

Islamic Biography - Prophetic Biography - Prophetic Character 1995 : lesson(16-32)- His mercy with orphans

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All-Knowing, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Dear believing brothers! Now, we go on to the sixteenth of the lessons that have to do with the Prophet's noble traits. In the previous lesson, we got to the point that deals with his mercy upon orphans. In this context Allah Almighty says:

(Therefore, treat not an orphan with oppression.)

[XCIII; 9]

Due to Allah's Infinite Divine Wisdom, the Holy Prophet, Peace be upon him, was an orphan, in order to console the hearts of all orphans that would come after him, as he, the best of all mankind and the most beloved to Allah, Almighty, was an orphan. Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, used to do well to orphans and help them. He (PBUH) used to counsel his Companions to be their custodians and to do well to them. He also showed the merits that come from that. Al-Bukhari narrated on authority of Sahl that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, said:

((I and the custodian of an orphan are like this (together) in Paradise (and he joined his four finger and middle finger together))

Ibn Maja also narrated on authority of Abu Huraira that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, says:

((The best Muslim house is a house in which an orphan is well treated; and the worst Muslim house is a house in which an orphan is badly treated.))

The above Prophetic Hadith shows clearly that if someone takes good care of an orphan, he is sure to enter paradise by his good care. Also, Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), praises a widow whose husband dies, but she abstains from getting married again and prefers to devote herself to bringing up her children. Sometimes the husband might pass away because of an accident or an illness at an early age, the husband might pass away at the age of thirty, and his wife might be twenty-two; very early, he passes away leaving her with her orphan children. Of course, she can get married, but if she gets married the children will perhaps be lost or go astray. The new husband might not accept her with her children. She has to put her children under the care of her parents who might be old: and with an old person, a young child might quite often get out of control.

If a young widow abstains from getting married again, prefers to devote herself to bringing up her children, and prefers to do good to her children instead of getting married again: such a woman was praised by Allah's Messenger. In this contest, 'Aouf Bin Malik Al-Ashja'i narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, said:

((I and a woman with dark brown cheeks will be like these (i.e. together) on the Resurrection Day (and he joined his fore finger and middle finger together): a widow, although beautiful noble, devoted herself for her orphans upon her husband's death until they became strong enough or died))

What is the meaning of "a woman with dark brown cheeks"? Interpreters of the foregoing Prophetic Hadith,

said it means “a widow who abstained from getting married again and therefore she became pale with hard work and sorrow”, and therefore the color of her cheeks became dark brown. This is because a woman has been created by Allah to be a wife, and when her husband is away from her, this causes her a lot of misery and badly affects her beauty. This fact was made quite clear when a woman came to the Prophet’s venerable wife ‘A’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, complaining about her husband. ‘A’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, noticed that the woman, who was the wife of Uthman Ibn Math’oun (may Allah be pleased with him), had neglected herself. When the woman complained about her husband that he was always fasting and that he always stood up the nights for prayer, Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him, summoned him, and he addressed him: “O Uthman! Am I not your example in life?!” And he taught him that he had to fulfill certain rights towards his wife. On the next day, however, Uthman’s wife came back with a good apparel and nice smell. Where did she get that good looking? The answer is: when her husband took care of her. Then, ‘A’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, asked the woman: “How are things with you now?” Uthman’s wife answered: “I have had what other people usually have.”

Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Ass quoted Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him, as saying:

((Don't do that! Fast for sometime, and break the fast for sometime. Stand up the nights (in prayer) for sometime and sleep for sometime. This is because your body has a right on you, your eyes have a right on you, and your wife has a right on you))

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmithi, An-Nasa’ee, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, and Ad-Darimi]

Islam is a well-balanced religion, i.e. you can reach the topmost rank with Allah and, at the same time, fulfill your duties towards other fellow humans. But if you overdo your worships but neglect the rights of other fellow humans, you will be held responsible, and you will be called to account for neglecting such rights.

This woman, who sacrificed herself for her children, abstained from getting married again, and preferred the good righteous work of looking after her orphans to getting married again, became with dark brown cheeks, i.e. became in a miserable condition because of her being away from her husband. Once again:

((I and a woman with dark brown cheeks will be like these (i.e. together) on the Resurrection Day (and he joined his fore finger and middle finger together): a widow, although beautiful noble, devoted herself for her orphans upon her husband’s death until they became strong enough or died.))

The foregoing Prophetic Hadith shows clearly that the woman abstained from getting married to another husband, but consecrated herself to her children. Now the question is: how dear is this young child to Allah, so that if you take care of it, you deserve Allah’s Paradise? The answer is: I swear by Allah! I don’t see any work in this present life nobler or better than firmly establishing true faith in your children, taking good care of them, making them happy, and bringing them up to love Allah, His Messenger and his noble family. There is nothing nobler or better than making your children love Allah’s book (the Holy Quran), bringing them up according to the teachings of Islamic religion, teaching them rules of Islamic Law, and making them love true Faith and righteousness. Such work is indeed very great in the sight of Allah.

That is why I mentioned in the previous lecture, that man is sad and miserable when his children are sad and miserable, no matter how great or wealthy he might be. Some thirty years ago, a relative of mine passed away, leaving a legacy of a hundred million pounds. But just before he died, he said to his wife: “We have lost the real gold! We gained nothing but coal!” Of course, he meant his children, because he had neglected them, and, therefore, they deviated from the Right Way.

This father admitted that he had committed a grievous mistake when he had neglected his children but cared for collecting money. Furthermore, When the man died, he left that entire great legacy in the hand of his sister, who was profligate and irresponsible, and, therefore, the man’s wealth and children were all lost.

Dear brothers! There is no better work that man can ever do than bringing up his children and educating them according to the teachings of Islam. I swear by Allah! I greatly respect a person who does such noble work!

Someone living comfortably and wealthily in a European country, or the United States of America, for example, but suddenly he makes a decision that appears to be difficult but, in reality, it is the best decision that he ever makes, when he decides to go back to his country in order to bring up his children according to the teachings of Islam, and to preserve their religion for them. Such a man is really great and wise!

Today, we are going to discuss the Prophet's Mercy upon orphans, which is indeed something incredible. A person who takes an orphan under his custody and guardianship will be with Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), in Paradise; and similarly, a wife whose husband dies leaving her orphans, and she devotes herself to bringing them up and abstains from getting married again, will be with Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), in Paradise.

Narrated Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him, that a man came to Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), complaining about his being hard hearted, so Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), advised him:

((Tap on the heads of orphans, and feed the needy one.))

[Narrated by Ahmad]

An orphan might, one day, become a great social reformer, a great scientist, or a great misanthropist. A person who takes care of this orphan and brings him up according to Islamic teachings will be greatly rewarded by Allah Almighty. I know a man whose brother died, leaving him male and female orphans. He brought up his brother's orphan children, exactly as he brought up his children, he chose for his dead brother's daughters good righteous husbands; and he made, at his own expense, wedding parties for his brother's daughters like those he made for his own daughters. There is also another family that I respect highly because when their brother died, all the other brothers and sisters took his place and took good care of his children. No doubt, taking care of children is one of the very best human works, and so is bringing them up properly. Once again: "I and a woman with dark brown cheeks like these on the Resurrection Day (and he joined his fore finger and middle finger together): a widow, although beautiful noble, devoted herself for her orphans upon her husband's death until they became strong enough or died."

I have a friend who died in a car crash at the age of thirty-five. He left behind a wife and three children. One day, I met one of his children, who was in the third secondary class. I asked him: "Do you need anything?" He said: "Yes, please. I need some help in the subject of Arabic." I said: "Come to my place, and I'll give you some lessons." For the sake of my dead friend, I gave his son some lessons in Arabic. In fact, he was very weak in this subject, but I took care of him in a way that pleases Allah Almighty; and every day, I gave him a lesson until he became very good in Arabic and until he passed his exams with high marks. I saw the boy's father, my dead friend, in a dream, thanking me.

An orphan doesn't have a father, so each and every believer should be a father for him. If this orphan feels that people have mercy on him and treat him kindly, he likes them whether they are of his father's relatives or friends. In other words the community of believers is cooperative and helpful to one another. Have you ever thought of this question? Allah Almighty said:

(Have you seen him who denies religion? That is he who repulses the orphan.)

[CVII; 1,2]

Why did Allah, Almighty, choose denying Allah's religion as the most ugly human quality and confirm that those who deny Allah's religion are those who repulse orphans? Some scholars say: an orphan should not be repulsed, but should be treated kindly and gently, if you don't treat him well, you are completely wrong; so how would the case be if you pushed him harshly away? Yes, indeed! It is a great mistake to treat an orphan badly, but it is even worse to repulse him harshly, to humiliate him, or treat him unkindly.

A friend of mine told me that one of his female relatives passed away. By the way, I don't like to mention this as evidence. It is merely an example to clarify things. Anyway, he told me that he saw her in a dream in a very terrible condition, surrounded by flames in a fire. He swore to me that he saw her several times once or twice a year for eight years, in such horrible condition. Later on, he told me that after eight years, he saw her in a dream in a very good condition. He was happy for that and told her that he was very happy for that. He asked her: "What happened to you? And how are things with you now?" She told him: "It was the milk." Of course the man

knew her story: she had children from her husband but from another wife, and she also had orphans from her previous husband, she used to give her children full cream milk, but the orphans milk mixed with a lot of water. That was why she was tormented in her grave for eight years. Now, if you have an orphan, it is a grievous mistake to give him bad milk but your own son good full cream milk.

Narrated Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him, that a man came to Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), complaining about his being hard hearted, so Allah's Messenger (PBUH) advised him:

((Tap on the head of orphans, and feed the needy.))

[Narrated by Ahmad]

Also, Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

((He who looks after a widow and a needy person is like a fighter for the Cause of Allah." He also said: "like someone who stands up the night in prayer and worship and someone who is always fasting.))

[Narrated by: Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmithi, An-Nasa'ee, Ibn Maja, and Ahmad]

Yes, indeed! It is great to look after a widow and a needy person. By the way, a Prophetic Hadith that is narrated by the two Sheikhs, Al-Bukhari and Muslim, is one the most authentic and true Prophetic Hadiths. However, Ibn Maja mentioned another narration of the foregoing Prophetic Hadith, which goes:

((He who looks after a widow and a needy person is like a fighter for the Cause of Allah, or someone who stands up the night in prayer and worship and fasts all the day.))

As for the Prophet's mercy on animals, he, peace be upon him, always recommended his companions to be merciful to animals. He forbade keeping animals without food for a long time, making them work more than they can, or overloading them. In this context, Sahl Ibn Al-Hanthalia said:

((Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), came past some camels, one of which was so slim, so he (PBUH) said, 'Fear Allah as regards these animals! Use them well and eat their meat well.))

[Narrated by Abu Dawood and Ahmad]

By the way, I had a relative who passed away a few years ago; may Allah have mercy on him. He had a horse, and he used to take good care of it. He used to provide it with a good fodder, and he also used to make a special bed of straw for it to lie on, for its own comfort, of course. Once, his daughter mounted the horse and rode it on the main road. When a tramcar passed by the horse, it was frightened, but it realized that on its back was the daughter of her master. So it kneeled down gently, allowing the little child to dismount safely, and then it ran away. Animals know those who love them, those who take care of them, and those who feed them. A true Muslim is someone who is always merciful to animals.

((Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came past some camels, one of which was so slim, so he (PBUH) said, 'Fear Allah with these animals! use them well and eat their meat well.))

In this Prophetic Hadith we notice that the camel was made so slim because of hunger. Taking care of animals is part to a true believer's Faith. But nowadays, we no longer have to live with animals in the same place, as people used to do in the past. But there are pets, like cats and dogs, which are also rare in our country. However, if someone sees an animal in an orchard on a field, he has to take good care of it whenever necessary.

Abdullah Ibn Ja'far said:

((I was riding behind Allah's Messenger (PBUH) one day and he confided to me something I shall never tell to any one. Whenever Allah's Messenger (PBUH) wanted to answer the call of nature,

the best place for him to hide in was a wall or an enclosure of palm trees. So he (PBUH) entered an orchard that belonged to one of the Ansar (Helpers), where there was a camel. When the camel saw Allah's Messenger (PBUH), it looked at him sadly, and its eyes were filled with tears. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came to the animal and wiped with his Holy hands the back of its head, behind its ears, and the camel stopped weeping. So, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) asked, 'Whose is this camel?' A man of the Ansar (Helpers) came to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying: "It is mine, O Messenger of Allah.' Allah's Messenger (PBUH) turned to the man and said: 'Don't you fear Allah as regards this animal, which Allah has enabled you to own?! It complained to me that you keep it hungry, overload it, and force it to work more than it can.))

[Narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawood, Ibn Maja, Ahmad, and Ad-Darimi]

I swear by Allah! I once saw, with my own eyes, a female dog weeping, because a car had run over her baby dogs; and she stood before her babies with tears in her eyes. Animals are creatures and have souls; and we will see later on how a woman deserved to enter Hell-Fire because of a cat. Now, we go back to a Prophetic Hadith,

((... Allah's Messenger came to the camel and wiped with his holy hand the back of its head, behind its ears, and he asked, 'Whose is this camel?' A man of the Ansar (Helpers) came to Allah's Messenger (PBUH), saying: 'It is mine, O Messenger of Allah.' Allah's Messenger (PBUH) turned to the man and said: 'Don't you fear Allah as regards this animal, which Allah has enabled you to own?! It complained to me that you keep it hungry, overload it and force it to work more than it can.))

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) also strongly forbade keeping animals hungry or forcing them to work more than they can, either by forcing them to do lots of works or by overloading them. In this context, some of those who work with animals use an awl or spur to punch animals with. In this way, they very badly treat animals, and therefore, they will be severely punished by Allah All Mighty.

A true believer is someone who believes that animals belong to Allah, and Allah is their Lord and their Defender. He, All Mighty, will certainly punish those who do them harm or treat them cruelly. I told you before that I saw someone riding a car on the road to the airport. He wanted to show off that he is a good driver, so he ran over the two legs of a dog in the cold winter days. The dog of course was sitting on the side of the road, stretching its hands on the asphalt to keep them warm, because it felt that asphalt was warmer because it was black and could absorb more heat. In short, the man ran over the dog's legs and cut them off; and he laughed hysterically, boasting that he was a very good car driver. By the way, the person who was sitting beside him in the car told me that after a few days, and in the same place, the man had a flat tire, and therefore, he had to replace it. He tried to lift the car by using a jack, but suddenly the car slipped and fell on his two wrists. When he was taken to hospital, his hands had got black and died out; and they had to be amputated. In the same place where he cut off the dog's hands, he cut off his own hands. Keep in mind! Allah is Great; Allah is the Almighty Avenger.

Because a roaming animal doesn't have a master, some ignorant people kill it or run it over with their cars. If someone runs over a hen or a sheep, for example, its masters will charge him its price. Roaming dogs have no human masters to defend them, but keep in mind that they have Allah, All Mighty, to defend them.

I would like to remind you of the story of a prostitute who gave water to a dog to drink. Although she knew for sure that the dog had no masters to thank her and that there was no one around to see her good deed, she gave water to this dog and quenched its thirst. Therefore, Allah, the Almighty, forgave her all her sins. Narrated Abdullah Ibn Omar, may Allah be pleased with them, that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

((A woman was tormented for a cat that she kept imprisoned until it died, so she was made to enter Hell-Fire because of it. She didn't feed it or give it to drink when she kept it imprisoned; nor did she leave it eat from the vermin of the earth.))

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, and Ad-Darimi]

The same thing applies to a person who treads even an ant with his foot. To this effect, Allah All Mighty, says,

(Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: 'O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts should crush you while they perceive not.)

[XXVII; 18]

According to the teachings of Islam, it is forbidden to tread insects or small animals with our feet. So we have to be careful about animals. It is by no means permissible to kill animals. In this context, the Almighty Allah says,

(And they (true believers) do not kill the Self that Allah has forbidden to be killed, except rightfully.)

[XXV; 68]

Narrated Sahl Ibn Mou'az on authority of his father:

((Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came across some people who were standing on the backs of their animals, talking together. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) addressed the people: 'Ride them safely, and leave them safely. And do not make them seats for you to talk on the roads and markets. A ridden animal might be better than its rider, because it remembers Allah more than he does.))

[Narrated by Ahmad and Ad-Darimi]

Ridden animals might sometimes be better in the sight of Allah than their riders, because Allah Almighty says:

(The seven heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, glorify Him; and there is not a thing but glorifies His Praise, but you understand not their glorification. Truly, He is Ever Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.)

[XVII; 44]

If the rider is in a state of heedlessness of the Lord, Allah, All Mighty, while the ridden animal is in a state of consciousness of Him, then, the ridden animal is indeed better than its rider.

Narrated Abdur-Rahman Bin As-Salami, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

((Verily Allah counsels you to take care of these brute animals.))

And he repeated this twice or three times. Then, he (PBUH) added,

((After you have traveled on them, take them back to their stables))

Some people sell fish live from lakes or special containers. Those ignorant sellers open the body of the fish, and take out their inner parts while they are still alive and moving. In Islam, it is not permissible to cut open the body of a fish, while it is still alive. You should do that after it has become completely dead and motionless. It is forbidden in Islam to torture a fish that is still alive and feeling pain. Ignorant fish sellers not only catch the fish and take them away from the water, but also make them suffer painfully because of the lack of Oxygen; they also cut open their bodies alive, and take out their inner parts. A fish is a living creature with a soul. A person who buys fish alive in the water has no right to let ignorant sellers to cut open the body of the fish and take out its inner parts unless it is completely dead and motionless.

Narrated Abdur-Rahman Bin Uthman said:

((A physician told Allah's Messenger (PBUH) about a medicine that contained frogs in it, so Allah's

Messenger (PBUH) forbade killing frogs))

[Narrated by Ahmad, An-Nasa'ee, Ad-Darimi and Abu Dawood]

He (PBUH) also said,

((Croak of frogs is a kind of glorification of the Lord Almighty))

In a well known Prophetic Hadith mentioned in Al-Munthiry's book of Hadith on authority of Abdullah Bin 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

((A woman was tormented for a cat that she kept imprisoned until it died, so she was made to enter Hell-Fire because she didn't feed it or give it to drink when she kept it imprisoned, nor did she leave it eat from the vermin of the earth.))

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, and Ad-Darimi]

You notice in the foregoing Prophetic Hadith that a woman deserved to enter the Fire, because she imprisoned a cat. Similarly, if a chief of a police station arrests someone without any investigation or charges, and the person dies in arrest, the chief of the police station is considered, in Islam, as a killer. Because of a cat, the woman deserved to enter Hell-Fire, so what do you think of more important things or creatures than a cat. A cat might be the cause of entering Hell-Fire, so what about a human being.

In this context, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) forbade inciting animals against one another, and instigating them by skirmishing them against one another. Narrated Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him

((Allah's Messenger (PBUH) forbade instigating animals against one another.))

[Narrated by Abu Dawood and At-Tirmithi]

It is worth mentioning that some people make certain fights between animals, like cocks or dogs for example. Such kind of entertainment is absolutely forbidden in Islam. Of course, dogs and cocks might fight on their own, which is something natural, but to incite animals and to make it your entertainment to incite animals against one another or to instigate them to fight one another or kill one another is strongly forbidden according to the teachings of Islam.

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) recommended us to take care of birds. I would like you to consider the following Hadith, which confirms the fact that due to his mercy upon animals, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) forbade frightening birds by doing harm to their babies. Abdur-Rahman Bin Abdullah narrated that his father said:

((While we were traveling with Allah's Messenger (PBUH), he went away to answer the call of nature. We found a Humra (kind of bird) with her two baby birds. We took away the Humra's babies, and when the Humra came back, she kept moving its wings in confusion and worry (about her babies). Therefore Allah's Messenger (PBUH) asked: 'Who distressed this bird with her babies? Give her back her babies!' He also saw an ant-village that we had set on fire, so he asked: "Who set this on fire?" 'We did.' We replied. He (PBUH) said: 'No one has the right to torture by the fire except the Lord of the Fire (Allah, the Almighty.))

[Narrated by Abu Dawood and Ahmad]

Some people put a scorpion alive in fire. Such a deed is a kind of torture; and torture with fire is strongly forbidden in Islam, as no one has the right to torture with fire except the Lord of fire Allah, Almighty.

Narrated Amr Bin Ash-Shareed: I heard Ash-Shareed say: I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) say:

((Whosoever kills a bird just for fun, the bird comes to Allah on the Day of Judgment, complaining: 'O Lord! So-and-so killed me just for fun, and he didn't kill me for any benefit.))

Only if you are on travel in a remote deserted place, and if you are very hungry and there is no food to eat, it is permissible for you to hunt birds and eat them. But to take hunting birds just for a hobby and entertainment, and to kill them just for fun, without eating them, is strongly forbidden in Islam.

Narrated Abdullah Bin Ammer that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

((If someone kills a bird or any other animal without its due right, Allah, the Almighty, will question him for it (the bird). They asked: "O Messenger of Allah! What is its due right?" He (PBUH) said: "Its due right is to slaughter it and eat it, and not only to cut off its head and throw it away))

[Narrated by Ahmad and An-Nasa'i]

At-Tabarani, and others, narrated on authority of Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, that a man lay down a sheep in order to slaughter it, and began to sharpen his knife in front of it. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said angrily:

((Do you want to kill this sheep twice?! Why don't you sharpen your knife before you lay it down?!))

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) also severely reproached another person who slaughtered a sheep in front of other sheep:

((Do you want to kill the sheep twice?! Why don't you separate them from one another (while you are slaughtering them?!))

After private slaughterhouses had been established, one of our brother, who worked in this kind of business, asked me about the proper Islamic way to slaughter animals. I recommended him to make a special room for slaughtering animals away from the other sheep. I told him: "If you slaughter the sheep in front of one another, it is a sinful deed." I advised him to make a secret room especially for the sheep that he wanted to slaughter so that the other sheep would not see those that are being slaughtered.

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) also forbade making animals or any living things as targets to shoot at. In this context, the two Sheiks (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) narrated on authority of Sa'eed Bin Jobair:

((Ibn Omar, may Allah be pleased with them, came past some boys who had posted a bird and were shooting their arrows at it; and they gave the bird's master all the arrows that missed. When they saw Ibn Omar they dispersed, but Ibn Omar asked angrily: 'Who did this?! Allah curses those who do such a thing! And Allah's Messenger (PBUH) curses those who take any living thing for a target!))

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, An-Nasa'i, Ahmad and Ad-Darimi]

I have heard of a horrible kind of food in South East Asia. People there bring a monkey alive, put it under a wooden chair that has an opening on the monkey's head. The monkey's skull is cut off and opened; and they eat its brain while it is still alive. This is something that some of my friends saw with their own eyes in countries of South East Asia, and also in America. This is a grievous sinful deed! Don't those people fear that Allah, the Almighty, may transform them into monkeys?! Those who eat monkey's brains while they are still alive: don't they fear that Allah make them monkeys themselves?! When man becomes so hard-hearted he is no longer a human being. According to the teachings of Islam, even if you were to kill a scorpion, or a snake, you should by no means torture it.

Narrated Shaddad Bin Aous:

((I learned two things from Allah's Messenger (PBUH), as he said: 'Allah bids good doing to

everything. If you kill you, should kill well; and if you slaughter, you should slaughter well. And the one of you should sharpen his blade and comfort his slaughtered animal.))

[Narrated by Muslim, At-Tirmithi, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah-, Abu Dawood, Ahmad and Ad-Darimi]

According to the teachings of Islam, even if you kill an animal that Allah, the Almighty, considers as permissible for you to kill, you should by no means torture it. If you torture it, Allah, the Almighty, is severe in revenge and punishment.

Undoubtedly, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was sent as a mercy to all worlds. To this effect Allah, the Almighty, says:

(And We have sent you not (O Muhammad) but as a mercy for all worlds.)

[XXI; 107]

In other words all the good deeds that Prophet Muhammad's nation does are due to his Prophetic direction and guidance. True Muslims work according to the teachings of Islam, i.e. the principles of their Islamic religion; and they have values and principles. Allah's commandments have been communicated to them, so it is not up to them to kill or not to kill. But ignorant disbelieving people are like brute animals. True believers are well disciplined and rightly guided people; and all of the things that they do are according to Allah's religion.

I noticed that some people who sell poultry strip off feathers of chickens while they are still alive and moving. They just put them in hot boiling water and they strip them, while they are still alive and moving, off their feathers. Don't such people have any mercy?! Man should know what to eat and how to slaughter the animal that he wants to eat. A chicken should by no means be stripped off its feather until it is completely dead and motionless. We should fear Allah as regards animals!

In this context Allah, the Almighty, protects true upright believers, together with their children and families, if they have mercy on animals. I have heard of someone who gave his son a bird with a rope attached to its leg. Whenever the bird desired to fly away, the boy pulled the rope to prevent it from flying away, until the bird's leg was broken. Two days later, the boy fell down and had his leg broken. Be careful! Don't allow your children to play with birds or to cause them any injury, because those are Allah's creatures and have souls. And remember that a father is the custodian and guardian of his house and he is responsible for the ones under his custody. In his book of Prophetic Hadith, Imam Ahmad narrated on authority of Ibn Abbas:

((While Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was asleep, he dreamt of two angels that came to him. The first angel sat at his feet, and the second angel sat at his head. The angel at his feet said to the angel at his head: 'Give the parable of this man (i.e. Muhammad) and the parable of his nation.' The angel at his head said: 'His parable and the parable of his nation, is the parable of a people who, while traveling, went into a desert but didn't have enough food and drink whereby they could cross the whole desert or go back to the place where they started. While they were in this case, a man, in a silk gown, came to them and said: 'You see! If I take you to an orchard full of green landscape and lakes of water, would you follow me?' They answered: 'Yes, we would.' And he took them to a green orchard with lakes of water, and they eat and drunk and were very happy. He said to them: 'Didn't I find you in that condition, didn't I ask you to follow me to a green orchard with lakes of water, and didn't you follow me?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Now, I am going to take you to orchards that are greener than those and lakes that have more water, so I would like you to follow me.' Some of the people said: 'By Allah! He speaks the truth. We shall follow him.' But others said: 'We are satisfied with this. We should remain here.))

[Narrated by Ahmad]

This symbolic story has a lot of lessons: it symbolizes the fact that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) communicated to us this divine religion of Islam from the Almighty Lord. He (PBUH) guided us to the Straight Path; and he came to with his Holy Prophetic Sunna and Tradition, which enable us to achieve our interests in both the present

world and the Hereafter. If someone follows Prophetic Sunna and Tradition, his life in the present world is all right, and his reputation is noble and pure, things are made easy for him, and his heart is made happy and contented. But if he thinks that this world is enough for him and doesn't care about the Hereafter, he loses the Hereafter, which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) describes as greener and better place than this present world.

In other words, after having committed himself to Allah's religion in the present world, and hence, reaped the good fruits thereof, he has to seek the Hereafter and strive for it, so that the bliss of this present world may be connected with that of the Hereafter. Sometimes, someone might be in the very best condition in the present world, but he has a very dangerous trap therein, namely death, after which he loses everything. But the really happy ones are those who are happy in this present world and whose happiness continues to the Hereafter. They are happiest in this present world, and when death comes, they still remain happiest. Therefore, in order to have the bliss in this present world connected with that in the hereafter, we have to stick to the Messenger's Sunna and Tradition to achieve happiness in this present world and the Hereafter.

Dear brothers! Today, we talked about the Prophet's Mercy upon orphans and animals. We also talked about his general mercy. In the next lecture, if Allah so wills, we will be talking about his shyness.

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