

In the name of Allah the most beneficent the most merciful

Rasulullah's ((sallallahu alayhe wa sallam)) Sense of Humor

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) is an example for the Muslim to follow in every aspect of life, as it is mentioned in the by Allah the almighty in the Quran **"In the Messenger of Allah is a good example for you to follow."** [Quran Surah#33 Ayah #21]. Even in joking and having a good sense of humor Rasulullah has set an example for us. It is reported that the Prophet was asked by his companions: **"You are joking with us."** He said, **"But I never say anything but the truth."** [Authentically reported in Sahih Bukhari]

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) used to joke, but he never said anything but the truth in his jokes. The Sahabah took the same approach to humor. There are many delightful reports about the jokes exchanged between the Prophet and the Sahabah. Among the stories related in the books of hadith and sirah is the report that the Prophet used to joke with the small child of one of the Sahabah, a boy called Abu 'Umayr, who had a small bird he used to play with. One day he saw the child looking sad, so he said, **"Why do I see Abu 'Umayr looking sad?"** The Sahabah told him, **"The nughar [a small bird, like a sparrow - author] which he used to play with has died, O Messenger of Allah."** The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) began to gently joke with the child, saying, **"O Abu Umayr, what happened to the nughayr?"** [Nughayr: diminutive of nughar. - author. In Arabic, this is a play on words, because of the rhyme between the boy's name and that of the bird. - Translator. This story was reported in Hayat al-Sahabah, 3/149]

A man came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) to ask him to give him a beast to ride. The Prophet jokingly told him, **"I will give you the offspring of a she-camel to ride."** He said, **"O Messenger of Allah , what will I do with the offspring of a she-camel?"** The Prophet said: **"Are riding-camels born except from she-camels?"** [Reported by Imaam Ahmad, Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi, with a Sahih isnad.]

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal reported from Anas (radhiallahu `anhu) that there was a man from the desert people whose name was Zahir. He used to bring gifts from the desert to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) , and in return the Prophet would provide him with whatever he needed when he went out to fight. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said, **"Zahir is our man of the desert, and we are his town-dwellers."** The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) loved him very much, and he (Zahir) was an ugly man. One day the Prophet came to him whilst he was selling some goods. He embraced him from behind. The man could not see him, so he said, **"Let me go! Who is this?"** Then he turned around and recognized the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam), so he tried to move closer to him once he knew who it was. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) started to say, **"Who will buy this slave?"** Zahir said, **"O Messenger of Allah , you will find meunsellable."** The Prophet

(sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said, **"But in the sight of Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) you are not unsellable,"** or he said, **"But in the sight of Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) you are valuable."**

An old woman came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) and said: **"O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) that I will enter Paradise."** He said jokingly, **"O Mother of So-and-so, no old women will enter Paradise."** The old woman went away crying, so the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said, **"Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) says: (We have created [their Companions] of special creation, and made them virgin-pure [and undefiled])[Quran 56:35-36]."** [Reported by al-Tirmidhi, it is hasan because of the existence of corroborating reports.]

One of the ahadith that reflects the Prophet's (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) sense of humor and enjoyment of fun is the report that Imaam Ahmad gives from 'A'ishah who said: **"I went out with the Prophet on a journey. At that time I was a young girl and was quite slender. The Prophet told the people, 'Go on ahead,' so they went ahead, then he said to me, 'Come, let us have a race.' So I raced with him, and I won. He let the matter rest until I had gained weight. Later, I accompanied him on another journey. He told the people, 'Go on ahead,' so they went ahead. He said to me, 'Come, let us have a race.' So I raced with him, and he won. He began to laugh, and said, 'This is for that.'"**

The Sahabah saw nothing wrong with joking or having fun, as they saw the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam), their leader and teacher, occasionally doing so. The many delightful stories about their sense of humor reflect the easy-going nature of the first Islamic society, and how far removed it was from narrow-mindedness and gloom.

In al-Adab al-Mufrad, Imaam Bukhari reports from Bakr ibn 'Abdillah who said: **"The Companions of the Prophet used to throw melon-rinds at one another, but when the matter was serious, they were the only true men."**

This is moderate, Islamically acceptable humor, which does not go beyond the bounds of truth, or lessen the gravitas or manhood of a person. Rather, it serves its purpose of refreshing hearts and minds.

An example of the Sahabah's sense of humor, which made the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) laugh, is the report given by Imam Ahmad from Umm. Salamah (radhiallahu `anha). Abil Bakr (radhiallahu `anhu) went to do business in Busra, and with him were Nu'ayman and Suwaybit ibn Harmalah (radhiallahu `anhuma), both of whom had been present at Badr. Suwaybit was in charge of food on the journey, and Nu'ayman said to him, **"Feed me!"** Suwaybit said, **"Not until Abu Bakr (radhiallahu `anhu) comes."** Nu'ayman was a fun-loving man with a sense of humor, so he went to some people who had brought livestock with them, and said, **"Will you buy a sturdy Arab slave from me?"** They said, **"Yes."** He said, **"He has a big mouth, and he may tell you that he is a free**

man. If that means that you do not want to take him, then forget the matter, and do not cause trouble for me with him." They said, **"No problem, we will buy him."** So they bought him for ten young she-camels. Nu'ayman brought the animals back, and told the people: **"There he is!"** Suwaybit said: **"I am a free man!"** They said, **"He has already told us all about you,"** and put a rope around his neck and led him away. Then Abu Bakr came, and was told what had happened. He and his companions went and returned the animals and took Suwaybit back. They told the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) what had happened, and he and his Sahabah would laugh about the story for a year afterwards.

A Bedouin came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam). He entered the mosque and left his camel in the courtyard. Some of his Companions said to Nu'ayman ibn 'Amr al-Ansari, who was known as al-Nu'ayman: **"If you slaughter it, we will eat it, because we want to have some meat, and the Messenger of Allah will pay for it."** So al-Nu'ayman slaughtered it. Then the Bedouin came out and saw his saddle, so he shouted, **"They have slaughtered my camel, O Muhammad!"** The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) came out and asked: **"Who did this?"** They said, **"Al-Nu'ayman."** So he went looking for him, and found him at the home of Duba'ah bint al-Zubayr ibn 'Abdul Muttalib (radhiallahu `anha), where he had hidden in a ditch and covered himself with palm branches and leaves. A man pointed to where he was and said, loudly, **"I have not seen him, O Messenger of Allah."** The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) brought him out of the ditch, and his face was dirty from where the leaves had fallen on him. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) asked him, **"Why did you do that?"** Al-Nu'ayman said: **"The ones who told you where I was, O Messenger of Allah, are the same ones who told me to do it."** The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) began wiping his face and laughing, then he paid the price of the slaughtered camel. [See Hayat As Sahabah, 3/154, 155]

There is no clearer indication than these and similar reports of the lightheartedness and sense of humor that Islam wants its followers to have. These qualities will make a person good-natured and likeable, which will enable him to win people's hearts. No one needs such characteristics more than the Muslim who seeks to call others to Islam.