

# Islam's Perfect Man

Koran Chapter 33:21 states that Muhammad is the perfect man for Muslims to imitate if they want to meet Allah in paradise:

*Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.*

## Tortured & killed unbelievers

Who is an “unbeliever”? According to Muhammad and the Koran, an unbeliever/disbeliever is anyone who rejects Islam:

*Imam Ahmad recorded from Tamim Ad-Dari that he said, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "This matter (Islam) will keep spreading as far as the night and day reach, until Allah will not leave a house made of mud or hair, but will make this religion enter it, while bringing might to a mighty person (a Muslim) and humiliation to a disgraced person (who rejects Islam). Might with which Allah elevates Islam (and its people) and disgrace with which Allah humiliates disbelief (and its people)."*<sup>1</sup>

Tamim Ad-Dari, who was a Christian before Islam, said:

*"I have come to know the meaning of this Hadith in my own people. Those who became Muslims among them acquired goodness, honor and might. Disgrace, humiliation and Jizyah befell those who remained disbelievers."*<sup>2</sup>

3: 32 of the Koran states that those who turn away from Allah and Muhammad are unbelievers. 34:31 states that those who do not believe in the Koran are unbelievers. And 5:17 and 5:72-73 specifically state that Christians are unbelievers.

So how did Muhammad treat unbelievers?

Shortly before Muhammad left Mecca in 622 to emigrate to Medina, he was already talking about slaughtering those who did not become Muslims. In the report below a group of non-Muslim Meccans were gathered outside Muhammad's front door. During the encounter with this group, Muhammad confirmed that if they became Muslims they would be the “kings of the Arabs and the non-Arabs,” but if they did not become Muslims they would “meet with slaughter from him”:

*...among them [the Meccans] was Abu Jahl b. Hisham, who said, while they were waiting at his door, “Muhammad claims that if you follow him in his religion, you*

*shall be the kings of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, that after your death you shall be brought back to life and your lot shall then be gardens like the gardens of Jordan. He also claims that if you do not do this, you shall meet with slaughter from him, and that after your death you shall be brought back to life, and your lot shall then be a fire, in which you shall burn.” Then the Messenger of God came out, took a handful of dust and said, “Yes, I do say that; and you are one of them.”<sup>3</sup>*

Muhammad commanded his Muslim warriors to fight the unbelievers until they accepted Islam or paid protection money (*Jizya*):

*...when the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment he would especially exhort him to fear Allah and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say: Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war...When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action...Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them...If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the Jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them...<sup>4</sup>*

One month before Muhammad's death, he issued the following order to one of his military commanders:

*Fight in the name of Allah, in the way of Allah, and kill him who disobeys Allah.<sup>5</sup>*

Here are some details:

## **Muhammad Tortured Unbelievers**

Muhammad personally ordered the torture of three non-combatant non-Muslims:

After the conquest of the Jewish community of Khaybar in June 628, Muhammad wanted to find a bag of treasure that had been hidden there by members of the Banu an-Nadir tribe. Muhammad was assured by Kinanah bin al-Rabi that the treasure had been used up in war; in reality, bin al-Rabi had hidden it.

Muhammad asked another Jew, Sa'yah ibn-'Amr, about the bag of treasure:

*“What has become of the bag which Huyai brought from the banu-an-Nadir?” To this Sa'yah answered, “Wars and expenses have emptied it.” But the Prophet remarked, “It was a short time and a big sum of money. Moreover, Huyai was killed before that.” The Prophet then turned Sa'yah over to az-Zubair and the latter put him to the torture.<sup>6</sup>*

As a result of the torture, Sa'yah revealed where some of the treasure was hidden.

Muhammad then returned to Kinanah bin al-Rabi to find out the location of the rest of the treasure. But when bin al-Rabi refused to answer, Muhammad ordered one of his soldiers, "Torture him until you extract what he has," so a fire was built on Kinanah's chest until Kinanah nearly died. Kinanah's head was then cut off by one of the Muslims.<sup>7</sup> Muhammad then turned his attention to Kinanah's brother:

*He commanded that the other Ibn Abi l-Huqayq (the brother of Kinana) also be tortured and then handed over to the care of Bishr b. al-Bara' to be killed by him. Some say that he cut off his head. After that the Messenger of God felt he had the right to their property and imprisoned their children.*<sup>8</sup>

Such treatment of unbelievers should come as no surprise. The Koran has this to say about unbelievers:

1. They are among the worst of creatures and destined for Hell (8:22 and 98:6).
2. Allah will torment them and strike terror in their hearts (3:56 and 3:151).
3. They "are ever to you [the Muslims] open enemies" (4:101).
4. Muslims are commanded to be harsh against and disgrace unbelievers (9:14, 9:73, 9:123, 48:29, and 66:9).
5. Muslims can even severely hurt unbelievers as a warning, and in order to create fear among other unbelievers (8:57).

## **Muhammad Killed Unbelievers**

Muhammad said there was no penalty for a Muslim who killed a disbeliever:

*It was narrated from 'Amr bin Shu'aib, from his father, from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah said: "A Muslim should not be killed in retaliation for the murder of a disbeliever."*<sup>9</sup>

Muhammad even specifically ordered that elderly non-Muslims were to be killed:

*It was reported from Al-Hasan, from Samurah bin Jundab who said: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'Kill the old polytheist men, but spare their children.'"*<sup>10</sup>

Muhammad personally ordered the killing of Abu Rafi' and the poetess 'Asma' bint Marwan, non-Muslims who had criticized him and/or Islam.

And then there was the case of Uqba bin Abu Mu'ayt, a non-Muslim. He had initially listened to Muhammad preaching in Mecca. However, after being soundly criticized for doing so, Uqba spat in Muhammad's face,<sup>11</sup> and then continued to mistreat Muhammad.<sup>12</sup> During the later Battle of Badr in March 624, Uqba was captured by the Muslims. After the battle was over, Muhammad ordered that Uqba be killed. Uqba said, "But who will look after my children, O Muhammad?" Muhammad replied, "Hell."<sup>13</sup> Muhammad then commanded,

*"...Lead him, O 'Asim, and cut off his head." 'Asim did so.<sup>14</sup>*

In September 624 Muhammad ordered the killing of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, a Jewish poet in Medina who had criticized Muhammad:

*The next morning, the Jews were in a state of fear on account of our attack upon the enemy of God [al-Ashraf], and there was not a Jew there but feared for his life. The Messenger of God said, "Whoever of the Jews falls into your hands, kill him." So Muhayyisah b. Mas'ud fell upon Ibn Sunaynah, one of the Jewish merchants who was on close terms with them and used to trade with them, and killed him.<sup>15</sup>*

And Muhammad also stated that a similar fate would befall anyone who insulted him:

*The Jews and the polytheists among them were alarmed. They came to the Prophet when it was morning and said, "Our companion, who was one of our lords, was knocked up at night and murdered treacherously with no crime or incident by him that we know of." The Messenger of God replied, "If he had remained as others of similar opinion remained he would not have been killed treacherously. But he hurt us and insulted us with poetry, and one does not do this among you, but he shall be put to the sword."<sup>16</sup>*

And as has been mentioned elsewhere, Muhammad personally supervised the beheading of 600-900 captured Jewish men, including both combatants and non-combatants.

From about April 624 until January 630 Muhammad had a standing order for the live mutilation, and then killing of a particular non-Muslim:

*As for Habbar b. al-Aswad, indeed the Messenger of God, whenever he sent out an expedition, commanded it regarding Habbar that if he were found he should be burned in the fire. Then he changed his mind saying: Surely only, the lord of the hell fire should cause such suffering. Cut off his hands and his legs if you have power over him, then kill him...His crime was that he sought out the daughter of the Messenger of God, Zaynab, and struck her back with a spear until she who was pregnant fell and lost her baby. The Prophet permitted his blood.<sup>17</sup>*

However, after the conquest of Mecca in January 630, Habbar converted to Islam and was spared by Muhammad.

Muhammad had also ordered the killing of a number of non-Muslim poets in Mecca who had criticized him and/or Islam. This was best summed up in a letter written shortly after the Muslim conquest of Mecca in 630. It was sent to a non-Muslim poet who used to satirize Muhammad, from the poet's brother; here is a portion of that letter:

*Allah's Messenger killed some men in Makkah who used to satirize and harm him, and the poets who survived fled in all directions for their lives. So, if you want to save your skin, hasten to Allah's Messenger. He never kills those who come to him repenting. If you refuse to do as I say, it is up to you to try to save your skin by any means.<sup>18</sup>*

So to save their lives from Muhammad, poets had to flee Mecca. This story had a happy ending, because after further correspondence between the brothers, the poet travelled to Medina, converted to Islam, and was forgiven by Muhammad.

And after the conquest of Mecca in January 630, Muhammad sent out a military force and had given the commander a general order to kill anyone who was not a Muslim:

*... 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Nawfal Ibn Musahiq al-Qurashi related to me on the authority of his father; he said: The Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him, sent us on the day of Nakhlah (when al-'Uzza was demolished), and said: Slay the people as long as you do not hear a mu'adhhdhin [one who calls Muslims to prayer] or see a mosque.<sup>19</sup>*

Muhammad had actually stated that it was his "practice" to kill unbelievers. In December 627 Muhammad had sent a Muslim force of 700 men under the command of 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Awf to Dumat al-Jandal to "invite them to Islam." Muhammad commanded 'Abd al-Rahman:

*Take it [the standard], Ibn 'Auf; fight everyone in the way of God and kill those who disbelieve in God... This is God's ordinance and the practice of his prophet among you.<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 4, pp. 412-413.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>3</sup> *The History of al-Tabari: Muhammad at Mecca*, p. 143. This was similarly reported in *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 5, No. 1731R1, pp. 162-163. This *hadith* about Muhammad ordering these three courses of action was also reported in *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Vol. 3, No. 2612, pp. 262-264; *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 4, No. 2858, pp. 98-100; and *Jami' At-Tirmidhi*, Vol. 3, No. 1617, pp. 376-378.

<sup>5</sup> *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 235.

<sup>6</sup> *The Origins of the Islamic State*, p. 43.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 515. This was also reported in *The History of al-Tabari: The Victory of Islam*, pp. 122-123. And according to Al-Waqidi:

*Al-Zubayr hurt him [Kinanah]; he came to him with a firebrand and pierced him in the chest.*

*The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 331.

<sup>8</sup> *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 331. Also see *The Origins of the Islamic State*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>9</sup> *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2659, p. 528. This statement by Muhammad was also reported by Ibn 'Abbas - see *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2660, p. 529. The legal ruling that a Muslim was not to be killed for killing a non-Muslim was also reported by the fourth Caliph, Ali bin Abi Talib: e.g. *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2658, p. 528; and *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, Book 56, No. 3047, p. 177.

<sup>10</sup> *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Vol. 3, No. 2670, p. 296.

<sup>11</sup> *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>14</sup> *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 57.

<sup>15</sup> *The History of al-Tabari: The Foundation of the Community*, pp. 97-98. This is also reported in *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 369; and a shorter version is in *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Vol. 3, No. 3002, p. 499.

<sup>16</sup> *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 96. Muhammad's attitude toward such poets is best summed up in this *hadith*:

*Saalim ibn 'Abdullah said: I heard Ibn 'Umar say: I heard the Messenger of Allah say: "If the belly of one of you were to be filled with pus, that would be better than filling his mind with poetry."*

*Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, Vol. 4, No. 5704, p. 441.

<sup>17</sup> *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 422.

<sup>18</sup> *The Sealed Nectar*, p. 521.

<sup>19</sup> *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 184.

<sup>20</sup> *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 672.

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