

Inspired by the Prophet's Character The Prophet of Mercy: A Word Picture

A messenger to a tribe is transcended by a messenger to a town, who is transcended by a messenger to a whole nation. We keep ascending the ranks of greatness. We keep soaring towards the summit. We keep advancing, stride after stride, in the echelons of human perfection until we reach a level that eyes, however ambitiously they aspire, cannot reach, to find the man chosen to convey the Great Message to all of humanity, whose highest levels of virtue and ideals were shaped by Allah into a man who walked peacefully on earth. That is Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah.

(Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Aqidat Al-Muslim (Creed of Muslim))

In Daily Life

Painting a word-picture of the Prophet of Mercy, peace be upon him, his Companion, Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

“He, peace be upon him, used to give fodder to the camel and tether it, sweep the house, milk the sheep, mend his shoes, patch his garment, eat with his servant, and grind the wheat instead of him if he asked him to. He used to buy dates from the marketplace; shyness did not prevent him from hanging them on his hand or wrapping them in the hem of his garment to take them to his family.

He shook hands with the rich and the poor, the young and the old, and was the first to greet whoever met him, whether young or old, black or red, free or a slave.

He did not feel shy about accepting invitations when he was invited, even if they came from an unkempt, dust-covered person. He never looked down on anything to which he was invited.

He was lenient, generous, friendly, and cheerful. He smiled without laughing, was sad without frowning, strong without violence, modest without servility, and generous without extravagance. He was merciful towards every kin and Muslim, tenderhearted, and always contemplative. He was never satiated with food, and he never stretched his hand out of greed.”

Lady Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, the Prophet’s wife, continues the admirable picture:

“The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, never satisfied his hunger, and he never complained to anyone. He found poverty preferable to affluence and richness. Even if he spent the night starving until morning, this would not keep him from fasting during the day. Though had he wished to ask his Lord to be given the treasures of the earth, its fruits, and its luxuries, from its Eastern and Western parts, he could have done so.”

“I might have cried out of pity for him for the hunger he suffered. I would pass my hand over his stomach and say:

“May my soul be scarified for you. If only you would satisfy yourself from this world with what sustains and protects you from hunger.”

He said:

“O Aishah, my brothers from the Messengers of strong will showed patience over what is harder than this and they departed in this state of theirs. They came to their Lord, Who honored their return and rewarded them generously. I feel shame if I live in such luxury that it makes me fall behind them. Therefore, patience for a few days is more beloved to me than having my share lessened tomorrow in the hereafter, and nothing is more beloved to me than joining my brothers.”

Way of Thinking

The Messenger of Allah was in a state of continuous grief and thought, had little rest, periods of long silence, and never spoke needlessly. He always started and ended his words by the Name of Allah. His words were precise, pithy yet comprehensive, never more or less than needed.

He walked as if descending a slope. When he turned, he would turn his whole body. He always lowered his gaze. The time he looked towards the ground was longer than that towards the sky. Most of his looking was contemplative. He used to walk at the rear of his Companions, guiding their steps, and would initiate greetings with anyone he met.

He appreciated any blessing, even if trivial, and never dispraised any that he received. He was never angry about worldly life or worldly things, but when a right was violated he stood angrily in defense of it until he rectified it. Still, he never felt angry for his own person (when wronged) or sought to avenge himself.

At home, he divided his time into three: a part dedicated to Allah, a second to his family, and a third to himself, which he divided between himself and other people.

He used to occupy himself with people's concerns and guide them towards what might set right their affairs, answering what they asked about, telling them what they needed to know, and used to say:

“Let those of you who are present inform those who are absent (of the knowledge they have heard); and inform me about the needs of those who cannot convey it themselves. Truly, the one who informs a person of authority about the need of one who is unable to convey it himself will have his feet made firm by Allah on the Day of Resurrection.”

He used to inquire after his Companions, and ask about what troubled people. He used to praise and support the good things, and condemn and undermine the bad.

His method of assembly was one of knowledge, tolerance, modesty, truthfulness, and patience, in which he was always cheerful, lenient, and good-natured. He was never rude, tough, noisy, or a fault-finder. He forbade himself from engaging in disputes, excess, and things that did not concern him, and never dispraised, criticized, or sought to know the lapses of anyone.

He only talked for a good purpose. No voices were raised during his assemblies. When he talked, those sitting with him bowed their heads and listened, as if there were birds perched on their heads. They did not speak until he had stopped. None interrupted the other, nor did the Messenger of Allah interrupt anyone. He laughed at what his attendants laughed at and admired what they admired.

He never rose or sat down without mentioning Allah, and would seat himself where he found a place (not in a particular place), and advised others to do the same. He used to divide his attention between all the attendants of his assembly to such a degree that each believed himself to be the closest to him. When anyone sat or talked with him about some issue, he remained patiently with him until that person was the one to leave. Anyone who came to him with a need would leave either having it fulfilled or with a kind word. His generously noble character was spacious enough to love all people, and he became a father to them all. (At-Tirmidhi)

Perfect Manners

The Prophets and Messengers of Allah were all blessed with the most gracious appearance and the noblest characters. Allah elected them, and certainly {Allah knows best with whom to entrust His Message.” (Al-An’ am 6: 124) And as such was Muhammad.

The Almighty chose him – He is the All-Knower of His creatures – to convey His last Message, and to set the ideal example for people until the Last Day. {And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses, not for them was the choice.} (Al-Qasas 28: 68)

This choice dictates that the messenger should be at the highest level in all human characteristics, both physical and ethical. He is a human just like all other people. He may forget as they forget, marry and have children, eat food, walk in the markets, and he is not immortal on earth.

He does not know the Unseen except what Allah wills. {The All-Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His Unseen. Except to a Messenger whom He has chosen.} (Al-Jinn 72: 26-27) He is the same as all people, but he is superiorly at the highest level in any quality that can exist in a human.

Noble manners have the profoundest influence in guiding and reforming. The Prophet reached the summit of all virtues so perfectly that Allah praised him, saying: {And indeed, you (O Muhammad) are of an exalted moral character.} (Al-Qalam 68: 4)

This is the essence of the Prophet's mission: "Verily, Allah has sent me to perfect righteous manners," (Musnad Ahmad) to which he himself was the living embodiment, perfectly living what he preached. Lady Aishah described her husband, saying:

"The manners of the Prophet of Allah were (those of) the [Quran](#)." (Sahih Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, the servant of the Prophet, said:

The Messenger of Allah was the best, the most generous, and the bravest of all people. One night, the people of Al-Madinah were terrified by a sound towards which some hastened, to be received by the Messenger of Allah on his way back. He had already preceded them to the source of the sound.

He was riding an unsaddled horse that belonged to Abu Talhah, with a sword slung round his neck, and he was saying:

"Do not be frightened. Do not be frightened." ([Sahih Muslim](#))

People of self-sacrifice and valor sought protection behind the back of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during moments of intense fighting:

“Whenever the battle grew fierce and the two parties clashed, we would seek protection with the Messenger of Allah who was the closest of us to the enemy.” (Musnad Ahmad)

People of sagacity appealed to the broadness and depth of his wisdom:

The Quraysh differed over who would replace the Black Stone after the rebuilding of the Ka’bah (the Sacred House at Makkah) to the point that a war was about to erupt among them. They agreed to appeal to the judgment of the first person to enter (through the gates of the Sanctuary), which was the Messenger of Allah. When they saw him, they said: “This is Al-Amin (the Trustworthy). We will be satisfied with his decision. This is Muhammad.”

He said: “Bring me a cloth.”

He placed the stone in the middle of the cloth and said: “Let each tribe hold one side of the cloth, then lift it up together,” and then he laid it back with his own hands. (Ibn Hisham, As-Sirah An-Nabawiyah)

People of charity saw him as a more generous giver of good than the freely going wind. He left nothing of material wealth to his heirs except his white mule, his weapon, and a piece of land bequeathed to charity. Anas ibn Malik narrated:

“A man asked of the Prophet, so he gave him a flock of sheep filling a valley between two mountains. The man returned to his people, saying: ‘O people, embrace Islam. By Allah, Muhammad gives like one who fears no poverty.’” (Musnad Ahmad)

This portrayal of virtues could go on and on. In every virtue he excelled, like a brilliant light nobly glittering on the loftiest of peaks. But this grandeur and nobility of character was not a barrier that isolated him from people.

The Messenger of Allah lived so closely to people, and was lenient and kind to everyone, walking with the widows and the poor to fulfill their needs, so much so that each believed themselves to be the closest and dearest to him, in the same way that the sun sends its rays and warmth so that each person profits and has a share without feeling that others are sharing in or rivals for its warmth.

(Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Aqidat Al-Muslim)

By Haya Muhammad Eid

References

From the Book “Muhammad the Prophet of Mercy” by Haya Muhammad Eid

Dedicated to anyone not aware, not fully informed, or has been misinformed about the Prophet of Islam.