

**ISLAM'S RAḤMAH (COMPASSION) AS APPLIED  
BY ḤADRAT MUḤAMMAD RASŪLULLAH  
KHĀTAM UN NABIYYĪN ṢALLALLĀHU 'ALAIHI  
WA 'ALĀ ĀLIHI WA AṢḤĀBIHI WA ṢALLAM**

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**Abstract**

This paper deals with *rahmah* (compassion and mercy) as practised by Prophet *Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* as an example for humanity that inspired his companions and was admired by others during his governance. Qualitative content analysis<sup>1</sup> is applied to the traditional discourse on the subject using the text of *The Holy Qur'ān* and its revered exegetes, and samples were taken from the Ḥadīth corpus. The Biography of the Prophet *Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* finds its relevance to the contemporary context and the need of the hour. It studies the meaning of *rahmah* according to Muslim lexicographers and its English equivalent, "compassion." *Rahmah* as *'Ibād al-Raḥmān* is examined as the Prophet's (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihi wa sallam*) extension of Allah's compassion and mercy for all creatures, emphasizing its need for peaceful coexistence and societal harmony. Examples of the Prophet's (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihi wa sallam*) governance concerning *rahmah*'s application to hypocrites, Jews, pagans, women, slaves, servants, animals, enemies, and prisoners of war.

**Key Words:** Compassion, *'Ibād al-Raḥmān*, Mercy, Peace, *Raḥmatun li'l-'Ālamīn*

**1. Introduction**

Islam's way of life is founded on revealed guidance from our Creator and Sustainer, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. Even so, Muslims face unprecedented trials as the global media vests

itself in fabrications regarding Islam. Many untruths are presented that ascribe intolerance and excess to Muslims who, according to propagandists, lack grace and compassion. However, the truth is that Islam unreservedly represents universal peace and harmony embodied in the divine concept of *raḥmah*, a notion that refers to compassion, grace, mercy and benevolence.

Misunderstandings or misperceptions allow Islam's enemies to speculate on Islamic doctrines and present Muslims as harsh, inflexible, inhuman, excessive, and opponents of peace. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Moreover, Islam's contributions to civilizational development often remain unexplored and unacknowledged. Its history has been deliberately reduced to back-seat status if not entirely ignored by mainstream media and state-sponsored educational venues.

The worldview of authentic Islam rests on cosmological truths. They are everlastingly suitable for all humankind. Therefore, it is essential to study *raḥmah* as enshrined in scripture and the example of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) to understand Islam's exact way of life. We launch this discourse by analyzing the term to demonstrate the extent to which Islam commands and upholds it. We first present *raḥmah*'s meaning according to Muslim lexicographers and exegetes. Then we look at the definition of 'compassion' in English dictionaries. We then discuss how Prophet *Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* understood, advocated and implemented compassion with profound integrity since his age served as an example for his followers, from generation to generation.

## **2. The Meaning of *Raḥmah***

To comprehend the term used in *The Holy Qur'ān*, it is imperative to analyse its meaning based on authentic linguistic and lexical sources. According to Ibn Fāris, al-Rāzī and al-Fayrūzābādī (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaihim*), *raḥmah* derives from the word, '*ra-ḥa-mīm*', which means *mildness, gentleness, forgiveness, softness, love and affection*.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Ibn Manẓūr (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaih*) expressed the same connotations in his *Lisān al-'Arab*, a well-known authentic dictionary.<sup>3</sup> Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaih*) wrote that *raḥmah* comes from the root word, *raḥima*, which means 'mother's womb'.<sup>4</sup> It extends love and compassion by emphasizing *iḥsān* (best

attitude) towards the blessed. Thus, if *rahmah* descends from Allah Almighty, it means the granting of His pleasure and grace. According to Hans Wehr's dictionary, *rahmah*'s contextual amalgam merges pity, compassion, human understanding, sympathy, kindness and mercy.<sup>5</sup> In this paper, *rahmah* is used with these cited implications.

### 3. The Meaning of Compassion in English

It is defined as follows:

Sympathetic pity and concern for the suffering and misfortune of others<sup>6</sup>

A strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for others' suffering or bad luck with a desire to help<sup>7</sup>

Sympathetic consciousness of others' distress, together with a desire to alleviate their suffering<sup>8</sup>

It is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.<sup>9</sup>

If someone shows kindness, caring, and a willingness to help others, they show compassion.<sup>10</sup>

### 4. *Rahmah* in The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an contains several verses in which *rahmah* and its derivatives are used. We begin with *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*'s use of '*al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*'.<sup>11</sup> Both *al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm* are derived as nouns taken from the word *raḥima* (to have mercy, to be compassionate), and both have the sense of 'one who has mercy.'<sup>12</sup> According to Ibn 'Abbās (*Radī Allah 'anhu*) "*al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*" means:

The One Who feels compassion (*al-raḥīq*), the One Who treats gently (*al-rafiq*) whomever He wishes to be Merciful towards, and Who is remote and stern towards whomever He wishes to be harsh with.<sup>13</sup>

*Al-raḥmān* denotes mercy for all creatures. *Al-raḥīm* represents mercy for believers.<sup>14</sup> Thus Allah Almighty, as *al-raḥmān*, has mercy for all creatures; whereas, as *al-raḥīm* indicates specific compassion directed towards some creatures in every estate or some, either in this world or the next or in both.<sup>15</sup>

Yusuf Ali (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaiḥ*) translates the verse 2 of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* "*al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*" as "most gracious and most merciful"<sup>16</sup>. Maududi (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaiḥ*) interprets it as "the All-Compassionate and All-Merciful."<sup>17</sup> Quṭb (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaiḥ*) interprets it as "the Compassionate, the Merciful." He says:

"Both attributes encompass all meanings and aspects of mercy and compassion and epitomize mercy as God Almighty's property. Both define the link between the Lord as Creator and His creation. It is a link based entirely on love, peace, reassurance, and care, inspiring a spontaneous feeling of gratitude and praise towards God... Unlike Greek mythology or the Old Testament (Gen 4: 1112), Islam does not depict God as an enemy who pursues man with a relentless vengeance or plots and schemes against His creation with spite and vindictiveness."<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, based on these examples, we assert that, according to Islam, Allah Almighty is undoubtedly compassionate and merciful and not a vengeful enemy of human beings.

##### **5. *'Ibād al-Raḥmān* (Servants of the Most Compassionate)**

*The Holy Qur'ān* contains a verse on *'Ibād al-Raḥmān* in *al-Furqān*:

*The servants of the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful, Allah) are those who walk on the earth humbly, and when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully.*<sup>19</sup>

Quṭb (*Raḥmat Allah 'alaiḥ*) interprets this as follows:

"... 'True servants' walk gently, without affectation, pretension, or any display of arrogance. Like every movement, walking is an expression of one's personality and feelings. A serious, reassured, and sound character

*demonstrates itself through its gait. A person of this type walks with an air of seriousness and reassurance, reflecting the clarity of purpose and strength.*<sup>20</sup>

Hence, faithful servants of mercy and compassion do not trouble themselves with criticisms, condemnations, calumny, derogations, absurdities, follies and stupidities. On the contrary, they apply peaceful, dignified, respectful and solemn approaches to their interactions, conversations, discussions and negotiations irrespective of whether they address friends or foes or believers, the rude and arrogant, or followers of irrational or superstitious belief systems, faiths or cultures. Neither do they waste time and energy on futile argument and controversy? Hence: “*when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully.*”<sup>21</sup> However, this is not a sign of weakness. Humility is politeness. Dignity does not permit any waste of time and energy over what is unbecoming of the honourable.<sup>22</sup> This verse conveys the message that humility manifests itself in two ways:

1. To those in search of knowledge, they give what they have as recipients have the capacity to assimilate.
2. To those who wish to dispute, they do not speak harshly but say, “Peace!” Which is to say, ‘May it be well with you, may you repent and be better; or ‘May Allah give me peace from such wrangling’; or ‘Peace and Good-bye: let me leave you’.<sup>23</sup>

The characteristic gait of a faithful servant of the Most Merciful shows character and personality with humble dignity that demonstrates gentle nobility instead of arrogant pride. Hence, they are easily recognized as good-natured persons who will not commit mischief.<sup>24</sup> Servants of the Most Merciful do not countenance vengeance when dealing with ignorant or uninformed people who behave rudely or insolently. They simply wish them ‘peace’ and turn away. *The Holy Qur’ān’s* use of *rahmah* also obliges Allah’s servants to show mercy, compassion and grace for everyone without regard for vain imaginations or fabricated dogma, myth, superstition and groundless fancy. Thus, compassion for all is a Qur’ānic dictum and takes priority in Islam for the furtherance of peace for humankind.

## 6. *Raḥmah* in Ḥadīth Literature

Numerous Traditions mention *raḥmah*. We cite only a few to emphasize the significance of compassion for all others as a central Islamic doctrine.

*Abu Huraira (Raḍi Allah ‘anhu) reported it was said to Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) : Invoke curse upon the polytheists, whereupon he said: ‘I have not been sent as the invoker of curses; rather, but I have been sent as a mercy.’*<sup>25</sup>

*The Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said: “The people of Jannah will be of three kinds: A just successful ruler, a man who shows mercy to his relatives and a pious believer who has a large family and refrains from begging.”*<sup>26</sup>

*The Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said: “The merciful are shown mercy by Ar-Raḥmān Therefore, be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens...”*<sup>27</sup>

*Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said: “He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor knows the honour of our elders.”*<sup>28</sup>

*Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said, “Allah will not be Merciful to those who are not merciful to mankind.”*<sup>29</sup>

*Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said, “You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves, showing love among themselves, and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”*<sup>30</sup>

*Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh (Raḍi Allah ‘anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said: “Whoever*

does not show mercy to the people, Allah will not show mercy to him.”<sup>31</sup>

### **7. Compassion of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam for All**

Relations of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam with Makkah’s and Madinah’s residents inspire all to consider him an unparalleled gift to humankind. His life was characterized by love, pity and compassion. *The Holy Qur’ān* declares, “And We have not sent you but as a mercy for all the worlds.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, Allah Almighty sent Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam as *raḥmah* for all the worlds. He was treasured by all, including competitors and enemies. Even modern writers who do not accept the divine origin of Islam admire him. All objective, balanced and fair-minded historians agree that the conduct and character of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam were admirable in all situations.

The Holy Qur’ān mentions *raḥmah* thirty-five times when referring to *Muslimīn* as well as *Mu’minīn*. It is used inclusively for all humankind.<sup>33</sup> Allah Almighty had repeatedly demonstrated His mercy for us all by sending prophets and messengers (*‘Alaihim As-Salām*) to guide each nation out of disbelief into righteousness long before Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam arrived. However, Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam was sent as *raḥmah* for everyone regardless of tribe, ethnicity or race.<sup>34</sup> Even Jesus said he was sent only to the Jews.<sup>35</sup>

According to al-Sha‘rāwī (*Raḥmat Allah ‘alaihi*), everything Islam has produced reveals blessing and compassion for humankind and every living plant, animal and creature, seen and unseen. The ‘way of life’ (Islam), as Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam demonstrated, has principles and methods that regulate all matters of importance and leave nothing unguided, however large or small.

Thus, *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* delivered mercy and compassion for all realms and all people: believers, non-believers, Christians, Jews and polytheists.<sup>36</sup> Allah’s grace is for all people, including unbelievers. Ever since the Prophet’s advent, Allah Almighty has not prescribed immediate punishment for the wrongs committed by his followers; punishment such as what happened to the people of Thamūd, ‘Ād, Fir‘awn, or Lūṭ.<sup>37</sup>

*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* was sent to educate and guide humanity from darkness into spiritual light as “*mercy for all the worlds.*”<sup>38</sup> Muslim exegetes say the merciful compassion mentioned in this verse does not refer exclusively to his companions or followers but all people.<sup>39</sup> Thus, his personality and example stand as a guiding light for all nations because his universal qualities transcend time and space. *The Holy Qur’ān* states, “*There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely.*”<sup>40</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (*Raḥmat Allah ‘alaihi*) wrote that those who accept *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* as the Messenger of Allah would obtain sufficient success to enjoy their lives in this world and the next. On the other hand, whoever denies or denounces *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* and Revelation will be degraded here and hereafter.<sup>41</sup> *The Holy Qur’ān* confirms this, saying, “*Have you not seen those who adopted disbelief in exchange of Allah’s favour and caused their people to disembark at a land of total destruction, (which is) the Jahannam. They shall enter it, and it is an evil place to dwell.*”<sup>42</sup> Al-Ṭabarī (*Raḥmat Allah ‘alaihi*) is of the view that there are divergent and contrasting opinions among *ahl al-ta’wīl* (scholars of exposition) regarding this verse. Some agree with Ibn ‘Abbās (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) that verse 107 of *al-Anbiyā’* reflects commission of *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* as a ‘mercy to all’; whereas others agree with Ibn Zayd (*Raḥmat Allah ‘alaihi*) who contended he was sent as mercy only for Believers.<sup>43</sup> *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* was sent as a mercy for his

people and all humankind that is yet to come. According to Qurʾān (Raḥmat Allah ‘alaiḥ):

... The message of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaiḥi wa ‘alā ‘Āliḥi wa Aṣḥābiḥi wa Ṣallam was a manifestation of grace to his people and humanity at large. The principles he laid down sounded strange at first because humanity was then far removed from a genuinely good practical and spiritual life. After the Revelation of Islam’s message, humanity drew gradually closer to these principles, which then started to sound familiar, acceptable and easy to implement... Numerous aspects confirm that message of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaiḥi wa ‘alā ‘Āliḥi wa Aṣḥābiḥi wa Ṣallam was a manifestation of divine grace for all of humanity ... including those who did not believe in him. All humanity has been influenced, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, by the code of living he outlined. This grace continues to be available in plenty for anyone who wishes to benefit from it.<sup>44</sup>

Today, humanity urgently needs this grace. Nevertheless, most remain in a confusing maze of materialism, endless war, and a meaningless spiritual void.

According to Maududi (Raḥmat Allah ‘alaiḥ), *al-Anbiyā’* verse 107, which says: “We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world,” means that Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaiḥi wa ‘alā ‘Āliḥi wa Aṣḥābiḥi wa Ṣallam was sent as a blessing and mercy from Allah Almighty to the entire world. He (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaiḥe wa sallam) aroused a neglectful world from the heedlessness of criteria that separate truth and falsehood; thus also warned all of us of impending ruin and clarified the path to salvation. Disbelievers in Makkah were duly informed that their view of the Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaiḥe wa sallam) was in serious error. Indeed, He (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaiḥe wa sallam) was not an affliction or source of distress as they surmised when they claimed that this man has sown seeds of discord among their clans and separated near relatives from each other. On the contrary, they have been told that “O foolish people, you are wrong to presume he

*is an affliction for you; he is, in reality, a blessing and mercy of Allah for you.*"<sup>45</sup>

When studying the life of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*), we find many examples for his compassion for all regardless of gender, ethnicity or faith. Thus, he secured everyone's rights and dignity and social status in the famous Charter of Madinah.

## **8. Compassion for Christians**

History testifies that the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) was merciful to his companions and others, including hypocrites. However, he also never compelled others to accept Islam, following Allah's command: "*There is no compulsion in Faith.*"<sup>46</sup> Without respect for other people's feelings and conscience, it is impossible to apply the principle of *raḥmah*.

The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) granted religious freedom after establishing Madinah's Islamic State. Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other groups were given guidelines on treating each other with justice to avoid bloodshed. He (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) provided many examples that could still help us resolve interreligious conflicts and establish and keep peace and harmony. These include his several treaties to ensure peaceful coexistence and security, such as the *Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah*, the *Treaty of Ṭā'if*, and the *Treaty of Najrān*.

The *Treaty of Najrān* declares that Allah Almighty's security and the pledge of His Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) are extended to the Christians of Najrān and its surrounding territories for their lives, religion, and property. Therefore, to the present as well as the absent, and others besides, there shall be no interference with the practice of their faith or their observance, nor any change in their rights and privileges, no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any priest from his priesthood, nor any monk from his monastery, and they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore, no image or cross shall be destroyed, they shall not oppress or be oppressed; they shall not practice the rights of blood vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops.<sup>47,48</sup>

Likewise, other Prophetic Traditions also refer to the compassion of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) towards non-Muslims,

particularly Christians. One example concerns Thumāma ibn Uthāl (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) who (before embracing Islam) had killed some Companions and even attempted to assassinate the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*). When he was captured and brought to Madinah, he was tied to a pillar in the mosque of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*). When the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) learned this, he ordered Muslims to treat him well and told his own family to bring him food. After three days, Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam forgave him and set him free. Overtaken by this mercy, Thumāma (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) embraced Islam. Thus, the compassion of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) transformed a fierce persecutor into a devoted servant of Allah Almighty.<sup>49</sup>

Man, as *khalīfah* (vicegerent of Allah on earth), receives Allah’s mercy daily. Both *The Holy Qur’ān* and Ḥadīth emphasize that believers should extend this mercy to others. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) said: “Allah will not be merciful to those who are not merciful to mankind.”<sup>50</sup> It explicitly means ‘without discrimination’, the lesson being that mercy is fundamental to Islam. If all Muslims correctly understood and practised this, then non-Muslims, religious and non-religious, would be better disposed towards Islam and peaceful coexistence. If compassion and mercy became viral, then plots, conspiracies, quarrels and wars would more likely than not be ameliorated. May the world realise that it needs empathy more than anything else.

The Rightly-Guided Caliphs (*Al-Khulafā-ur Rāshidūn*) showed compassion and tolerance towards non-Muslims while ruling a multi-religious society. For example, during the rule of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*), a Christian lady from Egypt complained to him about ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*), who had annexed a part of her house to build an extension for a mosque. On hearing this, he offered to buy her home at double the market price to preserve the mosque intact, but she declined. Without anger or resentment, the Caliph ordered the demolition of the new *masjid* annexe and rebuilt her entire house.<sup>51</sup> This remarkable example demonstrates the compassionate reversal of injustice and shows how leaders should respond to citizens for the sake of social peace and harmony.

## 9. Compassion for Jews

A Jewish funeral procession once passed *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*, so he stopped and paid respect. Then, when challenged by a companion, he said: “*Is he not a human being?*”<sup>52</sup>

Review now Madinah’s Constitution that accepted and recognized religions other than Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. It has a specific clause identifying Jews as a religious group: “*The Jews have their religion and believers have theirs.*”<sup>53</sup> This passage reflects the early attitude of nascent Islam.<sup>54</sup> The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*) implemented the constitution and never imposed any ruling that forced disbelievers to accept Islam:

Ibn ‘Abbās (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) said:

*“When the children of a woman (in pre-Islamic days) did not survive, she took a vow on herself that if her child survives, she would convert it a Jew. When Banū an-Naḍīr were expelled (from Arabia), there were some children of the Anṣār (Helpers) among them. They said: We shall not leave our children. So, Allah the Exalted revealed, “There is no compulsion in Faith. The correct way has become distinct from the erroneous.”*<sup>55</sup>

The Charter of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*) assured Jews of their rights as citizens on par with other believers. He declared: “*Whosoever of the Jews follows us shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor any enemy be aided against them.*”<sup>56</sup> His compassion for non-Muslims during his administration was exceptional. One Jewish woman intended to kill him with a roasted sheep laced with poison. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*) came to know that his companions (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhum*) proposed to kill her on hearing it. However, the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*) forgave her. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: 5777*) *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* displayed the utmost compassion for non-Muslims and did not practice segregation but was wholly righteous in all his transactions and relations. As head of state, he

visited a sick Jewish boy and invited him to Islam. His visit reflected his loving compassion, and the child consequently converted. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: 1356)

Several Jewish groups lived in Madinah—*Banū Qainuqā'*, *Banū al-Naḍīr* and *Banū Qurayzah*—who provoked and caused much harm to Muslims. The most mischievous was the *Qainuqā'*, experts in goldsmithing, blacksmithing, household instruments and weapons manufacture. They had 700 warriors and were the most audacious Jews in Arabia and the first to breach their covenant of non-aggression with the Prophet (*Ṣal Allāh-u-'alaihe wa sallam*). Ill-mannered and unbearable, their mischief included jeering and intimidating Muslim women physically in the bazaars. Matters worsened, and *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullāh Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* gathered them in assembly. He asked them to be sensible and decent, cautioning them against further transgressions. (*Sinan Abu dawood*: 3001)

## 10. Compassion for Pagans

Even though pagans had done terrible harm to Muslims for years, *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullāh Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* showed compassion for them. When the Prophet *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullāh Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* ordered bodies of infidels killed in battle to be thrown into a pit, the body of 'Utba was dragged there. On seeing him, the face of his son, Abū Ḥudhayfah (*Raḍī Allāh 'anhu*), a Muslim, turned pale with sorrow. The Prophet *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullāh Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* took compassion on him, after which Abū Ḥudhayfah (*Raḍī Allāh 'anhu*) said he did not question either command or fate. He knew his father was a man of forbearance and virtue and had hoped these qualities would lead him to embrace Islam. *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullāh Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* blessed Abū Ḥudhayfah (*Raḍī Allāh 'anhu*) and spoke to him words of kindness.<sup>57</sup>

The Prophet (*Ṣal Allāh-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) had high regard and secured the most incredible security levels for every non-Muslim who paid the *jizyah*. It was prohibited to kill anyone holding a treaty with the nascent Muslim State.

Narrated ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*):  
*The Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said, “Whoever killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the smell of Paradise though its smell is perceived from a distance of forty years.”*<sup>58</sup>

Asmā’ binti Abī Bakr (*Raḍi Allah ‘anha*) was Muslim, but her mother a polytheist. Asmā’ (*Raḍi Allah ‘anha*) asked the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) how to deal with her. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) had great respect for his own mother and asked Asmā’ (*Raḍi Allah ‘anha*) to treat her mother with respect and compassion.<sup>59</sup> The Tradition states the following:

Narrated Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr (*Raḍi Allah ‘anha*):  
*My mother came to me during lifetime of Allah’s (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam), and she was a pagan. I said to Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) (seeking his verdict), “My mother has come to me, and she desires to receive a reward from me. Shall I keep good relations with her?” The Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) said, “Yes, keep a good relation with her.”*<sup>60</sup>

## 11. Compassion for Hypocrites

The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) was also kind and compassionate to hypocrites. Many examples were recorded. Muslim narrates that Thaqīf were allies of Banū ‘Uqail, and Thaqīf captured two of the Companions of Allah’s Messenger (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*). And the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) captured a man from Banū ‘Uqail, and along with him, they caught (the camel) Al-Aḍbā’. The Messenger (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) passed by him when he was in chains. He said: ‘O Muhammad!’ So, he came to him and said: ‘What is the matter with you?’ He said: ‘Why did you capture me, and why did you capture the one who precedes the pilgrims (the camel)?’ He said: ‘I captured you because of the wrongdoing of your allies, Thaqīf.’ Then he turned away, and he called out to him, saying: ‘O Muḥammad!’ The Messenger of Allah (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) was compassionate and kind, so he came back to him

and said: *'What is the matter with you?'* He said: *'I am a Muslim.'* He said: *'If you had said that when you were still in control of your affairs, you would have gained every success.'* Then he turned away, and he called him, saying: *'O Muḥammad! O, Muḥammad!'* He came to him and said: *'What is the matter with you?'* He said: *'I am hungry, feed me, and I am thirsty, give me to drink.'* He said: *'That is what you need,'* and he ransomed him for the two Muslims.<sup>61</sup>

The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) could have taken revenge but always showed similar respect and compassion for his enemies, forever sympathizing with their distress. Although a certain man who had pestered him was from Banū 'Uqail, each time, the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) answered his questions with humility and responded by saying, *"these are your rights."*<sup>62</sup>

Once, the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) ordered 'Alī, Abū Marthad and al-Zubayr (*Raḍi Allah 'anhum*) to go to Rawdat Khakh, where a polytheist woman carried a letter from Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta'ah (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*), a Muslim, to her compatriots in Makkah. They found her riding a camel and asked for the note. When she said she did not have it, they made her camel kneel and searched but did not find it. They insisted, saying she would be stripped naked if need be. She gave in. They brought it to the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*). On hearing this, 'Umar (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) said Ḥāṭib (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) had committed treason and should be beheaded. Instead, the Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam asked Ḥāṭib (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) to explain why he did it. Ḥāṭib (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) replied by saying he did not intend to give up his belief in Allah Almighty and His Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) but merely wanted influence among Makkans so his descendants and property might be protected. He did not do this out of disbelief nor apostasy. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) said Ḥāṭib (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) spoke the truth and advised his companions not to speak ill of him or do him harm. Hearing this, 'Umar (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) said, *"He has betrayed Allah, his Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) and the faithful believers. Let me cut off his neck!"* The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) said, *"Is he not one of the Badr warriors? May be Allah looked at the Badr warriors and said, 'Do whatever you like, as I have granted Paradise to you', or said, 'I have forgiven you.'" On*

hearing this, tears came out of 'Umar's eyes, and he said, "*Allah and His Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) know better.*"<sup>63</sup>

'Umar (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) had insisted on killing Ḥāṭib (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) for treason, but the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) did not allow it out of mercy. If the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) forgave betrayal, why can't people forgive others for lesser offences committed in our age?

## 12. Compassion for Women

Islam promoted a unique culture regarding women and their empowerment. Pre-Islamic Arab society was known for its unkind, non-compassionate attitude towards women, whom Arabs neither honoured nor held in high regard. Female infants meant shame to these barbarians and were often buried alive because Arabs thought women were inferior to men. Islam respects women on par with men. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) rejected the social order of the *Jāhiliyyah* and treated women with the utmost kindness and affection.

*Abū Huraira (Raḍi Allah 'anhu) reported Allah's Apostle (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) as saying: He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards a woman, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there. So, act kindly towards women.*<sup>64</sup>

The Traditions of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) demonstrate that men should avoid forcing women into doing things surpassing their capacity and strength. Women should be treated softly, respectfully, and with compassion and mercy. Their dignified roles as wife and mother are highly esteemed, and they are not regarded as mere reproductive factories.

The compassionate concern of Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) for women inspired their merciful empowerment in Islamic society, unlike other civilizations, where women were/are treated as mere instruments of sexual pleasure. For example, Hindu civilization

treated women as slaves and sacrificed wives alive (*suttee*) at their husband's funerals in orthodox families. Women had not been honoured in Makkah, but after migration to Madinah, their status improved because the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) established their rights.

### 13. Compassion for Slaves and Servants

Class differences were marked in pagan Arabia, and the poor were subjected to ill-treatment and discrimination as in most societies. Slavery was common, and humans were sold like merchandise. Slaves and servants were often deprived of life's necessities, including healthy food and modest clothing. They were exposed to suffering and torture due to the arrogant belief that they were inferior subordinates. All such things were standard practice before the advent of Islam. The Revelation's man of compassion and mercy showed kind and generous treatment for slaves, servants and labourers. Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) reported the following:

*“The Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) advised that slaves should be well-treated. He said, “Feed them from what you eat and clothe them from what you wear. Do not punish what Allah has created.”<sup>65</sup>*

Islam also disallows vengeance. The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) never took revenge on anyone, and he never beat anyone. 'Ā'ishah (*Raḍi Allah 'anhā*) reported:

*The Messenger of Allah (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) never hit anything with his hand, neither a servant nor a woman, but of course, he did fight in the Cause of Allah. He never took revenge upon anyone for the wrong done to him, but of course, he exacted retribution for the sake of Allah in the case the Injunctions of Allah about unlawful acts were violated.<sup>66</sup>*

### 14. Compassion for Animals

Indeed, there is a relation between compassion for animals and goodness of character. *The Holy Qur'ān* declares Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-*

*u-'alaihe wa sallam*) is merciful for humanity and all creatures. We refer to instances where he took great care of animals and warned people not to torture or ill-treat them. He prohibited his companions from keeping animals hungry or thirsty. Neither should animals be disturbed nor overburdened or troubled. Putting animals at ease is considered a meritorious deed that brings us closer to Allah Almighty. Abū Hurairah (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) reported the following on the authority of the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*):

*A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst, and came out. Meanwhile, he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and watered it. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him. The people said, "O Allah's Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam)! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being)."*<sup>67</sup>

Suppose this is the type of mercy Islam promotes, even for a dog. Why are some compassionate, merciful Muslims who work for the betterment of humankind is suspected and allegedly blamed for merciless terrorism in some countries? Something is amiss. Islam never permits atrocity. Instead, Muslims must be compassionate and merciful.

*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* made efforts also to stop cruel customs and practices such as cutting a horse's tail and mane, branding animals or keeping horses saddled. He once said a woman would dwell in hellfire for mistreating a cat:

*Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (Raḍi Allah 'anhu): Allah's Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) said: "A lady was punished because of a cat which she had imprisoned till it died. She entered the (Hell) Fire because of it, for she neither gave it food nor water as she had imprisoned it nor set it free to eat from the vermin of the earth."*<sup>68</sup>

On another occasion, he (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) said a prostitute who gave water to a thirsty dog would be forgiven for this act of hers.<sup>69</sup> Such examples show the Prophet’s gentleness and kindness for animals. Indeed, as Muslims regard him as a role model, they should act accordingly.

Moreover, the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) did not allow for unnecessary suffering when animals were slaughtered for food. Specific criteria for the slaughter were set out; only the sharpest knives were used to cause minimum pain.<sup>70</sup> He (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) even commanded people that the blade should be sharpened and hidden from the animals so they would not be frightened or know they were to be killed.<sup>71</sup> In light of the Prophet’s ḥadīth, Muslims must understand that they should run responsible husbandry and treat animals with utmost care.

### 15. Compassion for Enemies and Prisoners of War

Islam applauds compassion, including enemies, specifically prisoners of war. Muslims fought several battles after migrating to Madinah. The first combat was the Battle of Badr. Muslims won and captured Makkans, who had furiously determined to destroy Islam and defeat the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*).

The Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) treated all prisoners great heartedly, contrary to customary practice. One of the best examples is Suhayl ibn ‘Amr, who used to denounce him cruelly. He was the prominent speaker of the Quraysh and their representative to deal with the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) during Hdaybiyah treaty, was caught as a prisoner in the battle of Badr. ‘Umar (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) suggested removing ‘Amr’s two teeth so that he cannot talk or lecture against the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) or Islam. But, Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) rejected the stand of ‘Umar (*Raḍi Allah ‘anhu*) and added that he would not treat anyone harshly so that Allah Almighty would not harm him.<sup>723</sup> Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) said, “ O ‘Umar, Allah Almighty may punish me on the Day of Judgement due to this, even though I am a Prophet.”<sup>74</sup>

Makkan pagans were extremely rude, arrogant people who ceaselessly used all possible means to destroy the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) and his cause. As a last resort, they tried

assassination by hiring a man named 'Umar (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*), their most dynamic youth the same man cited above who converted to Islam and later became Caliph. Finally, after enduring all their threats, tortures and plots, the Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) was commanded by Allah Almighty to migrate to Madinah. Even then, Makkah pagans continued their enmity and waged wars, evident from early Islamic history.

When *Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* conquered Makkah without resistance or bloodshed, he entered the city and gathered together all unbelievers:

*How do you expect me to treat you?" he asked. They unanimously replied, "You are a noble one, the son of a noble one". Upon hearing this, the Prophet (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) announced, "You may go free! No reproach this day shall be on you; may Allah forgive you.*

Thus, after years of murder and horrendous mistreatment, this general amnesty exemplified the Almighty's raḥmah for all humanity through His Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*), including towards our bitterest, most violent and cruellest of enemies.<sup>75</sup>

## 16. Compassion for Children

*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* demonstrated the highest degree of empathy for children. Whenever he saw a child crying, he sat beside them and what is wrong. He once said, "*When I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it but on hearing the cries of a child. I cut it short, as I dislike to trouble the child's mother.*"<sup>76</sup> He carried children in his arms and embraced them. Abū Hurayra (*Raḍi Allah 'anhu*) said:

*The Messenger of Allah (Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam) kissed Hasan ibn Alī (Raḍi Allah 'anhu) while al-Aqra' ibn Habis at-Tamīmī (Raḍi Allah 'anhu) was sitting with him. Al-Aqra' (Raḍi Allah 'anhu) observed, 'I have ten children, and I have never*

*kissed any of them.’ The Messenger of Allah (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) looked at him and said, ‘Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.’”<sup>77</sup>*

A Muslim is required to be merciful to his children in particular and all others in general. But, unfortunately, mercy, in postmodern society, is nearly extinct.

### 17. Generosity

Life of *Ḥadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam* was characterized by kindness, compassion and generosity. *The Holy Qur’ān* calls him *Raḥmatun li’l-‘Ālamīn*, (*mercy for all worlds and all creatures*). Whenever someone asked him for something, he either gave it or spoke kind words as a sign of regret if he could not. The ḥadīth record proves that he never replied negatively, unsympathetically, or in anger to any petitioner. On the contrary, his responses were always respectful and kind. Such is rare today. His example instructs Muslims to be hospitable, gracious and amicable when dealing with petitioners. This would sow the seed of social harmony and eliminate differences between people.

*Ibn Shihāb (Raḍi Allah ‘anhu) reported that Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) went on the expedition of Victory, i.e. the Victory of Makkah, and then he went out along with the Muslims and they fought at Hunain and Allah granted Victory to his religion and the Muslims and Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) gave one hundred camels to Ṣafwān ibn Umayya (Raḍi Allah ‘anhu). Then, he again gave him one hundred camels and then again gave him one hundred camels. Sa‘īd ibn Musayyib (Raḥmat Allah ‘alaih) said that Ṣafwān told him: (By Allah) Allah’s Messenger (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam) gave me what he gave me (and my state of mind at that time was) that he was the most detested person amongst people in my eyes. But he continued giving to me until now he is the dearest of people to me.”<sup>78</sup>*

**18. Conclusion**

The author applied qualitative content analysis to the sacred discourse on mercy and compassion, referring to exegetes, the Ḥadīth corpus and biography of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā ‘Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*. We recalled the word *raḥmah*'s meaning according to lexicographers and exegetes. Definitions were collected from English dictionaries to epitomize its implications and legitimate usage. The concept of *raḥmah* was examined regarding Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) as its role model—*par excellence*—for generations to come. Today, Muslims should espouse and behave in this respectable and exemplary manner so that people of all cultures and traditions might look upon Islam with due respect and admiration. Islam views *raḥmah* as a foundational premise that preserves and upholds social peace and harmony.

We discussed the term *raḥmah*'s usage in *The Holy Qur’ān*, beginning with the *Opening Chapter*. Proper comprehension of the word deliberated on *‘Ibād al-Raḥmān* is enshrined in *Sūrat al-Furqān*. Since Ḥadīth Literature is a principal source that helps us recognize Islam's message, references were also made to the Ḥadīth corpus, where we found several examples of mercy and compassion. Another crucial dimension that had been addressed was mercy and compassion for all humankind (*Raḥmatun li'l-‘Ālamīn*). We highlighted the Prophet's compassion and understanding for Christians, Jews, pagans, hypocrites, women, slaves, servants, animals, enemies, prisoners of war, and children and his generosity, especially during the period of his governance.

As expressed in this paper, the author suggests that Muslims should apply and in their daily life and habituate themselves to several practices of *raḥmah*. First, everyone should translate compassion into constructive good deeds. Whosoever is a sincere worshipper of our Creator, regardless of his/her religious affiliation, should adopt this attitude to alleviate human suffering. Because Allah Almighty is All-Compassionate, All-Merciful, All Beneficent, All Benevolent, and All Gracious; and because the Prophet is *Raḥmatun li'l-‘Ālamīn* it is mandatory for all moral and *maqāṣidic* / *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* (an Islamic legal doctrine) considerations that Muslims manifest attributions associated with *raḥmah*, as it will help us pave

the way to global peace as a Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations.

When adopted and taken to heart, this paper and its recommendations will help eliminate misunderstanding, mistrust, and misperceptions concerning Islam and its followers. Currently, Muslims are branded as fundamentalists, extremists, terrorists and religious activists who lead mobs into dissension and riotous social disturbances. Hence, it is high time for Muslims to revisit Islam's foundational sources, learn the authentic perspective, and then present *rahmah* to the world as God's universally revealed message.

Of utmost relevance is that Muslim administrators, leaders, heads of states, and policymakers should apply compassion and mercy as demonstrated by the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) to every man, woman, and child whether peers, colleagues, subordinates or others and regardless of their religious affiliation. Discrimination, bias, tribal or family nepotism should never be allowed to dominate or obstruct decision-making processes. Ethnocentrism, nationalism, racism and religious chauvinism must be eliminated. *Rahmah* and peace are the most crucial criteria in all matters. Believers should forever bear this in mind, especially decision- and policymakers. Unilateral considerations that reserve favours and perks for selves, supporters, party men, cronies, ethnic groups, and nationalities should be avoided. Granting irresponsible excuses for discriminatory deeds should not be done, knowing full well they will be held accountable on the Day of Judgement. *The Holy Qur'an* states, "whoever does any good act (even) to the weight of a particle will see it. And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle will see it."<sup>79</sup> Thus, compassion has been decreed a major Islamic priority, especially for those in seats of governance. Remember, Allah will not be merciful to those who are not compassionate to others.

Unfortunately, many who claim to be pious custodians of the faith remain unconcerned about these essential matters in Muslim societies. As a result, they are advised to be more vigilant because their responsibilities and consequent accountabilities are greater than those of ordinary people. Religion is too easily abused for the sake of personal, family, business or institutional concerns as well as for racial or ethnic considerations. Likewise, such circumstances are often used to shield biased decisions that harm the interests of others. Preferring one group over another is expected under the garb of

higher authority, and all too often, minorities and 'others' are not given just treatment. On the other hand, privileges and perks tend to outrank and completely disregard the concept of *raḥmah*. It is not Islam and not Sunnah.

Conscientious, righteous, pious and God-fearing people must fight such discrepancies again wherever they arise, especially in multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-ethnic societies. They should understand that the application of *raḥmah* is a divinely appointed prerequisite for peaceful coexistence and harmony, which is the aim of human life in submission to Allah Almighty and the true meaning of Islam.

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