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We have decided to archive the papers in this series after undergoing substantive revisions which can now be found in our newly published e-book *The Final Prophet: Proofs for the Prophethood of Muhammad*. We will also make webpage versions of the articles available in the near future and will include links when available.

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

The Message of the Prophet ﷺ: The Proofs of Prophethood Series

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In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Grantor of Mercy

The message brought by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—namely the Quran he recited and his Sunnah (prophetic example)—testifies to its truth. Even before considering its moral or intellectual greatness, the sheer volume of what has been documented of Muhammad ﷺ's twenty-three-year ministry is staggering. It cannot be compared with the Bible, for instance, which does not contain the teachings of Moses but rather is a cumulative historical canon whose development spanned centuries. Then consider the value of what he ﷺ preached, both in terms of its inherent quality and the breadth of its scope. It defined people's relationships with their Maker, with those around them, even with animals and inanimate objects, and provided timeless wisdom about everything related to their individual or collective well-being. Then consider its consistency; the *harmony* of such a comprehensive corpus that addresses theology, personal conduct, interpersonal behavior, civil laws, foreign policies, ritual worship, and spiritual perceptions certainly classifies it as uniquely intriguing, if not downright miraculous. This becomes further evident when contrasted with other doctrines of religion and law that waned in the face of criticism and with the passage of time. The ongoing inability of human beings to devise an ageless system that confers equilibrium and holistic well-being makes us appreciate the message of the Final Prophet ﷺ all the more. This paper showcases ten highlights from his message, focusing on those most easily appreciated by denizens of the 21st-century.

1) Absolute Monotheism

Say [O Muhammad], 'This is my way; I call to Allah upon insight, I and those who follow me.' [Yoosuf (12): 108]

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never asked people to worship him. He did not even allow anyone to display excessive reverence to him. He would always make a sharp distinction between the Divine and his own human nature. He ﷺ stopped people from standing for him when he entered, and objected to people implicitly equating him and Allah in their sermons, and warned on his deathbed about the actions of past people who had turned the graves of their prophets into shrines.

Nothing stood out from his message more than a keenness to protect the purest understanding of monotheism in people's hearts, and to remove any barrier between individuals and their direct and personal connection with God.

Leo Tolstoy (d. 1910) hailed from an aristocratic Russian family and is described by some as one of the greatest novelists of all time. Many have reported his great admiration for Islam, and the statements attributed to him in this regard include the following:

Muhammad has always been standing higher than Christianity. He does not consider God as a human being and never makes himself equal to God. Muslims worship nothing except God and Muhammad is his Messenger. There is not any mystery and secret in it.

Elsewhere, he writes, "After I have read the Quran, I realized that all what humanity needs is this heavenly law."¹

Humanity's greatest existential need is to identify the one true God, and only belief in Him alone aligns with both rationality and intuition. Humans are purposeful creatures, and only One with wisdom and purpose could have endowed them with purpose. The Creator must also have communicated that purpose to us, and hence the undying appeal of the "divine revelation" model of religion; that of "heavenly inspired messengers." As for other religions, they involve limited philosophies that fall short of fulfilling people's greatest, most pressing questions on purpose and what makes life meaningful. Once a person's search is narrowed to the Abrahamic faiths, the unique emphasis of Islam on the Oneness of God becomes quite clear. Only in Islam does one find a God who is absolute in His Oneness and perfection, glorified above resembling His creation, and equally compassionate to all of humanity, addressing them all with the same message.

2) Predestination

Allah (the Most High) says,

¹ See: *Treatise on Sayings of Muhammad*, by Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy

No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed that, for Allah, is easy—in order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And Allah does not like every self-deluded and boastful person. [al-Ḥadīd (57): 22-23]

Herbert Benson, MD, a cofounder of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine, says, “Faith in God is the best preventative tool for such stress and to promote [a] healthy immune system. Believing that one hand is in control of everything eases the mind.”² The security he speaks about—when a person believes that just one hand is ultimately in control—is precisely how the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ defined fate: “To believe in predestination, the good of it and the evil of it [all being from Allah].”³ Without this belief, a person is haunted by the possibility of dualism (contending cosmic forces). This would in turn destroy the integrity of a person’s spirituality, because even if they worshipped God, they would still worry about other contending forces in the universe. But with conviction that everything happens only by His will and decree, and that only He brings events into existence, inner peace becomes attainable.

Similarly, Mayo Clinic’s Edward T. Creagan, MD, a board member of the American Cancer Society, describes the best stress management tool as, “Acknowledging that [this] life is not always fair, and the good guy does not always win.”⁴ In other words, belief that everything is, and forever will be, in God’s hands, and that God has constructed this life with ups and downs for a wisdom only He fully knows, are two powerful resources that make life endurable and enjoyable. These beliefs were consistently taught by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and his followers continue to find contentment in it when faced with poverty, fear, and other challenges.

² See: *Timeless Healing*, Herbert Benson and Marg Stark, Fireside Book New York, 1997

³ Collected by Muslim (8)

⁴ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/expert-blog/life-is-unfair/bgp-20056039>

3) Prayer

Ritual prayer is the second pillar of Islam after the testimony of faith. Linguistically, it means a connection. It is a chance for people to pull themselves out of the spinning machine of this life to reinforce their relationship with their Creator, to water the tree of their faith and to moisten their souls, which would otherwise be drying out and cracking in the desert of this never-ending pursuit of abundance and carnal pleasures. For the soul, praying is like turning to the shade of a tree in the middle of work on a hot day. It is a chance to rejuvenate our spirituality, a reminder of our origin, our Creator, and the reason for our existence. If it is done with devotion, it can be the greatest deterrent to wrongdoing and aggression.⁵

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ required Muslims to pray five times each day. Though some people may consider this a burdensome task, many Muslims—upon actually experiencing the prayer—voluntarily choose to supplement these daily five with even more. The magnetic force of this unique devotional act should be a clear sign of its meaningfulness. Prayer is the most evident fruit (and seed) of conviction, and as Jesus Christ is quoted to have said, “You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” [Matthew 7:16]

The late Pope John Paul II, despite his theological differences with Islam, once expressed this exact sentiment, saying,

*The religiosity of Muslims deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer. The image of believers in Allah who, without caring about time or place, fall to their knees and immerse themselves in prayer remains a model for all those who invoke the true God, in particular for those Christians who, having deserted their magnificent cathedrals, pray only a little or not at all.*⁶

⁵ Hatem al-Hājj, MD, *Fiqh of Worship: A Commentary on Ibn Qudāmah's "Umdat al-Fiqh"*, IIPH (2011)

⁶ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope: John Paul II on Islam*, 1994

Without question, the greatest benefit of the prayer is in connecting with God. That connection nurtures a spiritual resilience that helps one endure in fulfilling their purpose in this life and qualifies them for salvation in the hereafter. However, even the [physical](#) and mental benefits of the Muslim daily prayer are astounding. And on the mental/psychological front, [research](#) suggests that prayer enhances self-control, and offsets the negative health effects of daily stressful experiences. Considering the upsurge in anxiety, depression, [drug abuse](#), and [suicide](#) all around us, the hurting world testifies to the renewed relevance of the Muslim daily prayer; “And they used to be invited to prostration while they were [still] sound.” [al-Qalam (68): 43]

4) Fasting

Fasting is another pillar of Islam, practiced by over a billion Muslims worldwide, at least during the lunar month of Ramadan. From dawn until sunset, a Muslim abstains from food, drink, and conjugal relations out of devotion to his/her Creator. This restriction of the carnal appetites feeds one’s spirituality, reinforces the religious conscience, and cultivates sincerity in one’s observance of God—for only God is watchful of you at all times. It also teaches self-restraint in other spheres of life, and thus the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ informed us, “Whoever does not give up foul speech while fasting, [know that] Allah has no need for this person to give up food and drink.”⁷ Of course, fasting also allows a Muslim to experience hunger and discomfort, generating empathy for the underprivileged and downtrodden. For that reason, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would outdo himself in generosity during Ramadan,⁸ and obligated his followers with a mandatory charity (*Ṣadaqat al-Fiṭr*) at the month’s end.

As for the health benefits gained by fasting, they are both physical and psychological. In one study by [Mattison and Lane \(2003\)](#) at the National Institute of Aging in Baltimore, it was found that caloric restriction extended lifespan and

⁷ Collected by al-Bukhāri (6057)

⁸ Ibn ‘Abbās (rA) said, “The Prophet ﷺ was the most generous of all people, and he used to become [even] more generous in Ramadan when Gabriel met him. Gabriel used to meet him every night during Ramadan to revise the Quran with him. Allah's Messenger ﷺ was more generous than the fast wind.” Collected by al-Bukhāri (3554)

reduced the incidence of age-related diseases. Similarly, [Clive McCay](#), PhD at Cornell University, found that laboratory rats kept on a severely reduced-calorie diet lived almost twice as long as expected, so long as they had the proper nutrients. And in the famous “[Canto and Owen Experiment](#),” anti-aging researcher Richard Weindruch, PhD at the University of Wisconsin’s School of Medicine and Public Health, published a major paper showcasing two rhesus monkeys of similar ages with very different diets. His research yielded a clear message: “caloric restrictions” and “fasting” reverse and slow the cellular decline associated with aging. As for the therapeutic effects of fasting on mental health, Dr Yuri Nikolayev of the Fasting Clinic of the Moscow Institute of Psychiatry has tracked the effectiveness of fasting for thousands of schizophrenia patients for whom medications had been ineffective.

5) Healthy Eating

Allah (the Most High) said,

O children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of prostration, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess. [al-A‘rāf (7): 31]

These divine instructions were not left unqualified. Rather, nuanced detail was provided by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ regarding food, drink, and dress. For instance, Muslims are forbidden from eating pork⁹ unless a dire necessity compels them, and they are discouraged (not forbidden) from eating beef to avoid medical complications. In one hadith, “I prescribe for you cows’ milk, for they eat from all the herbs, and it contains a cure for every disease.” In another related report, “And stay away from cow meat, for it is [a cause of] disease.”¹⁰ Not only was the kind of food addressed, but the amount as well. The Prophet ﷺ said,

No human being fills any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam [to eat] a few mouthfuls, to erect his spine (i.e., sustain

⁹ This prohibition is biblical as well: “And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcass.” [Deuteronomy: 14/8]

¹⁰ See: *Sahih al-Jami‘* (4061)

*him). But if he must [eat more], then let one third be for food, one third for drink, and one third for his air.*¹¹

Taking it a brilliant step further, Muslims were given by their Prophet ﷺ a roadmap to eating less, transitioning them from the abstract to imbibing this guidance. Anas (rA) reports that the Prophet ﷺ forbade them from drinking while standing,¹² and [Anas added:] that eating while standing was even worse. This advice on eating and drinking mindfully is a proven key¹³ to avoiding the dangers of overeating and obesity.

6) Forbidding Fornication

Sexual permissiveness has certainly been a dark road for the secular modern world. Yet, despite how politicized, you will find experts from across the ideological spectrum still accepting the roles of chastity, abstinence, and marital fidelity in preventing sexually transmitted diseases. These protective values taught by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are associated with low rates of HIV infections in Muslim-majority nations.

Allah, the Most High, said,

And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way. [al-Isrā' (17): 32]

Not only did the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ bring this verse prohibiting adultery and fornication, but outlined for us a code of conduct to preempt the slippery slope leading to them. Civilizations that did not respect this code always stumbled to points of no return. The licentious override implodes their sensibilities, and as the verse states, fornication is an evil path—not an evil end. It begins with extramarital relations, then identifying your existence based on your sexual orientation, followed by acceptance of all forms of sexual expression, even bestiality and necrophilia. From that vantage point, a newfound appreciation for how this verse

¹¹ Collected by at-Tirmidhi (2380) and Ibn Mājah (2/1111)

¹² Collected by Muslim (2024)

¹³ See: *Putting an End to Mindless Munching*, The Wall Street Journal, by Melinda Beck – Durham, N.C.

begins—“Do not approach fornication...”—surfaces, as if it were a vicious blaze that engulfs those who even come close to it.

Another way in which Islam inhibits this threat is by emphasizing the family system. Fornication is not just an invitation to bodily diseases, but represents a selfish mentality that has no care for the families it destroys, the children that are born deprived of love and care, the millions of late-term abortions, the prison systems that we pay for collectively, and the like. Islam installs safeguards against all this, with chastity and social responsibility being among them. Fornication even affects the elderly who die alone and dejected, for those whose parents are not married (or unknown to the child) will certainly be further severed from their grandparents. As a result, the elderly find themselves abandoned in their vulnerable old age—a time that usually requires the presence of the extended family to shoulder the load together. The Prophet ﷺ highlighted these dangers on many occasions; for example, telling the young man who struggled with his lusts, “Would you accept it [i.e., fornication] for your mother, your sister, your daughter...?”¹⁴ Similarly, he ﷺ reinforced the interconnectedness of the extended family by saying, “The maternal aunt shares the status of the mother.”¹⁵

7) Forbidding Interest/Usury

Jābir b. ‘Abdillāh (rA) said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ cursed the consumer of interest, its payer, its documenter, its two witnesses, and said, ‘They are all equal [in sin].’”¹⁶ Past and present, people have downplayed the danger of an interest-bearing transaction, especially when effected by mutual consent. However, the wisdom of the Divine transcends our short-sighted criticism and deems this financial model an enormity. Allah, the Most High, said,

O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers. And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you

¹⁴ Collected by Ahmad (21705)

¹⁵ Collected by at-Tirmidhi (1904) and Abu Dawud (2278)

¹⁶ Collected by Muslim (1598)

may have your principal—[thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.
[al-Baqara (2): 278-279]

Nowadays, we observe firsthand how interest-based banking institutions have destroyed nations beyond repair, and individuals as well. The vicious nature of usury is clear; it appears to be an avenue for quick funds, but in reality it buries people further in debt. It places the entire risk on the debtor and no risk on the creditor who *invests* by lending. It also disparages labor, since money is what begets money here, not effort or craftsmanship. In turn, the rich steadily get richer while the poor steadily get poorer—to points of unthinkable devastation, which then become catalysts for financial meltdowns and uprisings that have historically devoured many nations, even superpowers. Highlighting this type of inequity, God said about money, “So that it will not become a perpetual distribution [solely] among the rich from among you.” [al-Hashr (59): 7] Hence, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ outlawed profiting [in the worldly sense] from loans by saying, “Profit is contingent upon liability (the possibility of loss).”¹⁷

When you add to the perils of usury those of excessive speculation (*gharar*), which the Prophet ﷺ forbade as well, you have all the ingredients of an economic crisis, and the 2008 financial meltdown is still in recent memory. For this reason, a global trend is emerging in Europe¹⁸ and elsewhere that recognizes how the Islamic financial regulations offer a refreshing alternative and remedy for economic woes.

8) Penal Code

There are only five prescribed punishments that were specifically ordained by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Contrary to widespread myth, in a typical book of traditional Islamic law, which often spans a dozen volumes, and is essentially a collection of stated or extrapolated prophetic directives, the penal code (*hudūd*) chapter constitutes about [2% of the book](#). Furthermore, examining that 2% reveals

¹⁷ Collected by at-Tirmidhi (1303)

¹⁸ See: “Vatican Paper Supports Islamic Finance. France Wants its Share of Sharia Banking”, *The Brussels Journal*, 3/12/2009 - Original paper:
<http://rassegnastampa.mef.gov.it/mefnazionale/PDF/2009/2009-03-04/2009030412006886.pdf>

why these five penalties are rarely implemented in Muslim societies that implement Shariah (Islamic Law), and why they only work well within a holistic system that fosters the values these penalties aim to protect. However, even these five penalties have a legislative brilliance to them. Why did the Prophet ﷺ prescribe punishments for theft and fornication, but not for eating pork, gambling, and usury? This seems to imply that the penal code is not simply about God avenging Himself against those who trespass His bounds. Indeed, it is more about protecting the individual and society from their own vices. Theft and fornication offer an immediate gain or pleasure, a strong driving force that some cannot resist without the fear of punishment being significant enough to inhibit that greed or lust. On the other hand, although interest-bearing transactions are more condemnable in Islam than theft or fornication, there is no prescribed punishment for them. This is no inconsistency, but rather an ingenious nuance: a recognition of the fact that interest is a crime that slowly undermines society as a whole, as opposed to theft which people commit compulsively because it offers instant riches.

In an article published in the *Policy Studies Journal*, a revision of deterrence theory has been proposed. Essentially, it theorizes that crime can be better prevented through altering the cost-benefit ratios calculated by criminals. The authors say,

*We find, in literature and our own empirical analysis, that once punishment is correctly accounted for in a model, the severity of punishment has a significant negative effect on crime and does indeed matter as deterrence theory tells us.*¹⁹

In other words, a criminal usually considers the likelihood of getting caught as well as the severity of the penalty if caught. Thus, striking the right balance between these two factors will most effectively minimize crime.

Though the effectiveness of different deterrence theories is still debated in criminology forums, many indications support that the secular world—in a

¹⁹ Mendes, Silvia M., and Michael D. McDonald. 2001. Putting Severity of Punishment Back in the Deterrence Package, *Policy Studies Journal* 29 (4): 588-610.

commendable attempt to do away with draconian laws—has fallen into overemphasizing the apprehension of criminals through improved surveillance, aggressive policing, and enhanced forensic instruments. This has happened at the expense of reevaluating the actual penalty once the criminal is caught. As a result of this sometimes misplaced benevolence, in the name of civility, many lives are lost and many more are ruined. Consider the United States, for example, whose profoundly failing prison system ranks first on the planet in number of incarcerations (tallying over 2 million prisoners), first in gun crimes, and first in cannabis use (3rd in opiate use). Furthermore, as US law professor Peter Moskos points out in his book, *In Defense of Flogging*, the notion that imprisoning someone in a cell is somehow more humane than subjecting them to brief but intense bodily pain is a [collective cultural fiction](#). Interestingly, upon colonizing Muslim India, British officials in early 18th century India felt that Islamic law compared well with the ‘bloody justice’ of England and Europe.²⁰ Then they intervened, arguing that “the Islamic law was in many respects excessively mild. The purpose of British legislation was to limit this mildness.”²¹ The mildness in these laws was noticeable in two aspects: firstly, that lifelong prison sentences and vicious execution methods were absent, and secondly, that—as another British official in the late 1700’s noted—it was incredibly rare for the *hudūd* punishment for theft to actually be carried out.²²

In summary, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ prescribed just five specific penalties, designed to frighten potential offenders into abstaining from otherwise alluring crimes, though these were rarely implemented. And when they were implemented, they were still far milder than many modern criminal punishments.

9) Personal Hygiene

The following words are attributed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ :

²⁰ Jörg Fisch, *Cheap Lives and Dear Limbs: The British Transformation of the Bengal Criminal Law 1769-1817* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), p.88

²¹ Ibid (p. 7)

²² Ibid (p. 88)

Ten [practices] are from the fiṭra (natural inclinations): trimming the mustache, letting the beard grow, brushing the teeth, rinsing the nose, clipping the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking armpit hair, shaving pubic hair, and washing oneself with water after using the lavatory.

A sub-narrator said, “And I forgot the tenth, unless it was rinsing the mouth.”²³

When a person reflects on the wisdom of such teachings, sees the effects of their application, and considers the laws of Islam from the perspective of their higher objectives, one cannot help but be stirred both intellectually and spiritually. These ten practices above, for instance, do not just testify to the Final Prophet ﷺ being centuries ahead of the most progressive civilizations of his time, but they also serve to indicate the compassionate nature of the Divine; namely, how kind the Most Compassionate, Lord of Might, is to His creation.

George Bernard Shaw (d. 1950), an influential Irish playwright and critic, writes,

*The formulators of the superseded native religion, like Mahomet, had been enlightened enough to introduce as religious duties such sanitary measures as ablution and the most careful and reverent treatment of everything cast off by the human body, even to nail clippings and hairs; and our missionaries thoughtlessly discredited this godly doctrine without supplying its place, which was promptly taken by laziness and neglect.*²⁴

Bathing was not customary amongst Europeans until the 11th century. Plagues would regularly visit their unsanitary dwellings, and they would wear grime-covered clothing until it fell off their bodies. By that time, Muslims had been washing for prayers, bathing after sexual intercourse, and for ritual devotions, and even washing their deceased—for over 400 years! “In the Year 1000 CE, the Crusaders return from the east with the news of a delightful custom – the Turkish bath. Bathhouses are built all over Europe.”²⁵

²³ Collected by Muslim (1/223), Abu Dawud (1/14), Ibn Mājah (1/107), at-Tirmidhi (5/91), and an-Nasā’i (5/405)

²⁴ *The Doctor’s Dilemma: Preface on Doctors*, by George Bernard Shaw, 1908

²⁵ The Dirty Secrets of Bath Time, Times Online, March 26, 2009

Islam even discouraged the consumption of raw onions, promoted rinsing the mouth regularly, and brushing the teeth frequently, from its inception. As the Prophet ﷺ said, “The toothbrush is a purification for the mouth, and a [means of] pleasing the Lord.”²⁶ Islam’s final Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ, taught that these are means of nearness to God, and to comfort the people, as well as the angels who are also bothered by bad odors. With today’s advances in technology, we understand just how useful diluting the sugar in one’s mouth—for instance—can be in preventing rotting teeth and the agony that ensues from gum infection.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed Muslims to rinse their noses as part of their pre-prayer ablution. Researchers today are beginning to discover just how valuable this simple practice can be; one study “concluded that nasal irrigation has an enormous potential of improving the quality of life of millions of patients in a very cost effective way.”²⁷ Rhinologists refer to it as “nasal irrigation” because sending small amounts of water *all the way through* is the proper way to treat and prevent sinusitis, among other things. This is precisely what the Prophet ﷺ prescribed in his statement, “And be thorough in irrigating the nose, unless you are fasting.”²⁸ In other words, the water should almost reach the throat in this nasal rinsing, hence carefulness during fasting is necessary.

Even in today’s modern world, in which superior hygiene is central to its generally healthier populations, people are still not as hygienically motivated as Muslims have been for nearly 1500 years. The following is from Mayo Clinic’s much-admired website:

Despite the proven health benefits of hand-washing, many people don’t practice this habit as often as they should – even after using the toilet. Throughout the day, you accumulate germs on your hands from a variety of sources, such as direct contact with people... If you do not wash your hands

²⁶ Collected by Ahmad (6/47) and an-Nasā’i (1/50)

²⁷ Tomooka L. et al. (2000) Clinical Study and Literature Review of Nasal Irrigation. *The Laryngoscope*

²⁸ Collected by Abu Dawud (142, 143), at-Tirmidhi (38), an-Nasā’i (1/66, 69), and Ibn Mājah (448)

frequently enough, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. And you can spread these germs to others...

10) Science and Medicine

This may very well be the most overlooked teaching of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and yet the greatest debt owed to him: the fact that he taught the world the importance of knowledge! Liberating them from the dungeons of ignorance and superstition, he taught his followers the necessity of investing their lives in education, and as a result they became the forerunners in every field. He ﷺ validated for his adherents their intellectual potential by saying, “You know better concerning your worldly affairs.”²⁹ Statements like these taught the early Muslims that life experience and expertise ought to be respected and encouraged, not trumped by baseless dogmas.

Stemming from that worldview, Islam pioneered the liability of physicians, and its people set the intellectual standards for centuries. This was no coincidence, but rather the byproduct of their Prophet ﷺ saying, “He who practices medicine without being known for [proficiency in] medicine shall be liable.”³⁰ Cautioned by that statement, tenth-century Baghdad (Iraq) instituted a medical licensing exam that all physicians had to take before practicing medicine.³¹

In another tradition, “Allah has not sent down a disease except that He sent down for it a cure, regardless of who may know it and who may be ignorant of it.”³² In other words, the Prophet ﷺ was telling people that these cures are discoverable, so let the research renaissance begin! Muslims were so advanced in medicine that William Osler, a founder and second president of the Medical Library Association,

²⁹ Collected by Muslim (2363) and Ahmad (24964)

³⁰ Collected by Abu Dāwud (4576), Ibn Mājah (3466), and an-Nasā’i (4845)

³¹ Firas AlKhateeb, *Lost Islamic History* (p. 72), Oxford University Press (2014)

³² Collected by Ahmad (3578). In another narration, Usāma b. Shareek reports that the Bedouins said, “O Messenger of Allah, should we seek treatments?” He said, “Seek treatments, for Allah has not created an ailment except that He created its cure, except for one.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, what is it?” He said, “Aging.” Collected by Abu Dāwud (2/331), at-Tirmidhi (3/258), and Ibn Mājah (2/1137)

said, “The Canon (*Qanūn*) of Avicenna (*Ibn Sina*) has remained a medical bible in Europe for a longer period than any other work.”³³

In fact, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ introduced the modern medical quarantine. When ‘Umar (rA), the Prophet’s second successor, reached a place called Sargh during his travels, he was informed that there was a plague in the place he was heading (*ash-Shām*). ‘Abdur-Rahmān b. ‘Awf (rA), another senior companion of the Prophet ﷺ told ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had said, “When you hear about its occurrence in a land, do not enter it. And when it happens in a land, do not flee it.”³⁴

On the renaissance of knowledge sparked by the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ, Yale University’s Franz Rosenthal says in his book, *Knowledge Triumphant*,

*For ‘ilm (knowledge) is one of those concepts that have dominated Islam and given Muslim civilization its distinctive shape and complexion. In fact, there is no other concept that has been operative as a determinant of Muslim civilization in all its aspects to the same extent as ‘ilm... There is no branch of Muslim intellectual life, of Muslim religious and political life, and of the daily life of the average Muslim that remained untouched by the all-pervasive attitude toward knowledge as something of supreme value for Muslim being. ‘Ilm is Islam, even if the theologians have been hesitant to accept the technical correctness of this equation. The very fact of their passionate discussion of the concept attests to its fundamental importance for Islam.*³⁵

In another book, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Rosenthal asserts that the Quran not only stimulated historical research, but changed the course of history when it came to historiography. The reason, he argues, is that suddenly the actions of individuals (like prophets), the events of the past, and the circumstances of all peoples of the earth had now become matters of religious importance, in addition

³³ “[The Significance of Ibn Sina's Canon of Medicine in the Arab and Western worlds.](#)” Science and Its Times: Understanding the Social Significance of Scientific Discovery. *Encyclopedia.com*. 11 Jan. 2017.

³⁴ Collected by al-Bukhāri (5729) and Muslim (98)

³⁵ Rosenthal, Franz. *Knowledge Triumphant*. Boston: Brill, 2007. p. 2

to the abundance of historical data in the Quran which Muhammad ﷺ brought that incentivized pursuing additional illustrative historical information.

Robert Briffault (d. 1948), a British surgeon and author on social anthropology, said,

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world... The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist of startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to the Arabs; its own existence... Observation and experiment are the two sources of scientific knowledge... Greek method of acquiring scientific knowledge was mainly speculative; hence science could make little headway... Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method... Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge.³⁶

Conclusion

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was not just an orphan who adopted the world with his compassion, but an illiterate shepherd who provided an extraordinary prism that answers every theological, ethical, or civilizational inquiry until the end of time. He propounded a message of profound substance, coupled with fine-tuned laws that remained flexible enough that the message would remain forever relevant, and never become obsolete. Such vitality reflects the impeccable equilibrium that was struck—without any trial and error phase—in his teachings. He offered the world a definitive message, but one also versatile enough to accommodate the transformations in world dynamics that were unimaginable to the brightest minds 1400 years ago.

³⁶ See: *The Making of Humanity*, by Robert Briffault

With that, we complete our tour of what some describe as the intellectual miracle of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ ; namely that his message was the most compelling facet of his prophethood and the strongest indicator of its divine origins.