

# THE NOBLE PERSONALITY AT A GLANCE

## ***THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE PROPHET AND HIS MANNERS***

Those who accomplish great deeds in the world, particularly the prophets and reformers, are gifted with a charismatic personality and it is this personality which is the power behind all their works of reform and leadership of movements and building up of a new order, based on a particular way of thinking. Thus, while studying the Prophet's life we should first assess the personality of this redeemer of the humanity.

The appearance of a man helps a great deal in understanding his personality. The body structure, physical features and symmetry of body parts are indications of his mental and moral makeup. The face being the index of the mind, it is an open book in which a man's character and the history of his future achievements can be clearly read. We do not have any picture or image of this greatest man whereby we can have the privilege of looking at his elegance because the Prophet himself prohibited the drawing or sculpturing of his picture as he feared this would be abused and might even be worshipped, which would annul the most basic tenet of Islam. All pictures of him, drawn by non-Muslims are imaginary and are based on their biased view of the Prophet. We, therefore, have only some pen-portraits drawn by his companions, which give us a glimpse of his appearance.

**Abdullah bin Salam** was a Jew of great learning; the moment he saw the Prophet, he was convinced of the truth of his mission and embraced Islam. He said, "As soon as I saw the Prophet, I realized that this face cannot be that of an impostor." Another companion, **Abu Ramsa Taimi(R.A)** says, "I went to the Prophet with my son and the people there pointed him out to me. Immediately my son and the people there pointed him out to me. Immediately on seeing him I was convinced that he was truly a messenger of God." A caravan of merchants came to Medina and camped outside the city. The Prophet incidentally passed that way and purchased a camel, promising to send its price from home. The owner of the camel felt worried that he had trusted a man whom he did not know whereupon his mother said, "Do not worry. I have seen the face of a man which was bright like the moon. A man with such features cannot be false and if he does not send the price of the camel. I will give it

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to you myself." Later, however, the Prophet sent to him dates worth more than the price of the camel. The mother and aunt of Qarsafa had said. "We have not seen more handsome man than the Prophet. We saw light coming out of his lips." **Abu Huraira(R.A)** remarked, "**The Prophet was like a bright sun.** I have not seen a more handsome than the Prophet. **Rab'ee,** daughter of Mu'awwaz. Had said, "**If you had seen the Prophet, you would have felt as if the sun had risen.**" **Hazrath Ali(R.A)** said, "**On the very first sight of him you would feel awe.**" **Hazrath Jabir Samra(R.A)** said, "**I was once looking at the Prophet in the moonlight and comparing his face with the moon.** At last I realized that the Prophet was much more handsome than the moon." **Ka'ab bin Malik(R.A)** said, "**When the Prophet was pleased, his face became as bright as the moon and we could find from his face that he was pleased.**"

**Now let us see the statements of people about different parts of his physical features:**

### Face:

"His face shone like the moon." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"His face was round like the moon." - (Bara bin Azib)

"His face was not quite round but inclined to roundness." - (Hazrat Ali(R.A))

"Broad forehead, slanting thick brows parted in the middle. A vein protruded between the two parts which became more prominent in anger." (Hind bin Abi Hala)

### Color:

"Neither white like lime, nor tanned, but brown with whiteness predominant." - (Hazrath Anas(R.A))

"White, reddish." - (Hazrath Ali(R.A))

"White but wholesome." - (Abu Tufail)

"White and bright." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

### Eyes:

"Black, with long eyelashes." (Hazrath Ali)

"Black and drooping. Habit of looking from the corner of the eyes in shyness." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"Red lines in the white parts, wide sockets, and natural grey corners." - (Jabir bin Samra)

Nose:

"Somewhat high with unique brightness whereby it looked large at first sight." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

### Cheeks:

"Even and soft, a bit of flesh drooping at the lower end." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

### Mouth:

"Wide." - (Jabir bin Samra)

"Moderately wide." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

### Teeth:

"Thin and bright, symmetrical, openings in front teeth." - (Hazrath Ibn Abbas)

"When talking a light seemed to sparkle from the teeth." - (Hazrath Anas)

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## Beard:

"Full and thick." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

## Neck:

"Thin and long, beautifully chiselled like a statue Colour of the neck white like silver and handsome." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

## Head:

"Large but symmetrical." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

## Hair:

"Neither quite straight, nor sheep like." - (Qatada)

"Slightly curly." - (Hazrath Anas)

"Thick, sometimes touching ear lobes and sometimes reaching upto shoulders." - (Bara bin Azib)

"Parted in the middle." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"The body did not have much hair. A line of hair running from the chest to the navel." - (Hazrath Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala)

"There were some hair on shoulders, arms and upper chest." (Hind bin Abi Hala)

## General Structure:

"Body well built, bones joining limbs large and strong." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"Body was not fat." (Hazrath Ali)

"Neither tall nor short, small but middle-sized." - (Hazrath Anas)

"Inclined to be tall. Among the people he appeared to rise higher than others." - (Bara bin Azib)

"The abdomen was not protruding." - (Umme-e-Mabad)

"Despite has poor conditions and lack of proper food his body was stronger and more virile than those of better nourished persons." - (Al-Mawahib)

"I have not seen a braver and stronger man than the Prophet." - (Ibn Umar)

## Shoulder and Chest:

"Chest broad and even with the abdomen." - (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"Chest broad." - (Bara bin Azib)

"Width between shoulders more than usual." - (Hind bin Abi Hala and Bara bin Azib)

"Portion between shoulders fleshy." - (Hazrath Ali)

Arms and Hands : "Wrists large, palms wide and fingers symmetrically large." (Hind bin Abi Hala)

"I have not touched any thick or thin silk or anything else which was softer and fleshier than Prophet's palms." - (Hazrath Anas)

## Calfs and Feet:

"Calfs were not fleshy but symmetrical." - (Jabir bin Samra)

"Feet were fleshy, lower parts of feet little hollow and feet so smooth that they could not retain water." - (Jabir bin Samra)

"Very little flesh on heels." - (Jabir bin Samra)

The most graphic description of the Prophet was given by an old woman at whose house the Prophet stopped on his way from the cave of Thaur to Medina and her goats gave so much milk that the Prophet and his companions were fully satisfied and yet there was much left over. When the old woman's husband returned home and expressed his surprise, the woman gave the description of the Prophet as follows:

"Handsome features, bright face, likeable temperament, neither the abdomen protruding nor hair of the head fallen out, graceful, handsome, eyes black and large, hair long and thick, voice clear, long neck, bright black of the eye, natural grey corners, thin and drooping eyelashes, black and curly hair, silent with dignity inclined to cordiality, graceful and captivating at a distance and very sweet and most handsome from near, talk sweet and words clear, neither more nor less than necessary, all talk consistent, middle-sized, neither short so as to look insignificant nor tall to look unbecoming, a fresh twig of handsome plant, charming to look at and well- built. His companions are so devoted that they always surround him, quietly listen to what he says and promptly obey what he orders. Obeyed, liked, neither verbose nor cryptic."

The original Arabic has been translated into Urdu in the book *Rahmatul Lil Alamin*.

Dress: The Qur'an says:

*"Oh ye children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness is the best." (VII 26)*

At another place:

*"He made you garments to protect you from heat and coats of mail to protect you from (mutual) violence." - (XVI: 81)*

Thus the Prophet's dress was governed by these conditions. It was protective and dignified and with all that a dress which indicated the fear of God. It served needs and followed some strict moral principles and good taste. The Prophet hated pride and ornamentation. He said, "I am a servant of God and dress up as such." Usually the Prophet's dress consisted of loose cloth tied above the navel and reaching up to a little above the ankles, the front portion somewhat lower than the back, a little long shirt (*Kurta*) and turban. When he saw some of his companions wearing trousers he liked it and purchased a pair for himself. It was also found among the things he left after his death. Sometimes he also put on a cap and also socks. A pair of socks sent as a gift by the Negus was worn by him and he passed his hands on them in ablution (instead of washing the feet). A pair of socks presented by Wahiawa Kalbi was used by him till they were worn out. He preferred white clothes and directed that dead bodies also should be wrapped in white. His footwear was like a *Chappal*. He also put on a ring on his little finger which had the words "*Muhammad Rasul Ullah*" engraved on it and was also used as a seal. His clothes were always clean and though he disliked ostentation he never dressed like anchorites. He was very careful about his hair and particularly of his beard and ordered that those who kept beard should keep it and tidy. He always kept the following seven articles near his bed whether at home or traveling: (1) A bottle of oil, (2) Comb, (3) *Surma dani*, (4) Scissors, (5) Stick for tooth-brush, (6) Mirror and (7) A thin chip of wood. He was very fond of perfumes and was pleased to accept gifts of these.

He walked with firm and dignified steps always looking ahead. Despite his very heavy responsibilities he found time to participate in social conversations in which all kinds of religious and mundane subjects were discussed. He always spoke slowly and pronounced each word so distinctly that his listeners could remember them. The modulation of his voice in talking was most striking. Arabic language was already well-known for its brilliance and polish and the Prophet's language as he himself claimed was inspired, so in clarity, and style and comprehensiveness, his language was unique and brevity of expression was its chief characteristic, so that his few words carried great meanings. If it were possible to render into translation some of his most beautiful expressions and remarks, we may have given here some but those interested in the subject are referred to the original of these. Two of his greatest orations are, one on the conquest of Makkah and the second on his last Hajj. The last one in a way opens a new chapter of history.

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The Prophet greeted everyone whom he met on the way when he went out and was always ahead in wishing others. If he sent a message to anyone he also sent his wishes with it. If someone sent a message to him he greeted both the sender and the messenger. Once he passed by a group of children and greeted them. When he passed by a group of women he greeted them too. He used to wish everyone at home when going out and while coming in. He shook hands with friends and also embraced them and sometimes even kissed them on the forehead. While shaking hands he never withdrew his hands till the other man had withdrawn his. In the assembly of people he always chose the corner place to sit and never jumped over others to go ahead. He used to say, "I sit as a servant of God should sit." He disapproved of people rising for him in respect. If someone came to visit him he spread a sheet of cloth for him to squat on and did not dismiss the visitor till he himself wanted to leave. He never introduced any irrelevant subject in the talk but participated in the general topic of discussion and talked with his companions most cordially. Stories of pre-Islamic days were told and laughed at. Verses were also recited and commented upon. If the Prophet found from the faces that people were disinterested in any subject he would at once change the topic. He treated all those present with equal cordiality so that no one could complain of indifference or discrimination. If someone interjected an irrelevant topic in the course of the conversation, the Prophet overlooked it, reverted to the subject of discussion and then turned to the person who had talked irrelevantly. He never turned away his face from anyone unless the other one looked away or finished his talk if he was speaking in confidence. He even gave a hearing to the talk he did not like but admonished in a general way. Even for those whom he disliked the Prophet had smiling face. Once a person came to him whom he used to call the worst of his group but he talked to him with all cordiality and on Hazrath Ayesha's(R.A) expressing surprised said, "By God, the man whom people avoided because of his discourtesy will have the worst place on the Day of Judgment."

When he went to meet anyone he sent his greetings from outside and sought permission, and if it was night he wished in such a way that the person concerned might hear if he was awake and if he was asleep he might not be disturbed. If he did not receive a response, he returned without any annoyance. If anyone removed a straw or dust from his clothes he thanked him and said, "May God keep away from you everything that you dislike." He accepted gifts and offered gifts in return. If someone was harmed by him accidentally he gave him the right to retaliate or sent him some gift. If anyone came to him putting on new clothes, he would say, "*Very Good, Very Good. Wear it for long till it is worn out.*" He did not retaliate for ill-treatment from others but forgave them. If anyone accosted him even if he was one from his family, he always responded with a respectful 'yes'.

He was particularly keen on calling upon a sick person and on visiting him, he enquired about his health, sat by his side, passed his hands over his forehead and if he asked for anything to eat, he would send for it if it was not harmful. He caressed the patient, pacified him and told him "God willing, you will recover soon." He even went to call on ailing relatives who had not accepted Islam. He called on a sick Jewish child, who then accepted Islam. There was no fixed time for such visits but the moment he heard of an illness and he was free, he went to see the patient. He even called on Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, when he was ill.

When he heard of the death of anyone he visited the bereaved family members and consoled them; he prohibited loud lamentations. He insisted on the dead body being shrouded in clean white cloth. If any dead body passed before him he stood up even if the dead man was not a Muslim. He also insisted on the burial taking place immediately after death. He led the funeral prayers of Muslims and accompanied the bier. He advised that people should send food to the house where a death had occurred. He embraced the person who returned from a journey and bade farewell to those departing, saying "Please remember me in your prayers."

He was particularly interested in children whom he called flowers of the garden of God and said that it was they who would be future leaders of the Islamic movement. He patted the children and prayed for them. If a baby was brought to him he took him on his lap. If he met a child on a journey he took him on his conveyance. When he received a seasonal fruit for the first time he gave it to the children. Occasionally, he also found time to play with them.

His treatment of the people is best illustrated by **Hazrath Anas(R.A)**. This is what he said, **"I had been with the Prophet for ten years and he never snubbed me even once. He never criticized anything I did for him and he never resented if I failed to do something. He treated all his servants and dependents the same way. He never beat any of his servants."** This is further corroborated by Hazrath Ayesha(R.A) who said that the Prophet never beat any of his servants or dependents nor took revenge on anyone.

## HOME LIFE

The Prophet's public and private life was governed by one common principle. Replying to a question Hazrat Ayesha is reported to have said, "He was just like other men. He himself took care of his clothes, milked his goats, stitched his torn apparels and mended his shoes and leather buckets. He carried loads, gave fodder to animals. If there was a servant he also worked with him and shared his labour. He himself brought provisions from the market and carried them in a sheet of cloth." **Hazrath Ayesha(R.A)** also said, **"The Prophet was the most lenient man at home, smiling and cordial. In fact, there was no one more affectionate to his people than the Prophet."** According to Hazrath Ali, the Prophet was occupied at home in three kinds of activities: he spent some time in prayers and some time on his dependents and some time in rest. At the same time he spent some time for general meetings at the mosque and for friends and guests, and to receive people who came to him for their personal needs. In fact, he found very little time for rest. He had to arrange provisions for his consorts and for their training and the work of reforming women was also carried on through them. Many women came to him with their problems which they conveyed on him through his consorts. But despite that, his domestic life was never artificial or onerous. It was a man's home in which there were natural feelings. There were smiles and also tears, affections were at work and at times strains of jealousy. There were worries and also enjoyments and whenever the Prophet arrived at once the home was bright and glowing. There was conversation on general topics and sometimes there was story-telling and interesting titbits. It is related, for instance, that once Hazrath Ayesha(R.A) cooked a preparation of minced meat and wheat flour when Hazrath Sauda(R.A) was present and the Prophet was sitting between them. An atmosphere of informality prevailed in which Hazrath Ayesha asked Hazrath Sauda to take some of her preparation not agree to take it. On Hazrath Sauda's again refusing it, Hazrath Ayesha actually pasted it on her face whereupon the Prophet had a hearty laugh and told Hazrath Sauda to do the same with Hazrath Ayesha to make her stop and when Hazrath Sauda did it the Prophet laughed again. Once Hazrath Abu Bakr(R.A) came and finding Hazrath Ayesha(R.A) talking to the Prophet impertinently, lost his temper and wanted to beat her when the Prophet intervened and pacified him and said that it did not matter. When Hazrath Abu Bakr(R.A) left, the Prophet said to Hazrath Ayesha(R.A), **"Did you see how I saved you from the old man?"**

Throughout his life the Prophet woke up in the latter half of the night, cleansed his teeth, did ablution and offered *Tahajjud* prayers and recited the Qur'an very peacefully. Sometimes he stood in the prayers for such a long time that his feet became swollen and when his companions said where was the need of his putting himself to so much trouble when God had promised him forgiveness of all his lapses of the past and future, the Prophet replied, "Shall I not become a grateful servant of God?"

The Prophet's idea about the house and its furnishing was that man should pass his life as a traveller who takes a little rest under a shade and then continues his journey. It meant that those who make the next life as their goal should live in this world just to do their duties and

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to live on probation. And how could those who have to struggle here for a high ideal think of building mansions and equipping them with costly furniture and enjoying life in blissful comfort? So neither the Prophet nor his companions built large houses or furnished them. Their houses were just like rest-houses where there was provision for protection from heat and cold and preventive measures against wild animals and for privacy in regard to hygienic necessities. The Prophet had built small rooms by the mosque for his consorts in which the only decoration was cleanliness. The Prophet was so keen on cleanliness that he always exhorted his companions to keep their courtyards quite clean. Very few utensils were kept in the Prophet's house. There was a wooden bowl covered with iron which was mostly used for eating. There could be no question of stocking provisions as daily necessities were often hardly available. His bedding was of leather filled with straw. His cot was strung with jute ropes which he often used without the bedding and the marks of the rope were found on his body over which Hazrath Umar(R.A) once shed tears and said that while emperors of Rome and Iran lived in all luxury the Prophet was in that condition. The Prophet asked him if he was not pleased to find that while those people gained this world, the Prophet gained the next. Gunny bag sheets were also used as bedding and once when they were four-folded and the Prophet got such a sound sleep that he could not wake up for his *Tahajjud* prayer, he resented it and strictly prohibited making for him such 'comfortable' bedding.

His taste of food and drink was very refined. He liked meat in particular and preferred shank, neck and lion of animals and also bones of ribs. A special Arab dish prepared with soup and bread was also relished by him. Honey, vinegar, melon, cucumber, gourd, butter and rice cooked with pulses were particularly liked by him. He also liked dates mixed with milk or with butter. He also ate cucumber with salt and melon with sugar. He also put dates into water and drank from it till the evening and then threw away as keeping it longer would ferment it. While drinking he never made a noise and raised the cup from his lips three times, each time thanking God. He liked people sitting together to eat. Use of table and chair was contrary to ascetic life. Also he did not like food served in small dishes. Silver and gold utensils were prohibited and generally glass, earthen, zinc and wooden vessels were used. Before sitting on the dinner mat, he removed his shoes and washed his hands. He used only right hand while eating and always took from his side of the vessels, never dipping his fingers in the middle. He did not like to lean while eating. Generally he sat cross-legged or on folded legs with the feet put behind like in prayers. If he disliked anything he quietly left it and did not criticize. He avoided very hot food. Sometimes he cut the meat with eating he used only three fingers and did not soil them. Sometimes he also ate a fruit while standing and sometimes took two fruits together like melon and dates. Sweet dish was his favorite. He also used fried barley powdered and mixed with water. Once when almond powder was substituted he rejected it saying that it was a rich man's food. When soup was prepared he asked to increase its quantity so that the neighbors could also have it. At every morsel he used to thank God. He was very particular in washing his hands after eating. If there was a guest he urged him again and again to eat freely and well. He never refused invitation and if someone else went with him he always asked the permission of the host to include him. In offering thanks to God after dinner he also blessed the host. He got up only when others of the company had risen. If others had finished before him he rose along with the rest. He disliked blowing over hot food or drink or smelling them. Since he disliked bad breath he never used onions or garlic. If any food was sent to him, he insisted on those present to partake of it, and set apart the share of the friends who were absent. Ever since the attempt made to poison him he always enquired of the name of the food brought from elsewhere and insisted on the person who brought it to take at least a morsel from it. In spite of this refinement of taste the Prophet had often to go without food and used to say, "I eat and drink as a servant of God should do."

## PERSONAL HABIT

The Prophet often sat on his haunches and sometimes put his arms round his legs, sometimes covering his legs with some cloth. He usually rested on his left arm. While deeply thinking he was found digging the earth with some stick. When sleeping he lay on the right side and put the palm of his right hand under his cheek. Sometime he also slept on his back, sometime putting one leg over the other but always careful to see that no part of his body was uncovered. He very much disliked lying with the face downward and forbade others also to do so. He did not like sleeping in a dark room or an open roof without parapets. He performed ablutions before retiring to bed and recited prayers till he fell asleep. He snored softly in sleep. When he woke up in the night for easing himself or passing urine he generally washed his hands and face on return. A separate long cloth was kept for using at bed time when he usually removed his shirt. Since there were no latrines in the houses those days the Prophet used to go out up to two miles out of the city so as to be completely out of sight and he selected soft earth to avoid water spilling over the body. He also took care to take the cover of some rock or raised ground. He always took his bath behind a curtain or used a long cloth when bathing in a shower of rain. When sneezing he always put some cloth to his nose. He usually liked to begin his journey on Thursday and herd his conveyance at a fast speed. While taking rest during the journey he would start afresh the next stage early in the morning and while camping he worked with others on different chores. On one occasion when his fellow travelers divided the work of various items of cooking the Prophet took upon himself the task of collecting wood for fuel and in spite of others desiring to spare him he insisted on doing it and did it cheerfully. He always took some pedestrian fellow-traveler on his conveyance. When he returned from a journey he first prayed in the mosque and when the household was informed he went in without any fuss.

## HUMAN FEELINGS

The Prophet like any other human being was moved by feelings, shared in the joys as well as in the sorrows of others. He had great affection for his consorts and used to eat and drink in the same utensil with Hazrath Ayesha(R.A). He invited *Ansar* girls to play with her and once while showing her the acrobatic feats of the Abyssnians, her chin was resting on the Prophet's shoulders, and he repeatedly asked her if she was satisfied but Hazrath Ayesha (R.A) continued her interest and this lasted for a long time. For Hazrath Safiah(R.A) the Prophet bent his knees to let her step over them to mount the camel for conveyance. On one occasion the camel stumbled and both the Prophet and Hazrath Safiah(R.A) fell down and when people rushed to help them, the Prophet cried that the lady should be attended first. His son, Ibrahim, was put on the second floor of an iron-monger's house during the nursing period and the Prophet went there covering long distance and despite suffocating smoke he sat by the child and fondled and kissed him. When his daughter, Fatimah(R.A), came to him he stood up to receive her. Her sons, Hasan and Husain, were very much loved by the Prophet who used to carry them on his shoulders and played with them. Even at the time of prayers they were permitted to sit on his shoulders. To a person who was surprised on seeing the Prophet kissing Hussain, he said, "One who does not feel compassion for others should not expect for himself." When his son, Ibrahim, died his eyes were filled with tears. Again when one of his daughters died before his eyes and the maidservant Umm-e-Aiman began loud lamentation, the Prophet stopped her and on her retort that the Prophet himself was weeping, he said that such weeping comes from a feeling which is a Divine blessing. At the grave of his daughter, Umm-e-Kulsoom(R.A) also, the Prophet was in tears. Before the dead body of his foster brother, Usman bin Mazoon, the Prophet was in tears and kissed the forehead of the corpse. The Prophet himself explained his weeping in the following words: "The eyes are full of tears and the heart is sad but we can say nothing except that whatever is the Will of God must prevail." Often in grief he uttered the following verse:

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*"For us God sufficient and He is the best dispenser of affairs." - (III:173)*

He never raised his voice in weeping but sighed like a boiling kettle. His sensitive heart was also moved while praying to God and pearls shone in his eyes. On one occasion he asked Abdullah ibn Masud(R.A) to recite the Qur'an and when he came to the verse:

*"How then if We brought each people a witness and We brought thee as a witness against these people" - (IV : 41)* a flood of tears rolled down his eyes. It is a matter of great surprises how the Prophet with such delicately sensitive heart could demonstrate such patience and fortitude in times of distress and difficulties!

As mentioned above the Prophet had a cheerful disposition and used to say "Your meeting a friend with a smiling face is also a virtuous act." The Prophet said that a smiling and cheerful disposition of a person who intended to accomplish stupendous tasks helped to win the hearts of the people. He has been described as:

He met people with such cordial cheerfulness that his affection became rooted in the hearts of his companions.

His interesting and cheerful talks enlivened those around him, although he never lost balance and modesty. The portion of jest was mild like salt in the bread and there, too, never anything against truth could be found nor anyone's feelings were hurt, nor did he indulge in boisterous laughter. His laughter was a smile like the opening of flower-buds in which only teeth were visible and never the gullet. Hazrath Abu Huraira(R.A) once asked in surprise, "Do you joke with us also?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, but I never say anything contrary to truth." Some examples of the Prophet's sense of humor will not be out of place here.

Once a man asked the Prophet to give him a conveyance and the Prophet said "I will give you a camel calf ." The man said, "What shall I do with a calf?" And the Prophet said "Every camel is born of a she-camel as a calf."

An old woman came to him and requested that he may pray for her to be given a place in Paradise. The Prophet humorously said, "No old woman can enter Paradise." When the woman was leaving in tears, the Prophet asked those present to recall her and inform her that God does not send to Paradise anyone in the state of senility but has promised:

*"We have created (their companions) of special creation and made them virgins pure (and undefiled)." - (LVI : 35-37)*

it means that those entering Paradise will be given the bloom of youth.

A beduin friend of the Prophet who was on friendly terms with him was usually sent by him to market on business. Once when the beduin was selling something in market the Prophet went quietly to him and put his hands over his eyes and asked him to recognize who he was. At first the beduin was flabbergasted and when he recognized he began to rub his shoulders against the Prophet's chest. The Prophet then called out, "Who is going to purchase this slave?" The beduin said in humility, "Whosoever purchases this worthless slave be at a loss." The Prophet then remarked, "You are not worthless in the sight of God."

Once the Prophet was eating dates with his companions and playfully he threw the seeds in front of Hazrath Ali(R.A) and when they became a heap the Prophet said to Ali, "You have taken a lot of dates." Hazrath Ali(R.A) replied, "I have not eaten them seeds and all."

Once in the thickness of the Battle of the Ditch the Prophet found an occasion to laugh. It so happened that Sa'ad, the father of Amir, was aiming his arrows against an enemy who was

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promptly warding them off with his shield. Sa'ad then put the arrow in the bow and waited till the enemy put his face out of the shield and then threw the arrow with such precision that it struck the enemy's forehead and he swirled and fell in a way that his legs were lifted above, creating a ludicrous situation.

The figure of religious and godly men as generally conceived is identified with a wry face and morose disposition, and it is difficult to understand as to how the Prophet with his devotion in prayers, his God-fearing nature, his stupendous responsibilities and overhanging worries could find time for such relaxation in the scheme of life.

But in this scheme, faith and godliness do not mean abstention from relaxation. In reply to a question Ibn Umar said that the companions of the Prophet used to laugh although faith was firmly rooted in their hearts like a rock. They used to compete in archery exercises and heartily laughed together. There was a general assembly after the Morning Prayer at which pre-Islamic stories were also told and the Prophet laugh along with his companions. With the children and with his household he was always full of cheer.

## RECREATION

Recreation within bounds is an essential element of well-balanced life in order to remove its monotony and scheme of life which has no place for diversion cannot be tolerated for long by any society. The Prophet also occasionally liked to enjoy some permissible diversion. He liked to go to the gardens sometimes alone and sometimes in company and discussions on various topics were often held there. Sometimes swimming exercises were also held in which pairs of two competed with one another. Hazrath Abu Bakr(R.A) was once partner of the Prophet in this. When it rained after a long break the Prophet bathed in the shower wearing a long cloth. He took keen interest in all running and archery exercises and wrestling bouts and heartily laughed there along with others. On joyous occasions he liked playing of drum open from one side, and singing by young girls. Once on the day of Eid two girls were singing near Hazrath Ayesha(R.A) when Hazrath Abu Bakr(R.A) came and snubbed them; the Prophet intervened and allowed them to continue. On occasions of marriage also he allowed the beating of such drums. At the wedding of an Ansar girl who lived with Hazrath Ayesha(R.A), the Prophet said that the Ansar were fond of music and so a singing girl should be sent with the bride who should sing:

We have come to you. We have come to you. So you live long and we live long.

On one such occasion some girls were singing when Hazrath Amir bin Sa'ad(R.A) came and snubbed them upon which those present said, "If you want to listen, sit down, otherwise go away. We have the Prophet's permission for it." The Prophet had also a taste for poetry which somewhat differed from the prevailing style. The stream of revelation did not give him time to indulge in poetry but his taste in it was polished and he appreciated a good couplet. In fact, he gave a new trend to poetry. Jabir bin Samrah says that he attended more than a hundred meetings of the Prophet at which tales of pre-Islamic days were told and the companions recited poems. Once the Prophet greatly appreciated a line of poet Labid which said:

Beware, everything besides God is mortal.  
Its other line was:

And all pleasures are bound to fade.

Once the Prophet heard one hundred verses of Umayya bin Abi Salt, recited by Hazrath Sharid and said at the end that this man had reached very near Islam. Sometimes, especially on the

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battlefield, the Prophet unintentionally talked poetically. He asked Hazrath Hassan and Ka'ab bin Malik(R.A) to compose verses in reply to abusive verses of the enemies of Islam, and often asked Hassan to recite verses from the pulpit and remarked that these verses were more effective against the enemies than daggers. He also once said, "A Muslim performs *Jihad* with the swords as well as with his words."

## SOME SPECIAL TRAITS

The Prophet used his right hand in taking or giving anything. In dictating letters he asked the writer to begin with the name of Allah and then put the names of sender and of the addressee. The text then followed and the seal was affixed at the end. The Prophet was free from all superstitions and never consulted omens. Nevertheless, he appreciated good names and disliked bad ones. While camping on the way during a journey he selected places whose names indicated happiness or blessing or success. Similarly he did not entrust any work to a person whose name smacked of quarrel or loss. He gave work to such men whose names meant joy or success. He also changed some names for better ones. In the use of conveyance he preferred the horse and used to say that in the hair of the horse's neck there was blessing till the Day of Judgment. He cleaned the eyes, nose and mouth of the horse with his own hands. He did not like noise and turmoil and preferred calm, dignity and order in everything. Even for going to prayers he prohibited running and undue haste. He used to say "Calmness and dignity is for you." Once at the time of Hajj there was much noise and confusion and the Prophet restored order by raising his whip and said, "Undue hurry is no virtue."

A description of the Prophet's good manners needs a separate volume as his whole life was a portrayal of elegance in manners. Hazrath Ayesha(R.A) said, "His etiquette is the Qur'an." What Anas bin Malik said about him was most comprehensive. He said, "He was the best of men, most generous of men and the bravest of men." Never in his life did he hurt anyone except under the Divine law and never took revenge for any injury from others. He forgave everyone to the extent that he even forgave his most cruel persecutors of Makkah and Taif. He never refused anyone's request for help and even borrowed to help others if he could not arrange it himself or asked the person to come some other time or kept silent. The proof of his courage is that he stood up single-handedly to proclaim the truth and bravely faced all troubles and tribulations, never giving way to fear even in the most dangerous situations nor did he ever show any weakness. In the most critical times of his stay at the cave of Thaur and in the Battles of *Uhad* and *Hunain*, his faith remained unflinching and his steadfastness unparalleled.

Excerpts from: MUHAMMAD(Peace be upon Him) The Benefactor of  
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