

Sharing in the Difficulties of Others

The Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was a religious leader who shared in the life of the people in every way. He never considered himself to be separate from his community and it was never the case that his friends and followers lived in difficulty while he lived in comfort. Rather, he was in the front line of all events and shared in their happiness and sorrow and he exerted himself with regard to difficulties. Reference will be made to a number of examples of his custom of sharing in the difficulties of others:

1. The Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, peace be upon him, has said, "When digging the ditch (known as *khandaq*) I was with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) when Faṭimah (the Prophet's daughter and 'Ali's wife, may peace be upon them all) came and brought some bread. The Messenger of God asked, 'What is this?'

Faṭimah (peace be upon her) replied, 'I made a loaf of bread for Hasan and Husayn (the two sons of 'Ali and Faṭimah, may peace be upon them all) and I have brought some of it for you.'

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, 'After three days of being hungry, this is the first thing your father will eat.'" ¹

2. A number of Arab tribes set out for Madinah in order to overthrow the newly instituted government of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), who had become aware of the enemies' plans, gathered his companions and consulted with them concerning how to defend themselves and oppose the enemies.

Salman al-Farsi suggested that they dig a trench on the outskirts of Madinah to prevent the enemy from entering the city. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) endorsed this idea.

The Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) appointed groups of Migrants [Muhajirin] and Helpers [Ansar] to dig a ditch every twenty to thirty steps apart. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) himself took a pick and started digging where the Migrants stood and the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) would take the loose dirt out of the ditch. They

continued until the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) began sweating and grew tired from working so hard. At that point he said, "There is no comfort other than the comfort of the Afterlife. O God, forgive the Migrants and the Helpers."

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah has said, "When we were digging the ditch, we came upon a hard spot. We said, 'O Messenger of God, we have arrived at a hard spot. What should we do?' He said, 'Pour a little bit of water on it.' Then, when he was so hungry that he had tied a rock to his stomach, he took his pick and said God's name three times and then struck. He shattered those rocks to the point that they became like gravel."[2](#)

3. During the last days of his life while lying on his death bed, the Messenger of God, (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) told Bilal to summon the Muslims. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) went to the mosque, ascended the pulpit and asked them, *"My companions, what kind of prophet was I to you? Did I not take part in jihad with you? Were my teeth not broken (in battle)? Was my face not covered with dirt? Did blood not flow over my face to the point where it covered my beard? Did I not tie a rock to my stomach out of hunger?"*

His companions replied, "Yes, O Messenger of God. Verily, you were patient and you forbade evil. May God reward you with the best reward."

He replied, *"May God reward you with an outstanding reward as well."*[3](#)

[1.](#) Hayat al-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 119.

[2.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 20, p. 198.

[3.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p.508.

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