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Loving the Messenger ﷺ By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)

It is the nature of man that he is drawn towards good character and beauty, and with this, he starts on the road to *muhabbah*. Allah ﷻ bestowed His Messenger ﷺ with so much beauty and honor that every believer naturally has intense love for him.

Reason 1: Beloved of Allah ﷻ

The greatest reason for loving the Prophet ﷺ is that he is the beloved of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, it is essential for believers to have *muhabbah* for him given Allah's ﷻ love for him. The Holy Quran is the greatest witness to the Prophet's ﷺ beauty and character, and it tells us so much about him. The words of *muhabbah* that Allah ﷻ used for His Messenger ﷺ are proof of Allah's ﷻ love for him; and the honor and power that Allah ﷻ bestowed upon him is evidenced throughout the Holy Quran.

Proof 1

Whenever Allah ﷻ addressed the Prophets in the Holy Quran, He did so by name; for example 'O Adam', 'O Noah', 'O Zakariah' and 'O Moses.' When He addressed the Prophet ﷺ of Islam, however, Allah ﷻ never addressed him by name, rather by pseudonyms and character traits - "O thou folded in garments." Allah ﷻ bestowed such honor upon His Messenger ﷺ that even He did not refer to him by name.

Proof 2

Allah ﷻ said in the Holy Quran that we are not to take His Messenger's ﷺ honorable name among ourselves as if he was a common man.

Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another. (24: 63)

This beautiful verse tells the Muslims that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is not an ordinary person, so his auspicious name is not to be taken in vain, but rather, he is to be respectfully addressed with 'O Nabi' or 'O Messenger of Allah ﷺ'. To refer to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ directly by name is disrespectful, and the slightest disrespect may render our deeds void.

Proof 3

Different nations and tribes raised objections against their Prophets. The people of those nations refused to accept the truth, altering it into falsehood, to the extent of slandering their prophets. Whenever an objection was raised against a specific Prophet, Allah ﷻ answered

the objection through that particular Prophet. For example, when charged with being mad, the Prophets themselves have answered that they are not mad but are in fact messengers from Allah ﷻ.

However, when it came to charges against His Messenger ﷺ, Allah ﷻ took it upon Himself to respond. For example, whenever the Prophet ﷺ was charged with being a madman or a poet, Allah ﷻ Himself answered in the Holy Quran that His beloved is neither mad nor a poet.

You are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad or possessed. (68:2)

When we hold intense love for someone, we offer ourselves as a shield, not letting him brave the harsh winds alone. Allah ﷻ Himself has done just that with these charges against His Messenger ﷺ.

When Allah's ﷻ Wrath was invoked against such people who falsely accused His Messenger ﷺ, He revealed the following:

Heed not the type of despicable man, ready with oaths – A slanderer, going about with calumnies; (Habitually) hindering (all) good, transgressing beyond bounds, deep in sin – violent (and cruel) – base born. (54:10)

Proof 4

Whenever Allah ﷻ took oaths from the Prophets, The Prophet of Islam ﷺ was always mentioned first.

And (remember when) We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant. (33:7)

Hadrat Umar ibn al-Khattab ؓ was awestruck upon hearing this verse and remarked, “O Beloved of Allah ﷻ, your status is so high that you are mentioned first among the Prophets.”

Proof 5

Allah ﷻ summarized His relationship to the Prophet ﷺ in a very beautiful way when He ﷻ said:

He who obeys Allah and His Messenger has already attained the highest achievement. (33:71)

Proof 6

Allah ﷻ assigned the same status to obeying His Messenger ﷺ as He assigned to Himself. Thus, obedience to the Messenger of Allah ﷻ is part of obedience to Allah ﷻ.

He who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah. (4:80)

Proof 7

Allah ﷻ responded to whosoever swore allegiance to His Messenger ﷺ under the tree at Hudaibiya:

Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. (48:10)

Proof 8

Allah ﷻ awarded such honor to His Messenger ﷺ, that the two names, Allah ﷻ and Muhammad ﷺ occur side by side in the *Kalimah* (Testament of Faith), with no joining word separating the two:

There is no deity of worship except Allah ﷻ, Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah.

Allah ﷻ has also placed His Messenger's ﷺ glorious name in the prayer and the call to prayer, making sure that His Prophet's ﷺ name is continually honored and praised throughout the world.

Proof 9

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent as a mercy to all the worlds. The word 'worlds' is plural, and therefore, it includes not only humans, but also the Jinn and all other life forms wherever they may exist in creation. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I have been sent as a mercy from Allah ﷻ."

We sent you not, but as a mercy for all creatures. (21:107)

In a *hadith*, The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

I am a mercy sent by Allah ﷻ – Ibn Asakar.

Proof 10

Allah ﷻ has awarded His Messenger such a high status that even the angels constantly send blessings upon him. Allah ﷻ said in the Holy Quran:

Indeed Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet; O you who believe! Ask (and send) blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (33:56)

There is no bigger proof of the Prophet's ﷺ high status than the fact that Allah ﷻ Himself is constantly sending blessings and mercies upon him, and all of this is solely because he is the beloved of Allah ﷻ.

Reason 2: Beauty of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Another reason people love one another is beauty; the heart becomes inclined towards anything beautiful. Mere words cannot describe the beauty of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. We are told in *hadith*:

Allah is beautiful and likes beauty.

A poet has penned the following verses:

*Beauty itself boasts about the beauty of the Messenger ﷺ
The beauty of galaxies is only the dust of your feet
O Caravan of the desirous! Walk barefoot towards Madinah
The thorns on your way are softer than flowers.*

When Allah ﷻ Himself likes beauty, we can only imagine how beautiful He would have made the one whom He chose as His beloved. *Hadrat* Anas رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most handsome amongst all the prophets and that his hands were softer than silk.

*My eye has not seen anything as beautiful as you,
No woman has ever borne anyone as beautiful as you,
Pure from imperfections, as if your features are of your own choosing*

Hadrat Aishah Siddiqah رضي الله عنها is known to have said, “O Zulaikha, you only cut your fingers at seeing (*Hadrat*) Yusuf عليه السلام. Had you seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, you would have cut open your heart.” She also said, “The sky has its sun, and we have our own sun.”

In yet another narration, we are told that Halima Sadiya’s daughter Shima used to ask her mother to send her brother with her when she would go to tend the sheep. When asked why, Shima said to her mother, “I notice that the sheep graze quickly whenever my brother Muhammad ﷺ is with me. The sheep then gather around where I sit with my brother, and both I and the sheep gaze at his beautiful face.”

Hadrat Qurtubi رحمته الله said that Allah ﷻ did not reveal His Messenger’s ﷺ entire splendor because the people would not have been able to bear it.

*How can the beauty of Yusuf ever compare to you?
He was the beloved of Zulaikha; you are the beloved of Allah
Veiled in the secret of humanity is your flawless beauty
Unknown to all that you are part of the beauty of Allah.*

Moreover, *Hadrat* Syed Ata’ullah Shah Bukhari رحمته الله said while describing the events of the Cave of Thaur – “O Abu Bakr, I see your lap as a desk and the Prophet’s ﷺ face as the Holy Quran lying within. O Abu Bakr, I see you as a *qari* who is reading this Quran.”

One night, *Hadrat* Jabir رضي الله عنه entered the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ and found the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sitting therein. The full moon was shining brightly, and *Hadrat* Jabir رضي الله عنه shifted his gaze to and fro between the moon and the Prophet’s ﷺ beautiful face. He did this a few times as if comparing the two, and finally decided that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was far more beautiful than the moon. Furthermore, *Hadrat* Ali رضي الله عنه said:

Whoever laid but a glance upon the Messenger ﷺ was awestruck; whoever looked upon him repeatedly was drowned in love and said in praise, 'I have neither seen anything so awesome before nor will I see the like again.'

1) On the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, *Hadrat* Abu Sa'id Khudri رضي الله عنه said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was even more modest and shy than a veiled virgin girl."

2) Before his acceptance of Islam, *Hadrat* Abdullah bin Salam رضي الله عنه traveled to meet the person who everyone was saying was a prophet of Allah ﷺ. Upon relating the event later, he said:

I realized immediately upon seeing his face that it could not be the face of a liar (Hadith).

3) *Hadrat* Musaab bin Umair رضي الله عنه was sitting in a gathering with his head bowed, envisioning the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He then raised his head and said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was of a beautiful complexion with a reddish hue, and his auspicious eyes were large and alluring. His eyelashes were prominent, and his hair was slightly wavy, while his beard was thick. His neck seemed to shimmer like silver, and the perspiration on his brow would glimmer like diamonds. His palms and the soles of his feet had ample flesh to them, and whenever he walked, it seemed as if he were descending from a height. He was of medium height, and the Seal of Prophethood was very prominent between his shoulders. People would be captivated at their first glance of the Prophet ﷺ and would fall in love with him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of all and at the same time the most daring. He always kept his word with people and was the most truthful. He was the best in his social dealings with people and had the kindest nature of all. I have never met anyone like him nor will I meet anyone like him again."

*The idols of Azar are envious of your beautiful countenance
However much I praise your beauty, it is always beyond description
Traveling across the world, I fell in love with many a beautiful face
But nothing could ever compare to what I see in you.*

The Prophet's ﷺ face used to shine like the full moon. There was a slight ruddiness to his fair complexion that added an air of elegance.

*The Assembly of the Universe was first convened
You were then presented onto its stage
O leader of the first and the last! There is no being like unto you.
O Mustafa Mujtaba! Praising you is beyond my capability
My heart is too cowardly and my lips too fearful.*

4) The Messenger's ﷺ eyebrows were not joined, and in between them was a vein that swelled whenever he would become angry. His hair was parted in the middle and was down to his earlobes.

5) The Messenger's ﷺ eyes were round and beautiful, and the thin red veins were very prominent in the whites of those eyes. His eyelashes were long and delicate, and people would not be able to turn their gaze from his face.

He would become more beautiful the more one gazed (Hadith)

6) Both sides of his face were symmetrical, and his teeth were slim and sharp. Light (*nur*) would shine through a gap between his two front teeth whenever he talked or smiled.

7) The Messenger's ﷺ nose used to shine radiantly, thus appearing more elevated than it was.

8) The Messenger's ﷺ thick beard beautified his face even more, and his slender neck used to shimmer like silver.

9) *Hadrat* Ali ﷺ used to say that the Seal of Prophethood was between the Prophet's ﷺ shoulders and that he was the last of the Prophets.

Reason 3: Grandeur of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

The Prophet's ﷺ intercession for the believers on the Day of Judgment is yet another reason why every Muslim should love him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached the inner and outer heights of human character, and this is one of the reasons why Allah ﷻ made him His beloved. Allah ﷻ said:

And great is the grace of Allah unto you. (4:113)

Proof 1

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Listen carefully! I do not take any pride that I am the beloved of Allah ﷻ. The banner of Allah ﷻ will be in my hands on the Day of Judgment, and beneath it shall be Prophet Adam ﷺ and all the Prophets. I shall be the first to intercede, and my intercession shall be the first accepted. I, and the destitute of my nation, shall be the first ones to enter Paradise. I am nearer to Allah ﷻ than the first and the last ones."

Proof 2

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

I am the last of the prophets, and there is no prophet after me.

Just as the guest of honor is the last to make his entrance, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the last to grace this world with his noble presence.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said, "I and the Last Day are joined like the two fingers of a hand." The gathering is set to conclude after the appearance of the guest of honor, and

likewise, creation is also set to conclude after the appearance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the highest among the Prophets, his Book is the highest among the Books, and his nation is the best among the nations.

Proof 3

Allah ﷻ summoned His Messenger ﷺ to the heavens during the Ascent (*Miraj*) and showed him His treasures. It was there that Allah ﷻ revealed Himself to His noble Prophet ﷺ, a privilege that had been denied to *Hadrat* Musa ؑ when he had asked to see Allah ﷻ .

*So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His servant; (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.
(53:10)*

Proof 4

Allah ﷻ referred to His Messenger ﷺ with the title of *Habibullah*, the highest of all titles in Allah's ﷻ realm, higher than even *Kalimullah*¹, *Khalilullah*², or *Ruhullah*³.

*The beauty of Yusuf – the breath of Isa – the brilliance in Musa's palm,
All these are seen combined in you.*

Proof 5

Allah ﷻ gave the title of *Nabi Ummi* (Unlettered Prophet), to His Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ never sat as anyone's student or apprentice; therefore, the Prophet's ﷺ teacher was the Creator of the universe Himself.

And taught you what you knew not (before), and great is the grace of Allah unto you. (4:113)

A poet penned the following:

*What the philosophers could not fathom and intellectuals could not unravel,
The one donned in a black garment resolved in moments.*

Proof 6

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent to teach mankind human character. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

And you (stand) on an exalted standard of character (68:4)

The Prophet's ﷺ superior character brought about the revolution of Islam in the short period of ten years. Our scholars (*ulama*) have written that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ conquered Makkah and Madinah with the best of character. The world can easily combat the sword, but it cannot resist impeccable character like that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions (*Sahabah*).

¹ The One who spoke to Allah ﷻ – *Hadrat* Musa ؑ.

² The Friend of Allah ﷻ – *Hadrat* Ibrahim ؑ.

³ The Spirit of Allah ﷻ – *Hadrat* Isa ؑ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was mercy for mankind:

*Who would conceal the sinner with his blessed garment?
Who would pray for those who inflicted wounds upon him?⁴
What else would history call him except mercy?*

Proof 7

The first Prophets were sent to various nations, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent for all of creation. Allah ﷻ said:

We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them. (34:28)

The following poem speaks volumes:

*Reaching the utmost heights with his splendor,
Your exquisite beauty drove away all darkness.
All your characteristics became beautiful,
Peace be upon you and your household.*

Reason 4 : Favors of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Man is a slave of favors [done to him] (Saying)

Man is weak and dependent upon favors and kindness. It baffles the mind to think how much the Muslim nation owes to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Proof 1

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should perish; ardently anxious is he over you. To the believers he is most kind and merciful. (9:28)

Proof 2

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Indeed I am the distributor, whereas Allah is the One who gives.

Whatever blessings and favors the Messenger of Allah ﷺ received from Allah ﷻ, he would promptly distribute them among the *Sahabah*. In one *hadith*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Whatever Allah ﷻ put in my heart, I have put into the heart of Abu Bakr.

⁴ This is in reference to the incident at Taif where he was chased out of town by children stoning him.

Proof 3

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would stand in prayer all night, praying and crying for his disobedient nation, so much so that his feet would swell. The Prophet's ﷺ wife *Hadrat* Aishah Siddiqah ﷺ related that one night the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continually repeated the following verse:

If You do punish them, they are Your servants. If You do forgive them, You are the Exalted in power, the Wise. (5:121)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O people, you are running towards the Hellfire, whereas I am desperately pulling you back." The Prophet ﷺ lived his life in the likeness of *Hadrat* Nuh ﷺ when he said to Allah ﷻ:

Verily I have called my people to Allah ﷻ day and night.

Proof 4

Allah ﷻ presented His Messenger ﷺ with fifty prayers on the occasion of the Ascent (*Miraj*). The Prophet ﷺ, however, pleaded for leniency at the urging of *Hadrat* Musa ﷺ, who knew that the Muslims would not be able to fulfill this weighty demand. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept pleading until this number was reduced to five. At this Allah ﷻ said, "My beloved, your nation shall observe five prayers, but I shall give them the reward of fifty." This great reduction in the number of prayers is an enormous blessing that the Muslims enjoy due to the favor of their Prophet ﷺ.

Proof 5

It is stated in *hadith* that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed at Hajj for his disobedient nation. He prayed to Allah ﷻ to forgive the sins of his nation, even if they were to fall outside the rights of Allah ﷻ (*huquq Allah*) and the rights of humanity (*huquq al-ibad*). Allah ﷻ accepted the first half of this prayer and He therefore forgives the pilgrims the *huquq Allah* that they were unable to fulfill or were lacking in. *Huquq al-ibad*, however, would have to be dealt with on an individual basis with the person whose rights were violated.

After completing the rites at Arafat, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went to Muzdalifa and pleaded with Allah ﷻ using the same prayer, "O Allah, make mankind so content with Your blessings that they forgive one another." Allah ﷻ accepted this prayer and said, "O My beloved, I will forgive My rights to whoever comes for Hajj, and I will make your nation so content with My mercies and blessings that they will forgive each other their rights." This is yet another tremendous favor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ upon his undeserving nation.

Proof 6

On one occasion, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ cried in prayer for a long time, praying for his nation's forgiveness. Allah ﷻ responded:

And soon will your Guardian-Lord give you (that wherewith) you shall be well pleased. (93:5)

When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “I will not be content until the last of my nation enters Paradise.”

Proof 7

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told his *Sahabah* that all the Prophets had been granted permission to make a supplication that would be answered exactly as it had been asked, and all of the Prophets used their respective supplications in their lifetimes. The *Sahabah* asked the Prophet ﷺ if he had asked anything of His Lord, and the Prophet ﷺ replied that he had not. He then continued, “I have saved my request for the Day of Judgment. I will supplicate when my nation is presented in front of Allah ﷻ and keep supplicating until every last one of my nation enters Paradise.”

*I would not be surprised if for your sake
The sins of your nation are counted as acts of obedience.
The crimes of your nation are considered so precious,
The least of your nation will be showered with a thousand blessings.*

Having intense love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seems obvious and mandatory since the above proofs show that every Muslim is immersed in his favors. All aspects of *muhabbah* are present in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but the element of intercession alone would make *muhabbah* for him absolutely necessary. A believer loves the Messenger of Allah ﷺ more than his own life, and as Muslims, we are desperate for his intercession.