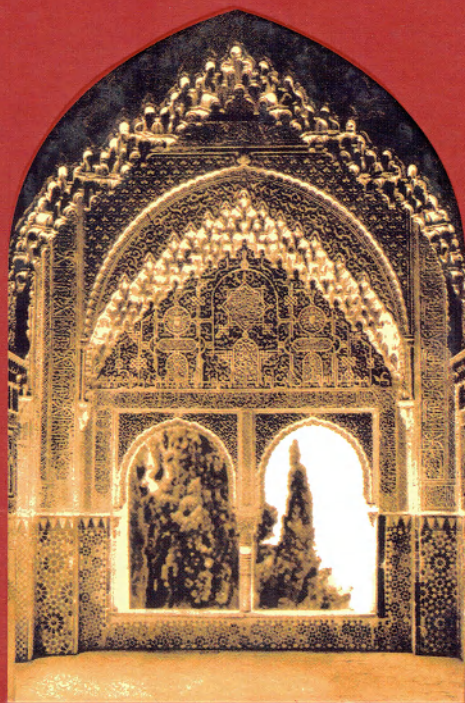


# THE PROPHET'S METHODS OF CORRECTING PEOPLE'S MISTAKES

الأساليب النبوية في التعامل مع أخطاء الناس



Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF

**ALLAH**

THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL



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*The Prophet's Methods of  
Correcting People's Mistakes*

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Revised Fourth Edition

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Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي  
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# Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

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Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans- literated form
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ — اى	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i> )	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell, rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap, mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing, maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam, ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	ħ
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> and <i>smooth</i>	dh
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated form
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word Allah, it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - هـ	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و	long 'u', as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i>	y
ي	long 'e', as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : <i>bu'er</i> , or the stop sound in <i>uh-oh!</i>	(omitted in initial position)

## Diphthongs

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أَوْ، وَاوْ	long 'o', as in <i>owe, boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw
أَيّ، اِيّ	long 'a', as in <i>aid, rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

## Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
◌َ fathah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
◌ِ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
◌ُ dammah	shorter version of oo	u
◌ّ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	double letter
◌ْ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	absence of vowel



# Arabic honorific symbols

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(ﷻ)	<i>Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ</i>	The Exalted
(ﷺ)	<i>şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i>	Blessings and peace be upon him
(ﷻ)	<i>'alayhi as-salâm</i>	May peace be upon him
(ﷻ)	<i>rađiya Allâhu 'anhu</i>	May Allah be pleased with him
(ﷻ)	<i>rađiya Allâhu 'anhâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with her
(ﷻ)	<i>rađiya Allâhu 'anhumâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with both of them
(ﷻ)	<i>rađiya Allâhu 'anhum</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them
(ﷻ)	<i>rađiya Allâhu 'anhunna</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only)





# Hadith grade terms

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Sound: *ṣaḥeeḥ*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it



## About the Word ‘*Lord*’

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The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is ‘master’ or ‘ruler’, and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: ‘the lord of the mansion’ or ‘Lord So-and-So’ (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God – Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah – not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor



## Publisher's Note

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All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty and All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His Messengers and Prophets, and upon his family, his Companions and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

Islam encourages learning in general and learning about Islam in particular. Teaching people is one of the major good deeds as it benefits others immensely. This is why Muslim educationists are concerned with the best teaching methods in all the subjects.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was the best teacher that humankind ever knew. His methods were not only the best but also divinely guided. He often used various methods to teach his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) the religion of Islam. Among his methods were: questioning and answering; narrating the stories of the past nations that were revealed to him; correcting people's mistakes indirectly; and observing and correcting their prayers. He corrected mistakes kindly and humbly, in a way that had a lasting impact yet never embarrassed the one who had erred.

In this informative and well-researched book, the author has highlighted all the methods that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to correct people's mistakes. If we compare these methods to the modern teachings methodologies, we will find that the former are the best and most effective even though they were practised more than 1400 years ago.

I pray to Allah (ﷻ) to benefit the readers by these methods and to enable them to follow the Prophet's guidance when teaching Islam or any other branch of knowledge.

May Allah accept the efforts of all those who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad Abdul Mohsin Al-Tuwaijri  
Managing Director  
International Islamic Publishing House  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



# Preface

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Praise be to Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He), the Lord of the Worlds, Master of the Day of Judgement, God of the first and the last, and Sustainer of the heavens and earth. Peace and blessings be upon His trustworthy Prophet, the teacher of humankind, who was sent as a mercy to the worlds.

Teaching people is one of the greatest good deeds whose benefits spread to others. It is the *du'ât*'s<sup>1</sup> and educators' share of the heritage of the Prophets and Messengers. The Prophet (*ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him) said:

«Allah and the angels, and even the ant in its nest and the whale in the sea, will pray for the one who teaches people the ways of good.»  
(Recorded by at-Tirmidhi who graded it *ṣaḥeeḥ ghareeb ḥasan*)<sup>2</sup>

There are different types and ways of teaching, with different means and methods, one of which is correcting mistakes. Correcting mistakes is a part of education; they are like inseparable twins.

Dealing with and correcting mistakes is also a part of sincerity in religion (*naṣeeḥah*) which is a duty on all Muslims. The connection

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<sup>1</sup> *du'ât*: People who invite others to the religion (Islam).

<sup>2</sup> All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is usually because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

between this and the concept of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, which is also a duty, is quite obvious (but we should note that the area of mistakes is broader than the area of evil [*munkar*], so a mistake may or may not be evil as such).

Correcting mistakes also formed a part of the *wahy* (revelation) and the methodology of the Qur'an. The Qur'an brought commands and prohibitions, approvals and denunciations, and correction of mistakes – even the ones made by the Prophet (ﷺ). So it included rebukes and pointing out of mistakes, for example:

﴿عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۖ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ ۚ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّىٰ ۙ أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ ۗ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۚ﴾ ﴿٤﴾ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ فَإِنَّ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبَ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنِ جَاءَكَ يُسَعَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَإِنَّ عَنْهُ لُحْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ ﴿سورة عبس: ١-١٠﴾

«He frowned and turned away, when the blind man came to him. How do you know? Perhaps he may be purified, or he may pay heed and benefit from the reminder. But as for him who is indifferent, you give him your full attention, although you are not to be blamed if he does not want to be purified. Yet as for the one who has come to you eagerly [seeking purification], for he fears Allah, you allow yourself to be distracted from him.» (*Abasa* 80: 1-10)<sup>1</sup>

﴿مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا﴾ ﴿٢٨﴾ ﴿سورة الأحزاب: ٣٨﴾

«There is no blame on the Prophet with regard to what Allah has made lawful for him. Such was the way of Allah with those [Prophets] who came before. And the command of Allah is a decree determined.» (*al-Aḥzâb* 33: 38)

﴿لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ﴾ ﴿١٢٨﴾ ﴿سورة آل

عمران: ١٢٨﴾

<sup>1</sup> The translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book have been taken (with some changes to the text) from *The Majestic Qur'an* translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, under publication with IIPH. (Editor)

﴿It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide whether He should turn in mercy to them, or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers.﴾ (Āl Imrān 3: 128)

The Qur'an was also revealed to correct the mistakes of some Companions in specific situations. When Ḥaṭīb ibn Abi Balta'ah (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) made the mistake of writing to the disbelievers of Quraysh and informing them of the direction in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was headed on a military campaign against them, Allah revealed the words:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ﴾ (سورة المتحنة: ١)

﴿O you who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as allies, offering them friendship – even though they have rejected the truth that has come to you, and have driven out the Messenger and yourselves simply because you believe in Allah your Lord – if you have come out to strive in My cause and seek My good pleasure. How can you offer them friendship in secret when I know full well all that you conceal and all that you disclose? Whoever among you does that has indeed strayed from the right path.﴾ (*al-Mumtahinah* 60: 1)

Concerning the mistake made by the archers at the Battle of Uḥud, who left the position where the Prophet (ﷺ) had commanded them to stay, Allah revealed the words:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرْسَلْنَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ...﴾

﴿...until you faltered and quarrelled among yourselves about the [Prophet's] orders, and disobeyed after He had shown you what you desired [of booty]. Among you are some that seek worldly gains and among you are some that seek rewards in the hereafter...﴾ (*Al 'Imrân* 3: 152)

When the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed away from his wives (ﷺ) in order to discipline them, and some people spread rumours that he had divorced them, Allah revealed the words:

﴿وإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ﴾ ... ﴿٨٣﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٣)

﴿When they hear any news, whether it is of a reassuring or disquieting nature, they make it known to all and sundry, whereas if they referred it to the Messenger and those in authority among them, those who sought news could learn it from them...﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 83*)

When some Muslims failed to migrate from Makkah to Madinah with no legitimate excuse, Allah revealed the words:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُم مَّا كَانُوا فِيهَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ فِي الْمَوْتِ ۖ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِيهَا لَخَالِفُونَ ۗ﴾ ... ﴿٩٧﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٧)

﴿Verily, when the angels take [in death] the souls of those who have wronged themselves, they ask them: What was the matter with you? They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land. They say: Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place?...﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 97*)

When some Companions (رضي الله عنهم) believed and repeated the rumours of the hypocrites accusing 'Â'ishah (*radīya Allāhu 'anhâ* – may Allah be pleased with her) of something she was innocent of, Allah revealed verses concerning this lie, including:

﴿وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ



عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسِبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴿سورة النور: ١٤-١٥﴾

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you in this world and the hereafter, a grievous penalty would have overtaken you, because of the talk you indulged in, when you were propagating it with your tongues and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter, whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence.﴾ (an-Noor 24: 14-15)

Then Allah said:

﴿وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ ﴿سورة النور: ١٦-١٧﴾

﴿Why, when you heard it, did you not say: It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You [O Allah]! This is a monstrous slander? Allah admonishes you never to repeat such conduct, if you are [truly] believers.﴾ (an-Noor 24: 16-17)

When some Companions argued in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) and raised their voices, Allah revealed:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ ۗ بِالْقَوْلِ ۚ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ١-٢)

﴿O you who believe, do not decide any matter [of a religious or communal nature] before Allah and His Messenger have decided concerning it; and fear Allah, for verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loudly to him as you speak loudly to one another, lest your deeds come to nothing without your realizing it.﴾ (al-Hujurat 49: 1-2)

When the caravan came at the time of the Friday sermon, and some people left the sermon and dispersed to engage in trade, Allah revealed the words:

﴿وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة الجمعة: ١١)

﴿When they see some merchandise or distraction, they rush towards it and leave you standing there. Say: That which is with Allah is better than any distraction or merchandise. And Allah is the best of providers.﴾ (al-Jumu'ah 62: 11)

Many other examples also indicate the importance of correcting mistakes and not keeping quiet about them.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was guided by the light of his Lord in following the principle of denouncing evil and correcting mistakes with no compromise. From this and other reports, the scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) derived the principle: “It is not permitted for the Prophet to delay speaking up and explaining mistakes at the appropriate time.”

Understanding the Prophet’s methodology in dealing with the mistakes of the people he met is of great importance, because the Prophet (ﷺ) was guided by his Lord, and his words and deeds were supported by the *wahy*, and confirmed or corrected as needed. His methods are wiser and more efficacious, and his approach is the best way to get people to respond positively. If the one who is in a position to guide and teach others adopts these methods and this approach, his or her efforts will be successful. Following the method and approach of the Prophet (ﷺ) also involves following his example, for he is the best example for us. This will lead us to a great reward from Allah, if our intention is sincere.

Knowing the methods of the Prophet (ﷺ) exposes the failure of human-made methodology – which is followed everywhere on

this earth – and proves to the followers of that methodology that it is a failure. Much of it is clearly a deviation that is based on corrupt theories such as absolute freedom, or it is derived from false heritages such a blind imitation of one's fathers and forefathers.

We must point out that the practical application of this methodology in real life relies heavily on *ijtihad* (studying the situation and attempting to determine the best approach) to a great extent. This involves selecting the best methods for a particular situation. Whoever understands people's nature will be able to notice similarities between real life circumstances and situations described in the texts, so they will be able to choose the most appropriate method from among the methods of the Prophet (ﷺ).

This book is an attempt to study the methods of the Prophet (ﷺ) in dealing with mistakes made by people of different levels and backgrounds, among those who lived with him and with whom he interacted. I ask Allah to make it successful and free of mistakes, and to benefit my Muslim brothers (and sisters) and me through it, for He is in control of all things, and He is able to do this, and He is the Guide to the straight path.



# Points to Be Noted When Dealing with Mistakes

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*B*efore we embark on our discussion we should note some issues and considerations, and bear them in mind before and when dealing with and correcting the mistakes of others.

## Sincerity towards Allah

When correcting the mistakes of others, it is essential that one's intention be to earn the pleasure of Allah, not to demonstrate one's superiority, or to vent one's anger, or to impress others.

At-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) reported from Shufayy al-Aṣḥāḥi:

«He entered Madinah and saw a man with people gathered around him. He asked: Who is this?

They said: Abu Hurayrah.

(Shufayy said:) So I approached him and sat down in front of him. He was speaking to the people. After he was finished and they had gone away, I said to him: I ask you, by Allah, to narrate to me a hadith that you heard from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and understood fully.

Abu Hurayrah said: I will do that. I will tell you a hadith that I heard from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and understood fully.

Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp. He remained in this condition until he recovered, then he said: I will tell you a hadith that Allah's

Messenger (ﷺ) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.

Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp again; then he recovered and wiped his face and said: I will tell you a hadith that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.

Then he gasped; then he recovered and wiped his face and said: I will tell you a hadith that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me in this house when there was no one else present except me and him.

Then Abu Hurayrah began to gasp severely, and his head fell forward. I supported him with my shoulder for a long time; then he recovered and said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me: On the Day of Judgement, Allah will come down to judge between the people. Every nation will be kneeling in submission. The first people to be called forth will be a man who had learned the Qur'an by heart, a man who was killed for the sake of Allah, and a man who had a lot of wealth. Allah will ask the reader: Did I not teach you what I had revealed to My Messenger? He will say: Of course, My Lord.

Allah will ask: What did you do with what you were taught?

He will say: I stayed up at night and during the day (to recite it).

Allah will say: You have lied.

The angels will say: You have lied.

Allah will say: You only wanted it to be said that so-and-so is a reader, and it was said.

The one who had a lot of wealth will be brought, and Allah will ask him: Did I not give generously to you so that you were not in need of anyone?

He will say: Of course, O Lord.

Allah will say: What did you do with what I gave you?

He will say: I used to give it to my relatives and in charity.

Allah will say: You have lied.

The angels will say: You have lied.

Allah will say: You only wanted it to be said that so-and-so is generous, and it was said.

Then the one who was killed for the sake of Allah will be brought, and Allah will ask him: What were you killed for?

He will say: I was commanded to fight in jihad for Your sake, so I fought until I was killed.

Allah will say: You have lied.

The angels will say: You have lied.

Allah will say: You only wanted it to be said that so-and-so was courageous, and it was said.

Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) struck my knees and said: O Abu Hurayrah, these three are the first people for whom the fire will be heated on the Day of Resurrection.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it 'reliable but odd')

If the intention of those who are giving the advice is sincere, they will earn a reward. Also, their advice will be accepted and acted upon, with Allah's permission.

## Making mistakes is part of human nature

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Every son of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Bearing this fact clearly in mind will put things into their proper perspective. The educators should not expect people to be perfect or infallible or judge them according to what they think they should be, and then consider them to have failed if they make a major mistake or err repeatedly. They should deal with them in a realistic manner, based on their knowledge of human nature which is subject to ignorance, negligence, shortcomings, whims and desires, and forgetfulness.

Understanding this will also prevent the educators from being greatly shocked by the kind of sudden mistake that could lead them to react in an inappropriate fashion. It will also remind the du'ât and educators who are striving to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil that they too are human beings who could make the same mistakes. So they should deal with those who have erred on a footing of compassion rather than harshness. This is because the basic aim is to reform, not to punish.

But this does not mean that we should leave the people who are making mistakes alone, or find excuses for those who are committing sins, on the basis that they are only human, or that they are just youngsters, or that the modern age is full of temptations and so on. We must denounce the actions and call the people to account, but at the same time we must evaluate their actions according to Islam.

Saying that someone is wrong should be based on *shar'î* evidence and proper understanding, not on ignorance or the fact that one happens not to like it.

Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir reported that Jâbir prayed wearing only an *izâr* [lower garment wrapped around the waist] tied at the back [the reason for this was that they did not have trousers, and they would wear their *izâr* tied at the back because this was more concealing when they bowed and prostrated].<sup>1</sup> His other clothes were on a clothes' hook. Someone asked him: Are you praying in one garment?

He said: I only did it so that some foolish person like you would see me. Who among us had two garments at the time of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)?<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is meant by 'foolish' here is 'ignorant'... The purpose was to explain that it is permissible to pray wearing only one garment,

<sup>1</sup> *Fath al-Bâri*, as-Salafiyah edition, 1:467.

<sup>2</sup> Recorded by Bukhari as reported in *al-Fath*, no. 352.

even though wearing two garments is preferable. It is as if he was saying: I did it on purpose to show that it is permissible, so that one who does not know could follow me in that or he could rebuke me so that I could teach him that it is permissible.

The reason why his answer was so harsh was so that he could teach them not to rebuke the scholars and to urge them to look into shar‘i matters themselves.<sup>1</sup>

## The more serious a mistake is, the more effort should be made to correct it

More effort should be made to correct the mistakes that are related to *‘aqeedah* than if the mistake is related to etiquette, for example. The Prophet (ﷺ) was intensely concerned about dealing with and correcting mistakes that had to do with *shirk* in all its forms, because this was the most important matter. Examples of this follow:

Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah said:

«There was an eclipse of the sun on the day that (the Prophet’s infant son) Ibrâheem died, and the people said: This eclipse is because of the death of Ibrâheem.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse for the death or life of anyone. If you see them (eclipsed), then call on Allah and pray to Him until the eclipse is over.» (Bukhari)

Abu Wâqid al-Laythi reported:

«When Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) went out to Ḥunayn, he passed by a tree belonging to the polytheists that was called Dhât Anwât, on which they used to hang their weapons. They said: O Messenger of Allah, make for us a Dhât Anwât like they have.

<sup>1</sup> *al-Fath*, 1:467.



The Prophet (ﷺ) said: *Subhân Allâh!* This is like what the people of Moosâ said:

﴿... يَمْوَسَىٰ اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ...﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٣٨)

﴿...O Moosâ, make for us a god like the gods they have...﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 138)

By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, you will follow the ways of the people who came before you.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it authentic)

According to another report narrated by Abu Wâqid:

«They went out from Makkah with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to Hunayn. He said: The disbelievers had a lotus-tree to which they were devoted and on which they used to hang their weapons; it was called Dhât Anwât. We passed by a big, green lotus-tree, and we said: O Messenger of Allah, make this a Dhât Anwât for us.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, you have said what the people of Moosâ said to him:

﴿... يَمْوَسَىٰ اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ﴾ (سورة

الأعراف: ١٣٨)

﴿...O Moosâ, make for us a god like the gods they have. He said: Verily, you are ignorant people.﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 138)

It is the same thing, and you will follow the ways of the people who came before you, step by step.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

Zayd ibn Khâlid al-Juhani said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) led our *fajr* prayer at al-Ḥudaybiyah just after it had rained in the night. After he finished, he turned to the people and asked: Do you know what your Lord says?

They said: Allah and His Messenger know best.

He said: This morning, one of My slaves became a believer in Me and one became a disbeliever. As for the one who said that we have

been given rain by the grace and mercy of Allah, he is a believer in Me and a disbeliever in the stars; as for him who said that we have been given rain by such-and-such a star – he is a disbeliever in Me and a believer in the stars.» (Bukhari)

Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«A man said: O Messenger of Allah, whatever Allah and you will. He said: Are you making me equal to Allah? (Say instead:) What Allah alone wills.» (Recorded by Aḥmad; al-Albâni graded it sound based on corroborating evidence)

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that he caught up with ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb who was with a group of people and was swearing by his father. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) called them and told them that Allah had forbidden them to swear by their forefathers; the one who wants to swear an oath should swear by Allah or else keep quiet. (Bukhari)

Note: Imam Aḥmad reported in his *Musnad*:

Wake‘ told us that al-A‘mash told us from Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubaydah who said: I was with Ibn ‘Umar in a circle and he heard a man in another circle saying: No, by my father.

So Ibn ‘Umar threw pebbles at him and said: This is how ‘Umar used to swear, and the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade him to do this and said that it was shirk.<sup>1</sup>

Abu Shurayḥ Hâni’ ibn Yazeed said:

«A delegation of people came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he heard them calling one of them Abdul-Ḥajar (‘slave of the stone’).

He asked him: What is your name?

He said: ‘Abdul-Ḥajar.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: No, you are ‘Abdullâh (slave of Allah).» (Recorded by Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*; al-Albâni graded it sound)

<sup>1</sup> *al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbâni*, 14:164.

## Taking into account the position of the person who is striving to correct the mistake

Some people's advice may be more readily accepted than others' because they have a status that others do not have, or because, unlike others, they have some authority over the person who has made the mistake. For example, a father with his child, or a teacher with his student, or a government official with the one whom he is inspecting. Old and young are not equal; a relative is not like a stranger; and a person with authority is not similar to someone with none. Understanding these differences will make the reformers put things into perspective and evaluate them properly, so that their rebuke or correction will not lead to a greater evil. The position of the ones who are rebuking and the esteem in which they are held by the one who has made the mistake are very important in judging how strong the rebuke should be and how harsh or gentle the tone should be. From this, we learn two things:

- 1- Firstly, that those to whom Allah has given status or authority should use that to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and to teach the people. Such people should understand that they have a great responsibility because people will accept more from them than from other people – usually – so they can do more than others.
- 2- Secondly, those who seek to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil should not misjudge the situation by considering their position higher than it is and behaving as if they have some qualities that they do not. This will only put people off.

The Prophet (ﷺ) made the most of the position of respect that Allah had given him when he was rebuking and teaching people. He did things that would not have been appropriate if they were done by anyone else, examples of which follow:

«Ya‘eesh ibn ʿIkhfah al-Ghiffārī reported that his father said: I was a guest of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), one of the poor whom he hosted. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came out to check on his guests during the night, and he saw me lying on my stomach. He kicked me and said: Do not lie like this; this is the kind of lying that Allah hates.

According to another report: He kicked him and woke him up, and said: This is how the people of hell lie.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhi, and Abu Dâwood; authenticated by al-Albâni)

This method of rebuking was appropriate for the Prophet (ﷺ) because of his position and status, but it is not appropriate for ordinary people. It is not alright for any person who wants to rebuke another for sleeping on his stomach to kick him whilst he is asleep and wake him up, and then expect him to accept this advice and thank him for it. The same applies to hitting a person who is making a mistake or throwing something like pebbles at him. Although some of the *salaf* (pious predecessors) did that, it was because of their particular status. Some stories of this nature follow:

Ad-Dârimi [may Allah have mercy on him] reported from Sulaymân ibn Yasâr that a man called Sabeegh came to Madinah and started to ask about the ambiguous texts of the Qur’an. ‘Umar sent for him, and he had prepared some date palm branches for him [to hit him with]. [‘Umar] asked him: Who are you?

He said: I am the slave of Allah, Sabeegh.

‘Umar took hold of one of the palm branches and hit him, saying: I am the slave of Allah, ‘Umar.

He kept hitting him until his head began to bleed, and he said: O Ameer al-Mu’mineen, enough! [The ideas that] were in my head are gone!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sunan ad-Dârimi*, edited by ‘Abdullâh Hâshim Yamâni, vol. 1, p. 51, no. 146.

Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported:

«Ibn Abi Laylâ said: Ḥudhayfah was in al-Madâ'in. He asked for a drink, and a Magian gave him a vessel of silver. He threw it at him and said: I would not have thrown it, but I told him not to do it and he did not stop. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade us from wearing silk and brocade, and from drinking from vessels of gold and silver. He said: These are for them in this world and for you in the hereafter.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by Aḥmad, describing the same incident:

‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Laylâ said: I went out with Ḥudhayfah to one of these areas, and he asked for something to drink. A Magian brought him a vessel of silver and he [Ḥudhayfah] threw it in his face. We said: Be quiet, be quiet! If we ask why he did it, he might not tell us.

So we were quiet and, a little while later, he asked: Do you know why I threw it in his face?

We said: No.

He said: I had told him not to do it. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Do not drink from vessels of gold.»

Mu‘âdh said: Do not drink from vessels of gold or silver, and do not wear silk or brocade; these are for them in this world and for you in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

Bukhari narrated:

Seereen asked Anas to write him a contract of manumission, as he had plenty of money, but Anas refused. Seereen went to ‘Umar, who told Anas to write the document. Anas still refused, so ‘Umar hit him with a whip whilst reciting the words:

... وَالَّذِينَ يَبْنُونَ الْكُتُبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا... ﴿٣٣﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٣)

<sup>1</sup> *al-Musnad*, 5:396.

«...If any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing [to enable them to earn their freedom in return for a certain sum], then write it for them, if you see any good in them...» (an-Noor 24: 33)

So he wrote the document for him.<sup>1</sup>

An-Nasâ'i reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri:

«He was praying when a son of Marwân came in front of him. He tried to stop him, and when he did not go back, he hit him. The boy went out crying. He went to Marwân and told him what had happened. Marwân asked Abu Sa'eed: Why did you hit the son of your brother?

He said: I did not hit him; I hit the Shayṭân. I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying: If any one of you is praying and someone wants to pass in front of him, let him stop him as much as he can, and if he refuses then fight him, for he is a devil.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) reported from Abu an-Naḍr:

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri was suffering from a sore leg. His brother came in and saw him lying with one leg crossed over the other. He hit him on the sore leg, making it hurt even more. He said: You hurt my leg! Did you not know it is sore?

He said: Of course I knew.

He asked: What made you do that?

He said: Did you not hear that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade us to sit like this?<sup>2</sup>

Mâlik reported from Abul-Zubayr al-Makki:

A man proposed marriage to another man's sister, and he [the brother] told him that she had committed *zinâ*. News of this

<sup>1</sup> *al-Fath*, 5:184.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Musnad*, 3:42.

reached 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, so he hit him or nearly hit him, and asked: Why did you tell him?<sup>1</sup>

Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from Abu Is-ḥâq who said:

I was with al-Aswad ibn Yazeed in the Great Mosque, and ash-Sha'bi was with us. Ash-Sha'bi told us about what Fâtimah bint Qays had said about Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) not providing housing or an income for her. Al-Aswad took a handful of pebbles and threw them at him, saying: Woe to you! You talk about something like this? 'Umar said that we should not leave the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of our Prophet (ﷺ) for the words of a woman who we cannot be sure has remembered things properly or not. Women have the right to accommodation and an income. Allah says:

﴿... لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مَبِينَةٍ...﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ١)

﴿...Do not turn them [divorced women] out of their houses [during the waiting period], nor should they themselves leave, unless they are guilty of manifestly immoral conduct...﴾ (at-Ṭalâq 65: 1)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Dâwood reported, with a chain of narration in which two men are *maqbool* (acceptable):

Two men entered from the doors of Kindah, when Abu Mas'ood al-Anṣârî was sitting in a circle. The two men asked: Is there any man who will judge between us?

A man in the circle said: I will.

Abu Mas'ood took a handful of pebbles and threw them at him, saying: Shut up! It is disliked to hasten to judgement.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Muwaṭṭa' Mâlik*, no. 1553, report of Abu Muṣ'ab az-Zuhri, ed. by Bash-shâr Ma'roof and Maḥmood Khaleel. Mu'sasat ar-Risâlah.

<sup>2</sup> *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, no. 1480

<sup>3</sup> Reported by Abu Dâwood, *Kitâb al-Aqdiyah, Bâb fee ṭalab al-qadâ' wa at-tasarru' ilayhi*.

We should also note that the Prophet's rebuking of some of his closest Companions was, on occasions, harsher than his rebuking of a Bedouin, for example, or a stranger. All this has to do with wisdom and proper evaluation in rebuking.

## Making a distinction between one who errs out of ignorance and one who errs despite having knowledge

One of the stories that illustrates this clearly is about Mu'âwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam as-Sulami when he came to Madinah from the desert, and he did not know that it is forbidden to speak during *ṣalâh*. He said:

«Whilst I was praying behind Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), a man sneezed, so I said: *Yarḥamuk Allâh* (may Allah have mercy on you).

The people glared at me, so I said: May my mother lose me! What is wrong with you that you are looking at me?

They began to slap their thighs with their hands, and when I saw that they were indicating that I should be quiet, I stopped talking (that is, I nearly wanted to answer them back, but I controlled myself and kept quiet). When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had finished praying – may my father and mother be sacrificed for him, I have never seen a better teacher than him before or since – he did not rebuke me or hit me or put me to shame. He just said: This prayer should contain nothing of the speech of men; it is only *tasbeeh* and *takbeer* and recitation of the Qur'an.» (Muslim)

The ignorant person needs to be taught; the one who has doubts needs explanations; the negligent person needs to be reminded; and the one who wilfully persists in error needs to be warned. It is not right to treat someone who knows about a ruling and someone who is ignorant of it in the same manner when rebuking them. If those who do not know are treated harshly, it will only put them off and



make them refuse to follow advice. This is unlike what happens when they are taught with wisdom and gentleness. This is because ignorant people simply do not realize that they are making a mistake. It is as if they are saying to the one who is rebuking them: “Why do you not teach me before you attack me?”

Those who are making a mistake without realizing it may think that they are right, so we should take this into account and deal with them tactfully. Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in *al-Musnad* from al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) ate some food, then got up to pray. He had already done ablution before that, but I brought some water for him to do ablution. He rebuffed me and said: Go away!

I felt upset, by Allah. He prayed, and I complained to ‘Umar about what had happened. He said: O Prophet of Allah, al-Mugheerah feels hurt by your rebuff, and he is worried that you may be angry with him for some reason.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: I see only good in him, but he brought me water to do ablution after I had eaten some food. If I had done ablution, then the people would have followed suit (that is, they would have thought that they had to perform ablution every time they had eaten something).» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

We should note here that when the Prophet (ﷺ) pointed out the mistakes of these great Companions, it did not have a negative impact on them or put them off; rather, it had a positive effect on them. Having been corrected in this manner by the Prophet (ﷺ), they would remain anxious and worried, watching their behaviour and feeling concerned until they could be sure that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was pleased with them.

We may also note from this story that when the Prophet (ﷺ) pointed out al-Mugheerah’s mistake, he was not angry with al-Mugheerah himself; he did this out of mercy to the people and

to explain things clearly to them, so that they would not impose something on themselves that was not obligatory and that would cause them a great deal of hardship.

## Making a distinction between mistakes stemming from an honest effort to find out what is right (*ijtihâd*), and mistakes made deliberately, out of negligence, or because of shortcomings

There is no doubt that in the first case, those who err are not to be blamed; indeed they will earn one reward even if they are mistaken, as long as their intention was sincere and they tried to reach the right conclusion. This is because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If a ruler judges and strives to make the right decision, and his decision is correct, he will have two rewards, and if his decision is wrong, he will still have one reward.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it ‘reliable but odd’)

This is different from those who err deliberately or because of shortcomings. In the first instance, the people should be taught and advised; in the second, they should be warned and rebuked.

The *ijtihâd* which may be excused should have been done by someone who is qualified, not one who gives fatwas without knowledge and without taking circumstances into account. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) severely denounced the people who made the mistake in the case of the man with the head wound. Abu Dâwood narrated in his *Sunan* from Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) who said:

«We went out on a journey. One of the men with us was struck in the head with a stone and started bleeding. Then he slept and when he woke up he needed to do *ghusl* (he was in state of *janâbah* or ritual

impurity). He asked his companions: Do you think I could get away with doing *tayammum*?

They said: We do not think you have any excuse because water is available.

So he did ghusl, and he died. When we came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was told about this, he said: They have killed him, may Allah kill them! Why did they not ask if they did not know? The cure of the one who does not know is to ask...» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; al-Albâni graded it reliable and indicated that the extra material added at the end of the hadith is weak)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Judges are of three types, one of whom will go to paradise and two to hell. The one who will go to paradise is a man who knows what is right and gives judgement accordingly; but a man who knows what is right and acts tyrannically in his judgement will go to hell; and a man who gives judgement for the people when he is ignorant will go to hell.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood, and graded sound by al-Albâni)

The third type is not regarded as having any excuse.

Another factor in gauging the degree of rebuking is paying attention to the environment in which the mistake occurred, such as whether it is an environment in which the Sunnah is followed or innovation (*bid'ah*) is widespread, or how prevalent evil is, or whether there are ignorant or overly lenient people, whose opinions are widely followed, issuing fatwas to say that certain matters are permissible when they are not.

## Rebuking even those who make a mistake with good intentions

‘Amr ibn Yahyâ said: I heard my father narrating from his father who said: We were at the door of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood before the early morning prayer. When he came out, we walked with him

to the mosque. Abu Moosâ al-Ash‘ari came up to us and said: Did Abu ‘Abdur-Raĥmân come out to you yet?

We said: No.

He sat down with us until [Abu ‘Abdur-Raĥmân] came out. When he came out, we all stood up to greet him, and Abu Moosâ said to him: O Abu ‘Abdur-Raĥmân, earlier I saw in the mosque something that I have never seen before, but it seems good, *Alĥamdulillâh*.

He said: And what was it?

He said: If you live, you will see it. I saw people in the mosque sitting in circles waiting for the prayer. In every circle there was a man, and they had pebbles in their hands. He would say: Say *Allâhu akbar* one hundred times.

They would say *Allâhu akbar* one hundred times.

Then he would say: Say *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* one hundred times.

They would say *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* one hundred times.

Then he would say: Say *Subĥân Allâh* one hundred times.

They would say *Subĥân Allâh* one hundred times.

He asked: What did you say to them?

He said: I did not say anything to them; I was waiting to see what your opinion would be and what you would tell me to do.

He said: Why did you not tell them to count their bad deeds and guarantee them that nothing of their good deeds would be wasted?

Then he left. We went with him, until he reached one of those circles. He stood over them and asked: What is this I see you doing?

They said: O Abu ‘Abdur-Raĥmân, these are pebbles we are using to count our *takbeer*, *tahleel* and *tasbeeh*.

He said: Count your bad deeds, and I guarantee that nothing of your good deeds will be wasted. Woe to you, O Ummah of Muhammad, how quickly you are getting destroyed! The Companions of your

Prophet (ﷺ) are still alive, his garment is not yet worn out, and his vessels are not yet broken. By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, either you are following a way that is more guided than that of Muhammad or you have opened the door of misguidance! They said: By Allah, O Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmân, we only wanted to do good.

He said: How many of those who wanted to do good failed to achieve it! Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told us that people recite the Qur'an and it does not go any further than their throats. By Allah, I do not know, maybe most of them are people like you.

Then he turned away from them. 'Amr ibn Salamah said: I saw most of the members of those circles fighting alongside the Khawârij on the day of Nahrawân.<sup>1</sup>

## Being fair and not being biased when correcting those who make mistakes

Allah commands:

﴿... وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٥٢)

﴿...And when you speak, be fair, even if it concerns a close relative...﴾  
(*al-An'âm* 6: 152)

﴿... وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٨)

﴿...and when you judge between people, to judge with justice...﴾  
(*an-Nisâ*' 4: 58)

The fact that Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) was the beloved of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the son of his beloved (Zayd) did not stop the Prophet (ﷺ)

<sup>1</sup> Reported by ad-Dârimi, *as-Sunan*, no. 210, ed. by 'Abdullâh Hâshim al-Yamâni. Al-Albâni classed its chain of narration as sound in *as-Silsilat as-Ṣaḥeeḥah* under hadith no. 2005. See *Majma' az-Zawâ'id* by al-Haythami, 1:181.

from rebuking him most sternly when he tried to intercede regarding one of the punishments (*hudood*) prescribed by Allah.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

«The Quraysh were concerned about a woman who had stolen at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), during the conquest of Makkah. They said: Who will speak to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) about her? Who will dare to do this other than Usâmah ibn Zayd, the beloved of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)?

She was brought to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), and Usâmah ibn Zayd spoke to him concerning her. The face of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) changed colour and he said: Are you interceding concerning one of the punishments prescribed by Allah?

Usâmah said to him: Pray for forgiveness for me, O Messenger of Allah.

When evening came, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up and addressed the people. He praised Allah as He deserves to be praised, then he said: The people who came before you were destroyed because if one of their nobles stole, they would let him go, but if one of the weak among them stole, they would carry out the punishment on him. By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, if Fâtimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand.

Then he ordered that the woman who had stolen should have her hand cut off.» (Bukhari and Muslim; this version was narrated by Muslim)

According to a report narrated by an-Nasâ’i from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), she said:

«A woman borrowed some jewellery ... then she sold it and kept the money. She was brought to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). Her family went to Usâmah ibn Zayd, who spoke to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) concerning her. The face of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) changed colour whilst Usâmah was speaking, then Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said

to him: Are you interceding concerning one of the punishments prescribed by Allah?

Usâmah said: Pray for forgiveness for me, O Messenger of Allah.

In the evening, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood up, praised Allah as He deserves to be praised, and then said: The people who came before you were destroyed because if one of their nobles stole, they would let him go, but if one of the weak among them stole, they would carry out the punishment on him. By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, if Fâtimah, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would cut off her hand.

Then he ordered that the woman's hand should be cut off.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i, and graded sound by al-Albâni)

The Prophet's attitude towards Usâmah (رضي الله عنه) indicates that he was fair and just, and that he prioritized Islam over the love of people. People may put up with the personal faults of whoever they wish, but they have no right to be tolerant or biased towards those whose mistakes transgress the limits set by Islam.

Sometimes, when a relative or friend makes a mistake, people do not rebuke them as they would those whom they do not know. One may see un-Islamic bias or discrimination in their dealings because of this, as such people turn a blind eye to their friends' mistakes while harshly criticizing strangers.

An Arab poet once said:

*If you are happy with a person, you do not see his mistakes,  
But if you are angry with him, you see them all.*

This may also be reflected in the way in which actions are interpreted. An action on the part of a person one loves will be taken one way, and the same deed on the part of another person will be taken quite differently.

All of the above applies only when circumstances are the same. Otherwise there could be different considerations as we will see below.

## Being careful lest correcting one mistake leads to a bigger mistake

It is a well-established fact that Islam allows the lesser of two evils in order to repel a greater evil. So a dâ'iyah may keep quiet about one mistake lest saying something leads to a more serious mistake.

The Prophet (ﷺ) kept quiet about the hypocrites and did not execute them, even though their disbelief was well established. He bore their insults with patience, lest people said, "Muhammad is killing his Companions," especially since their true nature was not known to everyone. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not destroy the Kaaba in order to rebuild it on the foundations laid by Prophet Ibrâheem, out of consideration towards Quraysh who were still new to Islam and too close to their recent *jâhiliyah*. He feared that it might be too much for them. So he left it as it was, with a part missing and the door set high up and closed to the masses, even though this contains an element of wrongdoing or oppression.

Before this, Allah had told the Muslims not to insult the gods of the polytheists, even though this is a form of worship, because this could lead to people insulting Allah, which is the worst of evil.

Du'ât may keep quiet about a wrong action, or defer rebuking, or change their approach, if they think that by doing so they will avoid a greater evil or mistake. This is not considered as a shortcoming or negligence as long as their intention is sincere and they do not fear anyone except Allah, and it was only concern for the best interests of Islam, not cowardice, which stopped them from saying anything.

We may note that what causes a greater evil when rebuking for one mistake is jealousy which is not checked or controlled.



## Understanding the human nature from which the mistake sprang

There are some mistakes which can never be fully eradicated, because they have to do with the way Allah has created people. It is possible to reduce them a little, but going to extremes in dealing with them will lead to a disaster. Such is the case of women. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: «A woman was created from a rib, and she will not behave consistently towards you. If you enjoy her company, then enjoy it despite her crookedness. If you try to straighten her, you will break her, and her breaking is her divorce.» (Muslim)

According to another report:

«Be kind to women, for they were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is the top. If you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it alone, it will stay crooked. So be kind to women.» (Bukhari)

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words «be kind to women» indicate that you should try to put them right gently. If you go to extremes in trying to straighten them, you will break them, and if you leave them, they will remain crooked... What we learn from this is that we should not leave them crooked if they go beyond the natural expected shortcomings and commit sins or neglect duties. What is meant is that we can leave them crooked with regard to permissible matters. We also learn from the hadith that a gentle approach wins people over and opens their hearts. It also tells us to deal with women by being easy-going with them and by bearing their crookedness with patience. Whoever insists on putting them right will not benefit from them. As a man cannot do without a woman to enjoy the

pleasure of living with her and to be his support in life, it is as if he said: You cannot enjoy her company unless you put up with her.<sup>1</sup>

## Making a distinction between mistakes that transgress the limits of Islam and mistakes that only affect other people

If Islam is dearer to us than our own selves, we must defend it and protect it and get angry for its sake more than we get angry for our own sakes and defend our own selves. It is a sign of not having religious feelings if we get enraged for our own sake if anyone insults us, but we do not get angry for the sake of Allah's religion if anybody insults it; at most, we only feebly defend it in an embarrassed manner.

The Prophet (ﷺ) often used to forgive those who made mistakes in their interactions with him, especially the hard-hearted Bedouin, in order to soften their hearts. Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Anas ibn Mâlik said:

«I was walking with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and he was wearing a Najrâni cloak with a stiff collar. A Bedouin accosted him, grabbing his cloak in such a manner that the collar left a mark on the Prophet's neck, and he said: O Muhammad! Give me some of the wealth of Allah that you have!

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) turned to him and smiled, then ordered that he should be given something.» (Bukhari)

But if the mistake had to do with some issue of religion, then the Prophet (ﷺ) would become angry for the sake of Allah. Examples of this will be given below.

There are some other matters which should also be borne in mind when dealing with people's mistakes, such as:

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<sup>1</sup> *al-Fath*, 9:954.

- i- Making a distinction between major mistakes and minor mistakes, just as Islam makes a distinction between major sins (*kabâ'ir*) and minor sins (*ṣaghâ'ir*).
- ii- Making a distinction between people who have a track record of performing many good deeds, which will more or less cancel out the significance of their mistakes, and sinners who transgress against themselves (by habitually doing evil deeds). People may put up with the mistakes of the ones with the good track record that they will not put up with on the part of others. This is what happened to aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (Abu Bakr), as the following story illustrates:

«Asmâ' bint Abi Bakr said: We went out with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as pilgrims, and when we reached al-'Arj, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stopped to rest, and we stopped with him. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) sat beside Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and I sat beside my father. The riding beast shared by Abu Bakr and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was with a slave belonging to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr sat down, waiting for him to catch up, and when he caught up, the camel was not with him. Abu Bakr asked: Where is the camel?

The slave answered: I lost it yesterday.

Abu Bakr said: One camel and you lost it?

He started to hit him. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: Look what this *muḥrim* (person in a state of *iḥrâm* for Hajj) is doing.

Ibn Abi Rizmah said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not do any more than saying: Look what this *muḥrim* is doing – and smiling.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood, and graded reliable by al-Albâni)

- iii- Making a distinction between the one who makes mistakes repeatedly and the one who is making a mistake for the first time.
- iv- Making a distinction between the one who frequently makes mistakes and the one who rarely does so.
- v- Making a distinction between the one who makes mistakes openly and blatantly, and the one who tries to cover up one's mistakes.
- vi- Paying attention to cases where people's adherence to Islam may not be strong and their hearts need to be opened to the religion, so we should not be too harsh with them.
- vii- Taking into account a person's situation regarding status and authority.

The considerations that we have mentioned above do not contradict the fairness and justice referred to earlier.

- viii- Youngsters who make mistakes should be rebuked in a manner that is appropriate to their age.

Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported that al-Hasan ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) took one of the dates that had been given in charity and put it in his mouth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said in Persian:

«*Kikh, kikh*, do you not know that we do not eat the *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity)?» (Bukhari)

Aṭ-Ṭabarāni (may Allah have mercy on him) reported from Zaynab bint Abi Salamah that she came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) whilst he was performing ghusl. She said:

«He took a handful of water and threw it in my face, saying: Go away, foolish girl!» (Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarāni; al-Haythami said its chain of narration is reliable)

From this it is clear that children's tender years do not mean that their mistakes should not be corrected; indeed, correcting

their mistakes is akin to giving them the best upbringing, as it will be imprinted in their memory and will benefit them in the future. The first hadith shows how a child is taught to fear Allah and restrain himself, and the second hadith shows how they are taught good manners, how they should seek permission to enter, and how they should refrain from looking at the *'awrah* (that which should be covered) of others.

Another brilliant example of correcting children is the story of the young boy 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah. Bukhari reported:

«He said: I was a young boy under the care of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and my hand used to wander all over the plate (at mealtimes). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to me: O young boy! Say *bismillâh*, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is directly in front of you.

This remained my way of eating from that time on.» (Bukhari)

We may note that when the Prophet (ﷺ) advised that young boy who made the mistake of letting his hand go everywhere in the food, his words were short, brief, and clear, which made it easy for the child to remember and understand; the effect on the boy's heart lasted for a lifetime, as he said, "This remained my way of eating from that time on."

- ix- Exercising caution when advising non-*maḥram* women, so that the advice is not taken wrongly and any *fitnah* (trial or temptation) is avoided. Young men should not use correction of mistakes or teaching as a pretext or excuse to speak to young non-*maḥram* women. How often has this led to disasters! When it comes to correcting women, a large role should be given to *ahl al-ḥisbah* ("religious police") and older people who could help them in this regard. Those who seek to enjoin good and forbid evil must act in accordance with what they think will be the outcome of this rebuking. If they think that it is likely to

benefit, they should speak up, otherwise they should refrain from speaking to ignorant women who may make false accusations against them whilst persisting in their wrongdoing. The state of the society at large and the status of the one who is seeking to enjoin good and forbid evil plays a fundamental role in the success of efforts to rebuke, convey the message, or establish evidence. The following story illustrates this:

The freed slave of Abu Ruhm, whose name was ‘Ubayd, reported:

«Abu Hurayrah met a woman who was wearing perfume and heading for the mosque. He said: O female slave of al-Jabbâr (the Compeller), where are you going?

She said: To the mosque.

He said: And you have put on perfume for this?

She said: Yes.

He said: I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saying: If any woman puts on perfume and then goes out to the mosque, Allah will not accept her prayers until she does ghusl.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

According to *Ṣaḥeḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*:

«A woman passed by Abu Hurayrah and her perfume was overwhelming. He said to her: Where are you going, O female slave of al-Jabbâr?

She said: To the mosque.

He said: Are you wearing perfume?

She said: Yes.

He said: Go back and do ghusl, for I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saying that Allah does not accept the prayer of any woman who goes out to the mosque with overwhelming perfume, until she goes back and does ghusl.» (Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah;

graded reliable by al-Albâni; also recorded by Aḥmad and graded sound by Aḥmad Shâkir)

- x- Not occupying oneself with putting the symptoms right whilst neglecting to deal with the cause of the mistake.
- xi- Not exaggerating the mistake.
- xii- Not going to extremes to prove the mistake happened or trying to force an admission of guilt from the one who made the mistake.
- xiii- Allowing enough time for correcting the mistake, especially for someone who has been accustomed to doing it for a long time, whilst still following up the matter and continuing to advise and correct.
- xiv- Not making the one who committed a mistake feel like an enemy, because the aim is to win people over, not score points against them.

Now we will move on to our discussion of the methods used by the Prophet (ﷺ) when dealing with the mistakes of the people, as recorded in the sound hadiths narrated by the scholars.



# The Prophet's Methods of Dealing with People's Mistakes

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## 1 – Hastening to deal with people's mistakes and not putting it off

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to hasten to deal with people's mistakes, especially when it was not right for him to delay doing so, at the moment when this was needed. His task was to explain the truth to the people, teach them to do good, and warn them off from doing evil. So he hastened to correct people on many occasions, as is seen in the stories of the man who was not doing his ṣalâh properly, the Makhzoomi woman, Ibn al-Lutbiyah, Usâmah, the three who wanted to go to extremes in worship, and others. These stories will be related in the course of this discussion, *in shâ' Allâh*.

Not hastening to deal with mistakes goes against the interests of Islam and misses out on the opportunity to strike while the iron is hot, as it were.

## 2 – Dealing with mistakes by explaining the ruling (*ḥukm*)

«Jarhad (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) passed him when his thigh was uncovered. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Cover your thigh, for it is part of the 'awrah.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi who graded it reliable)



### 3 – Referring people back to Islam when they make mistakes, and pointing out to them the principle that they are breaking

When someone is indulging in a mistake, the Islamic principle is far from their minds and is lost in the clamour of the moment. In such cases, reiterating the Islamic principle and announcing it loudly can be an effective way of stopping the person in their tracks and waking them up from the stupor that has overtaken them. When we look at what happened between the *Muhâjiroon* and *Anşâr*, because of the flames of fitnah stirred up by the hypocrites, we will see an example of how the Prophet (ﷺ) used this tactic. Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in his *Şaheeh* that Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) said:

«We went out on a military campaign with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). Some of the Muhâjiroon went with him too and they were very many. Among the Muhâjiroon was a man who was very playful (a joker). He shoved an Anşâri (in jest). The Anşâri got very angry with him and called others to support him, saying: O Anşâr!

The Muhâjir called out: O Muhâjireen!

The Prophet (ﷺ) came out and said: What is this call of the people of jâhiliyah all about?

Then he asked: What is the matter with him?

He was told about how the Muhâjir had shoved the Anşâri in jest. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Let it be, for it (tribalism) is evil.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by Muslim, he said:

«Let a man help his brother, whether he is a wrongdoer or a victim of wrongdoing. If he is a wrongdoer, he should stop him, and if he is the victim of wrongdoing, he should come to his aid.» (Muslim)

## 4 – Correcting misconceptions that are due to something not being clear in people's minds

Ḥumayd ibn Abi Ḥumayd aṭ-Ṭaweel reported that he heard Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) saying:

«Three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), asking about how the Prophet (ﷺ) worshipped. When they were told about it, they thought that it was little. They said: Who are we, compared to the Prophet (ﷺ)? All his sins, past and future, have been forgiven.

(They thought that the one who does not know that his sins have been forgiven needed to go to extremes in worship and do far more than the Prophet (ﷺ), in the hope that their sins might be forgiven.) One of them said: As for me, I will pray every night from now on.

Another said: As for me, I will fast for the rest of my life and will never break my fast.

The third said: As for me, I will have nothing to do with women and I will never marry.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came to them and said: Are you the people who said such-and-such? By Allah, I am the one who fears Allah more than anyone, but I fast and I break my fast; I pray and I rest; and I get married.» (Bukhari)

Muslim reported from Anas:

«A group of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) asked the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) about what he did in secret. One of them (those Companions) said: I will never marry women.

Another said: I will never eat meat.

Another said: I will never sleep on a bed.

(The Prophet [ﷺ]) praised and thanked Allah, then he said: What is the matter with some people who say such-and-such? But as for me, I pray and I sleep; I fast and I break my fast; and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah has nothing to do with me.»  
(Muslim)

Here we may note the following points:

- i- The Prophet (ﷺ) came to them and addressed them directly; when he wanted to teach all the people, he did not refer to them by name or expose them; he merely said: «What is the matter with some people...?». In this way, he was gentle with them and covered up for them whilst, at the same time, he acted in the common interest by teaching everybody.
- ii- The hadith describes finding out about the action of good people and seeking to emulate them. Investigating such things is the sign of a sound mind and efforts to improve oneself.
- iii- This report indicates that when it comes to useful matters of religion, it is permissible to learn them from women if it is not possible to learn them from men.
- iv- There is nothing wrong with a person talking about his or her deeds as long as there is no element of showing off and it is for the benefit of others.
- v- We also learn that going to extremes in worship may cause a person to get bored, which in turn could lead them to stop worshipping altogether; the best of things are those that are moderate.<sup>1</sup>
- vi- Mistakes generally come about as a result of misconceptions; if the ideas are put right, mistakes will decrease. It is clear from the hadith that the reason why those Companions adopted the concepts of extreme worship and monasticism was that

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<sup>1</sup> See *al-Fath*, 9:104.

they thought they had to go beyond the Prophet's actions in worship in order to attain salvation. This was because he had been told that all his sins were forgiven, but they did not have this advantage. The Prophet (ﷺ) set them straight. He told them that even though he was forgiven, he was the most fearing of Allah among humankind, and he commanded them to follow his Sunnah in worship.

A similar thing happened to another Companion, whose name was Kahmas al-Hilâli (رضي الله عنه), who narrated his story:

«I became Muslim and came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that I had become Muslim. I stayed away for a year, during which I became very skinny. When I came back, he looked me up and down. I said: Do you not know me?

He asked: Who are you?

I said: I am Kahmas al-Hilâli.

He said: What happened to you?

I said: After I saw you, I never spent a day without fasting, and I never slept at night.

He said: Who told you to torture yourself? Fast during the month of patience (Ramadan) and one day of every month besides that.

I said: Let me do more.

He said: Fast the month of patience and two days of every month besides that.

I said: Let me do more. I am able for it.

He said: Fast the month of patience and three days of every month besides that.» (Recorded by at-Ṭayâlisi and at-Ṭabarâni; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Some misconceptions may be based on how one judges and regards people. The Prophet (ﷺ) was very keen to correct this and put people straight in this regard. In *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Bukhâri*, there is a report from Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sâ'idi who said:

«A man passed by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), who asked a man sitting by him: What do you think of this man?

He said: He is one of the noblest people. By Allah, if he proposes marriage, he deserves to be accepted and if he intercedes, he deserves to have his intercession accepted.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said nothing. Then another man passed by and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked the man with him: What do you think of him?

The man said: O Messenger of Allah, he is one of the poor Muslims. If he proposes marriage, he does not deserve to be accepted, if he intercedes, he does not deserve to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks, he does not deserve to be heard.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: This man is better than an earth full of men like the other man.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by Ibn Mâjah:

«A man passed by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and the Prophet (ﷺ) said (to his Companions): What do you think of this man?

They said: We think that he is one of the noblest people. If he proposes marriage, he deserves to be accepted, if he intercedes, he deserves to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks, he deserves to be heard.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said nothing. Another man passed by and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: What do you think of this man?

They said: By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, he is one of the poor Muslims. If he proposes marriage, he does not deserve to be accepted, if he intercedes, he does not deserve to have his intercession accepted, and if he speaks, he does not deserve to be heard.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: This man is better than an earth full of men like the other one.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni)

## 5 – Dealing with mistakes by repeatedly reminding people to fear Allah

Jundub ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Bajali reported:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) sent a group of Muslims to fight some polytheists, and they met in battle. One of the polytheists was ambushing individual Muslims and killing them. One of the Muslims wanted to catch him out and kill him. (Jundub said:) We used to think that that man was Usâmah ibn Zayd. When he raised his sword, the polytheist said: *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*.

But he (Usâmah) killed him. A messenger came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and reported to him what had happened in the battle. When he told him about what had happened to the polytheist who said *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent for Usâmah and asked him: Why did you kill him?

He said: O Messenger of Allah, he had caused much grief to the Muslims. He killed So-and-so and So-and-so – and he named a number of people. I attacked him and when he saw the sword he said *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: And then you killed him?

Usâmah said: Yes.

He said: What will you do when *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* comes on the Day of Resurrection?

He said: O Messenger of Allah, pray for forgiveness for me.

The Prophet (ﷺ) simply said: What will you do when *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* comes on the Day of Resurrection?

He did not say any more than that.» (Muslim)

According to a report narrated by Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه), he said: «Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) sent us out on a military campaign and we reached al-Haraqât near Juhaynah in the morning. (During the battle) I

caught a man and he said: *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*, but I stabbed him. Then I felt bad about that, and I mentioned it to the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: He said *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* and you killed him? I said: O Messenger of Allah, he only said it because he was afraid of my weapon.

He said: How can you know what is in his heart? How can you be sure whether he was sincere?

He kept repeating this until I wished that I had not become Muslim until that day (because embracing Islam wipes out all sins that came before – Translator).» (Muslim)

One issue that may be included under the heading of reminders is reminding people about the power of Allah. An example of this follows:

Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) reported:

«Abu Mas'ood al-Badri said: I was beating a slave of mine with a whip, and I heard a voice behind me saying: Listen, Abu Mas'ood! I did not pay any attention to the voice because I was so angry. When the voice got nearer to me, I realized that it was Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and he was saying: Listen, Abu Mas'ood; listen, Abu Mas'ood! I dropped the whip from my hand (according to another report: the whip fell from my hand out of respect for him). He said: Listen, Abu Mas'ood, Allah has more power over you than you have over this slave.

I said: I will never hit a slave again.» (Muslim)

According to another report:

«He said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, he is free for the sake of Allah. He said: If you did not do this, the fire of hell would blow in your face, or the fire would touch you.» (Recorded by Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*; authenticated by al-Albâni)

According to another report also narrated by Muslim:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Certainly Allah has more power over you than you have over him.

So he freed him.» (Muslim)

Abu Mas'ood al-Anṣārī said:

«I was beating a slave of mine when I heard someone saying from behind me: Listen, Abu Mas'ood; listen, Abu Mas'ood.

I turned around and saw that it was Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). He said: Allah has more power over you than you have over him...

I never beat any slave of mine after that.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it authentic)

## 6 – Showing compassion to the one who is making a mistake

This applies in the case of those who deserve compassion and who feel remorseful and show that they have repented. This is sometimes the case when people come to ask questions to learn, as in the following story:

«Ibn 'Abbās reported that a man who had divorced his wife by *dhihâr* and then had intercourse with her came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I divorced my wife by *dhihâr* then I had intercourse with her before I offered *kaffârah* (expiation)

He said: What made you do that, may Allah have mercy on you?

He said: I saw her anklets in the moonlight.

He said: Then do not go near her until you have done what Allah commanded you to do.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it *ḥasan ghareeb ṣaheeh*)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Whilst we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), a man came to him and said: O Messenger of Allah, I am doomed!



He asked: What is the matter with you?

He said: I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) inquired: Are you able to set a slave free?

He said: No.

He asked: Can you fast for two consecutive months?

He said: No.

He queried: Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor persons?

He said: No.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said nothing more about the matter for a while, and whilst we were sitting there like that, a large basket full of dates was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ).

He asked: Where is the one who was asking?

The man said: Here I am.

He said: Take this and give it in charity.

The man said: Who is poorer than me, O Messenger of Allah? By Allah, there is no family in Madinah poorer than mine.

The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled until his eyeteeth were visible, then he said: Feed your family with it.» (Bukhari)

This person who had made a mistake and came to ask about it was not joking or taking the matter lightly. He felt remorseful and guilty, as is clear from his saying "I am doomed." For this reason, he deserved pity and compassion. The report narrated by Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) makes the man's state clearer:

Abu Hurayrah reported:

«A Bedouin came, hitting his cheeks and tearing out his hair, and saying: I am sure that I am doomed!

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to him: What makes you doomed?

He said: I had intercourse with my wife during Ramadan.

He asked: Can you free a slave?

He said: No.

He inquired: Can you fast for two consecutive months?

He said: No.

He queried: Can you feed sixty poor persons?

He said: No – and he mentioned how poor he was.

A large basket containing fifteen *ṣā'* of dates was brought to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: Where is that man? ... Feed the poor with this.

He said: O Messenger of Allah, there is no one in Madinah who is poorer than my family.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) smiled until his eyeteeth were visible and said: Feed your family.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and in *al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbâni*)

## 7 – Not hastening to tell the people that they are wrong

Something happened to 'Umar which he himself told about:

«He said: I heard Hishâm ibn Ḥakeem ibn Ḥizâm reciting Soorat al-Furqân during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). I listened to his recitation, and he was reciting it differently from the way that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to recite it. I nearly interrupted his prayer, but I waited until he had said the salâm. Then I grabbed him by his cloak and asked: Who taught you to recite this soorah I heard you reciting?

He said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) taught me to recite it.

I said: You are lying! Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) taught me to recite it differently.

I took him to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: I heard him reciting Soorat al-Furqân differently from the way you taught me to recite it.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Let him go. Recite, O Hishâm.

He recited it as I had heard him recite it. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: This is how it was revealed.

Then he said: Recite, O 'Umar.

So I recited it as he had taught me. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: This is how it was revealed. This Qur'an was revealed with seven ways of recitation, so recite it in the way that is easiest for you.» (Bukhari)

Among the educational methods we learn from this story are the following:

- i- Telling each to recite in front of the other and approving their recitation was more effective in confirming that both were correct and neither was wrong.
- ii- The Prophet (ﷺ) told 'Umar to let go of Hishâm in order to prepare both parties to listen in a calm manner. This was an indication that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) had been too hasty.
- iii- A person who is seeking knowledge should not be too hasty to condemn any opinion that differs from the one he or she is familiar with; one should first be sure of what one is saying, because the opinion being objected to may turn out to be a valid scholarly one.

Another relevant point is that one should not hasten to punish someone who makes a mistake, as we see in the following story:

«An-Nasâ'i (may Allah have mercy on him) reported from 'Abbâd ibn Sharḥabeel (رضي الله عنه) who said: I came with my (paternal) uncles to Madinah, and we entered one of the gardens of the city. I rubbed some of the wheat. The owner of the garden came and took my cloak and hit me. I came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asking for his help. He sent for that man and they brought him to him. He asked him: What made you do that?

He said: O Messenger of Allah, he went into my garden and took some of my wheat and rubbed it.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: You did not teach him if it was the matter of him not knowing, and you did not feed him if it was the matter of him being hungry. Give him back his cloak.

And Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) ordered that I should be given a *wasaq* or half a wasaq (measure of wheat).» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i; authenticated by al-Albâni)

From this story we learn that we should find out the circumstances of the ones who are making a mistake or acting in an aggressive manner, so that we may know the right way of dealing with them.

We may also note that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not punish the owner of the garden. This was because he was right, but he had handled the matter incorrectly. He pointed out to him that the way he had dealt with someone who did not know better was inappropriate in such circumstances. Then he taught him how to handle the matter properly and told him to give back the garment he had taken from the hungry man.

## 8 – Remaining calm when dealing with people's mistakes

This is especially when being too harsh could make matters worse and cause more harm than good. We can learn this from looking at how the Prophet (ﷺ) dealt with the mistake made by the Bedouin who urinated in the mosque, as was reported by Anas ibn Mâlik, who said: «Whilst we were in the mosque with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), a Bedouin came and stood urinating in the mosque. The Companions of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Stop it! Stop it!

But Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Do not interrupt him; leave him alone.

So they left him until he had finished urinating. Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) called him and said to him: In these mosques it is

not right to do anything like urinating or defecating; they are only for remembering Allah, praying, and reading Qur'an – or words to that effect.

Then he commanded a man who was there to bring a bucket of water and throw it over the (urine), and he did so.» (Muslim)

The principle which the Prophet (ﷺ) followed in dealing with this mistake was treating the man gently and not being harsh with him. Bukhari reported from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه):

«A Bedouin urinated in the mosque, and the people got up to sort him out. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to them: Leave him alone, and throw a bucket of water over it. You have been sent to make things easy for the people, not to make things hard.» (Bukhari)

The Companions (رضي الله عنهم) were very keen to denounce the repulsive thing they had seen and to keep their mosque clean and pure. This is indicated in the various reports of this hadith, which describe them as shouting at him, getting up to sort him out, rebuking him, hastening to deal with him, or telling him to “Stop it!”<sup>1</sup> But the Prophet (ﷺ) was thinking of the likely consequences of the two options – stopping him or leaving him alone. If they tried to stop him, forcing a man to suppress his urination could harm him; if he was unable to stop but moved away because he was afraid of them, the impurity would spread over a wider area of the mosque and on the man's body and clothing. The Prophet (ﷺ) had the farsightedness that leaving the man alone until he had finished urinating was the lesser of two evils. This was especially since the man had already started doing it, and it was a problem that they would be able to resolve by cleaning it afterwards. So he told his Companions to leave him alone and not to interrupt him. He told them to leave him alone because this was in the better interests of all and would ward off a worse evil.

<sup>1</sup> *Jâmi' al-Uşool*, 7:83-87.

It was also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked the man the reason for his action. Aṭ-Ṭabarâni reported in *al-Kabeer* that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said:

«A Bedouin came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and pledged allegiance to him in the mosque. Then he went away and started to urinate. The people wanted to stop him, but the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not stop a man when he is urinating.

Then he asked him: Are you not a Muslim?

He said: Of course.

He said: What made you urinate in our mosque?

He said: By the One Who sent you with the truth, I thought it was just like any other place so I urinated in it.

The Prophet (ﷺ) called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine.» (Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarâni; authenticated by al-Haythami)

This wise manner of dealing with the problem had a far-reaching effect on the Bedouin, as is clear from his reaction. Ibn Mâjah reported that Abu Hurayrah said:

«A Bedouin entered the mosque where Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting, and said: O Allah, forgive me and Muhammad, and do not forgive anyone else.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: You are narrowing something vast.

Then (the Bedouin) went away to the furthest part of the mosque, opened his legs, and began to urinate. After he had learnt better, the Bedouin said: He got up, may my mother and my father be sacrificed for him, but he did not rebuke me or insult me. He just said: We do not urinate in this mosque; it was only built for the remembrance of Allah and for prayer.

Then he called for a bucket of water and poured it over the urine.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned in his commentary a number of things we learn from the hadith about the Bedouin, among which are the following:

- i- We should be gentle when dealing with those who are ignorant and teach them what they need to know without rebuking them, as long as they are not acting out of stubbornness and especially if they need to be won over.
- ii- The Prophet (ﷺ) was kind and dealt nicely with the Bedouin.
- iii- The idea of taking precautions against impurity (*najâsah*) was well established in the minds of the Companions, which is why they hastened to denounce it in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) without first asking his permission. The idea of enjoining good and forbidding evil was also well established in their minds.
- iv- We should also hasten to remove anything objectionable when there is nothing to stop us from doing so. When the man had finished urinating, the Prophet (ﷺ) issued instructions that the place should be cleaned with water.

## 9 – Explaining the seriousness of the mistake

Ibn ‘Umar, Muhammad ibn Ka‘b, Zayd ibn Aslam, and Qatâdah reported (the following is compiled from their reports):

«During the campaign of Tabook, a man said: We have never seen anyone who loves food and tells lies more than our reciters, or anyone who is more cowardly on the battlefield – referring to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions.

‘Awf ibn Mâlik said: You are lying! You are a hypocrite, and I am going to tell Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

‘Awf went to the Messenger of Allah to tell him, but found that the Qur’an had already been revealed concerning it. That man came to

the Prophet (ﷺ), who was riding his camel, and said: O Messenger of Allah, we were only talking idly and joking, just to pass time on the journey.

Ibn 'Umar said: It is as if I can see him hanging onto the reins of the Prophet's camel, with the stones hitting his feet, saying: We were only talking idly and joking – whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was reciting: ﴿...Say: Was it Allah, His revelations and His Messenger that you were ridiculing?﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 65) – no more, no less.»

Ibn Jareer reported:

«Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: During the campaign of Tabook a man said in a gathering: We have never seen anyone who loves food and tells lies more than our reciters, or anyone who is more cowardly on the battlefield.

A man who was present said: You are lying! You are a hypocrite, and I am going to tell Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) – and the Qur'an was revealed.

'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar said: I saw him hanging on to the reins of the Prophet's camel, kicking up the stones, and saying: O Messenger of Allah, we were only talking idly and joking – and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was saying:

﴿... قُلْ أَيَاللَّهِ وَعَائِنِيهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٦٥)

﴿...Say: Was it Allah, His revelations and His Messenger that you were ridiculing?﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 65)»<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tafseer at-Tabari*, 14:333, Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1412. Its narrators are those of *aş-Şaheeh* except Hishâm ibn Sa'd, from whom Muslim did not report except as a corroborating report, as in *al-Meezân*. It was also reported by at-Tabari with his chain of narration, and there is a corroborating report with a reliable chain of narration recorded by Ibn Hâtim from the hadith of Ka'b ibn Mâlik. *Şaheeh al-Musnad min Asbâb an-Nuzool*, p. 71.



## 10 – Explaining the harmful effects of the mistake

Abu Tha‘labah al-Khushani said:

«Whenever Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) broke his journey in a place, the people would disperse in the valleys and mountains. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Your dispersing in these valleys and mountains is from Shayṭân.

After that he never stopped anywhere but they all stayed close together, so much so that if a cloak was spread over them, it would cover them all.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; graded sound by al-Albâni)

According to another report:

«...until you would say that if you were to spread a cloth over them, it would cover them.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

Here we may note the Prophet’s concern for his Companions, which was the leader’s concern for his troops. The army’s dispersing when they made camp was a trick of the Shayṭân to make the Muslims scared and to lead the enemy to attack them.<sup>1</sup> Dispersing in this manner would make it hard for one part of the army to come to the aid of another part.<sup>2</sup>

We may also note that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) obeyed him in whatever instructions they received from him.

Another example of the Prophet (ﷺ) indicating how serious and dangerous a mistake was can be seen in the hadith of an-Nu‘mân ibn Basheer, according to which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Straighten your rows (for prayer), or Allah will make you divided.» (Bukhari)

Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from Simâk ibn Ḥarb, who said:

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<sup>1</sup> See *‘Awn al-Ma‘bood*, 7:292.

<sup>2</sup> See *Daleel al-Fâliḥeen*, 6:130.

«I heard an-Nu‘mân ibn Basheer saying: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to straighten our rows strictly, until he realized we had got the message. One day, he came out and was about to say takbeer when he noticed a man whose chest was sticking out. He said: O slaves of Allah, straighten your rows, or Allah will make you divided.» (Muslim)

An-Nasâ’i reported from Anas (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «Make your rows firm and close together, and make your necks in a straight line, for by the One in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, I see the *Shayâteen* (devils) coming among your ranks as if they are small black sheep.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ’i and graded sound by al-Albâni)

Explaining the negative effects and evil consequences is very important when it comes to convincing people that they are making a mistake. The consequences may affect the person himself or herself, or they may spread to other people. An example of the former is the report narrated by Abu Dâwood (may Allah have mercy on him) in his *Sunan* from Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), in which a man cursed the wind. Muslim said that a man’s cloak was snatched away by the wind at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he cursed the wind. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Do not curse it, for it only does as it is commanded, and if a person curses something that does not deserve to be cursed, his curse will come back upon him.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; authenticated by al-Albâni)

An example of the latter was narrated by Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) in his *Shaheeh* from ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Abi Bakrah from his father, who said:

«A man praised another man in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ).» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by Muslim:

«A man said: O Messenger of Allah, there is no one other than Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) who is better than him in such-and-such.

(The Prophet [ﷺ]) said to him: Woe to you! You have cut your companion's throat! You have cut your companion's throat!

(He said this) several times, then he said: If any one of you insists on praising his brother, let him say: I think so-and-so is such-and-such, and Allah knows the exact truth, and I do not confirm anyone's good conduct before Allah, but I think him to be such-and-such – if he knows that this is the case.» (Muslim)

According to a report narrated by Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Miḥjan al-Aslami (رضي الله عنه) said:

«...until when we were in the mosque, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw a man praying, prostrating, and bowing. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked me: Who is this?

I started to praise him and said: O Messenger of Allah, this is so-and-so, and he is such-and-such. (According to another report also in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, he said: This is so-and-so and he is one of the best people in Madinah in prayer.)

He said: Be quiet, lest he hears you and you destroy him.» (Recorded by Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* and graded reliable by al-Albâni)

Bukhari reported that Abu Moosâ (رضي الله عنه) said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) heard a man praising another man and going to extremes in that. He said: You have destroyed him, or: You have broken the man's back.» (Bukhari)

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that exaggeration when praising someone is a mistake which can have negative consequences. It may make the people who are being praised feel proud, so their hearts are filled with arrogance and self-admiration, and they rest on their laurels or start to show off because they enjoy the praise so much. This in turn may lead to their ultimate doom, which is what the Prophet (ﷺ)

meant when he said: «You have destroyed him» or «You have cut the man's throat» or «You have broken the man's back».

Moreover, if people go to extremes in praising someone, and say something they are not certain of, or affirm something they could not possibly know, or maybe even tell lies or say something to please the person they are praising, this will be a disaster, especially if the person they are praising is an oppressor or wrongdoer.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, it is not forbidden to praise people. The Prophet (ﷺ) praised some people in their presence. An important explanation of this topic is to be found in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, where there is a chapter entitled *Bâb an-Nahy 'an al-Madh idhâ kâna feehi ifrât wa kheefa minhu fitnatan 'alal-mamdooh* (Chapter: Prohibition of praising others if it is exaggerated or if there is the danger of fitnah for the one who is praised). (*Kitâb az-Zuhd war-Raqâ'iq, Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*).

People who see themselves as falling short will not be damaged by praise, and if they are praised, they will not become arrogant, because they know their own true nature. Some of the salaf said:

If a man is praised to his face, let him say: O Allah, forgive me for what they do not know, do not hold me responsible for what they say, and make me better than what they think.<sup>2</sup>

## 11 – Practically teaching the one who is making a mistake

In many cases, practical teaching is more effective than theoretical teaching. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) did. Jubayr ibn Nufayr reported from his father:

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<sup>1</sup> See *al-Fath*, 10:478.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Fath*, 10:478.

«He came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), who called for water, then said: Perform ablution, O Abu Jubayr.

Abu Jubayr started with his mouth, and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Do not start with your mouth, O Abu Jubayr, for the disbeliever starts with his mouth.

Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) called for water and washed his hands until they were clean; then he rinsed his mouth and nose three times, washed his face three times, washed his right arm up to the elbow three times, and his left arm three times; then he wiped his head and washed his feet.» (Recorded by al-Bayhaqi, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

We may note here that the Prophet (ﷺ) deliberately put this Companion off from doing an incorrect action by telling him that the disbelievers start with their mouths; the meaning may be that the disbelievers do not wash their hands before putting them in the vessel (I was told this by Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn Bâz when I asked him about the interpretation of this hadith), and that this is not hygienic. And Allah knows best.

## 12 – Offering a sound alternative

'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood said:

«When we prayed with the Prophet (ﷺ), we used to say: Peace be upon Allah from His slaves; peace be upon so-and-so.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not say: Peace be upon Allah, for Allah is the Peace (*as-Salâm*). You should say:

*At-Tahiyâtu lillâhi was-salawâtu waṭ-ṭayyibât, as-salâmu 'alayka ayyuhan-Nabiyu wa raḥmat-Allâhi wa barakâtuhu, was-salâmu 'alaynâ wa 'alâ 'ibâd-illâh iṣ-ṣâliḥeen.*

If you say this, it will include every slave of Allah in heaven or between heaven and earth. (Then say:) I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Then choose whichever supplication you like, and recite it.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by an-Nasâ'i:

«'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood said (that they used to pray): Peace be upon Jibreel, peace be upon Mikâ'eel.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Another report that deals with this topic was narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه), who said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) saw some sputum in the direction of the qiblah and this upset him so much that his anger could be seen on his face. He stood up and removed it with his hand, then said: When any one of you stands up to pray, he is talking to his Lord. His Lord is between him and the qiblah, so none of you should spit in the direction of the qiblah; he should spit to his left or under his feet.

Then he took the edge of his cloak, spat on it, and rubbed part of it against another part and said: Or do like this.» (Bukhari)

Another example was reported by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه), who said:

«Bilâl came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with some good quality dates, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: Where is this from?

Bilâl said: We had some poor quality dates, and I sold two measures of those for one measure of these so that we could give them to the Prophet (ﷺ).

When he heard that, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Oh, oh! The essence of *ribâ*, the essence of ribâ! Do not do that. If you want to buy, sell your dates for something else and then buy it.» (Bukhari)

According to another report:

«One day, a slave belonging to the Prophet (ﷺ) brought him some fresh dates. The Prophet's dates were dry, so he asked him: Where did you get these dates from?

He said: We bought a measure of these for two measures of our dates.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not do this, because it is not right. Sell your dates first, then buy whatever dates you want.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

However, we notice that there is a shortcoming in the methods of some du‘ât and people who seek to enjoin good and forbid evil. They only point out the mistakes and denounce them as haram, without offering an alternative or explaining what must be done to make amends. It is known that the method of Islam is to offer alternatives to make up for any benefits that may have been gained through the haram practice. When zinâ (fornication, adultery) was forbidden, marriage was allowed and prescribed; when ribâ (usury, interest) was forbidden, trading was allowed; when pork, dead meat, and the flesh of every creature that has fangs or talons were forbidden, the meat of properly-slaughtered cattle and other animals was allowed, and so on. If any individuals do fall into error, Islam shows them the way out, through repentance and expiation, as is explained in the texts on *kaffârât* (acts of expiation). So those who seek to call others to Islam must follow the Sharia in offering alternatives and finding acceptable ways out. (Another example of offering an alternative is to quote sound hadiths which will replace weak and fabricated hadiths).

It is worth pointing out here that offering alternatives is something that depends on what is possible. Sometimes a mistake may be something that has to be stopped, but there is no realistic alternative. This is either because the general situation is bad and people are far removed from the Sharia of Allah, or because the one who is seeking to enjoin good and forbid evil cannot remember what the alternative is – all one wants to do is denounce the mistake and correct it, even if one has no alternative to offer. This happens a great deal in the case of financial dealings and investment organizations, which emerged in disbelieving societies and were brought, complete with all their Islamically unacceptable features, to Muslim societies; the Muslims have shortcomings and weaknesses that prevent them from creating Islamic alternatives and applying them everywhere. So

those shortcomings and weaknesses remain, even though the divine methodology contains alternatives and ways out that could alleviate the Muslims' hardships, and there are some who know this and some who do not.

## 13 – Guiding people to what will prevent them from making mistakes

Abu Umâmah ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf reported that his father told him: «Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went out, and they travelled with him in the direction of Makkah, until they reached the ravine of al-Khazzâr near al-Juhfah. Sahl ibn Hunayf did ghusl, and he was a white man with a handsome body and beautiful skin. 'Âmir ibn Rabee'ah, the brother of Banu 'Adiy ibn Ka'b, looked at him whilst he was doing ghusl and said: I have never seen anything like what I have seen today, not even the skin of the virgin who is hidden away! (referring to the whiteness of his skin).

Sahl fell to the ground (he had an epileptic fit). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came and it was said to him: Do you want to see Sahl? By Allah, he cannot raise his head or wake up.

He asked: Whose fault is this?

They said: 'Âmir ibn Rabee'ah looked at him.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) called 'Âmir and rebuked him angrily, and said: Why would any one of you kill his brother? If any one of you sees that his brother has something he likes, let him pray for blessing for him.

Then he said to him: Wash yourself to help him.

So he washed his face, his hands up to the elbows, his knees, the sides of his feet, and inside his izâr (lower garment) in a vessel. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Pour that water over him.



So he poured the water over his head and from behind, tilting the vessel, and Sahl went with the people and there was nothing wrong with him.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, and authenticated by al-Haythami)

According to a report narrated by Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him):

«Muhammad ibn Abi Umâmah ibn Sahl ibn Ḥunayf said that he heard his father saying: Abu Sahl ibn Ḥunayf did ghusl in al-Kharrâr and took off the garment he was wearing. ‘Âmir ibn Rabee‘ah was looking at him, and Sahl was a white man with beautiful skin. ‘Âmir ibn Rabee‘ah said to him: I have never seen anything like what I have seen today, not even the skin of the virgin!

Sahl fell ill on the spot and became seriously ill. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came and was told: Sahl has fallen ill and cannot go with you, O Messenger of Allah.

Sahl told him what had happened with ‘Âmir, and Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Why would any one of you kill his brother? You should have asked for blessing for him. The (evil) eye is real. Perform ablution to help him.

So ‘Âmir performed ablution, and Sahl went with Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), and there was nothing wrong with him.» (Recorded by Mâlik)

What we learn from this story is:

- i- The teacher (that is, the Prophet [ﷺ]) got angry with the one who harmed his Muslim brother.
- ii- He explained the harmful effects of the mistake and that it could lead to death.
- iii- He pointed out the way of preventing harm from befalling a Muslim.

## 14 – Not confronting people directly with their mistakes and addressing the issue in general terms may be sufficient

Anas ibn Mâlik said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: What is the matter with some people who raise their gaze to the heavens whilst they are praying?

He spoke so harshly about them that he said: They should stop doing that, or else Allah will take away their sight.» (Bukhari)

When 'Â'ishah wanted to buy a slave-woman whose name was Bareerah, her owners refused to sell her except with the condition that she would still be connected to them. When the Prophet (ﷺ) found out about this, he stood up to address the people, praised and thanked Allah, and then said:

«What is wrong with men who impose conditions which are not mentioned in the Book of Allah? Every condition that is not mentioned in the Book of Allah is invalid, even if there were one hundred such conditions. The decree of Allah is more true, the conditions laid down by Allah are more binding, and *walâ'* (connection, loyalty, and allegiance) is to the one who sets the slave free.» (Bukhari)

'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) did something and made it permissible, but some people felt that they were above doing that. News of this reached the Prophet (ﷺ), so he addressed the people. He praised and thanked Allah, then he said: What is the matter with people who think themselves above doing the things that I do? By Allah, I know more about Allah than they do, and I fear Him more than they do.» (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah reported:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw sputum in the (direction of the) qiblah of the mosque, so he turned to the people and said: What is wrong with

one of you that he stands facing his Lord and spits in front of Him? Would any of you like someone to face him and spit in his face? If any one of you wants to spit, let him spit towards his left, under his feet, and if he cannot do this, let him do this – and al-Qâsim described how he spat on his garment and rubbed one part of it against another part.» (Muslim)

An-Nasâ'i reported in his *Sunan*:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed *Ṣalât aṣ-Ṣubḥ* and recited Soorat ar-Room, but got mixed up in his recitation. When he had finished praying, he said: What is the matter with people who pray with us but do not purify themselves properly? Such people are the ones who make us get mixed up when we recite the Qur'an.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i; graded reliable by al-Albâni)<sup>1</sup>

Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) reported that Abu Rawḥ al-Kalâ'i said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) led our prayer and recited Soorat ar-Room. However, he got mixed up in part of the recitation. He said: The Shayṭân made us get mixed up in our recitation, because of some people who come to the prayer without ablution. When you come to pray, perform ablution properly.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

He also reported from Shu'bah from 'Abdul-Malik ibn 'Umayr, who said:

«I heard Shabeeb Abu Rawḥ narrating from a man from among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed *Ṣalât aṣ-Ṣubḥ* and recited Soorat ar-Room, and got mixed up, and he narrated (the same hadith).» (Recorded by Aḥmad)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Its narrators are trustworthy, but al-Ḥâfīdh said about 'Abdul-Malik ibn 'Umayr that even though he was trustworthy, his memory changed and he may have fabricated reports.

<sup>2</sup> It was also reported from Zâ'idah and Sufyân from 'Abdul-Malik. *Al-Musnad*, 3:473.

There are many examples, all of which indicate that the identity of the person who has made the mistake need not be exposed. This indirect approach and avoiding a direct confrontation has a number of benefits, including the following:

- i- It avoids a negative reaction on the part of those who made the mistake, and prevents them from being tempted by the Shayṭān to avenge themselves or defend themselves.
- ii- It is more acceptable to the people and is more effective.
- iii- It conceals the person's mistake in front of other people.
- iv- It increases the status of the educator and makes the advisor more beloved.

It must be pointed out that this method of using hints to convey a ruling to those who have made a mistake, without exposing them and embarrassing them, is only to be used when what they have done is not known to the majority of people. If most of the people do know what they have done, and they (the offenders) know that the people know about this, then this method would be more of a rebuke and scolding, and exposing them in the most hurtful manner. The one who has made a mistake would prefer to be confronted directly than be dealt with in this manner. Among the factors that can make a difference are: who is giving the advice, in the presence of whom the advice is being given, and whether the advice is given in a provocative and aggressive manner, or in a kindly and gentle manner.

Indirect methods of teaching people may benefit the one who has made the mistake and others, if they are used wisely.

## 15 – Provoking public opinion against the one who has made the mistake

This method is only to be used in very limited circumstances, when a great deal of thought has been given to the matter, to avoid any

negative escalation of the situation. There follows an example of how the Prophet (ﷺ) used this method:

Abu Hurayrah said:

«A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and complained to him about his neighbour. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Go and put up with him.

The man came back two or three times, then the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Go and put your belongings out in the street.

So he went and put his belongings out in the street. People started to ask him what was going on, so he told them, and the people started to curse (the neighbour), saying: May Allah do such-and-such to him.

Then the neighbour came to him and said: Put your stuff back; you will not see anything else from me that you dislike.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; authenticated by al-Albâni)

This method has a counterpart which is used in other circumstances to protect people from the public's harm, as will be explained below:

## 16 – Avoiding helping the Shayṭân against the one who is making a mistake

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb reported that at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), there was a man called ‘Abdullâh whose nickname was Ḥimâr (donkey). He used to make Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) laugh. The Prophet (ﷺ) had him whipped for drinking – he was brought to him one day and the Prophet (ﷺ) gave orders that he should be whipped.

«One of the men present said: O Allah, curse him! How often has he been brought (to be punished because of drinking)!

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not curse him, for, by Allah, all I know of him is that he loves Allah and His Messenger.» (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah said:

«A drunkard was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he ordered that he should be beaten, so some of us hit him with our hands and others with shoes and garments. When he went away, a man said: May Allah put him to shame!

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Do not be a help to the Shayṭân against your brother.» (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah also said:

«A man who had been drinking was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: Beat him.

Some of us hit him with our hands and others with shoes and clothes. When he went away, some of the people said: May Allah put you to shame!

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Do not speak like this. Do not help the Shayṭân against him.» (Bukhari)

According to another report:

«Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to his Companions: Rebuke him. So they turned to him and said: You did not think of Allah, you did not fear Allah, and you did not feel ashamed before Allah's Messenger (ﷺ).

Then they let him go, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Say: O Allah, forgive him; O Allah, have mercy on him – and some of them added similar sentiments.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood, and graded sound by al-Albâni)

According to another report:

«When he went away, some of the people said: May Allah put you to shame!

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Do not speak like this; do not help the Shayṭân against him. Say: May Allah have mercy on you.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, and authenticated by Aḥmad Shâkir)

What we learn from all these reports is that even if the Muslims fall into sin, they are still basically Muslims and still love Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and this should not be denied. It is not permitted to pray against them in a manner that helps the Shayṭân against them; rather we should pray for them and ask Allah to guide them, forgive them, and have mercy on them.

## 17 – Asking the person to stop doing the wrong action

It is very important to make the person stop the wrong deed so that it does not get any worse and so that there is no delay in the denunciation of evil.

«‘Umar reported that he said: No, by my father.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Stop! Whoever swears by something other than Allah is guilty of shirk.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, and authenticated by Aḥmad Shâkir)

Abu Dâwood reported in his *Sunan* that ‘Abdullâh ibn Busr (رضي الله عنه) said:

«A man came stepping over the necks of the people (in the mosque) one Friday, whilst the Prophet (ﷺ) was delivering the sermon. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Sit down! You are causing disturbance.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; authenticated by al-Albâni)

At-Tirmidhi reported that Ibn ‘Umar said:

«A man burped in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: Keep your burps away from us! The ones who fill their stomachs most in this world will be the ones who remain hungry longest on the Day of Resurrection.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it ‘reliable but odd’)

These hadiths indicate a direct request to the person who is making the mistake to stop what he is doing.

## 18 – Explaining to the person who is making a mistake how to put things right

The Prophet (ﷺ) did this in a number of ways, including the following:

### Drawing an individual's attention to his mistake so that he could put it right himself

An example of this is the report narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه):

«He said that he was with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and the Prophet (ﷺ) entered and saw a man sitting in the middle of the mosque, clasping his fingers together and talking to himself. The Prophet (ﷺ) gestured towards him, but he did not notice. So he turned to Abu Sa'eed and said: If one of you is praying, he should not clasp his fingers together, because this clasping comes from the Shayṭân; you are in a state of prayer as long as you are still in the mosque, until you go out.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, and authenticated by al-Haythami)

### Asking the person to do something again, correctly, if this is possible

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«A man entered the mosque whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting in a far corner. He prayed, then he came and greeted him with salâm. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: *Wa 'alayka as-salâm*, go back and pray, because you have not prayed.

So he went back and prayed, then he came back and greeted the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: *Wa 'alayka as-salâm*, go back and pray, because you have not prayed.

On the second occasion, or subsequently, the man said: Teach me, O Messenger of Allah.



He said: When you stand up to pray, perform ablution properly, then face the qiblah and say takbeer (*Allâhu akbar*). Then recite whatever is easy for you of the Qur'an, then bow until you are at ease in *rukoo'*, then stand up until your back is completely straight. Then prostrate until you are at ease in *sujood*, then sit up until you are at ease in your sitting, then prostrate again until you are at ease in your *sujood*, and then sit up again until you are at ease in your sitting. Do this in all your prayers.» (Bukhari)

We should note that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pay attention to the actions of the people around him so that he could teach them. According to a report narrated by an-Nasâ'i:

«A man entered the mosque and prayed, whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was watching him and we did not realize it. When he finished, he turned and greeted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), who told him: Go back and pray, for you have not prayed...» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Among the qualities of the educators is that they should be aware of the actions of those who are with them.

- i- It is part of educational wisdom to ask those who have made a mistake to re-do their action, so that they can realize their mistake and put it right themselves, especially when it is an obvious mistake that does not befit them. They may have done it out of forgetfulness, so this will remind them.
- ii- If the people who have made a mistake do not realize it, it must be pointed out and explained to them.
- iii- Giving information to those who are interested and have asked about it themselves is more effective and is more likely to be remembered than handing it out to someone who has not made any such enquiries.

The methods of teaching are many, and the educator can choose whichever are best suited in any given circumstances.

Another example of asking a person to repeat his action correctly is given by Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, where he reports that Jâbir said:

«‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb told me that a man performed ablution, but missed an area on his foot the size of a fingernail. The Prophet (ﷺ) saw him and said: Go back and perform ablution properly.

So he went and did it again, then he prayed.» (Muslim)

A third example was narrated by at-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) in his *Sunan* from Kaladah ibn Ḥanbal:

«He said that Ṣafwân ibn Umayyah sent him with some milk, yoghurt, and *daghâbees* (an edible plant) to the Prophet (ﷺ), when the Prophet (ﷺ) was at the top of the valley. He said: I came to him, and I did not greet him with salâm or ask permission to enter, so the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Go out and say *as-salâmu ‘alaykum*, may I enter?» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it ‘reliable but odd’; authenticated by al-Albâni)

## Asking the person who has made the mistake to correct it as much as he can

Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on it) reported from Ibn ‘Abbâs:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: No man should be alone with a woman unless he is a maḥram (close blood relative to whom marriage is permanently forbidden).

A man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, my wife has gone out for Hajj and I have signed up for such-and-such a military campaign.

He said: Go back and do Hajj with your wife.» (Bukhari)

## Putting right the consequences of the mistake

An-Nasâ’i (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in his *Sunan* from ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه):

«A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: I have come to pledge allegiance to you and to make Hijrah (migration) to you. I have left my parents weeping.

He said: Go back to them and make them smile as you made them weep.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i, and graded sound by al-Albâni)

## Offering *kaffârah* (expiation) for the mistake

If some mistakes cannot be corrected or reversed, then there are other ways offered by Islam for wiping out their effects. One of these ways is *kaffârât* or acts of expiation, of which there are many types, such as *kaffârat al-yameen* (expiation for swearing an unfulfilled oath) and expiation for *dhihâr* (a *jâhili* form of divorce in which one says to one's wife, "You are to me as my mother's back"), manslaughter, having intercourse during the day in Ramadan (while fasting), and so on.

## 19 – Denouncing only the mistake whilst accepting the rest

It may be the case that not all of what a person is saying or doing is wrong. It is wise to limit our denunciation only to what is wrong, and not to generalize by condemning everything that is said or done. This is indicated in the report narrated by Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) from ar-Rubayi' bint Mu'awwidh ibn 'Afrâ', who said: «The Prophet (ﷺ) came and entered, and sat down on my bed the way you sat down. Some young girls of ours began beating on the duff (hand-drum) and singing songs eulogizing those of our forefathers who had been killed at Badr. Then one of them said: Among us there is a Prophet who knows the future.

He (the Prophet [ﷺ]) said: Do not say that; say what you were saying before.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by at-Tirmidhi:

«...Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to her: Do not say this; say what you were saying before.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it authentic)

According to a report narrated by Ibn Mâjah, he said:

«Do not say this; no one knows the future except Allah.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah and graded sound by al-Albâni)

There is no doubt that this kind of treatment makes the person feel that the one who is striving to point out mistakes and correct them is fair and just, and this makes them more likely to accept advice. This is in contrast to some of those who want to denounce errors, but get so angry with the mistake committed that they go to extremes in their denunciation and condemn everything done and said by the one who has made the mistake, good and bad alike. This makes the person reject what they are saying and refuse to follow their advice.

In some cases, the mistake consists not of the words themselves, but the occasion or context in which they are uttered. For example, when somebody dies, one person may say, "Al-Fâtîḥah," and everyone present will recite it. They believe that nothing is wrong with this because what they are reciting is Qur'an, not words of disbelief. It has to be explained to them that what is wrong with this action is thinking that we should recite al-Fâtîḥah on such occasions as an act of worship without any shar'i evidence for doing so, which is the essence of bid'ah. This is what Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) pointed out to a man who sneezed beside him and said: *Alḥamdulillâhi was-salâm 'alâ Rasool-illâh* (Praise be to Allah and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah). «Ibn 'Umar said: I could say *Alḥamdulillâhi was-salâm 'alâ Rasool-illâh*, but this is not how Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) taught us. He taught us to say: *Alḥamdulillâhi 'alâ kulli ḥâl* (Praise be to Allah whatever the circumstances).» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it odd)

## 20 – Restoring rights and preserving positions

Muslim reported that ‘Awf ibn Mâlik said:

«A man of Ḥumayr killed one of the enemy and wanted to take his possessions as booty, but Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, who was in charge of the campaign, prevented him from doing so. ‘Awf ibn Mâlik came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and told him about it. He asked Khâlid: What stopped you from giving him his booty?

Khâlid said: I thought it was too much, O Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Give it to him.

Then Khâlid passed by ‘Awf, who pulled his cloak and said: Did I not do what I told you I would do with regard to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)?

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) heard him and got angry, and said: Do not give it to him, O Khâlid! Do not give it to him, O Khâlid! Why do you not leave my commanders alone? The likeness of you and them is that of a man who is asked to take care of camels or sheep, so he takes care of them; then when it is time for them to drink, he takes them to a trough and they start to drink, and they drink the clean water and leave the dregs behind. You take the clean water and leave the dregs for them (the commanders).» (Muslim)

Imam Aḥmad transmitted a more complete version of this report from ‘Awf ibn Mâlik al-Ashja‘i, who said:

«We went out on a military campaign on the border of Syria, and Khâlid ibn al-Waleed was appointed as our commander. A man belonging to Ḥumayr came and joined our band, and he had nothing but a sword, no other weapon. One of the Muslims slaughtered a camel and that man kept trying to snatch something until he managed to grab a piece of skin the shape of a shield. He spread it on the ground and cured it until it was dry; then he made a handle for it, like a shield. We met the enemy, who were a mixed group of Romans and Arabs

from (the tribe of) Qurā'ah. They fought us fiercely. Among them was a Roman on a palomino horse with a golden-coloured saddle and a gold-plated belt, and a sword of similar material. He started attacking and challenging the people, and that man kept dodging around the Roman until he approached him from behind and struck the horse's hamstring with his sword. The Roman fell off, and the man followed that with a blow from his sword that killed him. When Allah granted them victory, the man came asking about the booty, and the people bore witness that he had killed (that Roman), so Khâlid gave him some of the booty and withheld the rest. When he came back to 'Awf's band, he told him about it, and 'Awf said: Go back to him and let him give you the rest.

So he went back, but (Khâlid) refused to give it to him. 'Awf went to Khâlid and said: Do you not know that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) ruled that the booty should go to the one who kills?

He said: Of course.

He said: So what is stopping you from giving him his booty?

He said: I thought it was too much to give to him.

'Awf said: When I see Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) I am going to tell him about this.

When he came to Madinah, 'Awf sent the man and he complained to the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) called Khâlid, whilst 'Awf was sitting there and said: O Khâlid, what stopped you from giving this man his spoils of war?

He said: I thought it was too much for him, O Messenger of Allah.

(The Prophet (ﷺ)) said: Give it to him.

(Khâlid) passed by 'Awf, and 'Awf pulled on his cloak and said: Was it not enough for you what I told you about Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) heard him and got angry, and said: Do not give it to him, O Khâlid. Why do you not leave my commanders

alone? The likeness of you and them is that of a man who is asked to take care of camels or sheep, so he takes care of them; then when it is time for them to drink, he takes them to a trough and they start to drink, and they drink the clean water and leave the dregs behind. You take the clean water and leave the dregs for them (the commanders).» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

We may note here that when Khâlid made a mistake in his decision (ijtihâd) to withhold the large amount of booty from the killer, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded that the matter should be put right by giving the booty to its rightful owner. However, he got angry when he heard ‘Awf (رضي الله عنه) making insinuations about Khâlid and poking fun at him by saying, “Did I not do what I told you I would do with regard to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)?” and pulling on Khâlid’s cloak when he walked past him, so he said: «Do not give it to him, O Khâlid.» This was for the purpose of reinstating and reinforcing the position of the commander and leader, because upholding the leader’s position in front of the people serves an obvious purpose.

But the following question may arise: If the killer had the right to the booty, how could he deny it to him? An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) answered this query with two possible outcomes:

Either he gave the booty to the man later on, and he delayed it as a punishment to him and to ‘Awf for saying what they said to Khâlid and showing disrespect to the commander and the one who had appointed him; or the one who had the right to take it gave it up willingly and donated it for the Muslims, and the point of this was to make Khâlid feel better for the purpose of upholding the position of leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Further evidence concerning the restoration of the position of the person who has been wronged comes in the report narrated in the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad from Abu Ṭufayl ‘Âmir ibn Wâthilah:

<sup>1</sup> *al-Fath ar-Rabbâni*, 14:84.

«A man passed by a group of people and greeted them with salâm. They returned the greeting, but when he had gone, one of them said: By Allah, I hate this man for the sake of Allah.

The others present said: What a bad thing to say! By Allah, we are going to tell him. Get up, O So-and-So – one of the people present – and tell him.

So their messenger caught up with him and told him what had been said. The man went to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I passed by a group of Muslims among whom was So-and-So. I greeted them with salâm and they returned the greeting, and when I had left, one of them caught up with me and told me that So-and-So had said: By Allah, I hate this man for the sake of Allah. Call him and ask him why he hates me.

So Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) called him and asked him about what the man had said. He admitted it and said: I did say that, O Messenger of Allah.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked: Why do you hate him?

He said: I am his neighbour and I know him very well. By Allah, I have never seen him pray any prayer except the prescribed prayer which everyone, good and bad alike, prays.

The man said: Ask him, O Messenger of Allah, has he ever seen me delaying any prayer, or not doing ablution properly, or not bowing or prostrating properly?

He said: No.

Then he said: By Allah, I have never seen him fast at all except (during) this month (in) which everyone, good and bad alike, fasts.

He said: O Messenger of Allah, has he ever seen me breaking my fast during (that month), or doing anything to invalidate my fast?

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him, and he said: No.



Then he said: By Allah, I have never seen him giving to any needy person or spending any of his wealth for the sake of Allah except for this charity (zakat) which everyone, good and bad alike, gives.

He said: Ask him, O Messenger of Allah, have I ever withheld any part of the zakat or kept it back from the one who asked for it?

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him and he said: No.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: I do not know; maybe he is better than you.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Haythami)

The following is stated immediately after this report in *al-Musnad*:

Ya'qoob told us that my father told us from Ibn Shihâb that he was told that a man at the time of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) passed by a group of people. He did not mention Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl. Abu 'Abdullâh said: I heard that Ibrâheem ibn Sa'd reported this hadith from his memory and said concerning Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl that his son Ya'qoob narrated from his father, but he did not mention Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl. I think he is mistaken, and the report of Ya'qoob is sound, and Allah knows best.<sup>1</sup>

It is very important to maintain people's position after they have repented from their mistakes and set matters straight, so that they will remain on the right path and live a normal life among the people. The following was reported by 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) about the Makhzoomi woman who had her hand cut off (for stealing):

«She repented properly later on, and she got married. She used to come to me and I would tell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) what she needed.» (Muslim)

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<sup>1</sup> *al-Musnad*, 5:455. Al-Haythami said that the narrators of Aḥmad are trustworthy. *Athbât al-Majma'*, 1:291.

## 21 – Addressing both parties in cases where the blame is shared

It might happen that the person who made a mistake was wronged, but the blame is not to be shared equally. In this case, both parties must be addressed and advised. Following is an example:

‘Abdullâh ibn Abi Awfâ said:

«‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf complained about Khâlid ibn al-Waleed to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not upset any of those who were present at Badr, for even if you were to spend gold equal to the size of Uḥud, your deeds would not equal theirs.

He said: They insulted me first, and I responded.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not upset Khâlid, for he is one of the swords of Allah sent against the disbelievers.» (Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarâni; authenticated by al-Haythami)

## 22 – Asking people to forgive those who wronged them

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said:

«The Arabs used to serve one another when they were travelling. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar had a man with them who was serving them. They fell asleep and then woke up, and he had not prepared any food for them. One of them said to the other: This man sleeps too much. They woke him up and said: Go to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and tell him that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar send their salâm to you and are asking for food.

He (the Prophet [ﷺ]) said: Send my salâm to them and tell them that they have already eaten.

They got worried, so they came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, we sent word to you asking for food, and you told us that we had already eaten? What have we eaten?

He said: The flesh of your brother. By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, I can see his flesh between your teeth – meaning the flesh of the one about whom they had backbitten.

They said: Ask for forgiveness for us.

He said: Let him ask for forgiveness for you.» (Recorded by Ibn Katheer, al-Kharâ'itî, and aḍ-Ḍiyâ'; authenticated by al-Albâni)

## 23 – Reminding people about the good qualities of those whom they have wronged, so that they feel remorseful and apologize

This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) did in the situation that arose between Abu Bakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ, Kitâb at-Tafseer*, that Abu ad-Dardâ' said:

«There was a dispute between Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Abu Bakr made 'Umar angry, so he went away angry. Abu Bakr followed him, asking him to seek forgiveness for him, but he did not do that, and he shut his door in his face. Abu Bakr turned around and went to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and we were sitting with him. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: This companion of yours has gotten involved in a dispute. Then 'Umar regretted what he had done, so he came, gave the greeting of salâm, and sat down by the Prophet (ﷺ). He told Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) what had happened. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) got angry, and Abu Bakr started to say: By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I am more wrong. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Are you going to leave my Companion alone? Are you going to leave my Companion alone? I told the people: I am the Messenger of Allah to all of you, and you (all) said: You are a liar – but Abu Bakr said: You are telling the truth.» (Bukhari)

Bukhari also narrated this story in *Kitâb al-Manâqib* (the Book of Virtues) in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, from Abu ad-Dardâ':

«He said: I was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) when Abu Bakr came along, holding the hem of his garment up in such a way that his knees could be seen.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Your companion has gotten involved in a dispute.

(Abu Bakr) gave the greeting of salâm, then said: There is something between me and the son of al-Khattâb. I upset him, then I regretted it and asked him to forgive me, but he refused, so I have come to you.

He said: May Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr – three times.

Then ‘Umar regretted (what he had done), so he came to Abu Bakr’s house, asking: Is Abu Bakr there?

They said: No.

So he came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and signs of anger were so visible on the Prophet’s face that Abu Bakr felt sorry. He knelt down and said: O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, I was more wrong – twice.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Allah sent me to all of you, and you (all) said: He is a liar, but Abu Bakr said: He is telling the truth – and he helped me with his self and with his wealth. Are you going to leave my Companion alone?

He said this twice, and Abu Bakr was never hurt after that.» (Bukhari)

## 24 – Intervening to calm people down and put a stop to the *fitnah* (discord) between those who are making mistakes

The Prophet (ﷺ) did this on a number of occasions when fighting was about to break out among the Muslims. He intervened, as reported in the incident of the slander (*al-ifk*) against ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها). She said:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up that day and asked for someone to deal with ‘Abdullâh ibn Ubayy for him, whilst he was on the

*minbar*. He said: O Muslims! Who will deal with a man who I have heard is attacking me with regard to my family? By Allah, I know nothing about my family but good, and they have mentioned a man about whom I know nothing but good, and he has never come to my family except with me.

Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh, the brother of Bani 'Abdul-Ash-hal, stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, I will deal with him for you. If he is from Aws, I will strike his neck (cut his head off), and if he is from among our brothers of Khazraj, tell us what to do, and we will do it.

Then a man of Khazraj stood up; Umm Ḥassân was his cousin from the same clan, and he was Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah the leader of Khazraj. Before that he was known to be a righteous man, but on this occasion the spirit of tribalism took hold of him, and he said to Sa'd (ibn Mu'âdh): You are lying! By Allah, you will not kill him and you will not be able to kill him. If he were one of your people, you would not like him to be killed!

Usayd ibn Ḥudayr, the cousin of Sa'd, stood up and said to Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah: You are lying! By Allah, we will kill him! You are a hypocrite defending the hypocrites!

The two parties of Aws and Khazraj got so angry that they nearly began to fight whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was standing on the minbar. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) kept smoothing things over until they calmed down.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) went to Bani 'Amr ibn 'Awf to reconcile between them and stayed there for that purpose until the time for one of the congregational prayers came, as is reported in *aş-Şaḥeeḥayn* and in a report narrated by an-Nasâ'i. Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sâ'idi (رضي الله عنه) said:

«A dispute arose between two parties among the Anṣâr, to the point that they were throwing stones at one another. The Prophet (ﷺ) went to reconcile between them, and the time for prayer came. Bilâl called the *adhân* and waited for Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), but he did not come.

So he made the *iqâmah* (call immediately preceding congregational prayer) and Abu Bakr (ﷺ) led the prayer...» (Bukhari, Muslim, and an-Nasâ'i)

According to a report narrated by Aḥmad, Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sâ'idi said:

«Someone came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: Bani 'Amr ibn 'Awf are fighting and throwing stones at one another.

So Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went out to them to reconcile between them...» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

## 25 – Showing one's anger about a mistake

When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw or heard about a mistake, he would show his anger, especially if it had to do with matters of belief ('aqedah). This included indulging in disputes about *al-qadr* (divine decree) and the Qur'an. In *Sunan Ibn Mâjah* there is a report from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather, who said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out to his Companions, who were disputing about al-qadr, and it was as if a pomegranate seed had burst on his face, that is, his face became red with anger. He said: Is this what you were commanded to do? Is this what you were created for? Are you using some parts of the Qur'an to contradict others? The nations before you were destroyed by this!

'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr said: I never felt happy about missing any gathering with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), but I was happy about missing that gathering.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni)

According to Ibn Abi 'Âṣim in *Kitâb as-Sunnah*:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out to his Companions, and they were disputing about al-qadr, one quoting one verse and another quoting another verse. It was as if a pomegranate seed had been thrown in his face (because it was red with anger). He said: Is this what you were created for? Is this what you were ordered to do? Do not use parts of

Allah's Book against other parts. Look at what you are commanded to do and do it, and what you are forbidden to do, avoid it.» (Recorded by Ibn Abi 'Âṣim, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

Another example of the Prophet (ﷺ) becoming angry at the denial of one of the basic principles was what happened in the case of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), with regard to sources. Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) reported in his *Musnad* from Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه):

«'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with a book which he had gotten from some of the People of the Book. The Prophet (ﷺ) got angry and said: Are you confused about it, O son of al-Khaṭṭâb? By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, I have brought you (the message) pure and white, so do not ask them about anything, lest they tell you something true and you reject it, or they tell you something false and you accept it. By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, if Moosâ were alive, he could not but follow me.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, and graded reliable by al-Albâni)

The hadith was also narrated by ad-Dârimi (may Allah have mercy on him) from Jâbir, who said:

«'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) with a copy of the Tawrât (Torah), and said: O Messenger of Allah, this is a copy of the Tawrât.

(The Prophet [ﷺ]) did not say anything. ('Umar) began to read it, and the face of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) changed (that is, he was angry). Abu Bakr said: May your mother lose you! Do you not see the expression of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)?

'Umar looked at the face of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: I seek refuge with Allah from the anger of Allah and the anger of His Messenger (ﷺ). We are content with Allah as our Lord, with Islam as our religion, and with Muhammad as our Prophet.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: By the One in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, if Moosâ were to appear among you and you followed him and left me, you would go astray from the straight path. If he

had lived until the time of my Prophethood, he would have followed me.» (Recorded by ad-Dârimi, Aḥmad, and Ibn Ḥibbân with a reliable chain)

Among the corroborating reports is the hadith of Abu ad-Dardâ', who said:

«'Umar brought some pages of the Tawrât to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, (these are) some pages of the Tawrât which I took from a brother of mine from Bani Zurayq.

The face of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) changed, and 'Abdullâh ibn Zayd – the one who was shown the adhân in a dream – said: Have you gone mad? Do you not see (the expression) on the face of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)?

'Umar said: We are content with Allah as our Lord, with Islam as our religion, with Muhammad as our Prophet, and with the Qur'an as our guide.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) relaxed and said: By the One in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, if Moosâ were among you, and you followed him and left me, you would go far astray. You are my share among the nations and I am your share among the Prophets.» (Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarâni)<sup>1</sup>

We may note from these reports that the educator (the Prophet [ﷺ]) had the support of the other people present as they noticed how his expression changed and they took their stance based on what they saw. There is no doubt that this combination of events had a great impact on the person who was being reprimanded.

The process went through the following stages:

- i- Firstly, anger welled up in the Prophet (ﷺ), such that his expression changed even before he spoke.

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<sup>1</sup> According to al-Haythami, its chain includes Abu 'Âmir al-Qâsim ibn Muhammad al-Asadi, and he has not seen anyone giving his biography, but the rest of its narrators are trustworthy. *Al-Majma'* 1:174.



- ii- Secondly, (Abu Bakr) aṣ-Ṣiddeeq and ‘Abdullāh ibn Zayd noticed this and pointed it out to ‘Umar.
- iii- Thirdly, ‘Umar realized his mistake and hastened to put it right and to apologize for what he had done, seeking refuge with Allah from the anger of Allah and the anger of His Messenger (ﷺ), and reaffirming the basic principle of being content with Allah, His Messenger (ﷺ), and His religion.
- iv- Fourthly, the Prophet (ﷺ) relaxed and calmed down when ‘Umar retracted and realized his mistake.
- v- Fifthly, the Prophet’s comment confirmed and reinforced this basic principle by reaffirming the obligation to follow the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and warning against taking any other source of guidance.

Another example of the Prophet’s anger when he saw something objectionable was reported by Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) from Anas ibn Mâlik. He said that when the Prophet (ﷺ) saw some spittle in the mosque in the direction of the qiblah, he was so upset that it was clearly visible on his face.

«He wiped it with his hand and said: When one of you gets up to pray, he is talking to his Lord, or his Lord is between him and the qiblah, so he should not spit in the direction of the qiblah, but to his left or under his feet.

Then he took the edge of his garment, spat on it, and rubbed part of it against another part and said: Or he can do this.» (Bukhari)

An example of the Prophet’s anger when he heard about a mistake that led to wrongdoing was also reported by Bukhari, from Abu Mas‘ood al-Anṣârî, who said:

«A man came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I am going to go late to the prayer tomorrow because of so-and-so, who makes the prayer too long for us.

I never saw the Prophet (ﷺ) angrier in his rebuking than on that day, when he said: O people! Some of you are putting others off. When any of you leads the people in prayer, let him keep it short, for among them are the elderly, the weak, and those with pressing needs.» (Bukhari)

Another example is of showing anger towards the person who is asking questions when he starts to nit-pick in a ridiculous fashion. Zayd ibn Khâlid al-Juhani (رضي الله عنه) said:

«A Bedouin came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him about lost property that he finds. He said: Announce it for a year. Remember the description of its container and the string with which it is tied; if someone comes and claims it, and describes it correctly, give it to him, otherwise, utilize it.

He said: O Messenger of Allah, what about a lost sheep?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: It is for you, for your brother (that is, its owner), or for the wolf.

He said: What about a lost camel?

The face of the Prophet (ﷺ) became red (with anger), and he said: You have nothing to do with it. It has its feet and access to water, and it can eat trees.» (Bukhari)

The educators may show their anger in proportion to the mistake at the time when the mistake is made, or when they see or hear it, in such a way that the anger is visible on their face or recognized from their tone of voice. This is a sign that their heart is alert to wrongdoing, and they will not keep silent about it. This makes others present feel afraid of making the same mistake. Speaking out when you are angry can have a greater impact than remaining silent and waiting until things have cooled down, because then the impact of your comments will be lost.

On the other hand, it may be wise to delay commenting on a regrettable incident or seriously mistaken words until all the people have been called together or until they meet. This is because of the

seriousness of what is involved or because there are not enough people around to understand and convey the information to others. There is nothing wrong with addressing an individual immediately and delaying general discussion of the matter until later.

According to Bukhari:

«Abu Ḥumayd as-Sâ'idi reported: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) appointed someone (to collect the zakat). When he had finished his work, he came and said: O Messenger of Allah, this is for you, and this is what was given to me as a gift.

He said: Why do you not sit in your parents' house and see whether anyone brings you a gift or not?

In the evening, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood up after the prayer, pronounced the testimony of faith, and praised Allah as He deserves to be praised. Then he said: What is wrong with an employee whom we appoint, then he comes to us and says: This is for you and this is what I was given as a gift? Why does he not sit in his parents' house and see whether anyone brings him a gift or not? By the One in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, none of you unlawfully withholds something from us, except he will come on the Day of Judgement carrying it around his neck: if it is a camel, he will bring it bellowing; if it is a cow, he will bring it mooing; and if it is a sheep, he will bring it bleating. I have conveyed (the message).

Abu Ḥumayd added: Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) raised his arm so high that we could see his armpit.» (Bukhari)

## 26 – Turning away from those who made a mistake, and avoiding arguing with them, in the hope that they may come back to the right way

Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported:

«‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came to him and Fâṭimah (the daughter of Allah’s Messenger [ﷺ] one night) and said to them: Are you not coming to pray?

‘Ali said: O Messenger of Allah, our souls are in the Hand of Allah. If He wants to bring us back to life (from sleep), He will do so!

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) went away when ‘Ali said that to him, and he did not respond to it at all. However, ‘Ali heard him as he was walking away, slapping his thigh and saying:

﴿... وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٤)

«...but man is more than anything argumentative.» (*al-Kahf* 18: 54)»  
(Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

## 27 – Rebuking the one who has made a mistake

This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) did with Ḥâṭib (رضي الله عنه) when he heard that he had sent word to the disbelievers of Quraysh, informing them of the Muslims’ intention to head for Makkah to conquer it.

«The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: What made you do that, O Ḥâṭib?

He said: I believe in Allah and His Messenger and I never changed, but I wanted to make some gesture towards them through which Allah might protect my family and my wealth. All your other Companions have someone there through whom Allah will protect their families and their wealth.

(The Prophet [ﷺ]) said: He has spoken the truth, so do not say anything but good to him.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb said: But he has betrayed Allah and Messenger and the believers! Let me strike his neck (cut off his head)!

<sup>1</sup> The words of ‘Ali could be understood in different ways. See *al-Fath*, 7347.

(The Prophet [ﷺ]) said: How do you know? Maybe Allah looked at the people of Badr and said: Do what you like, for paradise is guaranteed for you.

Tears welled up in 'Umar's eyes and he said: Allah and His Messenger know best.» (Bukhari)

A number of important educational points can be learned from this story:

- i- The Prophet (ﷺ) rebuked the Companion who had made a serious mistake by asking him: «What made you do that?»
- ii- Enquiring about the reason behind the mistake undoubtedly affects the way the individual who committed one is treated.
- iii- Even those who have an excellent track record are not immune to committing major sins.
- iv- The educators must be open-minded in dealing with their companions' mistakes so that they continue progressing on the straight path. The aim is to reform them, not to alienate them.
- v- The educators must appreciate the moments of human weakness that may overcome some of those who are with them, and they should not be shocked by a serious mistake on the part of one who is advanced or senior.
- vi- The educators must defend those who deserve to be defended even though they made a mistake.
- vii- If any individuals who made a mistake have a great deal of good works to their credit, this should be taken into account when evaluating the level of their mistake and dealing with it.

## 28 – Blaming the person who has made a mistake

An obvious mistake cannot be ignored. Blame must be directed at those who make mistakes, and they must be rebuked from the outset,

so that they will realize that they have erred. Bukhari narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*:

«‘Ali (ﷺ) said: I had a she-camel from my share of the booty of Badr, and the Prophet (ﷺ) had given me another she-camel from the *khums*. When I wanted to marry Fâtimah, the daughter of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), I made an appointment with a goldsmith from Banu Qaynuqâ’ to go with me to Idhkhur. I wanted to sell him the two gold bracelets and use the money for my *waleemah* (wedding celebration). Whilst I was gathering together the saddles, sacks, ropes, and other gear, my camels were sitting beside a room belonging to one of the Anṣâr. After collecting the things I had to collect, I came back and found my camels with their backs cut open, their sides stabbed, and their livers removed. I could hardly bear to look at this scene. I said: Who did this?

They said: Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. He is in that house drinking with one of the Anṣâr.

I went to the Prophet (ﷺ), and Zayd ibn Ḥârithah was with him. The Prophet (ﷺ) knew something was wrong from my expression. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: What is the matter with you?

I said: O Messenger of Allah, I have never seen anything like today! Ḥamzah attacked my two she-camels and cut their backs open and stabbed them in their sides. He is in a house, drinking.

The Prophet (ﷺ) called for his cloak and put it on. Then he went walking, and Zayd ibn Ḥârithah and I followed him, until he reached the house where Ḥamzah was. He asked permission to enter, and they gave permission. They were drinking, and Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) started to hurl blame at Ḥamzah for what he had done, but then he noticed that Ḥamzah was drunk and red-eyed. Ḥamzah looked at Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). He looked up at his knees, then at his navel, then at his face, and then he said: You are no more than a slave to my father.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) realized that he was drunk, so he turned on his heels and we went out with him.» (Bukhari)

This happened before drinking alcohol was forbidden.

## 29 – Shunning the one who has made a mistake

Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) reported that Ḥumayd said:

«Al-Waleed came to me and a friend of mine and said: Come with me, for you are younger than me and you know more about Hadith. He took us to Bishr ibn 'Âṣim. Abul-'Âliyah said to him: Will you tell these two your hadith?

He said: 'Uqbah ibn Mâlik told us that Abu an-Naḍr al-Laythi said: Bahz, who was one of his group, said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sent an expedition to attack some people. A man drifted away from the people, and one of the (Muslim) expedition followed him with his sword unsheathed. The man who had wandered off said: I am a Muslim.

But the Muslim paid no attention to him, and struck him and killed him. Word of this reached Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and he spoke out angrily against it. News of this reached the killer, and whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was delivering a speech, the killer said: O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, he only said that to protect himself.

The Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from him and the people around him, and continued with his speech. The man said again: O Messenger of Allah, he only said that to protect himself.

The Prophet (ﷺ) again turned away from him and the people around him, and continued with his speech. The man did not put up with that; a third time he said: O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, he only said that to protect himself.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) turned to him, and it was clear from his expression how upset he was. He said: Allah scorns the one who kills a believer – three times.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Albâni)

An-Nasâ'i (may Allah have mercy on him) reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri:

«A man came from Najrân to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), wearing a ring of gold. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) turned away from him and said: You have come to me with an ember from the fire of hell in your hand.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

Aḥmad reported a more detailed version of this from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri:

«A man came from Najrân to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) wearing a ring of gold. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) turned away from him and did not ask him about anything. The man went back to his wife and told her about it. She said: There has to be a reason for that. Go back to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ).

So he went back, and threw away his ring and the garment he was wearing. When he asked for permission to enter, it was given to him. He greeted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), who returned the greeting. He said: O Messenger of Allah, you turned away from me when I came before.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: You came to me with a coal from the fire of hell in your hand.

He said: O Messenger of Allah, I came with a lot of coals.

He had brought some suits of clothing from Bahrain. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: What you have brought is not going to help us in any way (with regard to the hereafter). It has no more use than the rocks of al-Harrah; they are (only) luxuries of this world.

The man said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, explain this to your Companions, so that they do not think you were angry with me for some reason.



Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood up and explained this, and said that the problem had been with his gold ring.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

According to a report narrated by Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather: «The Prophet (ﷺ) saw one of his Companions wearing a ring of gold, and he turned away from him. The Companion threw it away and put on a ring of iron, and (the Prophet [ﷺ]) said: This is evil; this is the jewellery of the people of hell.

So he threw it away and put on a ring of silver, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said nothing.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and authenticated by Aḥmad Shâkir)

### 30 – Boycotting the one who has made a mistake

This was one of the effective methods used by the Prophet (ﷺ) especially when a very serious mistake was made. This was because of the far-reaching effect that a boycott has on the person concerned. An example of this is what happened to Ka'b ibn Mâlik and his two companions who stayed behind from the campaign of Tabook. After the Prophet (ﷺ) had ascertained that they had no valid excuse, and they had admitted it, as Ka'b said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade the Muslims to speak to any of us three who had stayed behind. So the people avoided us and their attitude towards us changed so that even the earth I was walking on looked different to what I had known. We stayed like that for fifty days. As for my two companions, they resigned themselves and stayed in their homes, weeping. I was the youngest and the most determined, so I used to go out and attend the prayers with the Muslims and go around in the marketplaces, and no one would speak to me. I would come to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) whilst he was in a gathering after

prayer and greet him with salâm, asking myself whether he had moved his lips in response or not. I would pray near him, stealing glances at him. When I would turn to pray, he would turn towards me, and when I would turn towards him, he would turn away from me. When the people's harshness had gone on too long for me, I went away and climbed over the wall of the garden of Abu Qatâdah, who was my cousin (son of my paternal uncle) and the dearest of people to me. I greeted him with salâm, but, by Allah, he did not answer me. I said: O Abu Qatâdah, I ask you, by Allah, do you not know that I love Allah and His Messenger?

He remained silent, so I repeated what I had said, pleading with him, but he remained silent. I repeated it again, pleading with him, and he said: Allah and His Messenger know best.

My eyes filled with tears. I turned away and went and climbed back over the wall...

When fifty nights had passed since Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had forbidden anyone to talk to us, after I had prayed fajr on the morning of the fiftieth day, and I was on the roof of our house, whilst I was sitting as Allah has described, with the land, despite its vastness, closing in on me and my very soul closed in on me (cf. *at-Tawbah* 9: 118), I heard the sound of someone shouting from the mountain of Sal' at the top of his voice: O Ka'b ibn Mâlik, rejoice!» (Bukhari)

We learn many great lessons from this story, which should not be ignored in any way. We read about some of them in the scholars' commentaries on this story, as in *Zâd al-Ma'âd* and *Fath al-Bâri*.

Another indication that the Prophet (ﷺ) used this method was narrated by at-Tirmidhi from 'Â'ishah, who said:

«No behaviour was more hateful to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) than lying. If a man told lies in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ), he would remain upset about it until he knew that he had repented from that.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, who graded it reliable)

According to a report narrated by Aḥmad:

«...he would remain upset with him...» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

According to another report:

«If it happened that one of the members of his household told a lie, he would keep turning away from him until he repented.» (Recorded by al-Ḥâkim; authenticated by al-Albâni)

It is clear from the reports mentioned above that turning away from those who are making a mistake until they give it up is an effective educational method. However, in order for it to be effective, the person who is forsaking and turning away from the other must have some status in the eyes of the latter, otherwise it will not have a positive effect, and may even give the person something to be happy about.

## 31 – Praying against someone who stubbornly persists in making a mistake

Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) reported:

«A man ate with his left hand in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: Eat with your right hand!

The man said: I cannot.

He said: May you never be able to!

Nothing was stopping him except pride, and he never raised it to his mouth after that.» (Muslim)

According to a report narrated by Aḥmad:

«Iyâs ibn Salamah ibn al-Akwa' reported that his father told him: I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) telling a man called Bisr ibn Râ'i al-'Eer, whom he saw eating with his left hand, to eat with his right hand. He said: I cannot.

He said: May you never be able to!

And his right hand never reached his mouth after that.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This hadith shows that it is permissible to pray against the one who goes against a shar‘i ruling for no good reason. It also demonstrates enjoining good and forbidding evil in all matters, even in the matter of eating.<sup>1</sup>

We may also note here that the du‘â’ against him was not for something that would help the Shayṭân against him; it was for something that was more like a rebuke or telling off.

## 32 – Turning a blind eye to some mistakes and being content to just hint about them, out of respect for the person who is making the mistake

﴿وَإِذْ أَسْرَأَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ. وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

(سورة التحريم: ٣)

﴿And [remember] when the Prophet told something in confidence to one of his wives. When she divulged it [to another] and Allah informed him of that, he made known [to her] part of it, and overlooked another part. When he informed her of that, she said: Who has informed you of this? He said: The All-Knowing, All-Aware has informed me of it.﴾ (at-Taḥreem 66: 3)

Al-Qâsimi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Maḥâsin at-Ta‘weel*:

<sup>1</sup> *Sharḥ Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, 13:192.

«And [remember] when the Prophet» refers to Muhammad (ﷺ). «to one of his wives» refers to Ḥafṣah. «something in confidence» means that she was not allowed to disclose it, or what he forbade for himself although Allah had allowed it. «When she divulged it» means that she told the secret to her companion [‘Ā’ishah]. «Allah informed him of that» means that Allah told him what Ḥafṣah had told ‘Ā’ishah. «he made known [to her] part of it» means that he told her part of what she had divulged as a rebuke; «and overlooked another part» means that he did not say some of it, out of respect to her.

It is noted in *al-Ikleel*:

The verse indicates that there is nothing wrong with speaking in a secretive way to the one whom you trust, such as a spouse or friend, and that he or she is obliged to keep the secret. The verse also indicates good treatment of wives, gentleness when rebuking, and refraining from seeking out every fault.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ḥasan said, “No noble person will pick on every little fault.” Sufyān said, “Turning a blind eye is the action of noble people.”

### 33 – Helping Muslims in correcting their mistakes

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Whilst we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), a man came to him and said: O Messenger of Allah, I am doomed!

He asked: What is the matter with you?

He said: I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Are you able to set a slave free?

He said: No.

<sup>1</sup> *Mahâsin at-Ta’weel*, 16:222.

He asked: Can you fast for two consecutive months?

He said: No.

He said: Can you feed sixty poor persons?

He said: No.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said nothing more about the matter for a while, and whilst we were sitting there like that, the Prophet (ﷺ) was brought a large vessel full of dates.

He asked: Where is the one who was asking just now?

The man said: Here I am.

He said: Take this and give it in charity.

The man said: O Messenger of Allah, is there anyone poorer between al-Harratayn (in Madinah) than my family?

The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled so broadly that his eyeteeth could be seen, then he said: Feed it to your family.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by Ahmad from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها):

«Whilst Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting in the shade of a large tree, a man came to him and said: I am burnt, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: What is the matter with you?

He said: I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.

'Ā'ishah said: This was in Ramadan.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to him: Sit down.

So he sat down at the edge of the group of people. Then a man brought a donkey on which was a vessel of dates, and said: This is my ṣadaqah (charity), O Messenger of Allah.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Where is the burnt one who was here just now?

The man said: Here I am, O Messenger of Allah.

He said: Take this and give it in charity.

He said: To whom should I give it except myself? By the One Who sent you with the truth, I do not have anything for myself and my children.

He said: Then take it.

So he took it.» (Recorded by Aḥmad)

### 34 – Meeting the person who made the mistake to talk it over

It was reported:

«‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amr said: My father married me to a woman from a good family. He used to come and check on his daughter in law, and ask her about her husband. She would say: What a good man he is. He has never slept in our bed or disturbed us since we got married.

When this had gone on for a long time, he mentioned it to the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: Let me meet him.

So I met him after that, and he asked: How often do you fast?

I said: Every day.

He inquired: How often do you complete the Qur’an?

I said: Every night.

He said: Fast three days of every month, and complete the Qur’an once a month.

I said: I can do more than that.

He said: Fast three days every week.

I said: I can do more than that.

He said: Do not fast for two days and then fast for one day.

I said: I can do more than that.

He said: Observe the best kind of fasting, the fasting of Dâwood, which is fasting one day and then not fasting the next, and complete

the Qur'an once every seven days. I wish that I had accepted the dispensation of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), because when I became old and weak I started to read one-seventh of the Qur'an to my family during the day, and whatever I read during the day made it easier to complete it at night. If I want to help myself, I do not fast for a number of days; then I count the number of days I did not fast and fast the same number of days. I do not want to give up something that I promised the Prophet (ﷺ) I would do before he died.

Abu 'Abdullâh said: Some of them said in three, and in five, and most of them said in seven.» (Bukhari)

A report narrated by Aḥmad describes the matter more clearly and contains important lessons:

«'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr said: My father married me to a woman from Quraysh. When she came to me, I did not approach her because I was so enthusiastic about worshipping Allah by fasting and praying. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ came to his daughter-in-law and asked her: How do you find your husband?

She said: He is the best of men, or: He is like the best of husbands among men. He has never disturbed us and he has never slept in our bed.

So he came to me and told me off.

(Ibn al-Atheer said: ...according to another hadith, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ said: So my father came to me and told me off.)<sup>1</sup> He said: I married you to a woman from a good family of Quraysh, and you are neglecting her (that is, not treating her as a wife) and you are doing such and such.

Then he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and complained about me. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent for me and I came to him. He asked me: Do you fast during the day?

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<sup>1</sup> *an-Nihâyah*, 3:200.



I said: Yes.

He inquired: Do you pray (*qiyâm*) at night?

I said: Yes.

He said: But I fast and I break my fast, I pray and I sleep, and I touch women (my wives). Whoever turns away from my Sunnah has nothing to do with me.

He said: Read the Qur'an once a month.

I said: I can do more than that.

He said: Read it once every ten days.

I said: I can do more than that.

One of them – either Ḥusayn or Mugheerah – said: Read it every three days.

He (the Prophet ﷺ) said: Fast three days of every month.

I said: I can do more than that.

He kept increasing the number until he said: Fast one day and do not fast the next day. This is the best of fasting, the fasting of my brother Dâwood.

Ḥusayn said in his narration of the hadith: Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Every worshipper has a time when he is motivated and keen, and after every such time comes a time of slackening, where he either follows the Sunnah or follows bid'ah. The one whose slackening follows the Sunnah is guided, but the one whose slackening follows bid'ah is doomed.

Mujâhid said: When 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr grew old and weak, he would fast for several days at a time, so that he could grow stronger; then he would break his fast for a similar number of days. He would read his portion of the Qur'an in like manner, sometimes reading more, sometimes reading less, so that he would finish the entire Qur'an in seven days or in three days. After that he would say: I wish that I had accepted the dispensation of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), for it would

be better for me than what I chose for myself, or: I left him saying that I would do something and I would hate to do something else.»  
(Recorded by Aḥmad and authenticated by Aḥmad Shâkir)

Among the things we learn from this story are:

- i- The Prophet (ﷺ) understood the cause of the problem, which was that ('Abdullâh ibn 'Amr) was exhausting himself in worship to the point that he did not have time to take care of his duties towards his wife, so he was falling short.
- ii- The principle of paying due attention to everyone who has rights over one's self applies to anyone who is preoccupied with matters of worship, such as a student who is giving many lessons, or a dâ'iyah who is so busy with his da'wah that his wife complains of mistreatment. This can lead to a loss of balance in carrying out different acts of worship and dividing one's time among all those who are making rightful claims on it. So there is nothing wrong with the teacher reducing the number of lessons he gives, or the dâ'iyah reducing his activities so as to allow himself enough time to take care of his home, wife, and children, and give them their rights regarding guidance, companionship, and education.

## 35 – Speaking bluntly to the people about the mistakes they are making

Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) reported:

«Abu Dharr said: There was an argument between me and another man. His mother was a non-Arab, and I said something insulting about her. He mentioned this to the Prophet (ﷺ), who asked me: Did you trade insults with so-and-so?

I said: Yes.

He inquired: Did you say something insulting about his mother?

I said: Yes.

He said: You are a man who still has something of jâhiliyah in you.

I said: I said what I said because I am getting old.

He said: Yes, but they are your brothers, and Allah has given you power over them. Whoever is given power over someone should feed him as he feeds himself, clothe him as he clothes himself, and not give him more work to do than he is able. If he does give him too much work, let him help him.» (Bukhari)

In *Saḥeeḥ Muslim*, it is reported:

«Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said: I had an argument with one of my brothers. His mother was non-Arab, and I said something insulting to him about his mother.

He complained about me to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). When the Prophet (ﷺ) met me, he said: O Abu Dharr, you are a man who still has something of jâhiliyah in him.

I said: O Messenger of Allah, if anyone insults a person, people will insult his father and mother.

He said: O Abu Dharr, you are a man who still has something of jâhiliyah in him. They are your brothers, and Allah has given you power over them, so feed them as you feed yourself and clothe them as you clothe yourself. Do not give them more work than they can do, and if you give them too much to do, then help them.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke in this straightforward and open manner to Abu Dharr because he knew he would accept it. Such a blunt approach can be a useful method that saves times and energy, and gets the point across in the easiest manner. However, it should only be done when it is appropriate to the situation and the people involved.

It is better to not use this direct approach if it will lead to something worse or if it means that a greater interest will not be achieved, for

<sup>1</sup> It appears that the man's mother was a slave. (Translator)

example if the person making the mistake is in a position of power and authority and would not accept such frank comments, or if a direct approach would cause too much embarrassment to the person who is doing wrong. It should also not be used if the person is extra sensitive and is likely to react badly. Undoubtedly a direct approach will be too much for a person to take if it is made in a spirit of confrontation and with the aim of causing embarrassment and showing him or her up at the time when the critic appears superior.

Similarly, it is essential to be cautious about using 'indirect' methods whose multiple negative effects may outweigh the benefits of a direct approach. This is because they may make the wrongdoers think that the ones who are advising them consider them stupid or that they are playing about. They might even be offended if they think that those who are advising them are making snide remarks. This way of pointing out what is right may not be effective, because what is being said may not be clear to the person addressed, so he or she will keep on making the mistake.

Generally speaking, people differ when it comes to accepting advice, and the right approach will differ in each case. However, a good attitude in discussing mistakes and guiding people will also have the greatest effect in achieving the desired goal.

## 36 – Persuading people that they are making a mistake

Engaging in a discussion with any wrongdoers with the aim of convincing them may lead to the blinkers being removed from over their eyes and to bringing them back on the straight path. An example of this is the report narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarâni (may Allah have mercy on him) in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* from Abu Umâmah, who said:

«A young man came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to commit zinâ (fornication or adultery).

The people shouted (at him) and (the Prophet [ﷺ]) said: Stop it! Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) then said: Let him calm down. Come here. He came and sat in front of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), who said to him: Would you like it for your mother?

He said: No.

He said: Likewise, people do not like it for their mothers. Would you like it for your daughter?

He said: No.

He said: Likewise, people do not like it for their daughters. Would you like it for your sister?

He said: No.

He said: Likewise, people do not like it for their sisters. Would you like it for your (paternal) aunt?

He said: No.

He said: Likewise, people do not like it for their (paternal) aunts. Would you like it for your (maternal) aunt?

He said: No.

He said: Likewise, people do not like it for their (maternal) aunts.

Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) put his hand on his chest and said: O Allah, forgive his sins, purify his heart, and make him chaste.» (Recorded by at-Ṭabarâni; additional material is included between brackets)

## 37 – Making a person understand that a flimsy excuse is not acceptable

Some people who make mistakes try to offer made-up, unacceptable excuses, especially when they are caught red-handed. Indeed, some of them may appear to be stammering when they give their flimsy excuses, especially those who are not good at lying because they are

basically good at heart. How should the educators act in a situation like this? The following story demonstrates the brilliant attitude of the Prophet (ﷺ) when dealing with one of his Companions in a situation of this nature. The story also shows us how the educator should persistently follow up until the person gives up his or her wrong attitude.

Khawwât ibn Jubayr (رضي الله عنه) said:

«We made camp with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) at Mar az-Zahrân (a place near Makkah). I came out of my tent and saw some women talking amongst themselves. I liked them, so I went back, got out my trunk, and took out a *hillah* (a suit of clothes). I put it on and came and sat with them. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out and said: O Abu 'Abdullâh! (That is, he was reprimanding him for sitting with those non-mahram women).

When I saw Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), I got scared and started stammering (trying to come up with an excuse). I said: O Messenger of Allah, my camel got lost and I am looking for a rope to restrain it. (That is, he came up with a false excuse to justify what he was doing.)

He left, and I followed him. He threw his cloak at me and went in among some *arâk* trees – and it is as if I can see the whiteness of his back against the greenness of the arâk trees. He answered the call of nature and did ablution, and (then he) turned (to me) with the water dripping from his beard onto his chest. He asked: O Abu 'Abdullâh, what happened to your lost camel?

Then we continued on our journey, and whenever he caught up with me, he would say: *Assalâmu alayka*, Abu 'Abdullâh. What happened to that lost camel?

When I realized this, I hastened on to Madinah and avoided the mosque and gatherings where the Prophet (ﷺ) was present. When this had gone on for a long time, I tried to go to the mosque when no one else was around. I went to the mosque and started to pray, but

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out of one of his apartments and started to pray two short units. I made my prayer long, hoping that he would go away and leave me. He said: Make it as long as you like, O Abu 'Abdullâh, for I am not leaving until you finish.

I said to myself: By Allah, I should apologize to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and make him happy.

When I had finished, he said: *Assalâmu 'alayka*, O Abu 'Abdullâh. What happened to your lost camel?

I said: By the One Who sent you with the truth, that camel has never gotten lost since I became a Muslim.

He said: May Allah have mercy on you – three times, then he never mentioned it again.» (Recorded by at-Ṭabarâni with two chains of narration; according to al-Haythami, one chain contains trustworthy narrators and the other has a broken link)

This is a brilliant study in training people and using wise strategies to achieve the desired result. We may also learn the following points from this story:

- i- People who have committed a sin will feel shy of any respected leaders when they catch them out.
- ii- The way the educator looks at and questions people – even though it may be very brief – will have a great impact on them.
- iii- Not discussing a false excuse at the time of hearing it – even though it is clearly made up – and turning away from the people who made them may be enough to make them realize that this excuse is not acceptable, which will motivate them to repent and apologize. This is what we understand from the phrase «he left».
- iv- Good educators are ones who make the people who have made a mistake feel so shy of them that they try to hide from them; at the same time, their need for them make them want to come to them. Then the latter takes precedence over the former.

- v- The change of attitude towards the wrongdoer is based – in this case – on the wrongdoer's admission that he was wrong and his giving up the thing he had done.

If the educators or leaders are held in high esteem by their companions, then if they rebuke one of them or tell them that they have made a mistake, this will affect them. The leader should pay attention to the interests of others when rebuking anyone, so that all of them benefit from it. However, this does not mean that they should ignore any negative effect on that particular individual. That can be dealt with and its effects limited in many ways, even through a third party. This was what al-Mugheerah did when he asked 'Umar to be a mediator whilst at the same time explaining the situation and affirming how highly the leader thinks of the follower.

## 38 – Paying attention to things that are inherent in human nature

An example of this is the jealousy of women, especially in the case of co-wives, some of whom may make mistakes that, if they were made by anyone else under normal circumstances, would be treated quite differently. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pay special attention to the issue of jealousy among his wives and the mistakes that were made by them as a result. The patience, justice, and fairness with which he handled this matter are plain to see. An example of this is the report narrated by Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) from Anas, who said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) was with one of his wives when another of the Mothers of the Believers sent a large vessel full of food to him. The wife in whose house the Prophet (ﷺ) was struck the hand of the servant, and the vessel fell and broke in two. The Prophet (ﷺ) picked up the pieces and put them together; then he gathered up the food that had been in the vessel and said: Your mother is jealous.



Then he asked the servant to wait until he was given the vessel belonging to the wife in whose house he was; he sent the whole vessel to the wife whose vessel had been broken and kept the broken vessel in the house of the one who had broken it.» (Bukhari)

According to a report narrated by an-Nasâ'i:

«Umm Salamah brought some food in a vessel belonging to her to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions, then 'Â'ishah came wrapped in a garment, carrying a stone, which she threw and broke the vessel. The Prophet (ﷺ) put the two halves back together and said: Eat, your mother is jealous – twice.

Then he took 'Â'ishah's vessel and sent it to Umm Salamah, and gave Umm Salamah's vessel to 'Â'ishah.» (A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ'i)

According to a report narrated by ad-Dârimi from Anas, he said:

«One of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him a vessel in which was some *thareed* (a dish of sopped bread, meat, and broth), when he was in the house of one of his other wives, who struck the vessel and broke it. The Prophet (ﷺ) started to pick up the thareed and put it back into the vessel, saying: Eat, your mother is jealous...» (Recorded by ad-Dârimi)

Women's jealousy is an inherent part of their nature that may cause them to do evil things and prevent them from seeing the consequences of their actions. It is said that when a woman is jealous, she cannot see the bottom of a valley from its top.



# Conclusion

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Following this exploration of the Sunnah and the methods which the Prophet (ﷺ) used in dealing with people's mistakes, we conclude by mentioning the following points:

- i- Correcting mistakes is obligatory and very important. It is part of naṣeḥah (giving sincere advice) and forbidding evil. However, it should be remembered that Islam is not only about forbidding evil; we are also commanded to enjoin good.
- ii- Education and training is not just about correcting mistakes; they also involve teaching and showing the basic principles of religion and the rules of Sharia to the people, and using various methods to establish these concepts firmly in people's minds and hearts, by example, by exhorting them, by telling stories, by discussing incidents, and so on. From this, it is clear that some parents and teachers are falling short by confining their efforts to addressing mistakes without paying due attention to teaching the basics or dealing with mistakes before they happen by instilling what will protect people from committing mistakes in the first place, or at least reduce their impact.
- iii- It is clear from the incidents and stories mentioned above that the Prophet (ﷺ) used different approaches in dealing with different mistakes. This is because circumstances and personalities vary. Whoever understands this and wants to follow suit must compare the situation one is dealing with, with these examples

to find the one that most closely resembles it, so that one can determine the most appropriate approach to use.

We ask Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to guide us and protect us, to make us openers of good and closers of evil, and to guide others through us, for He is the All-Hearing, the Ever-Near, Who answers prayers. He is the Best of supporters and the Best of helpers, and He is the Guide to the straight path. May Allah bless the unlettered Prophet and all his family and Companions. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.



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# Appendix 1: Jihad

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This appendix appears in *'Umdat al-Fiqh Explained* (Volume 2) authored by Dr. Hatem al-Haj and published by IIPH

Jihad is the struggle against all forms of evil and injustice, both within one's own self (*nafs*) and against others. Thus, jihad is not limited to the use of military force, although such armed struggle is one form of it, and in that sense, jihad has been practiced and sanctioned by all nations since the beginning of time. After all, there is no nation in our world that does not have an army, and in all nations, martyrdom is seen as the ultimate sacrifice. War, then, may be good or bad, depending on the motives of those who engage in it and their conduct during and after the campaign. We believe that armed struggle was prescribed in Islam to defend not only Muslims but also non-Muslims who suffer from oppression, as well as to support God's cause of justice on Earth. It was also meant to protect the right to worship God, Who created us, in complete security; it is natural that He would want that right granted to His servants.

There are, however, certain Qur'an verses that may be taken out of context and wrongly described as a declaration of endless war against the unbelievers. For example, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً...﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٣٦)

(سورة التوبة: ٣٦)

﴿...and fight against the polytheists collectively as they fight against you collectively...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 36)

And:

﴿فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ...﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٥)

(التوبة: ٥)

﴿And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 5)

While the vast majority of Muslims do not think that we should be fighting perpetually against the rest of humanity, a fringe minority of mostly youth, inflamed by the real and perceived injustices committed against Muslim peoples, use these verses and others to wage jihad against all of their opponents, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Lacking any means to wage conventional wars, they resort to terrorism to pursue their agenda or to avenge themselves against the enemies who fight them. Such is the dilemma that Muslims are facing nowadays and that mars the name of jihad.

It is true that the verses cited are the words of Allah, Most High. He also said:

﴿قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٢٩)

﴿Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made



unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth [that is, Islam] from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah [poll tax] willingly while they are humbled. ﴿at-Tawbah 9: 29﴾

He also said:

﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ١٩٣)

﴿Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah and [until] religion [that is, worship] is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors.﴾  
(al-Baqarah 2: 193)

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ، فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ، إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى»

«I was commanded to fight the people until they testify that none is worthy of worship except Allah, and (until) they believe in me and what I came with. If they do that, then they have safeguarded their blood and wealth from me, except according to it (Islam), and their judgment is upon Allah.» (Agreed upon, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah)

Not only that, but in previous scriptures, namely the Bible, much more than this is attributed to God, including the killing of infants and children, referred to in the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and others.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, in the First book of Samuel 15: 1-3, Samuel said to Saul:  
1 I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. 2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do=

Certainly, we do not believe that those statements about children and infants are from God, because it would be too hard to provide context that could explain them. However, in Islam, there is an explanatory context for all of these verses. First, it is important to note that Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾  
(سورة الأنفال: ٦١)

﴿And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He Who is the Hearing, the Knowing.﴾ (*al-Anfāl* 8: 61)

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=not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.

According to Deuteronomy 20:10-18, God said:

10 When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace.  
11 If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. 12 If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. 13 When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. 14 As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies. 15 This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby. 16 However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. 17 Completely destroy them – the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites – as the LORD your God has commanded you. 18 Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.

In Numbers 31:17-18, Moosâ said:

“17 Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, 18 but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man.”

And in Joshua 6: 21,

“They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.”

﴿... فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْكُمْ فَلَمْ يَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَلَيْسَ بِمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٠)

«...So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them.» (*an-Nisâ' 4: 90*)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ فَإِذَا لَقَيْتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ»

«O people, do not wish to meet the enemy, and ask Allah for pardon. But if you meet them, be patient and know that paradise is under the shade of the swords.» (Agreed upon, on the authority of 'Abdullâh ibn Abi Awfâ)

Who should be connecting the dots and reconciling the seemingly conflicting reports? The scholars well-grounded in the tradition. One of them, namely Imam Ibn Taymiyah, wrote a treatise on *Qitâl al-Kuffâr wa Muhâdanatuhum* [War and peace (treaties) with the disbelievers], in which he showed conclusively that the 'illah (effective cause) for fighting them is their aggression, not their disbelief. He pointed out that the texts implying an open fight against them can never be used as proof for fighting the people at large, because they appear to contradict other evidences (some of which is mentioned above), the consensus, and even the life of the Messenger (ﷺ) himself. Some of them appear to suggest fighting the people at large until there is no religion on Earth except Islam – yet this is contrary to the consensus. Do you not see that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) made peace and truces with non-Muslims? In fact, he said:

«دَعُوا الْحَبَشَةَ مَا وَدَعُواكُمْ وَاتْرُكُوا التُّرْكَ مَا تَرَكُواكُمْ»

«Leave the Abyssinians alone so long as they leave you (alone), and leave the Turks (alone) as long as they leave you alone.» (Abu Dâwood, and deemed ḥasan by al-Albâni in *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Jâmi'*)

This clearly indicates that the command to fight does not apply to the people at large. Rather, Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah bestow mercy upon him) said in *Hidâyat al-Hayârâ* [Guiding the bewildered]:

When Allah sent His Messenger [ﷺ], most of the religions willingly submitted to him and to his caliphs after him. He never forced the religion upon anyone, and he would only fight those who fought and warred against him. As for those who made peace with him, he did not fight them or compel them to embrace his religion, out of compliance with the command of his Lord [ﷻ], Who says:

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٦)

«There is no compulsion in religion; truth has been made clear from falsehood...» (*al-Baqarah* 2: 256)

These verses and hadiths, which appear to enjoin fighting the people at large, were referring to specific peoples during the Prophet's time, or to fighting in specific circumstances – such as defending the oppressed in accordance with the words of the Most High:

﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ...﴾

﴿٧٥﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٥)

«And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children...» (*an-Nisâ' 4: 75*)

– or to prevent tyrants from forcing those who embraced Islam to abandon worshipping Allah, the One and Only, as in the words of the Most High:

﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٣)

«And fight them until there is no [more] fitnah...» (*al-Baqarah* 2: 193)

– or preemptively against (genuine, not imaginary) enemy aggression, as the Muslims did when the Persians sent troops to arrest the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or when the Romans incited their allies,

the Christians of Shâm, against the Muslims. The Christians blocked the Muslims' roadways and surrounded their trade caravans, and the ally of the Romans, Shurahbeel ibn 'Amr al-Ghassâni, killed al-Hârith ibn 'Amr al-Azdi, who was the Prophet's messenger to the ruler of Busra.

Scholars in the past entertained the following question: Is the default in international relations peace or warfare? The majority viewed peace as the default, while others believed it was warfare, although some of the latter may have been referring to the situation at their time, when they had no stable borders or statehood as we know it. Empires were constantly fighting against others to expand their territories (as can be seen in any infographics showing the changes in the map of Europe over the last one thousand years). If we pose this question to them again, using different wording, asking, "Do we prefer peace or warfare?", perhaps all of them would answer in favor of peace. Did not the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, in addition to all of the aforementioned?

«Indeed, Allah is gentle and loves gentleness, and He grants because of gentleness what He does not grant because of harshness, nor what He grants because of anything else.» (Agreed upon, on the authority of 'Â'ishah, and this is the wording of Muslim)

If a nation that essentially rules with justice makes peace with us, grants security to the Muslims within its borders, and does not persecute us, then why should we fight them? If our objectives are that no one is deprived of the right to worship their Lord in peace, that no tyrant subjugates any of the creation of Allah, and that no one threatens the interests of our Ummah, and we can attain all that peacefully, is fighting still justified? Would choosing it in these circumstances embody the gentleness that Allah loves in all matters?

Even after all this discussion, we have still not looked at the essence of the matter in question: war. Was war one thousand years ago the same as war today? This is not an insignificant inquiry because applying

the legislative rulings correctly is contingent upon understanding the current reality in the place where these specific rulings are to be applied. In our age, the structure of nations has become stabilized and the borders of these nations have become distinct, in contrast to previous ages when nations did not rule themselves. Instead, they were ruled by dynasties and factions whose sovereignty would expand and then contract, only to be occupied by another.

In the past, the ruling factions fought on the battlefield, but this fighting rarely harmed ordinary people, farmers, women, or the weak. Furthermore, the masses would enjoy the rule of a just nation that replaced the tyranny that they had lived under for decades or centuries. This would bring them joy, just as the Christians of Shâm were overjoyed when the Muslims liberated them from Rome and its allies. But nowadays, the price of warfare is widespread chaos, corruption, and tragedy that do not differentiate between soldiers and civilians – for bombs and rockets are not like arrows and spears. If Imam Ibn Taymiyah ruled that a catapult could not be used except for the necessary jihad (to repel the enemy),<sup>1</sup> what would he say about modern weapons of war?

In the past, jihad was sometimes necessary to secure the deliverance of *da‘wah* to the entire creation, for it removed the obstacles, such as the tyrants and their oppressive regimes, that were preventing it. In our times, the deliverance of the *da‘wah* is possible through the jihad of articulation and the tongue, via broadcasts, satellite channels, and especially the Internet, which delivers written, audible, and visual statements alike. Furthermore, the *du‘ât* can travel to distant lands, mix with their people, and invite them, while enjoying security throughout.

To conclude this point, we can never deny the virtue of jihad and martyrdom in Islam and its raising its people upon courage, dignity,

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<sup>1</sup> *Majmoo‘ al-Fatâwâ*, 24:69.

honor, and sacrifice. However, we must also be confident that Islam decisively prefers peace over war.

The default for the relationship with United Nations member states is that of peace. All the Muslim states who signed the charter of this organization committed to peace with the rest of the signatory states. Such a covenant is acceptable in Islam and makes all the world, by default, a land of *muwâda'ah* (peace). The Ḥanafī *fuqahâ'* declared that *al-muwâda'at al-mutlaqah* (a peace treaty without an agreed-upon term) is one of the types of valid treaties.<sup>1</sup> There is a difference of opinion on this issue among the Shâfi'i and Ḥanbali schools, but Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 AH/ 1350 CE), the famous Ḥanbali jurist and disciple of Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 AH/ 1328 CE), made a strong case for the validity of such treaties.<sup>2</sup> Imam Muhammad ibn Idrees ash-Shâfi'i (d. 204 AH/ 820 CE) has himself explicitly stated that such a treaty is valid if the parties are given the option to terminate the treaty at will.<sup>3</sup> 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân made a treaty with the Nubians that stated:

We (Muslims) shall not wage war against you, prepare for war against you, or attack you, as long as you observe the conditions of the treaty between us and you... But it will not be incumbent upon the Muslims to drive away any enemy who may encounter you, or to prevent him from you, between the limits of the territory of Ulwah and Aswan.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See al-Kâsâni, *Badâ'i' aṣ-Ṣanâ'i'*, 6:77.

<sup>2</sup> See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Aḥkam Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2002), 1:336-344.

<sup>3</sup> See Muhammad ibn Idrees ash-Shâfi'i, *al-Umm* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, 1961), 4:110.

<sup>4</sup> See Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim Conduct of State*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Booksellers, and Exporters, 1987), 293.

There is another pertinent discussion here, which is that the war that Islam deems justifiable, at times, is an ethical war that must also be Sharia-complaint. It is a war where the civilians, or to be more precise, all non-combatants, are spared. Abu Dâwood reported from Anas that when they had to go to war, the Prophet (ﷺ) would instruct them not to kill “an older man, a child, or a woman,” and he would say, “Do righteousness and show kindness, for Allah loves those who are kind.” Ibn Mâjah added that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade killing the *'aseef*, which is best translated as a non-combatant attachment to the army.

May Allah bring peace, justice, and security to the distressed and suffering among humankind.





## Appendix 2: Slavery

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This appendix appears in *'Umdat al-Fiqh Explained* (Volume 2) authored by Dr. Hatem al-Haj and published by IIPH

The issue of slavery may be one of the hardest issues to discuss. Our collective conscience as a global community is extremely averse to the discussion because of a variety of factors, not least of which is the cruel treatment that slaves suffered for centuries. Many preachers find it difficult to talk about the issue, particularly when they are asked why Islam's stance did not mandate the immediate and absolute abolition of slavery. Furthermore, classical books of Islamic law contain extensive discussions of the rulings pertaining to the slaves, causing discomfort to many educators who must address them. In the following discussion, I will attempt to highlight some of the facts about Islam's stance on slavery.

### A Historical Matter

To begin with, any discussion of slavery in Islam that does not put the issue in its proper historical context will be flawed. No heavenly

religion sought to eliminate the institution of slavery more than Islam did. It would welcome the current state of abolishment of slavery worldwide, and it would certainly be keen on all the nations of the world maintaining this state. A central credo of conduct for Muslims is that when they engage in any agreement, they must comply with it, for Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ...﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١)

﴿O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts...﴾ (*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 1)

This defense of the Islamic stance on slavery, and its description of the excellent treatment of the slaves in Islam is, therefore, only a topic of theological and historical importance, not a practical matter.

## Never Racist

The second important point to highlight is that slavery in Islam was never a racist practice. In the early history of the Muslim state, there were slaves from all nations, and even before Islam, the Arabs had slaves of all races. The most famous slaves in the history of Islam were the Prophet's esteemed Companions Salmân the Persian, Bilâl the Abyssinian, and Şuhayb the Roman (ﷺ). Indeed, as British historian S. H. Leeder writes, the issue of color was irrelevant to the early Muslims.

“TAKE away that black man!” exclaimed the Christian Archbishop Cyrus. “I can have no discussion with him!” when the Arab conquerors had sent a deputation of their ablest men to discuss terms of surrender of the capital of Egypt, headed by the negro Ubâdah, as the ablest of them all. To the scared archbishop's astonishment, he was told that this man was commissioned by the General Amr; that the Moslems held negroes and white men

in equal respect – judging a man by his character and not by his colour.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to claim that there have never been racist Muslims. Racism is a human condition that arises from egoism and is manifested in different forms, such as tribalism, groupism, classism, nationalism, and so on. The closer and more devoted you become to Allah, the less egoistic you will be. The information here is about the institution of slavery in its theory, governing laws, and communal legal practice. Throughout the history of Islamic states, slaves came from all backgrounds; in fact, through most of Islamic history, they were from non-African nations, since there were not many conquests in sub-Saharan Africa. As in the Far East, those nations mostly came into the fold of Islam without war.

## Slavery before Islam and in Other Religions

Slavery existed before Islam, and it spanned nearly every culture, nationality, and religion. While it may not have been known among hunter-gatherer populations, it was a part of every ancient civilization. In both a socio-geographic and religious context, slavery was normalized and tolerated worldwide, including in pre-Columbian America. Slavery was also common in Africa; in non-Muslim Africa, it was associated with pagan practices such as burying one or two young slaves alive next to the body of their deceased master. The spread of Islam is credited with ending this practice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. H. Leeder, *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt and the Religion of Islam* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1913), 332.

<sup>2</sup> Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1989), 7.

Research shows that no religion encouraged the ending of the practice as much as Islam did; likewise, no religion encouraged the beneficent treatment of the slaves as much as Islam did.

Here are some mentions of slavery in the Bible. (Note that the newer translations have changed the word ‘slave’ to ‘servant’.)

Numbers 31: 17-18, NIV

Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man.

This statement, attributed to Moosâ (ﷺ), clearly allows capturing, enslaving and having sex with young women.

Leviticus 25: 44-46, NIV

Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly...

Exodus 21: 2-11, GNB

If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. But if the slave plainly says, “I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,” then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

American historian and philosopher Will Durant describes the position of the Church as follows:

The Church did not condemn slavery. Orthodox and heretic, Roman and barbarian alike assumed the institution to be natural and indestructible; a few philosophers protested, but they too had slaves... Pagan laws condemned to slavery any free woman who married a slave; the laws of Constantine ordered the woman to be executed, and the slave to be burned alive. The Emperor Gratian decreed that a slave who accused his master of any offense except high treason to the state should be burned alive at once, without inquiring into the justice of the charge.<sup>1</sup>

## Islam's Answer to the Dilemma of Slavery

It may be said that Islam did not take an absolute abolitionist stance on the institution of slavery, and this is true to some extent. One must remember, though, that during the time of the ministry of the Prophet (ﷺ), not only was the immediate abolitionist approach not proposed by any religious or secular order, but it would have been infeasible. Furthermore, it might have resulted in social and economic turmoil, not only for the larger communities, but firstly for the many slaves who would have been unable to fend for themselves.

In addition, the issue of how to handle war captives made slavery the surest path to saving their lives. In the past, armies could not keep the captives in prison and provide for them due to the scarcity of resources. Freeing them was not always possible because they could regroup and go back to fighting.

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<sup>1</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Vol. 4, The Age of Faith* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950).

Finally, since the enslavement of captives was a common practice of all armies, it would have been unexpected for the Muslims to free all the captives when they won a battle but still be taken as captives when they lost.

Islam's answer to the dilemma of slavery can be summarized in two major points:

- 1- Gradual diminishment of the institution by simultaneously cutting off its tributaries and widening its runoffs
- 2- Enjoining the excellent treatment of slaves for as long as the institution survived

In the following paragraphs, I will address these two points.

## The Gradual Diminishment of the Institution of Slavery

When one wishes to drain a river of its water, there are two methods: cutting off its tributaries (sources) and increasing its runoffs. Before Islam, a person could be condemned into slavery through various means, including a man selling his own wife or child, child abandonment, debt-slavery, captivity in war, kidnapping, and as a punishment for certain crimes. Islam cut off all of those tributaries that fed into the river of slavery except for one: captivity in war, for, as mentioned previously, it was a logistical necessity at times and, more importantly, enslavement helped protect the captives' lives. Despite that, Islam recommended freeing those captives. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فُكُّوا الْعَانِيَّ يَغْنِي الْأَسِيرَ وَأَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ وَعَوِّدُوا الْمَرِيضَ»

«Free the captives, feed the hungry, and visit the sick.» (Bukhari)

## Islam's Encouragement of the Emancipation of Slaves

Evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah makes it clear that the emancipation of slaves is considered one of the greatest virtues and ways to earn the Lord's pleasure.

Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾ فَلَا أَفْئَمَةٌ لِّلْعَقَبَةِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾﴾ (سورة البلد: ١٠-١٣)

«And have shown him [humankind] the two ways [of good and evil]? But he has not broken through the difficult pass [to righteousness]. And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? It is the freeing of a slave.» (al-Balad 90: 10-13)

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ... ﴿١٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٧)

«Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves...» (al-Baqarah 2: 177)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مُّسْلِمَةً أَعْتَقَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ عَضْوٍ مِنْهُ عَضْوًا مِنَ النَّارِ»

«Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (hell) fire as he has freed the body parts of the slave.»

Sa'eed ibn Marjānah said that he narrated this hadith to 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, who then freed his slave, even though 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far

had offered him ten thousand dirhams, or one thousand dinars, for that slave. (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah also narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من أعتق شِقْصًا له في عَبْدٍ أُعْتِقَ كُلُّهُ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ مَالٌ وَإِلَّا يَسْتَسْعَى غَيْرَ مَشْقُوقٍ عَلَيْهِ»

«Whoever frees his portion of a jointly-owned slave should free the slave completely by paying the rest of his price if he has enough money; otherwise, the price of the slave is to be estimated, and the slave should be helped to work, without hardship, until he can pay the rest of his price.» (Bukhari)

Islam also specified the freeing of slaves as the expiation for many sins.

Yet the best system Islam legislated was to give the slaves control over their own passage into the world of the free, by allowing them to purchase their own freedom with the help of the community members whom Allah ordered to support their cause. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَعَاوَهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ...﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٣)

«...And those who seek a contract [for eventual emancipation] from among whom your right hands possess – then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness and give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you...» (an-Noor 24: 33)

This was beneficial for the slaves who had to be weaned from depending on their masters for provisions, for they would have faced problems if they were suddenly required to provide their own food, clothes, and shelter. (We must not underestimate the potential impact on the stability and security of the society if it had been mandated that all the slaves be immediately freed.) Of course, it was also beneficial



for the masters, who were, to a great extent, dependent on the slaves for their businesses.

This was also favorable for the community, for they would see responsible people, who knew the value of work and labor, moving from the ranks of the slaves to those of the free.

It is worth noting that the Prophet (ﷺ) led by example. According to the books of *seerah* (the Prophet's noble history), he emancipated all the slaves he had before Islam was revealed to him, as well as those given to him after Islam. In the most authentic book of Hadith, 'Amr ibn al-Ḥârith (رضي الله عنه), the brother of the Mother of Believers, Juwayriyah (رضي الله عنها), reported from her that when he died, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) left neither a dinar nor a dirham, neither a male nor a female slave, nor anything else except his white riding mule, his weapons, and the land which he had given in charity to wayfarers. (Bukhari: Book 1, Hadith 475)

Finally, in attestation to the Islamic plan for eliminating slavery, C. Snouck Hurgronje writes:

Setting slaves free is one of the most meritorious pious works, and, at the same time, the regular atonement for certain transgressions of the sacred law. So, according to Mohammedan principles, slavery is an institution destined to disappear.<sup>1</sup>

## Islam's Enjoinment of the Excellent Treatment of the Slaves

The excellent treatment of slaves in Islam is a fact that I will try to highlight by proofs from the textual and historical accounts, including testimonies by non-Muslim historians and thinkers.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 129.

In the Qur'an, there are several verses commanding the good treatment of slaves, including:

﴿ وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ  
بِالْحَبْلِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا  
فِخُورًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٦)

﴿Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 36)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) repeatedly commanded people to treat the slaves with mercy and compassion. One of his last recommendations to the Muslims before he died was to fear Allah regarding their slaves. A quick review of the following hadiths will further testify to his instructions regarding the excellent treatment of slaves:

«لَا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ عَبْدِي وَأَمْتِي ... فَإِنَّكُمُ الْمَمْلُوكُونَ وَالرَّبُّ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ»

«None of you should say: My slave ('abdi) or: My slave woman – for you are all (Allah's) slaves, and the Lord is Allah, Most High.»  
(A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Al-Ma'roor ibn Suwayd narrated:

«I saw Abu Dharr al-Ghifâri wearing a cloak, and his slave was wearing a cloak (like it). We asked him about that.

He replied: Once I abused a man, and he complained of me to the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked me:

«يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَعَزَّتْهُ بِأُمِّهِ إِنَّكَ أَمْرٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ إِخْوَانُكُمْ خَوْلُكُمْ جَعَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَحْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ فَمَنْ كَانَ أَخُوهُ تَحْتَ يَدِهِ فَلْيُطْعِمْهُ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ وَلْيَلْبِسْهُ مِمَّا يَلْبَسُ وَلَا تَكْلَفُوهُمْ مَا يَغْلِبُهُمْ فَإِنْ كَلَّفْتُمُوهُمْ فَأَعِينُوهُمْ»

O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by slighting his mother? You are a man who has *jâhiliyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance and disbelief).

(He added:) Your slaves are your brethren, upon whom Allah has given you authority. If you have your brethren under your control, you should feed them with the like of what you eat and clothe them with the like of what you wear. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job).» (Bukhari 3:46:721)

The Prophet (ﷺ) unequivocally prohibited the separation of a mother from her slave child. Abu Moosâ reported that he said:

«لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَنْ فَرَّقَ بَيْنَ الْوَالِدَةِ وَوَلَدِهَا وَبَيْنَ الْأَخِ وَبَيْنَ أَخِيهِ»

«May he be cursed, he who separates a mother from her child, or a brother from his sibling.» (A weak hadith recorded by Tirmidhi)

And for one who humiliates his slave by beating him or slapping him, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ لَطَمَ مَمْلُوكَهُ أَوْ صَرَبَهُ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ أَنْ يُعْتِقَهُ»

«He who slaps his slave or beats him, there is no expiation for this but to free him.» (Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was always concerned about the wellbeing of the slaves, and he would always mention them at the times when he expected the greatest attention from his audience, such as the time of his death and during the Farewell Pilgrimage, where he had the largest audience in his lifetime. “As for your slaves, male and female,” he exhorted them during the Farewell Pilgrimage, “feed them with what you eat yourself and clothe them with what you wear. If you cannot keep them or they commit any

fault, discharge them. They are God's people like unto you and be kind unto them."<sup>1</sup>

No other nation or religious group in the world treated slaves better than the Muslims did, as demonstrated by the aforementioned examples of instructions from Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). The following are the testimonies of non-Muslim historians and leaders regarding this very fact:

On the attitude of the Muslim master towards his slaves, American historian and philosopher Will Durant writes:

...he handled them with a genial humanity that made their lot no worse – perhaps better, as more secure – than that of a factory worker in nineteenth-century Europe... It is astonishing how many sons of slaves rose to high place in the intellectual and political world of Islam, how many, like Mahmud and the early Mameluks, became kings.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century, Mouradgea d'Ohsson (an Armenian historian and diplomat who wrote extensively about the Ottoman Empire) declared:

There is perhaps no nation where the captives, the slaves, the very toilers in the galleys are better provided for or treated with more kindness than among the Muhammedans.<sup>3</sup>

Napoleon Bonaparte, a military leader who was Emperor of France from 1804 to 1814, is recorded as saying about the condition of slaves in Muslim countries:

In the East, slavery never had the same characteristics as in the West. The slavery of the East is that which is seen in the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Vol. 4, The Age of Faith*, 209.

<sup>3</sup> H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 35.

Scripture: the slave inherits from his master and marries his daughter. Most of the Pashas had been slaves; a great number of grand viziers, all the Mamluks, Ali Bey al-Kabir, and Murad Bey had all been slaves. They started by performing the most menial services in the house of their master and subsequently rose in status because of their merit or through favours. In the West, on the other hand, the slave was always below the domestic servant; he occupied the lowest rank...<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the question of concubines and having sex with the slave girls, we must first say that the Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged the masters to free their female slaves and marry them. He said:

«وَرَجُلٌ كَانَتْ لَهُ أَمَةٌ فَغَدَّأَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ غِدَاءَهَا ثُمَّ أَدَّبَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ أَدَبَهَا ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهَا وَتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ»

«He will be doubly rewarded... the man who had a slave girl, and he fed her well, taught her manners and educated her, and then freed her and married her.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Secondly, this system was not new, nor was it introduced by Islam; all the prophets before Islam acknowledged it and used it. There is no argument among the Jews, Christians, and Muslims that Hâjar was the concubine of Prophet Ibrâheem, and the Old Testament contains countless stories about concubines, including those of the Prophets Dâwood and Sulaymân (peace and blessings be upon them).

We can never view sexual relations with a female slave nowadays from the same perspective of those who lived during those times. It is illogical to deal with historical matters without understanding their context; judging a practice as good or bad cannot be done in the abstract, separate from its context and the norms of the time.

<sup>1</sup> Christian Cherfils, Bonaparte et l'islam d'après les Documents Français & Arabes (Paris: Libraire de la Cour d'Appel et de l'Ordre des Avocats, 1914), 124

Prostitution refers to sex outside of the socially acceptable context, but in ancient times, the concubine (like the wife) was allowed to have sex with the master as a legitimate partner. No woman would ever be allowed to have two sexual partners at the same time, so this concubine was not a sex tool to be enjoyed by the master and his relatives and friends. She could be wed to only one person, and her rights, along with the rights of her children, were guaranteed. Ultimately, sex with the female slave provided a way to fulfill her needs, and she also gained a special status once she delivered a child, who had the same rights as the master's other children. After bearing his child, she could not be sold and was freed upon the death of the master.

I would conclude by emphasizing that Islam was keen on the emancipation of slaves, and it enjoined this throughout its teachings. The original and natural state in which God created his servants is the state of freedom, and He desires a return to that freedom. Let us all pray for the deliverance of all people from all forms of disguised slavery that exist in our world today and for the end of all manifestations of subjugation of people by others.



# Glossary of Islamic Terms<sup>1</sup>

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<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i> )	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>adhân</i>	أَذَان	the call to prayer
<i>Allâhu akbar</i>	اللهُ أَكْبَرُ	Allah is the Greatest
<i>âmeen</i>	أَمِين	O Allah, accept our invocation; amen
<i>Anşâr</i>	الْأَنْصَار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
<i>'aqeedah</i> (pl. <i>'aqâ'id</i> )	الْعَقِيدَة	belief system that is based upon a firm conviction in all the fundamentals of faith and of the oneness of Allah; firm creed that one's heart is fixed upon without any wavering or doubt, and that excludes any supposition, doubt or suspicion
<i>'awrah</i>	الْعَوْرَة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i> )	بُنُو ، بَنِي	<i>lit.</i> ‘children (of)’; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
<i>bid’ah</i>	الْبِدْعَة	innovation, <i>esp.</i> undesired innovation in matters of religion
<i>bismillâh</i>	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ	in the name of Allah
<i>dhihâr</i>	الظَّهَار	<i>dhihâr</i> is the unlawful act of saying to one’s spouse: ‘You are as impermissible for me [to enjoy intimately] as my mother’ – and similar statements
<i>fatwa</i> ( <i>fatwâ</i> )	الْفَتْوَى	religious decision or decree
<i>fitnah</i>	الْفِتْنَة	<i>lit.</i> ‘trial’ or ‘temptation’; (attempting to sow) discord between Muslims
<i>ghusl</i>	الْغُسْل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
<i>ḥadd</i>	الْحَدَّ	specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication
Hadith ( <i>Hadeeth</i> )	الْحَدِيث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur’an form the basis of Islamic law
hadith ( <i>hadeeth</i> )	حَدِيث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Hajj ( <i>Hajj</i> )	الْحَجَّ	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba in Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime



Hijrah	الهجرة	migration, <i>esp.</i> the migration from Makkah to Madinah by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, which marks the start of the Islamic calendar
<i>ifk</i>	الإفك	forged statement; a lie or slander
<i>ihrâm</i>	الإحرام	the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing, consisting of two large sheets of white cloth, worn by the male pilgrim in such a state
<i>ijtihâd</i>	الاجتهاد	to use one's knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law
<i>iqâmah</i>	الإقامة	the call to rise for prayer, given when the prayer is about to begin
<i>izâr</i>	الإزار	a garment which is worn wrapped around the lower half of the body
<i>jâhili</i>	الجاهلي	of or pertaining to <i>jâhiliyah</i>
<i>jâhiliyah</i>	الجاهلية	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
<i>janâbah</i>	الجنابة	a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission
<i>Jibreel</i>	جبريل	the Arabic name of the Gabriel (عليه السلام), the arch-angel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (ﷻ) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
<i>jihad (jihâd)</i>	الجهاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)

<i>Kaaba</i> ( <i>Ka'bah</i> )	الْكَعْبَةَ	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, which Muslims face when they pray
<i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i>	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ	the Islamic testimony of faith: 'there is none worthy of worship other than Allah'
<i>maḥram</i>	الْمَحْرَم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
<i>minbar</i>	الْمِنْبَر	a raised pulpit in a mosque, from which sermons are presented. The pulpit in a mosque is different from that of a church in that it is basically a raised platform at the top of a set of steps, and it usually has a railing for the imam or speaker to lean on. This is why one can speak of 'sitting on the pulpit', and 'ascending the pulpit'
<i>Muhâjiroon</i> (or <i>Muhâ-jireen</i> )	الْمُهَاجِرُونَ	<i>lit.</i> 'emigrants' of any kind; used in Islamic discourse to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, specifically the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
<i>najâsah</i>	النَّجَاسَةَ	physical impurities or filth, as defined by Sharia
<i>qadr</i>	الْقَدْر	divine predestination; destiny; power; exact measure
<i>qibla</i> ( <i>qiblah</i> )	الْقِبْلَةَ	the bearing from any point on Earth to the Kaaba; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer

<i>qiyâm al-layl</i>	قِيَامُ اللَّيْلِ	<i>lit.</i> 'standing the night'; praying super-erogatory prayers during the late night and early morning before fajr
Quraysh	قُرَيْشٌ	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
Ramadan ( <i>Ramaḍân</i> )	رَمَضَانَ	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting and the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
<i>ribâ</i>	الرِّبَا	usury; charging interest on debt
<i>rukoo'</i>	الرُّكُوعُ	the act of bowing (in prayer)
<i>ṣâ'</i>	الصَّاعُ	a measurement of volume roughly equivalent to 3 litres, or four times the volume of a <i>mudd</i>
<i>ṣadaqah</i>	الصَّدَقَةَ	voluntary charity; in the Qur'an and Hadith, the word is often used to refer to <i>zakât</i>
<i>salaf</i>	السَّلَفُ	the pious predecessors: the earliest generations of the righteous followers of Islam
<i>salâm</i>	السَّلَامُ	<i>lit.</i> 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
<i>ṣalât</i> or <i>ṣalâh</i>	الصَّلَاةُ	formal prayer: a combination of physical postures, Qur'an recitation and supplication
Sharia ( <i>Sharee'ah</i> )	الشَّرِيعَةُ	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
<i>shar'i</i>	الشَّرْعِيّ	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
<i>Shayṭân</i>	الشَّيْطَانُ	Satan

<i>shirk</i>	الشُّرْكُ	associating partners with Allah
<i>subhân Allâh</i>	سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ	glory be to Allah
<i>Sunnah</i>	السُّنَّةُ	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
<i>tahleel</i>	التَّهْلِيلُ	the act of saying <i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i> (there is none worthy of worship other than Allah)
<i>takbeer</i> (pl. <i>takbeerât</i> )	التَّكْبِيرُ	takbeer is the act of saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> (Allah is the Greatest). The plural form refers to repeatedly saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> and other phrases praising Allah, as on the occasion of Eid ( <i>takbeerât al-'eed</i> )
<i>tasbeeh</i>	التَّسْبِيحُ	the recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying <i>subhân Allâh</i> (glory be to Allah)
<i>tayammum</i>	التَّيَمُّمُ	dry-earth ablution, performed when no pure water is available
<i>thareed</i>	الثَّرِيدُ	a dish made from pieces of flat bread soaked in a meat stew
<i>Ummah</i>	الْأُمَّةُ	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
<i>wasâq</i> (pl. <i>awsuq</i> )	الْوَسَقُ	a unit of measurement which is equivalent to sixty <i>ṣâ'</i> , or about 130.6 kg
<i>zakat</i> (or <i>zakâh</i> )	الزَّكَاةُ	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and distributed to others who qualify as recipients
<i>zinâ</i>	الزِّنَا	fornication or adultery; unlawful sexual intercourse



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