountered a day harder than the day (of the battle) of Ubad?" The Prophet , replied, "Your tribes have troubled me a lot, and the worse trouble was the trouble on the day of 'Aqaba when I presented myself to Ibn 'Abd-YAlil bin 'Abd-Kulāl and he did not respond to my demand. So, I departed, overwhelmed with excessive sorrow, and proceeded on, and could not relax till I found myself at Qarn-ath-Tha'ālib, where I lifted my head towards the sky to see a cloud shading me unexpectedly. I looked up and saw Jibril (Gabriel) in it. He called me saying, 'Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they replied back to you, Allah has sent the angel of the mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people.' The angel of the mountains called upon me and greeted me, and then said, 'O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I will let (i.e., two mountains) fall on them." The Prophet. said, "No, but I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone, and will worship none besides Him."

<sup>4</sup> Bukhārī ,Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, Ṣaḥīḥ AL- Bukhārī, Hadith Number: 3231, The Book of Beginning of creation, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 1997, 4:285

Thus, we see that instead of striking the unbelievers even though he had the authority Prophet (P.B.U.H) prayed for them. This also distinguishes Prophet (P.B.U.H) from other messengers of Allah. That's the meaning of the Qur'ānic teaching.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ<sup>5</sup>

We have sent you 'O Prophet' only as a deliverer of good news and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know.

John Davenport (1597-1670) an English Clergy man in England who received education at Oxford University in the chapter "Charges refuted" of his book on Sirah has compared different other messengers of Allah Almighty and the Prophet (P.B.U.H). He is forced to admit that Prophet (P.B.U.H) was the most merciful among them.

"Muhammad received generously and with open arms all who would submit to his law, he indeed put the obstinate to death, but he ever spared the innocent blood of women, maiden and infant. In short, he strictly commanded his followers never to molest, but to treat as brethren all who would accept and obey the Koran. Moses on the contrary, slaughtered whole nations without offering or accepting the conditions of mercy; an example never followed by Muhammad"<sup>6</sup>

Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) a German Orientalist explains while quoting an Indian Naqshbandi Sufi of Nineteenth century who had expounded on the idea of how Allah Almighty radiated on the Prophet (P.B.U.H) with his mercy. She quotes as follows: "The seed of the essence of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was veiled and invisible in the ground of non-existence. When the sun of the Real Existent and Realized Beloved [i.e., God] radiated on it, and when that seed, which is "Mercy for the worlds," received the water of Mercy, it lifted its head from the earth of non-existence, and everything besides God, what is found between earth and the Throne, between East and West, lifted its head from the blessed womb of the Muhammadan Essence and found freshness and charm. Therefore, God said, *Laulāka*, "But for your sake If

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<sup>5</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 34:28

<sup>6</sup> John Devenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*, John Davy and Sons Printers Long Arce London, 1882, P. 136

there were not Muhammad nobody would be, and the two worlds would not have existence”<sup>7</sup>

### Mercy for Slaves, Orphans and Poor People:

The world before the advent of the Islam was one of segregation of people based on their color, ethnicity, tribe and creed. But when the merciful Prophet (P.B.U.H) announced his Prophethood, he also called for a just society where people were respected for their moral standing, social behaviors and their steadfastness.

Therefore we see that in Islam ethnicity or wealth is no longer the parameter for superiority but it has been replaced with Taqwa. As Allah Almighty has given in the Holy Qur’ān.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ<sup>8</sup>

“Oh Mankind! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may ‘get to’ know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

Prophet (P.B.U.H) depicted this idea through several gestures and actions. In a prophetic tradition it is narrate that a Bedouin urinated in the mosque and people rushed to beat him but the merciful Prophet (P.B.U.H) came to his defense and he poured a bucket of water and directed his followers to be merciful.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، ح وَقَالَ اللَّيْثُ حَدَّثَنِي يُونُسُ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا بَالَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فَتَارَ إِلَيْهِ النَّاسُ لِيَقْعُوا بِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " دَعُوهُ، وَأَهْرِيقُوا عَلَى بَوْلِهِ ذُنُوبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ . أَوْ سَجَلًا مِنْ مَاءٍ . فَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ مُيسِّرِينَ، وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ"<sup>9</sup>.

“Narrated Abu Huraira: A bedouin urinated in the mosque, and the people rushed to beat him. Allah's messenger ordered them

Schimmel, Annemarie, And Muhammad is his messenger, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1985, P.143

<sup>8</sup>Al- Qur’ān, 49:13

<sup>9</sup> Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl, Ṣaḥīḥ AL- Bukhārī, Hadith Number: 6128, The Book of AL-Adab, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 1997, 8:88

to leave him and pour a bucket or a tumbler (full) of water over the place where he has passed urine. The Prophet then said, you have been sent to make things easy (for the people) and you have not been sent to make things difficult for them.”

Thus, we see Prophet (P.B.U.H) by giving respect to a Bedouin who were treated as slaves all over the world started a process whereby poor were given respect and they were not discriminated. Slaves who were being treated as harshly as the animals were given their rights and Prophet (P.B.U.H) stood for anyone who was oppressed. Resultantly thousands accepted Islam without any discrimination. Karen Armstrong (Born in 1944) a British author have a denomination of Irish Catholic portrayed the world before the advent of Islam in Arabia in a befitting manner. Karen Armstrong reflects through her writings how the life was horrible for the women, slaves and the weaker people of the Arabia who were subjected to different hardships and Brutalities. “The revelations had brought to light a fault line in the city. Over the years, a worrying divide had opened between young and old, rich and poor, men and women. This was dangerous. The scripture that was being revealed to Muhammad, verse by verse, surah by surah, condemned this kind of inequality; one faction would inevitably suffer at the hands of another” 10

Prophet (P.B.U.H) took a stand against these societal standards on division, therefore the women, slaves and other people began to accept Islam. On this Karen Armstrong (Born in 1944) writes:

“He could not help noticing that many of his followers came from the lower classes. A significant number were women, others freedmen, servants, and slaves. Fore- most among the latter was Bilal, an Abyssinian with an extraordinarily loud voice. When the Muslims gathered to pray together in the Haram, Muhammad found himself surrounded by “the young men and weak people of the city. Muhammad welcomed them warmly into his little company” 11

Commenting on the benefits of Mohammadi’s for slaves and poor people William Muir (1819-1905) is forced to accept: “Brotherly love is inculcated towards all within the circle of the faith, infanticide

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10 Karen Armstrong, Muhammad A prophet of our time, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2007, P.44

11 Karen Armstrong, Muhammad A prophet of our time, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2007, P.42

proscribed; orphans to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration, intoxicating drinks prohibited, so that Mohammadi's may boast of a degrees of temperance unknown to another creed"<sup>12</sup> Qasim Ali Jairazbhoy (Died in 1987) who was an Indian Scholar of Islam has discussed how the mercy and compassion of Prophet (P.B.U.H) lead to the removal of distinctions between human beings and instead created a bond of brotherhood between them.

“When you read the history of Islam you will realize what is meant when it is said that the holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) removed all distinctions of color and creed between man and man, and brought them under one brotherhood of Islam... There is in Islam no such thing as inferiority complex; for Muslims are taught that all human beings are equal.”<sup>13</sup>

Washington Irving (1783-1859) an American biographer and a historian also comments on the mercy of Prophet (P.B.U.H) whereby he treated everyone equally irrespective of their status. :“He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints. So that even in the self-indulgent intercourse of domestic life he was kind and tolerant. I served him from the time I was eight years old,” said his 'servant Anas, “ and he never scolded me for anything, though things were spoiled by me.” <sup>14</sup>

### **Mercy for Non-Muslims:**

Non-Muslims are an important part of every society. The propagation of Islam was not based on brutality but rather a message that all non-Muslims were safe in a Muslim society if they paid their taxes and accepted the law of the land. Allah Almighty categorically states in the Holy Qur'ān that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is not just a mercy for the Muslims but also for non-Muslims, the children and the animals. In short Prophet (P.B.U.H) is a mercy for all the worlds (Muslims and non-Muslims). As the Holy Qur'ān states:

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<sup>12</sup> William Muir, The life of Mohammad from Original Sources, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923P. 521

<sup>13</sup> Qassim Ali Jairazbhoy, Muhammad A mercy to all nations, Sind Sagar Academy, Lahore, 1979, P.319

<sup>14</sup> Washington Irving, Life of Mahomet, George bell & Sons York Street, London, 1874, P.193

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ 15

O' Messenger: We have not sent you but as a mercy for all the worlds.

The Holy Qur'ān has given a categorical command on the sanctity of life for everyone whereby Holy Qur'ān equates killing of one-man equivalent to killing of all humanity.

أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا<sup>16</sup>

If anyone kills a person- unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land- it is as if he kills all mankind.

Prophet (P.B.U.H) proved his merciful behavior throughout his life through multiple examples like of Taif, Conquest of Mecca and behavior of Muslims with non-Muslims in battles and wars. William Muir (1819-1905) a Scottish orientalist who is famous for his critical views on the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is forced to accept this: "In civility, kindness and affection the Holy Prophet was his own example and by his refulgent examples Muslims have been taught to treat all men kindly, regardless of their religions and beliefs may be; They were forbidden to destroy or interfere with the places of worship, or lands and property belonging to those of different religions. He taught them never to hurt but always to heal."<sup>17</sup>Laura Veccia Vaglieri(1893-1989) an Italian Orientalist in her book "An Interpretation of Islam" has cleared several confusions regarding Islam and the Prophet of Islam. She comments on the subject by saying that Prophet (P.B.U.H) had two noblest qualities justice and mercy.

"Against the accusation of cruelty, the answer is easy. Muhammad, Head of a State, defender of the life and freedom of his people, in the exercise of justice punished severely individuals guilty of crimes, and this attitude of his has to be considered in the light of his times and also in the light of the wild and barbarian society in which he lived. Muhammad, as a preacher of the religion of God, was gentle and merciful even towards his personal enemies. In him were blended justice and

<sup>15</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 21:107

<sup>16</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 5:32

<sup>17</sup> William Muir, The life of Mohammad from Original Sources, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923, P.298



mercy, two of the noblest qualities which the human mind can conceive. “ 18

Barnaby Rogerson (Born in 1960) a British author states that Islam is embodied by love for mankind. He further explains this embodiment of what Muslims follow: “If we were asked to name the dominant characteristic of the messenger of Allah, one would not hesitate to say Mercy”<sup>19</sup>Montgomery Watt (1909-2006) a Scottish orientalist and Professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Edinburgh and writer of different books on the biography of Prophet (P.B.U.H) is forced to accept: “In both Meccan and Medinan periods Muhammad’s contemporaries looked on him as a good and upright man, and in the eyes of history he is a moral and social reformer”<sup>20</sup> Tashia Al-Ismail in the book “The life of Muhammad” also writes about how there was prosecution on the name of the religion Prophet (P.B.U.H) gave protection to the Christian monks. “In an age when persecution in the name of religion was common in the world all around him, we find the messenger giving the Christian monks of ST. Catherine in Sinai a promise of protection and exemption from taxes.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Mercy for Children:**

Children are a beauty of the society but we see that usually the parents believe that they should be very strict to their children. In Arabia this was also the case especially the daughters who were given no love or affection for their gender. Prophet (P.B.U.H) stood against these societal standards and through is prophetic traditions directed everyone to love their children. This was also reflected with his love for Hadrat Fatima (R.A) and his grandsons Imam Hassan (R.A) and Imam Hussain (R.A). There are many events of kindness of Prophet (P.B.U.H) with children; one is narrated by Usama bin Zaid:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَارِمٌ، حَدَّثَنَا الْمُعْتَمِرُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا تَمِيمَةَ، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي عَثْمَانَ التَّهْدِيَّ، يُحَدِّثُهُ أَبُو عَثْمَانَ عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْخُذُنِي فَيُقْعِدُنِي عَلَى

<sup>18</sup> Laura Veccia Vaglieri, An Interpretation of Islam, Good word Books, India, 2004, P.30

<sup>19</sup> Laura Veccia Vaglieri, An Interpretation of Islam, Good word Books, India, 2004, P.223

<sup>20</sup> Watt, William Montgomery, Muhammad prophet and statesmen, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, P.234

<sup>21</sup> Tahia al-Ismail, The life of Muhammad, Ta-Ha Publishers ltd, London, 1988, P. 227

فَخَذَهُ، وَيُقْعِدُ الْحَسَنَ عَلَى فَخَذِهِ الْأُخْرَى، ثُمَّ يَضُمُّهُمَا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ " اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُمَا  
فَإِنِّي أَرْحَمُهُمَا"<sup>22</sup>

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to put me on (one of) his thighs and put Al-Hasan bin `Ali on his other thigh, and then embrace us and say, "O Allah! Please be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them."

David Samuel Margoliouth (1858-1940) is a famous English Orientalist who was also a professor at Oxford University and taught Arabic, while referring to the love of Prophet (P.B.U.H) for children has highlighted: "Mohammed was at all times of an affectionate disposition, and even demonstratively so ; he expressed disgust at a man who having ten children declared that he had never kissed one of them : and he remained demonstratively affectionate to the end towards the slave Zaid, adopted as a son. In his prayers he would at times hold a child in his arms when he stood up, putting it down when he prostrated himself. At Medinah he would let a little girl take his hand and lead him where she chose." <sup>23</sup>Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) was a German Orientalist and a writer on Islam and Sufism. She was also a professor at Harvard University. Annemarie Schimmel has expressed her views on the personality and characteristics of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) in her famous book "And Muhammad is his messenger, the veneration of the prophet in Islamic Piety". This book is a biographical account of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) that sketches his unique position in the world. We see that she has an unbiased approach and shows that honor of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) is not merely because of his teachings but by his unprecedented acts not only towards humanity but also to animals and other creatures. "Muhammad's loving kindness extended over all beings. He was noted for his love of children, and used to greet them in the street and play with them. Later folk ballads tell in touching verses how his two grandsons Hasan and Husain— often simply called al-Hasnain, the Two Hasans—climbed on "Gran' Dad Prophet's" back while he was performing his prayer"<sup>24</sup>

### **Mercy for Women:**

<sup>22</sup> Bukhārī ,Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, Ṣaḥīḥ AL- Bukhārī, Hadith Number: 6003,The Book of AL-Adab, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 1997, 8:32

<sup>23</sup>Marglouth, David Samuel, Mohammed and the rise of Islam, G Putnam Sons, New York, 1905, P.71

<sup>24</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie, And Muhammad is his messenger, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1985, P.59

Women are an important part of society and even in the modern world there are 49.6% women as compared to men. Their importance is increased as Allah Almighty has given them the ability to bring children into this world and contribute to the survival of humanity. But unfortunately, Women were not given any importance in Arabia. They were thought as a bad omens on birth and were usually killed sometimes just after their birth. Those who survived were subjected to disrespect and brutality by the society at large. In Arabia it was alone the personality of Prophet (P.B.U.H) who stood against these barbaric acts and through his own example became a source of mercy for all the women of the world. His kindness with his daughter Fatima (R.A) is an example of how love and affection should be showed towards children especially daughters.

عن ثوبان مولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم, قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا سافر كان آخر عهده بإنسان من أهله فاطمة, وأول من يدخل عليها إذا قدم فاطمة<sup>25</sup>.

“It was narrated that Thawbān, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah, said: "When the Messenger of Allah travelled, the last person among his family whom he spoke to was Fatimah, and when he came back, the first person he entered upon was Fātimah”

Likewise when it came to the rights of the women especially in battles Prophet (P.B.U.H) gave specific guidelines that women should not be killed or disrespected. One such example is the prophetic tradition by Hazrat Abdullāh:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رُمْحٍ ، قَالَ : أَخْبَرَنَا اللَّيْثُ . ح وَحَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ " أَنَّ امْرَأَةً ، وَجِدَتْ فِي بَعْضِ مَغَازِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَقْتُولَةً ، فَأَنْكَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَتْلَ النِّسَاءِ وَالصِّبْيَانِ<sup>26</sup> . "

“It was narrated from 'Abdullāh that a woman was found slain during one of the campaigns of the Messenger of Allah, and the Messenger of Allah denounced the killing of women and children.” 27

<sup>25</sup> Abū Dā'ūd, Sunan Abū Dā'ūd, , Hadith Number: 4213, The Book of Combining, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 2008, 4:469

<sup>26</sup> Imam Muslim, Abul Hussain Ibn Al- Hajjaj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadith Number: 4547, The Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 2007, 5:26

Aloys Sprenger (1813-1893) an Austrian Orientalist and an expert of Oriental languages at University of Vienna is forced to accept the respectable behavior of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) with women and children: "He was kind to women; never beat one; and entertained more respect for than is usual with nations addicted to polygamy. He frequently protected women who came to him for refuge."<sup>28</sup>

### **Mercy in War:**

During a war, it is difficult for a person to control over his faculties because of the rage and escalation. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) even in such situations showed great merciful behavior. This kind of behavior was not even shown by the Europeans and the western nations who claim to be the torch bearer of the humanity. World witnessed the barbarity of the west world War1, World War2, Cold war and the proxy warfare that has been imposed on the Muslim world especially Middle East. On the other hand, The Prophet (P.B.U.H) introduced the rules and regulations in the war that are unprecedented in the history of the mankind. He guided everyone that women, children, elders were not to be killed even during war times. One such incident is when the envoy of Prophet was slain at a place called Muta in Syria by the Christian tribe of Ghassan, Prophet set an expedition to the city so that in future no such incident took place. He appointed Zeid as the commander and gave him following orders. While commenting on this incident of Muta, Washington Irving (1783-1859) writes: "The orders to Zeid were to march rapidly, so as to come upon Muta by surprise, to summon the inhabitants to embrace the faith, and to treat them with lenity. Women, children, monks, and the blind, were to be spared at all events; nor were any houses to be destroyed, nor trees cut down."<sup>29</sup> Laura Veccia Vaglieri (1893-1989) an Italian Orientalist has also given an example of the rules of war that were introduced by the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and they were strictly followed throughout his lifetime and during the times of the four rightly guided caliphs. "Spare the aged, the women, and the children; refrain from demolishing the homes of those who do not resist you; do not

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<sup>27</sup>Imam Muslim, Abul Hussain Ibn Al- Hajjaj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadith Number: 4547, The Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh Saudia Arabia, 2007, 5:26

<sup>28</sup> Aloys Sprenger, Life of Mohammad, Presbyterian Mission Press, USA, 1851, P.93

<sup>29</sup>Washington Irving, Mahomet and his successors, The cooperative Publication society, London, 1849, P.70

destroy their means of subsistence; do not destroy fruit-bearing trees; do not touch palm trees."30

Annemarie Schimmel has also (1922-2003) referred Oriental poetry where at numerous instances the Prophet (P.B.U.H) of Islam has been quoted as mercy. She writes:

“Oriental poets have found a wonderful image to describe this special quality of the Prophet: that of the “cloud of mercy” or “rain of mercy.” In Anatolia and the eastern countries of Islam rain is still called, in rural areas, rahmat, “mercy... It was therefore a logical development that the merciful Prophet was symbolized as a beneficent rain cloud that sails over all lands and revives with its showers the unfeeling hearts, which are similar to dried-up fields” 31

### **Conquest of Mecca and the mercy of the Prophet (P.B.U.H):**

Prophet (P.B.U.H) had been forced to migrate to Madinah Munawara because of the staunch opposition of Quraysh and the hardships they inflicted on all Muslims. During his life at Madinah multiple battles with the non-believers took place. Conquest of mecaa was a special event in the life of Prophet (P.B.U.H) when he returned back to Mecca victorious. Everyone expected that now the Prophet (P.B.U.H) would take revenge and no one would be spared. But the unexpected happened and the general amnesty was announced by the merciful Prophet (P.B.U.H) of Allah for everyone. As The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبَ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ 32

It is closer to Taqwā (righteousness) that you forgive.

The best example which can be given in this context is the mercy which was shown by Prophet (P.B.U.H) even to his staunch enemies, Prophet (P.B.U.H) could have taken revenge from them but he instead forgave them. One such incident is of Hind d. 'Utba who even feared that Prophet (P.B.U.H) would punish her but instead she was forgiven. This has been explained in translation of Ishaq’s Sirat Rasol Allah (S.A.W.W) which

<sup>30 30</sup> Laura Veccia Vaglieri, An Interpretation of Islam, Good word Books, India, 2004, P. 30

<sup>31</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie, And Muhammad is his messenger, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1985, P.92

<sup>32</sup> Al- Qur’ān, 2:237

has been translated by A. Guillaume as *The Life of Muhammad*: “Among the Quraysh women who came was Hind d. 'Utba who came veiled and disguised because of what she had done especially in regard to Hamza, for she was afraid that the apostle would punish her... The apostle said, 'Then you are Hind d. 'Utba?' and she said 'I am; forgive me what is past and God will forgive you.’”<sup>33</sup> William Muir (1819-1905) while explaining the events of Conquest of Mecca is forced to accept that despite the fact that Prophet (P.B.U.H) had all the power and authority yet he treated everyone with respect and forgave them. He has spelled the word Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as Mahomet “The magnanimity and forbearance with which Mahomet treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him, is deserving of all praise, and it had its rewards.”<sup>34</sup> William Muir (1819-1905) also accepts this: “Generous and considerate towards his friends, his enemies so long as they continue their opposition, were regarded by him with a vindictive and unrelenting hatred; yet he rarely pursued a foe after he had tendered timely submission.”<sup>35</sup> While referring to the Conquest of Mecca Karen Armstrong (Born in 1944) states how the general amnesty was the sign of love, compassion and mercy of Prophet (P.B.U.H) for humanity. “It should lead to an appreciation of the unity of the human race. Muhammad had managed to redefine the concept of nobility in Arabia, replacing it with a more universal, compassionate, and self-effacing ideal. But were the Quraysh ready for this? Muhammad issued a general amnesty. Only about ten people were put on the Black List; they included 'Ikrimah (but not Safwan, for some reason), and those who had spread anti-Muslim propaganda or injured the Prophet's family. Some of these miscreants asked for pardon, however, and they seem to have been spared.”<sup>36</sup> David Marglouth (1858-1940) also goes on to explain the intrinsic details of the conquest of Mecca which is evident of the mercy of Prophet (P.B.U.H).

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<sup>33</sup> A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* “A translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasol Allah”, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998 P.553

<sup>34</sup> William Muir, *The life of Mohammad from Original Sources*, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923, P.186

<sup>35</sup> William Muir, *The life of Mohammad from Original Sources*, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923, P.27

<sup>36</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad A prophet of our time*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2007, P.189

“All old injuries were forgotten on that day of final triumph. The Refugees were not even allowed to reclaim their houses which had been seized or sold by the Meccans: they had to be satisfied with the promise of houses in Paradise. Even the keys of the Kabah were not taken away from their hereditary holders”<sup>37</sup>

Khalid Latif Gauba (1899-1981) born in a Hindu family and later converted to Islam writes about the conquest of Mecca. “Muhammad has been generous and magnanimous on more occasions than it is easy to remember. But his too-ready forgiveness of the Quraish is an event unique in history.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Banu Qurayzah and Prophet (P.B.U.H):**

Some scholars have tried to portray that that Prophet (P.B.U.H) was very harsh in his treatment with Banu Qurazah who had betrayed the Constitution of Medina in 627AD by helping the meccans who had besieged the city and later they were beheaded for their role in treason and for violation of the charter. Marshall G.S Hodgson explains this incident. “Banu Qurayzah, had remained neutral during the defense of the ditch but had negotiated with the Quraysh. The exiled Jewish clans had been very active in supporting the Bedouin coalition in favour of the Quraysh. When the Quraysh departed, Muhammad attacked the Banu Qurayzah, refused to allow them to depart into exile like the Banu Nadir, and insisted on unconditional surrender. In Arab expectations (as among many ancient peoples), when enemy captives were taken, the women and children were enslaved but adult males were killed or held for ransom, as they were not dependable as slaves. Muhammad now allowed no ransom but insisted that all the men, about six hundred, be killed.”<sup>39</sup> Medredith White Townsend (1831-1911) an English journalist and the editor of The Spectator while refuting the claim of scholars explains that this beheading is a common punishment and even Europeans would decide the same punishment for such an offence.

“He un- doubtedly regarded these men as traitors as well as rebels, and there is not the slightest evidence that the Koreitza,

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<sup>37</sup> Marglouith, David Samuel, Mohammed and the rise of Islam, G Putnam Sons, New York, 1905, P.388

<sup>38</sup> K.L.Gauba, The prophet of the desert, The times publishing Co.Ltd, Lahore India, 1934, P. 283

<sup>39</sup> Marshall G.S Hodgson, The venture of Islam, The university of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977, P.191

even by European codes, had not deserved their doom. They had plotted against their own allies on the battlefield, and there is no European general who would not have pronounced them worthy of death, however strongly the modern respect for life might have modified his actual sentence.”<sup>40</sup>

Martin Lings (1909-2005) an English writer and scholar further explains that this judgment was not passed by Prophet (P.B.U.H) but by their own chief Sa'd ibn Mu'ad while explaining this incident: “The clans of Aws sent a deputation to the Prophet asking him to show their former allies the same leniency that he had shown the Bani Qaynuqa' who had been the allies of Khazraj. He answered them saying: "Will it satisfy you, men of Aws, if one of yourselves pronounce judgment upon them?" And they agreed. So he sent to Medina for their chief, Sa'd ibn Mu'ad... "Then I judge," said Sa'd, "that the men shall be slain, the property divided, and the women and children made captive. The Prophet said to him: "Thou hast judged with the judgment of God from above the seven heavens.”<sup>41</sup> This shows the mercy of Prophet (P.B.U.H) extends to such a highest standard that instead of deciding the matter on his own he extended this opportunity to their chief Sa'd ibn Mu'ad.

### **Mercy for Animals:**

In the society where humans were dealt very harshly one can think of the treatment with Animals. They were killed for sports, sometimes overburdened and treated barbarically. Prophet (P.B.U.H) changed this attitude and commanded everyone to be merciful to the animals. Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) writes about one such incident. “Muhammad was also known for his love of animals. He once promised Paradise to a sinful, evil woman who had saved a dog from death by fetching water for it. But he had a special liking for cats.”<sup>42</sup> Montgomery Watt (1909-2006) also quotes an event when Prophet (P.B.U.H) ordered his followers to ensure that the puppies of dogs were not disturbed. “His kindness extended even to animals, which is remarkable for Muhammad’s century and part of the world. As his men marched towards

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<sup>40</sup> Meredith Townsend, Mahommed the great Arabian, Boston & Newyork Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1912, P.58

<sup>41</sup> Martin Lings, Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources, Inner Traditions International, New york, 1983, P.232

<sup>42</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie, And Muhammad is his messenger, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1985, P.59



Mecca just before the conquest they passed a bitch with puppies; and Muhammad not merely gave orders that they were not to be disturbed, but posted a man to see that the orders were carried out.”<sup>43</sup> Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) has quoted verses of Ahmad al-Arusi, a Spanish-Arabic poet of the late Middle Ages to display the image of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) as a symbol of mercy for the world and the animals. “Is it not you who has been sent as mercy to mankind? Is it not you whom the pebbles praised? And whom the lizard in the desert addressed, and the wolf too? Is it not you for whom the full moon in the sky was split?”<sup>44</sup> While discussing different poets who have reflected on the personality of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) Annemarie Schimmel has mentioned Indian Sufis, Punjabi Poets and Sindhi Poets. For example she has quoted Suhrawardī mystic Abdurrahim Girhori of 18<sup>th</sup> Century and Shah Abdul Latif Bhatai of Sindh. “The poetry of Shah Abdu’l-Latif contains a fine description of the Prophet through the image of the rain cloud, the symbol of divine mercy, whose help is implored for the Day of Judgment. Exalted descriptions of Muhammad as the Perfect Man, who is like the dawn between the divine light and the darkness of human existence”<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

Some personalities leave an impression on the world that is reflected even after thousands of centuries. Their work is appreciated not only by their followers but also those who disapprove of their ideology. Hadrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is one such an exceptional personality who lives even after more than 1400 Years. His Charismatic character is depicted through Holy Qur’ān, Hadīth and different books of Sirah. English books are also a vital part of the Biographical Description of Prophet (P.B.U.H). Usually, these books have been written by orientalist and even they are forced to accept that Prophet (P.B.U.H) is the most merciful personality in the entire history of humanity. References from the English books are the external evidence of how if you are upright even your staunch enemies will have to appreciate your efforts. All this work is part of the books and the history but the most arduous task is that the Muslims

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<sup>43</sup> Watt, William Montgomery, Muhammad prophet and statesmen, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, P.231

<sup>44</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie, And Muhammad is his messenger, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1985, P.88

<sup>45</sup> Schimmel, Annemarie, Mystical dimensions of Islam, The University of North Carolina Press, USA, 1975, P. 387

undertake this research. In this paper using the different books of Sirah we have discussed different aspects of mercy of Prophet (P.B.U.H). Indeed, this is not the end for the research on the personality of Prophet (P.B.U.H) it will continue till Day of Judgment. As Holy Qur'ān states:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ<sup>ط</sup> And we have exalted high for you your repute. <sup>46</sup>

Therefore, in the light of all this we can say that the balance which of justice and mercy which is present in the (P.B.U.H) is a living miracle. The books of Sirah continue to provide guidance to everyone irrespective, of their ethnicity, creed and even religion. Truly his teachings are for all the humanity and the world can become a great place to live in if they are implemented in their letter and spirit.



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<sup>46</sup> Al- Qur'ān, 94:4