

Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated:



that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever does not extend mercy shall not be shown mercy.**⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6013; Muslim, 2319.

From the Qur’an

- ﴿It is by God’s grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you. Therefore, pardon them and pray for them to be forgiven and consult with them in the conduct of public affairs.﴾ (3: 159)
- ﴿Your Lord has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy.﴾ (6: 54)
- ﴿My grace encompasses all things.﴾ (7: 156)
- ﴿We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds.﴾ (21: 107)
- ﴿He was one of those who believe and enjoin on one another to be patient in adversity, and enjoin mercy on one another.﴾ (90: 17)

The Narrator

Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Bajālī, whose appellation was Abu ‘Amr, also given as Abu ‘Abdullāh, was one of the distinguished companions of the Prophet, although he embraced Islam during the last year of the Prophet’s life. The Prophet sent him on a mission to destroy the idol known as Dhul-Khalaṣah, worshipped by the Daws and other tribes. He did just that. Later, he settled in Kufah. He died in Year 51 AH, but some reports say in Year 54, corresponding to 671 or 674 CE respectively.

Summary

God, the Ever-Merciful, does not extend His mercy to the one who does not show mercy to His creation, whether humans, birds or animals.



Message and Meaning



God's mercy is boundless. He says: 'My grace encompasses all things'. (7: 156) He divided His mercy into one hundred equal parts and placed one part only on earth. It is through this part that all creation, in all times, show mercy to one another, to the extent that a female animal lifts her leg so that she does not harm her young.⁽¹⁾



God sent his prophets and messengers as an act of mercy He bestowed on His servants, to guide them to the truth. He, thus, showed them guidance and granted them the blessing of having faith. In the life to come, He admits them into the abode of honour. Speaking of His Messenger, God says: 'We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds'. (21: 107)



For this reason, God bestows His mercy only on the merciful among His servants. Thus, whoever does not follow His line of being merciful to His creation will be deprived of God's mercy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God is specifically merciful to those of His servants who are compassionate'.⁽²⁾

The reason is that a believer is compassionate to others: he feels for those who are weak, poor, bereaved or suffering. God says: 'He was one of those who believe and enjoin on one another to be patient in adversity, and enjoin mercy on one another'. (90:17) The Prophet said that 'Only a wretched person is deprived of mercy'.⁽³⁾



Mercy should not be confined to one's own family; in fact, a Muslim should be compassionate to all creation. The Prophet said: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, God does not bestow His mercy except on one who is merciful'. People said: 'Messenger of God, everyone of us is compassionate'. He said: 'It is not the mercy one shows to a friend; it is the mercy extended to all'.⁽⁴⁾



The Prophet himself was the most merciful of people. God describes him in this verse: 'It is by God's grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you. Therefore, pardon them and pray for them to be forgiven and consult with them in the conduct of public affairs'. (3: 159) Indeed, he was full of mercy to all. One aspect that reflects the extent of his compassion is described in the following hadith: 'I start a prayer, intending to make it long. I hear a child crying and I shorten my prayer, lest I make it hard for its mother'.⁽⁵⁾



The Prophet's mercy also benefited animals and birds. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd narrated: 'We were with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) on a journey. He went away to relieve himself. We saw a bird with two young ones. We took the young birds. The bird came over and spread its wings. The Prophet then came and said: "Who has grieved this one with her young? Give them back to her"'.⁽⁵⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6000; Muslim, 2752.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7448; Muslim, 923.

3 Related by Ahmad, 9700; Abu Dāwūd, 4942; al-Tirmidhī, 1923.

4 Related by Abu Ya'lā, 4258.

5 Related by al-Bukhari, 707.

Implementation



To be compassionate to people is one of the marks of happiness. The person who is deprived of mercy is nothing short of wretched. It is important, then, not to share the characteristics of wretched people.



Mercy is one of God's attributes which He likes to be emulated by His servants. He loves to see a compassionate and merciful person who pardons and forgives people's errors and who is very generous.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) provides the example to follow. He was merciful to young and old. Al-Aqra' ibn Ḥābis al-Tamīmī was visiting the Prophet when al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the Prophet's grandson, came in. The Prophet held him and kissed him. Al-Aqra' said: 'I have ten children and I never kissed any of them'. The Prophet looked at him and said: 'Whoever does not extend mercy shall not be shown mercy'.



No one can claim to be in no need of God's mercy. We all have our faults, errors and sins. Without God's mercy, all mankind would be doomed. Therefore, whoever wants to receive God's mercy should be merciful to His creation. An Israelite prostitute saw a dog panting and licking the dust because of thirst. She gave a drink of water to the dog, and God granted her forgiveness of her sins because of the mercy she showed to an animal.⁽¹⁾



Actions are rewarded in kind: whoever is merciful will be granted mercy; and whoever inflicts suffering will suffer. Whoever makes things easy for people, God will make things easy for him.



To withhold mercy from God's creation is enough to cast a person into Hell. Abu Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī narrated: 'I was beating a slave of mine when I heard someone behind me saying: "Learn, Abu Mas'ūd! God has far more power over you than you have over him". I turned and saw that it was God's Messenger (peace be upon him). I said: "Messenger of God, he is free for God's sake". He said: "Had you not done [so], the Fire would have scorched you" or "the Fire would have touched you"'.⁽²⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3467; Muslim, 2245.

2 Related by Muslim, 1695.

