**God’s Messenger and Children**



**21:107**. We have not sent you (O Muhammad) but as an unequalled mercy for all the worlds.27

27. This verse expounds the mission of our Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, in all clarity. This mission has two cardinal aspects: one for the creation and life of the whole universe, and the other for the people from his time until the Last Hour.

With respect to the former aspect of his mission, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is both the seed of the Tree of Creation and its most illustrious and perfect fruit, one about whom God declares, "But for you, I would not have created the worlds" (al-‘Ajlūnī, 2: 232), and the mirror or means for God's manifestation of His being the All-Merciful or His favors of Mercy to reach the whole creation. In Sufi terminology, he is the first and foremost or greatest Universal Man. With respect to the second, religious aspect of his mission, he is the means for the individuals and communities following him to attain eternal happiness, and the owner of the most comprehensive rank of intercession in the Hereafter. In other words, he is the mirror or means for God's particular favors of His being the All-Compassionate to reach each creature. There is no other way than his which leads to eternal salvation.(A)



**9.128.** There has come to you (O people) a Messenger from among yourselves; extremely grievous to him is your suffering; full of concern for you is he, and for the believers, full of pity and compassion.(B)



**9.129.** Still, if they turn away from you (O Messenger), say: "God is sufficient for me; there is no deity but He. In Him have I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Supreme Throne (as the absolute Ruler and Sustainer of the universe and all creation, Who maintains and protects it). "(C)

**God’s Messenger and Children**

He was an extraordinary husband, a perfect father, and a unique grandfather. He was unique in every way. He treated his children and grandchildren with great compassion, and never neglected to direct them to the Hereafter and good deeds. He smiled at them, caressed and loved them, but did not allow them to neglect matters related to the afterlife. In worldly matters he was extremely open; but when it came to maintaining their relationship with God, he was very serious and dignified. He showed them how to lead a humane life, and never allowed them to neglect their religious duties and become spoiled. His ultimate goal was to prepare them for the Hereafter. His perfect balance in such matters is another dimension of his Divinely inspired intellect.

In a hadith narrated by Muslim, Anas bin Malik, honored as the Messenger’s servant for 10 continuous years, says: “I’ve never seen a man who was more compassionate to his family members than Muhammad.” [1] If this admission were made just by us, it could be dismissed as unimportant. However, millions of people, so benign and compassionate that they would not even offend an ant, declare that he embraced everything with compassion. He was a human like us, but God inspired in him such an intimate affection for every living thing that he could establish a connection with all of them. As a result, he was full of extraordinary affection toward his family members and others.

All of the Prophet’s sons had died. Ibrahim, his last son born to his Coptic wife Mary, also died in infancy. The Messenger often visited his son before the latter’s death, although he was very busy. Ibrahim was looked after by a nurse. The Prophet would embrace, kiss, and caress him before returning home. [2] When Ibrahim died, the Prophet took him on his lap again, embraced him, and described his sorrow while on the brink of tears. Some were surprised. He gave them this answer: “Eyes may water and hearts may be broken, but we do not say anything except what God will be pleased with.” He pointed to his tongue and said: “God will ask us about this.” [3]

He carried his grandsons Hasan and Husayn on his back. Despite his unique status, he did this without hesitation to herald the honor that they would attain later. One time when they were on his back, ‘Umar came into the Prophet’s house and, seeing them, exclaimed: “What a beautiful mount you have!” The Messenger added immediately: “What beautiful riders they are!” [4] They may not have been aware that the Messenger had honored them. This special compliment was due to their future status as leaders and family heads of the Prophet’s household. Among their descendants would be the greatest and most respected saints. His compliment was not only for his grandsons, but for all his offspring. For this reason, ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani, a well-known descendant of the Prophet’s household, said: “The Messenger’s blessed feet are on my shoulders, and mine are on the shoulders of all saints.” This statement will probably stand for all saints to come.

The Messenger was completely balanced in the way he brought up his children. He loved his children and grandchildren very much, and instilled love in them. However, he never let his love for them be abused. None of them deliberately dared to do anything wrong. If they made an unintentional mistake, the Messenger’s protection prevented them from going even slightly astray. He did this by wrapping them in love and an aura of dignity. For example, once Hasan or Husayn wanted to eat a date that had been given to distribute among the poor as alms. The Messenger immediately took it from his hand, and said: “Anything given as alms is forbidden to us.” [5] In teaching them while they were young to be sensitive to forbidden acts, he established an important principle of education.

Whenever he returned to Madina, he would carry children on his mount. On such occasions, the Messenger embraced not only his grandchildren but also those in his house and those nearby. He conquered their hearts through his compassion. He loved all children.

He loved his granddaughter Umama as much as he loved Hasan and Husayn. He often went out with her on his shoulders, and even placed her on his back while praying. When he prostrated, he put her down; when he had finished, he placed her on his back again. [6] He showed this degree of love to Umama to teach his male followers how to treat girls. This was a vital necessity, for only a decade earlier it had been the social norm to bury infant or young girls alive. Such public paternal affection for a granddaughter had never been seen before in Arabia.

The Messenger proclaimed that Islam allows no discrimination between son and daughter. How could there be? One is Muhammad, the other is Khadija; one is Adam, the other is Eve; one is ‘Ali, the other is Fatima. For every great man there is a great woman.

Fatima, the daughter of the Messenger, is the mother of all members of his household. She is our mother, too. As soon as Fatima entered, the Messenger would stand, take her hands and make her sit where he had been sitting. He would ask about her health and family, show his paternal love for her, and compliment her.

He loved her like his own self, and Fatima, knowing how fond he was of her, loved him more than her own self. Her great mission was to be the seed for saints and godly people. She always watched her father and how he called people to Islam. She wept and groaned when the Messenger told her that he would die soon, and rejoiced when he told her that she would be the first family member to follow him. [7] Her father loved her, and she loved her father. The Messenger was totally balanced even in his love for Fatima. He trained her for the heights to which the human soul should rise.

The Messenger raised her, as well as all of his other family members and Companions, in a way to prepare them for the Hereafter. All of us were created for eternity, and so cannot be satisfied except through eternity and the Eternal Being. Therefore, we only want Him and long for Him, either consciously or unconsciously. The essence of all religions and the message of every Prophet was about the Hereafter. For this reason, the Messenger always sought to prepare his followers for the eternal peace and permanent bliss; meanwhile, his very existence among them was a sample of that peace and bliss they would taste in His presence.

He loved them and directed them toward the Hereafter, to the otherworldly and eternal beauty, and to God. For example, He once saw Fatima wearing a necklace (a bracelet, according to another version), and asked her: “Do you want the inhabitants of the Earth and the Heavens to say that my daughter is holding (or wearing) a chain from Hell?” These few words, coming from a man whose throne was established in her heart and who had conquered all her faculties, caused her to report, in her own words: “I immediately sold the necklace, bought and freed a slave, and then went to the Messenger. When I told him what I had done, he rejoiced. He opened his hands and thanked God: ‘All thanks to God, Who protected Fatima from Hell.'” [8]

Fatima did not commit any sin by wearing this necklace. However, the Messenger wanted to keep her in the circle of the muqarrabin (those made near to God). His warning to her was based on taqwa (righteousness and devotion to God) and qurb (nearness to God). This was, in a sense, a neglect of worldly things. It is also an example of the sensitivity befitting the mother of the Prophet’s household, which represents the Muslim community until the Last Day. To be a mother of such godly men like Hasan, Husayn, and Zayn al-‘Abidin was certainly no ordinary task. The Messenger was preparing her to be the mother first of his own household (Ahl al-Bayt), and then of those who would descend from them, such great spiritual leaders as ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Muhammad Baha’ al-Din al-Naqshband, Ahmad Rifai’, Ahmad Badawi, al-Shadhili, and the like.

It was as if he were telling her: “Fatima, you will marry a man (‘Ali) and go to a house from which many golden ‘rings’ will emerge in the future. Forget the golden chain on your neck and concentrate on becoming the mother for the ‘golden chains’ of saints who will appear in the spiritual orders of Naqshbandiya, Rifa’iya, Shadhiliyya, and the like.” It was difficult to fulfill such a role while wearing a golden necklace. For this reason, the Messenger was more severe with his own household than with others. He reminded them of the straight path by turning their faces toward the other world, closing all the windows opening on this world, and telling them that what they need is God.

They were to lead their whole lives looking to the other world. For this reason, as a sign of his love, the Messenger purified his own household from all worldly rubbish and allowed no worldly dust to contaminate them. He turned their faces toward the exalted realms and prepared them for being together there.(D)

**“You Are With Those Whom You Love”**

According to this hadith, if you love Prophet Muhammad you will be on his path, and those on his path will be together with him in the world beyond. To prepare his household and Companions for this gathering, the Messenger loved and embraced them. He used this love efficiently.

Bukhari and Muslim gave another example of how he educated them. ‘Ali narrates that:

We had no servant in our house, and so Fatima did all the housework by herself. We lived in a house with just a small room. There, she would light a fire and try to cook. She often singed her clothes while trying to increase the fire by blowing. She also baked our bread and carried water. Her hands became covered in callouses from turning the millstone, as did her back from carrying water. Meanwhile some prisoners of war were brought to Madina. The Messenger gave them to those who applied. I suggested to Fatima that she ask for a servant from her father. And she did.

**Fatima continues:**

I went to my father, but he was not at home. ‘A’isha said she would tell him when he came, so I returned home. As soon as we went to bed, the Messenger came in. We wanted to get up, but he did not let us and instead sat between us. I could feel the cold of his foot on my body. He asked what we wanted, and I explained the situation. The Messenger, in an awesome manner, replied: “Fatima, fear God and be faultless in all your duties to Him. I will tell you something. When you want to go to bed, say subhan Allah (All glory be to God), al-hamdu lillah (All praise be to God), and Allahu akbar (God is the greatest) 33 times each. This is better for you than having a maid. [9]

**What he was actually saying through this conversation was:**

I am turning your faces to the other-worldly realms. There are two ways for you to reach them and be together with me there: Fulfill your duties in perfect servitude to your Lord and fulfill your duties to your husband. If a maid takes your responsibilities, this may make you deficient. You must have two wings to fly to the higher ranks. How can a man or woman become a perfect slave of God? How can a person become a perfect human being and fulfill all of his or her obligations? It is your duty to find the answers to these questions. First of all, become a perfect slave of God. Then, become a perfect human being by performing your duties to ‘Ali, a great man who represents all the saints who will descend from your family. If you do so, you will be with me in Heaven, where all the perfect things and perfect human beings shall come together.

I cannot help but digress to mention a fact about ‘Ali. The Messenger gave him his daughter in marriage without hesitation, because he deserved to have such a wife and to be a Prophet’s son-in-law. ‘Ali was the king of saints, and was created in this nature. The Messenger once told him: “O ‘Ali, every other Prophet had his own offspring. However, mine will come from you.” [2] ‘Ali is the father of the Prophet’s household, namely, his grandchildren and later descendants. For this reason, obeying ‘Ali means obeying the Messenger, and obeying the Messenger means obeying God. Also, those who love ‘Ali should love the Prophet and follow his Sunna.(E)

 **References**

 **(A)21:107/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(B)9:128 /The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(C)9:129/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**[1] Muslim, “Fada’il,” 63.
[2] Muslim, “Fada’il,” 62.
[3] Bukhari, “Jana’iz,” 44; Muslim, “Fada’il,” 62; Ibn Ma’ja, “Jana’iz,” 53.
[4] Hindi, Kanz al-‘Ummal, 13:650.
[5] Ibn Hanbal, 2:279; Muslim, “Zakat,” 161.
[6] Bukhari, “Adab,” 18; Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqat, 8:39.
[7] Muslim, “Fada’il,” 98, 99; Bukhari, “Manaqib, ” 25.
[8] Nasa’i, “Zinat,” 39.**

**[9] Bukhari, “Fada’il al-Ashab,” 9; Muslim, “Dhikr,” 80, 81.
[D] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Lemalar, 4. Lema.**

**(E)Gulen, Fethullah. *God’s Messenger and Children*. http://en.fgulen.com/**