**His Mildness and Forbearance**



**3.159.** It was by a mercy from God that (at the time of the setback), you (O Messenger) were lenient with them (your Companions). Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from about you. Then pardon them, pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel with them in the affairs (of public concern); and when you are resolved (on a course of action), put your trust in God. Surely God loves those who put their trust (in Him).(1)



**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.(2)



**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). "(3)

**He was very tolerant toward others. Not wanting to burden his community, he did not perform the supererogatory prayers in the mosque. When people complained that an imam was prolonging the prayer, the Prophet mounted the pulpit and said: “O people! You cause people to dread the prayer. When you lead a prayer, don’t prolong it, for others are sick or old or in urgent need.” Once his congregation complained about Mu’adh ibn Jabal, saying he prolonged the night prayer. The Prophet’s love for Mu’adh did not stop him asking three times if he was a trouble-maker(4)**

**His Mildness and Forbearance**

Mildness is another dimension of his character. He was a bright mirror in which God reflected His Mercy. Mildness is a reflection of compassion. God made His Messenger mild and gentle, thereby allowing him to gain many converts to Islam and overcome numerous obstacles.

After the victory of Badr, the Battle of Uhud was a severe trial for the young Muslim community. Although the Messenger wanted to fight on the outskirts of Madina, most Muslims desired to fight on an open battlefield. When the two armies met at the foot of Mount Uhud, the Messenger positioned 50 archers in ‘Aynayn pass and ordered them not to move without his permission, even if they saw that the Muslims had won a decisive victory.

The Muslim army, having only one-third of the men and equipment of the enemy, almost defeated the Makkan polytheists in the initial stage. Seeing the enemy fleeing, these archers forgot the Prophet’s command and left their post. Khalid ibn Walid, the Makkan cavalry’s commander, saw this and, riding round the mountain, attacked the Muslims from behind. The fleeing enemy soldiers turned back, and caught the **Muslims** in a cross-fire. They began to lose, more than 70 were martyred, and the Messenger was wounded.

He might have reproached those who had urged him to pursue their desires as well as the archers who had abandoned their post, but he did not. Instead, he showed leniency: It was by the mercy of God that you were gentle to them; if you had been harsh and hard of heart, they would have dispersed from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them in the affair. And when you are resolved, then put your trust in God; surely God loves those who put their trust (in Him) (3:159).

This verse shows two prerequisite for leadership: mildness and leniency toward those who make well-intentioned mistakes, and the importance of consultation in public administration.

This mildness and forgiveness was a reflection of God’s Names the All-Mild, All-Clement, and All-Forgiving. God does not stop providing for people despite their rebellion or unbelief. While most people disobey Him by indulging in unbelief, by explicitly or implicitly associating partners with Him, or transgressing His Commandments, the sun continues to send them its heat and light, clouds full of rain come to their aid, and the soil never stops feeding them with its fruits and plants. God’s Clemency and Forgiveness are reflected through the Messenger’s compassion, mildness, and forgiveness.

Like Abraham, whom he used to say that he resembled, **The Messenger** was mild, imploring, clement, and penitent (11:75), as well as gentle to believers and full of pity and compassion for them (9:128). Abraham was never angry with people, regardless of how much they tormented him. He wished good even for his enemies, and implored God and shed tears in His Presence. Since he was a man of peace and salvation, God made the fire into which he was thrown cool and safe (21:69).

Like him, the Messenger was never angry with anybody because of what they did to him. When his wife ‘A’isha was slandered, he did not consider punishing the slanderers even after she was cleared by the Qur’an. Bedouins often behaved impolitely with him, but he did not even frown at them. Although extremely sensitive, he always showed forbearance toward both friend and foe.

For example, while he was distributing the spoils of war after the Battle of Hunayn, Dhu al-Huwaysira objected: “Be just, O **Muhammad**.” This was an unforgivable insult, for the Prophet had been sent to establish justice. Unable to endure such offences, ‘Umar demanded permission to kill “that hypocrite” on the spot. But the Messenger only replied: “Who else will show justice if I am not just? If I don’t show justice, then I am lost and brought to naught.” According to another possible meaning of this expression, he said: “If I am not just, then, by following me, you people have been lost and brought to naught.” In addition, he implied that this man would later take part in a seditious movement. This came true during the caliphate of ‘Ali: Dhu al-Huwaysira was found dead among the Kharijites after the Battle of Nahrawan.

Anas ibn Malik related that a Jewess offered a roasted sheep to the Messenger after the conquest of Khaybar. Just before he took the first bite, he stopped and told the others not to eat, saying: “This sheep tells me it has been poisoned.” Nevertheless, a Companion named Bishr died immediately after his first bite (taken before the Messenger had spoken). The Messenger sent for the woman and asked her why she had poisoned the meat. She replied: “If you’re really a Prophet, the poison won’t affect you. If you’re not, I wanted to save people from your evil.” The Messenger forgave her for her conspiracy to kill him. According to some reports, however, Bishr’s relatives demanded that she be punished, and she subsequently was.

Once when the Prophet was going home after talking to his Companions in the mosque, a bedouin pulled him by the collar and said rudely: “O Muhammad! Give me my due! Load up my two camels! For you will load them up with neither your own wealth nor that of your father!” Without showing any sign of being offended, he told others: “Give him what he wants.”

**Zayd ibn San’an narrates:** Before I embraced Islam, the Messenger borrowed some money from me. I went to him to collect my debt before its due time, and insulted him: “O you children of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, you are very reluctant to pay your debts!” ‘Umar became very angry with me and shouted: “O enemy of God! Were it not for the treaty between us and the Jewish community, I would cut off your head! Speak to the Messenger politely!” However, the Messenger smiled at me and, turning to ‘Umar, said: “Pay him, and add 20 gallons to it, because you frightened him.”

**‘Umar relates the rest of the story:** We went together. On the way, Zayd said unexpectedly: “‘Umar, you were angry with me. But I find in him all the features of the Last Prophet recorded in the Torah, the Old Testament. It contains this verse: His mildness surpasses his anger. The severity of impudence to him increases him only in mildness and forbearance. To test his forbearance, I provoked him deliberately. Now I am convinced that he is the Prophet whose coming the Torah predicted. So, I believe and bear witness that he is the Last Prophet.” [1]

This mildness and forbearance was enough for the conversion of Zayd ibn San’an, a Jewish scholar.

The Messenger was extremely meticulous in practicing Islam. Nobody could match his supererogatory prayers. Despite being sinless, he spent more than half the night praying and crying, and sometimes fasted two or three successive days. Every moment he took another step toward the “praised station” set for him by God. He was very tolerant toward others. Not wanting to burden his community, he did not perform the supererogatory prayers in the mosque. When people complained that an imam was prolonging the prayer, the Prophet mounted the pulpit and said: “O people! You cause people to dread the prayer. When you lead a prayer, don’t prolong it, for others are sick or old or in urgent need.” Once his congregation complained about Mu’adh ibn Jabal, saying he prolonged the night prayer. The Prophet’s love for Mu’adh did not stop him asking three times if he was a trouble-maker. [2]

The Messenger’s mildness and forbearance captured hearts and preserved **Muslim** unity. As stated in the Qur’an, if he had been harsh and hard-hearted, people would have abandoned him. But those who saw him and listened to him were so endowed with Divine manifestations that they became saints. For example, Khalid ibn Walid was the Qurayshi general who caused the Muslims to experience a reverse at Uhud. However, when he was not included in the army that set out on the day after his conversion, he was so upset that he wept.

Like Khalid, Ikrima and ‘Amr ibn al-‘As were among those who did great harm to the Messenger and the Muslims. After their conversions, each became a sword of Islam drawn against unbelievers. Ibn Hisham, Abu Jahl’s brother, converted to Islam shortly before the Messenger passed away. He was such a sincere Muslim that just before he was martyred at Yarmuk, he did not drink the water that Hudayfa al-‘Adawi offered him. Rather, he asked that it be given to nearby wounded fellow Muslim groaning for water. He died, having preferred a fellow Muslim over himself.

Such people attained high ranks in the enlightening atmosphere of the Messenger. They became his Companions, regarded and respected as the most virtuous people after the Prophets by almost all Muslims since the earliest days of Islam. Explaining their greatness, Said Nursi, the great twentieth-century Muslim revivalist, says: I wondered why even the greatest saints like Muhyi al-Din ibn al-‘Arabi could not attain the rank of the Companions. One day God enabled me to perform in prayer a prostration that I could never repeat. I concluded that it is impossible to attain the Companions’ ranks, for all of their prostrations were like that in meaning and merit.

The Messenger brought up the Companions. Their greatness is shown in the fact that despite their small numbers, they successfully conveyed Islam to the furthest reaches of Asia and Africa within a few decades. In those areas, Islam became so deeply rooted that despite the concerted efforts undertaken by the superpowers of each era to extinguish Islam, it continues to gain new momentum and represents the only realistic alternative for human salvation. The Companions were transformed from their wretched pre-Islamic state to being guides and teachers of a considerable part of humanity until the Last Day, the vanguard of the most magnificent civilization in history.

In addition, the Messenger was absolutely balanced. His universal compassion did not prevent him from executing Divine justice, and his mildness and forbearance kept him from breaching any Islamic rule or humiliating himself. For example, during a military campaign Usama ibn Zayd threw an enemy soldier to the ground. When he was about to kill him, the man declared his belief in Islam. Judging this to be the result of a fear of imminent death, Usama killed him. When informed of the incident, the Messenger reprimanded Usama severely: “Did you cleave his heart open and see (if what you suspected is true)?” He repeated this so many times that Usama said later: “I wished I had not yet become a Muslim on the day I was scolded so severely.”

Likewise, once Abu Dharr got so angry with Bilal that he insulted him: “You son of a black woman!” Bilal came to the Messenger and reported the incident in tears. The Messenger reproached Abu Dharr: “Do you still have a sign of Jahiliya?” Full of repentance, Abu Dharr lay on the ground and said: “I won’t raise my head (meaning he wouldn’t get up) unless Bilal put his foot on it to pass over it.” Bilal forgave him, and they were reconciled. Such was the brotherhood and humanity Islam created between once-savage people.

 [1] Suyuti, al-Khasa’is, 1:26; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, 1:566.
[2] Muslim, “Salat,” 179; Nasa’i, “Iftitah,” 71; Bukhari, “Adab,” 74.

# His Prayers and Supplications

The Messenger always prayed to God before any action. When we look through the books of Tradition (Hadith), we find no case in which he did not pray. As mentioned earlier, prayer is a mystery of servanthood to God, and the Messenger is the foremost in servanthood. This is made clear with every repetition of the declaration of faith: “I bear witness there is no god but God; I also bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.” Note that he is called servant before Messenger. Whatever he intended to do, he referred it to God through prayer.

God is the Creator of us and whatever we do. Although we should take necessary precautions and follow precedents to accomplish things in this material world, where cause and effect has a special place, we should never forget that everything ultimately depends on God for its existence. Therefore, we must combine action and prayer. This is also required by our belief in God’s Unity.

The Messenger’s knowledge of God can never be equaled. As a result, he was the foremost in love of, and paradoxically, in fear of Him. He was perfectly conscious that everything depends on God for its existence and subsistence. Whatever God wills, happens: When He wills a thing, His command is to say to it “Be,” and it is (36:82). Things exist and the universe operates according to the laws established by God and the fulfillment of prerequisites. Fully aware of this, the Messenger did what he had to and then, combining action with prayer, left the result to God with absolute confidence.

His supplications have been transmitted to us. When we read them, we see that they have deep meaning and accord exactly with the surrounding circumstances. They reflect profound belief, deep sincerity, absolute submission and complete confidence. Some examples are given below:

• When you go to bed, perform wudu’ as you do before daily prayers and pray: “O God, hoping for (Your Mercy) and fearing (Your wrath), I submit myself to You, refer my affairs to You, and take refuge in You. There is no refuge or source of safety from Your wrath except You. I believe in the Book You sent down, and the Prophet you raised.”

• Without sins, a soul is like a polished mirror or a white piece of cloth. Sins dirty the soul, and can be expunged only by repentance and asking His forgiveness. The Prophet used to pray the following, even though he was sinless: “O God, put between me and errors a distance as great as that which you have put between East and West. O God, cleanse me of my errors as a white garment is cleansed of dirt.” The words used and the comparisons made in this prayer are so meaningful that their explanation could fill a whole volume.

In addition to these supplications for specific cases, the Prophet also left behind comprehensive supplications of various lengths. We present some of them here:

• God, I ask You for all good, including what is at hand and what is deferred, what I already know and what I don’t know. I take refuge in You from every evil, including what is at hand and what is deferred, what I already know and what I don’t know.

•God, nothing hinders what You grant, nor is anything granted that You hinder. No wealthy one can do us good, as wealth belongs to You.

• God, I have not told anything, taken an oath, made a vow, or done anything that You did not previously will. Whatever You willed is, and whatever You didn’t will is not. There is no strength or power save with You, and You are indeed All-Powerful over everything.

• God, whatever prayer I have said, let it be for whomever You have mercy, and whatever curse I have called down, let it be for whomever You have cursed. Surely You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die as a Muslim, and include me among the righteous.

• God, I ask You for contentment after misfortune, a peaceful life after death, the pleasure of observing Your Face, and a desire to meet You. I take refuge in You from wronging others and from being wronged, from showing animosity and being subject to animosity, and from erring or committing unforgivable sins. If You leave me to myself, you leave me in weakness, need, sinfulness and error. I depend only on Your Mercy, so forgive all my sins, for only You can do so. Accept my repentance, for You are the Oft-Relenting, All-Compassionate.

• God, You deserve most to be mentioned, and none but You deserve to be worshipped. You are more helpful than anyone whose help may be sought, more affectionate than every ruler, more generous than anyone who may be asked for something, and more generous than anyone who gives. You are the Monarch without partners, and the Unique One without like. Everything is perishable except You. You are never obeyed but by Your permission, and never disobeyed but within Your knowledge. When somebody obeys You, You reward them; when someone disobeys You, You forgive them. You witness everything, being nearer to it than any other witness; and protect everything, being nearer to it than any other protector. You ordained the acts of all people and determined their time of death. You know what is in every mind, and all secrets are manifest to You. The lawful is what You have made lawful; the forbidden is what You have forbidden. Religion is what You have laid down; the commandment is what You have decreed. The creation is Your creation, and the servants are Your servants. You are God, the All-Clement, All-Compassionate. I ask You, for the sake of the light of Your Face, by which the Heavens and Earth were illuminated, for the sake of every right belonging to You, and for the sake of those who ask of You, to forgive me just in this morning and just in this evening, and to protect me, by Your Power, from Hellfire.

• God, I seek refuge in You from all knowledge that gives no benefit, from a heart that does not fear You, from an unsatisfied soul, and from prayer that cannot be answered.

• God, I ask You for steadfastness in my affairs, resolution in guidance, gratitude for Your bounties and acceptable service to You, and a truthful tongue and a sound heart. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what You know. I ask You for the good of what You know, and Your forgiveness for what You already know. Surely You are the Knower of the Unseen.

• God, I ask You to enable me to do good, to refrain from vice, to love the poor, and to forgive me and have mercy on me. When You will people’s deviation and dissension and disorder in public life, make me die before taking part in that disorder. I ask You for Your love and for the love of whom You love, and the love of the acts that will make me nearer to Your love.

• God, I ask You for the good in the beginning and in the end, in its most comprehensive form with its beginning and result, its manifest and secret kinds, and for the highest rank in Paradise.

• God, help me remember and mention You, thank You, and worship You most properly.

• God, I ask You for guidance, fear of You, chastity, and independence of others.

• God, bring all of our affairs to a good conclusion, protect us from disgrace and ignominy in the world, and from being tormented in the Hereafter.

• God, we ask You for all of the good for which Your Prophet Muhammad asked You, and seek refuge in You from every evil from which Your Prophet Muhammad sought refuge in You.

Prayer was a fundamental part of the Prophet’s life. All the supplications quoted, together with many, have become keys in the hands of such great saints as Abu Hasan al-Shadhili, Ahmad al-Badawi, Ahmad al-Rifa’i, and ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, who used them to knock on the door of God’s Mercy.(5)

**References**

**(1) 3:159/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2) 9:128/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) 9:129/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**[4] Muslim, “Salat,” 179; Nasa’i, “Iftitah,” 71; Bukhari, “Adab,” 74.**

**(5) M.Fethullah Gulen,The Infinite Light, Tughrabooks.The Light Inc.**