



# The Prophet of Mercy

How Muhammad ﷺ  
Rose Above Enmity & Insult

♦

MOHAMMAD ELSHINAWY  
& OMAR SULEIMAN

# The Prophet of Mercy

---

How Muhammad ﷺ  
Rose Above Enmity & Insult



MOHAMMAD ELSHINAWY  
& OMAR SULEIMAN



*In association with*  
**YAQREEN™**  
INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

The Prophet of Mercy:  
How Muhammad ﷺ Rose Above Enmity & Insult

First published in England by  
Kube Publishing Ltd  
Markfield Conference Centre  
Ratby Lane  
Markfield  
Leicestershire  
LE67 9SY  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1530 249230

Website: [www.kubepublishing.com](http://www.kubepublishing.com)  
Email: [info@kubepublishing.com](mailto:info@kubepublishing.com)

© Mohammad Elshinawy & Omar Suleiman 2022. All Rights Reserved.  
The right of Mohammad Elshinawy & Omar Suleiman to be identified as  
the authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the  
Copyright, Design and Patent Act 1988.

Cataloguing in-Publication Data is available from the British Library

ISBN Paperback 978-1-84774-172-1  
ISBN Ebook 978-1-84774-173-8  
Cover design and typesetting: Jannah Haque  
Printed by: IMAK Ofset, Turkey.



# Transliteration

---

A brief guide to some of the letters and symbols used in the Arabic transliteration in this book.

*th* ث

*h* ح

*dh* ذ

*ṣ* ص

*ḍ* ض

*t* ط

*ẓ* ظ

*‘* ع

*‘* ع

*ā* آ

*ī* ي

*ū* أُ



May the peace and  
blessings of Allah  
be upon him.



Glorified  
and Exalted  
(is He).



May Allah  
be pleased  
with him.



May Allah be  
pleased with her.



May Allah be pleased  
with them both.



May peace be  
upon him.

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
‘His Character Was the Qur’an’ .....	x
A Blessing in Disguise .....	xi
 <b>A Difficult Decade in Makkah .....</b>	 <b>1</b>
1. Let the Angels Respond .....	7
2. They are Misguided in Their Insults.....	9
3. Praying for Guidance and Recognizing Their Potential...10	
4. Sparing Them Divine Punishment .....	11
5. Showing Mercy On the Worst Day of His Life .....	12
6. More Hope in a Tribe Than Its Own Chief.....	14
7. Maintaining the Trust of His Persecutors.....	15
8. Integrity in a Desperate Situation .....	16
 <b>The Legacy Continues in Madinah.....</b>	 <b>17</b>
9. Refusal to Resort to Name Calling.....	21
10. God Loves Gentleness .....	22
11. Abuse Only Increased Him in Grace .....	23
12. The Quraysh’s Scout .....	25
13. Maintain Your Promise .....	26
14. I Will Not Mutilate Him, Lest Allah Mutilate Me .....	27
15. Merciful Instincts.....	28
16. Feeding the Captives .....	29
17. Clothing the Captives .....	30
18. Lenience With the Ransom .....	31
19. Increased Opportunities for Freedom .....	32
20. Introducing Prisoner Exchange.....	35

21. Keeping Captive Families Together.....	34
22. No Favour Forgotten .....	35
23. Averting War With Banū Qaynuqā‘ .....	36
24. They Just Don’t Know Any Better.....	37
25. Forgiving Treason.....	39
26. God Informed Him of an Assassination Attempt.....	40
27. Forgiving a Sorcerer .....	41
28. A Blessed Woman .....	42
29. An Attempted Coup .....	43
30. ‘Let Them Cool Off’ .....	44
31. ‘Ignore Their Insults’ .....	45
32. ‘Do You Not Love that Allah Should Forgive You?’ .....	47
33. Raided in Ḥudaybiyyah Valley.....	48
34. Hosting the Insulting Ambassador .....	49
35. Eager for Peace.....	50
36. ‘These Are Your Rights’ .....	51
37. The Mother of His Companion .....	52
38. ‘Who Will Protect You From Me?’ .....	54
39. A Powerful Prisoner .....	56
40. Sparing the Quraysh Again .....	58
41. ‘Did You Check His Heart?’ .....	59
42. The Sword of Allah .....	61
43. Islam Does Away With the Past.....	62
44. Allah Loves Those Who Act Justly .....	64

### **Marching to Makkah: A Conquest Like No Other ..... 65**

45. Abū Jahl’s Partner .....	67
46. ‘Whoever Enters the Home of Abū Sufyān’.....	68
47. ‘Today is the Day of Mercy’ .....	70
48. Access Granted .....	73



49. A Changed Man .....	74
50. A Proud Heart Humbled.....	75
51. The One Who Mutilated His Uncle.....	76
52. The Assassin .....	78
53. A Promise of Security.....	79
54. Curing the Heart of a Racist.....	81
55. The Touch of Compassion .....	82
56. His Daughter's Persecutor .....	83
57. The Son of Abū Lahab.....	84
58. The Son of Abū Jahl.....	85
59. A Change of Tune .....	86

### **A Flawless Finish..... 87**

60. A Broken Chief.....	89
61. The Man from Yā-Sīn.....	91
62. Hypocrites at Tabūk.....	92
63. Ibn Salūl's Death .....	93
64. The Man Who Had Him Stoned in Ṭā'if .....	95
65. A Christian Chief.....	96
66. The Woman Who Poisoned Him ﷺ .....	97
67. Musaylamah's Delegates .....	98

### **Incrruptible..... 99**

68. The Father of Extremism.....	103
69. Help Him With His Debts .....	104
70. The Bedouin Who Suffocated Him .....	105

### **A Mercy Misunderstood ..... 107**





# Introduction

---

*In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.*

To delegitimize the Messenger ﷺ<sup>1</sup> is to call into question the entire message. During his time, the Makkans called him a poet, a magician, and a madman, among other names. Today, he is insulted with other labels. Perhaps the most invidious insult, designed to undermine the powerful establishment and spread of his message, is that he overcame his foes with terror and ruled them with cruelty. Descriptions of Muhammad's life ﷺ, military career, and traditions form the foundation for most judgments about his mission. Islam as a whole, through these depictions, is seen as either a religion of peace or a religion of war, depending on which interpretation of the Messenger ﷺ and his message is followed. Modern critiques of some of the Prophet's ﷺ undertakings are meant to question the civility of Islam in the ongoing manufactured clash of civilizations that fuels both Islamophobes and extremists. Michael Bonner notes: 'Many of these modern arguments over historiography, and over the rise of Islam and the origins of jihad more generally, began in the nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries among European academic specialists in the study of the East, often referred to as the orientalisists.'<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Honorific symbol stating: "salutations and peace be upon him".

<sup>2</sup> Michael David, Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 16.

He goes on to note that the motivation of these arguments cannot be disconnected from ‘their involvement in the colonial project’.<sup>3</sup>

By portraying the Prophet ﷺ himself as a barbarian, surely his followers must also be treated as an inherently violent political body that will employ any means necessary to achieve global domination. What is uncontroversial is that Muhammad ﷺ succeeded at wielding unprecedented power even after decades of persecution. Michael Hart, who famously considered him the most influential man in history, wrote:

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.<sup>4</sup>

The question of whether or not he sacrificed his principles in the pursuit of that success is one that requires an in-depth look at his consistency, or lack thereof, in varied political contexts.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Michael H., Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* (New York: Hart Pub. Co., 1978), 21.

## ‘His Character ﷺ Was the Qur’an’

---

This was the description of the Prophet ﷺ given by ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. He practiced everything he preached. He was an embodiment of the message; all the verses of grace, ethics, and beauty were embodied in his example. Allah says, *‘Repel that which is evil with that which is better’* (Fussilat 41:34), and it is in his example that we find how to rise above every form of evil one may face, particularly at the hands of those who show us hostility. The ‘evil’ is relative—and so is the response. Therefore, each unique circumstance that the Prophet ﷺ faced required a different response. The consistency with which he adopted the noblest course in every situation is what stands out and makes him venerable. Islamophobes argue that Muhammad ﷺ was himself the author of the Qur’an; hence, the Qur’an became less tolerant as his power grew. Muslims argue that the Prophet ﷺ was the embodiment of the Qur’an, which is the word of Allah, and that both his character and the prose of the Qur’an were consistent in their grace. The verses of battle were revealed only post-Madinah because the battles did not take place until the Prophet ﷺ had assumed the role of a head of state. Yet, some of the most prominent verses of tolerance, such as the verse: *‘There is no compulsion in religion’* (al-Baqarah 2:256), were also revealed post-Madinah.





## Merciful Instincts

Although ‘Umar ؓ urged him to execute the captives of Badr, and before revelation corrected the Prophet’s ﷺ decision to spare these war criminals, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was inclined to spare them—presuming this to be the greater good.<sup>35</sup> In fact, he emphasized to his Companions after Badr, ‘Treat the captives well.’<sup>36</sup> This was despite the fact that those captives had specifically intended to assassinate him and had prepared to celebrate over his corpse with wine.



<sup>35</sup> Collected by Muslim (1763).

<sup>36</sup> Collected by at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (977), and in *as-Ṣagħīr* (409), and al-Haythamī said in *Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id* (6/115), its chain is sound (*hasan*).



## No Favour Forgotten

Following the Battle of Badr, he ﷺ said, ‘Were al-Muṭ‘īm ibn ‘Adī still alive, and he spoke to me regarding these foul men, I would have freed them [all] for him!’<sup>48</sup> Ibn ‘Adī was not a believer, but he had not only helped to destroy the Quraysh’s pact to boycott Banū Hāshim but he had also granted the Prophet ﷺ asylum upon his return from Ṭā’if. The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated loyalty and gratitude to anyone who had helped him in his time of need, regardless of whether or not they chose to accept his Prophetic mission.



<sup>48</sup> Collected by al-Bukhārī (2970), Abū Dāwūd (2689), at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabeer* (1/302), and Ibn Athīr in *Asad al-Ghābah* (1/337).



## ‘Ignore Their Insults’

Allah wished to terminate the widespread practice of adopting a child and failing to preserve their lineage. However, this institution was so ingrained in Arabia’s culture that challenging it would only be accepted from the Prophet ﷺ himself, as only he was infallible and above criticism. For this reason, Allah instructed His Prophet ﷺ to desist from calling his adopted son Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (formerly Zayd ibn Muhammad) by other than his true paternal name. But to unequivocally establish that an adopted child was to maintain their own lineage, Allah then ordered (also in *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*) him to marry Zayd’s wife once Zayd had divorced her. Of course, the hypocrites pounced on this opportunity to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of being a licentious man who marries his daughter-in-law, and an imposter who forbade people from marrying their sons’ wives but accepted it for himself.<sup>63</sup> This was no harmless insult, but yet another attempt to develop a critical mass of Madinans who would overthrow the new head of state. The Prophet ﷺ did not punish them; rather, he ignored them completely and left the matter to God, just as his Lord had instructed him. ‘And do not mind the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Ignore their harm and rely upon Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a Disposer of [your] affairs’ (*al-Aḥzāb* 33:48) This was a time when the Prophet ﷺ

<sup>63</sup> See: *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*; [*al-Aḥzāb* (33):37].



## Eager for Peace

Suhayl ibn ‘Amr ﷺ was sent next by the Quraysh to finalize the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Even before demanding oppressive double standards in the treaty, Suhayl ibn ‘Amr forcefully objected to it being documented as an agreement between the Quraysh and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He said, ‘If we believed you were the Messenger of God, we would not have fought you’ and insisted that the title Messenger of Allah be erased. ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ refused to erase it, but the Prophet ﷺ obliged, not allowing his personal pride to deter him from making peace with the Quraysh as he was intent on avoiding bloodshed in the sacred sanctuary of Makkah. For that same reason, he reluctantly accepted to send back Abū Jandal ﷺ, the son and escaped prisoner of Suhayl ibn ‘Amr, to Makkah for the greater good.

This was pure mercy and piety, not timidity, because the Prophet ﷺ had initially said to Budayl ibn Warqā’, the Quraysh’s first ambassador to the Muslims at al-Ḥudaybiyyah, ‘We did not come to fight. We came for *‘umrah*, although we know that the Quraysh is worn out from warfare.’<sup>67</sup> Imam az-Zuhrī, a sub-narrator of this hadith, said, ‘He did this because he declared [upon reaching al-Ḥudaybiyyah], “They will not offer me any proposition which glorifies the sanctities of Allah except that I will accept it from them.”’

---

<sup>67</sup> Collected by al-Bukhārī (2731, 2732) and Muslim (4401–4409).



## Curing the Heart of a Racist

Abū Maḥdhūrah was a young Pagan who could not bear to see a black man ascend the Ka‘bah and perform the call to prayer (*adhān*) from its roof at the Conquest of Makkah. He and his friends began mocking Bilāl ﷺ and imitating his *adhān* with their own voices. The Prophet ﷺ heard his exceptionally beautiful voice and called for him. Abū Maḥdhūrah was brought, likely thinking that he would be executed for mocking Islam. But instead, the Prophet ﷺ wiped his blessed hands over the chest and head of this young man. Abū Maḥdhūrah said, ‘By Allah, my heart then filled with belief and conviction that he was the Messenger of Allah.’ He embraced Islam, was taught the words of the *adhān*, and was appointed the muezzin of Makkah when the Companions returned to Madinah.<sup>97</sup> Some chroniclers mention that the honorary task of calling *adhān* at the Ka‘bah remained with Abū Maḥdhūrah, and then was inherited by his descendants, for many generations after his death.

---

<sup>97</sup> See: *ar-Rawḍ al-‘Unf* (7/239).





## The Touch of Compassion

---

After the Conquest of Makkah, there were some whose hearts were not won over easily. Faḍālah ibn ‘Umayr was one of those seething with hatred and desperate for revenge. He vowed to kill the Prophet ﷺ, despite proclaiming to have accepted Islam. One day, as the Prophet ﷺ was circling the Ka‘bah, Faḍālah tucked his sword under his clothing and followed him closely, gradually coming within attacking range, thinking about the dastardly deed he was about to commit. Suddenly, the Prophet ﷺ turned around and found himself face to face with Faḍālah. ‘What was it that you were saying to yourself?’ the Prophet asked. ‘Nothing. I was just praising Allah’ Faḍālah said. The Prophet ﷺ simply smiled and said, ‘Ask Allah to forgive you’, placing his hand on Faḍālah’s chest, transmitting tranquility to him. Faḍālah would say, ‘By Allah, from the moment he ﷺ lifted his hand from my chest, there remained nothing of Allah’s creation except that he was more beloved to me than it.’<sup>98</sup> This is an assassin in the most sacred place, fully under the Prophet’s control, being met with the loving supplication of the Prophet ﷺ rather than the punishment he deserved.

---

<sup>98</sup> See: *ar-Rawḍ al-‘Unf* (7/114).

# A Mercy Misunderstood





he Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent as a blessing to mankind. For Muslims around the world, he is not only the beloved Messenger, but also a guide and a role model to emulate in our daily lives.

Our life in this world is a trial. We will experience ups and downs and face difficult situations. Who better to learn from than our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

This short and wonderful book provides seventy examples of difficult situations from the life of the Prophet ﷺ and the wisdom with which he faced each and every struggle. May it offer many enlightening lessons from the Seerah of the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ.



**Mohammad Elshinawy** graduated in English Literature from Brooklyn College and Islamic Studies from Mishkah University. He is the Religious Director of Jesus Son of Mary Mosque (Pennsylvania), Research Fellow at Yaqeen Institute and Instructor at Mishkah University.

**Omar Suleiman** is the Founder and President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research and Professor of Islamic Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, USA.



**YAQREEN™**  
INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

*In association with  
Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research*

ISBN 978-1-84774-172-1 US\$12.95



9 781847 741721



51295 >