

Characteristics of The Prophet (Peace be upon him)

All praise is due to Allah, and may Allah praise Prophet Muhammad, and render him safe from all evil.

This discussion about the personality of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) will be one about the perfection of humanity, because the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had all the excellent qualities which humans could achieve, and was free from all the baseness which humans could be attributed with.

If we say the physical appearance of a person influences their personality, as do sociologists, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was the most beautiful of people as his companions, who saw him, informed us. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was of a slightly above-average height. Amazingly, in gatherings, he would appear taller than those actually taller than him – until the people dispersed. In complexion, he was whit with a rosy tinge; pale, but not excessively so. His hair was jet black and wavy, but stopped short of curling, and was kept between his earlobes and shoulders. Sometimes he would part his hair at the middle. Other times, he would wear it braided. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) had the physique of a powerful man. He had a broad upper back and shoulders between which was the Seal of Prophet hood. He had long muscular limbs, large joints and a wide girth. His lean stomach never protruded out past the profile of his chest. His face was radiant, **“as if the sun were following its course across and shining from his face,”** His shoulders were broad; he was of medium height, neither too tall nor short. He was pleasant looking and majestic, people were full of awe when they saw him for the first time, and knew that his face was not one of a liar.

‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (Rasiallahuanhu) said:

“There was none more beloved to me than the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), and none more majestic in my eyes than him. I could not bear to look at him closely out of his magnificence, and if you asked me to describe him, I would not be able to do so, for I would not look at him closely.”

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was from the noblest tribe and onew of rich lineage. He was born in wedlock. This pure ancestry and social status are among the signs of his perfect qualities. He was eloquent in speech, of sound reason, and strong in argument. He was given the conciseness of speech, such that he would speak a few words but their meanings were weighty. He had an amazing ability of convincing others and joining people’s hearts. He was able to convey what he wished with a few words. For this reason, his wife, Aa’ishah (Rasiallahuanhu), said:

“The Prophet ((Peace be upon him) would not speak much as you do now. He would speak with pauses, and if a person wished to count his words they would be able to do so.”

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was also truthful, of an impeccable character, and honored by Prophethood in addition to the qualities already mentioned, we see that he was a perfect individual and there was no room for any deficiency.

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was known amongst his people, even before he was commissioned as a Prophet for his truthfulness, trustworthiness, chastity, good opinion and social interactivity. Allah mentions in the Quran that the disbelievers knew of his veracity, and only rejected his message out of arrogance and rebelliousness. Allah () says:

(We know indeed the grief which their words cause you (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)): it is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses (the Qur'an) of Allah that the polytheists deny.) [6:33]

The disbelievers knew that he was speaking the truth, but they rejected him and did not believe in him because they feared they would lose their leadership status and influence, for all are equal in Islam. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, neither a white over a black nor a master over a slave. People are favored only by piety and god-consciousness.

Abu Jahl, one of the worst enemies of the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) once met with al-Akhnas ibn shuraik. He said to him:

“O Abu al-Hakm! Tell me about Muhammad. Does he speak the truth or is he lying? There is none present from Quraish except yourself and myself.”

Abu Jahl said: “Woe to you! Indeed he is speaking the truth. He has never lied! But if the family of *Qusayy* take leadership, tend to the pilgrims as well as prophethood, what would the rest of the Quraish have left for themselves?”

He also said: “By Allah! Indeed I know that Muhammad is a Prophet, ut when was the family of Abdu Manaaf favored with leadership?”

Abu Jahl said that he disbelieved in the Prophet (Peace be upon him) because he feared that he would lose his social status, and leadership over people.

The same may be said of the Jewish rabbis and Christian monks; they knew him like their own children. They read about him in their own scriptures, and they knew he was the Final Prophet. But they rejected him and his prophethood out of fear of losing their worldly status and pride that the Final Prophet was raised from the Arabs and not them.

The Arabs knew the trustworthiness of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to the extent that he was nicknamed “The Trustworthy.” When a wealthy woman named Khadeejah bint Khuwailid learned of his trustworthiness and noble character, she offered him to carry out business for her in Greater Syria. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) agreed to her offer, and she sent Maysarah, her servant, to help him on his journey. When he returned to Makkah with great profits, and Maysarah informed her of his trustworthiness and noble character, she desired to offer him her hand in marriage. The leaders of her time desired

to marry her due to her wealth, lineage and sound mind. However, she was looking for another type of man. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) married her and he did not marry any other woman until she died.

An incident which shows the Prophet (Peace be upon him) sound opinion, even before his prophethood, was the incident of the Black Stone. After the Ka'bah was rebuilt, the Quraishites differed among themselves as to who would replace the Black Stone in its proper place. Each tribe sought this honor. They disputed among themselves until they were about to draw blood. Finally, they decided to settle the matter by seeking the advice of an arbitrator; they agreed that the first person to enter upon them would be given this duty. The first person was Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and they were all extremely excited. They exclaimed, "The Trustworthy has come, and we are pleased with him as an arbitrator!" They then informed him of the affair. He asked for a garment and placed the stone in the middle of it, and asked each of the disputing parties to hold an end of it. He asked them to raise it and he took the stone and placed it in its place. With his wise judgment he averted bloodshed.

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was chaste, even before he was commissioned as a Prophet. He was not one who followed his desires. He had no premarital relationships, as was the custom of the Arabs of that time, neither was he similar to a monk who forbade marriage upon himself. He married Khadeejah at the age of twenty five, while she was fifteen years senior to him. All his children, male and female, were born from her except, for his son, Ibraheem.

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was not an elusive person; rather he would participate in matters of social importance. He participated with his people in the Pact of *Fudool*, in which various tribes agreed to uphold the rights of the oppressed. He took part in rebuilding the Ka'bah and would carry the blocks himself. In a hadeeth of Abu Tufail:

“When the Kha’bah was being rebuilt, people were carrying stones, and the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was carrying as well. He took his garment and placed it over his shoulders, and we said, ‘Be careful that do not uncover yourself.’ He cast aside the stones he was carrying and arranged his clothes, and never uncovered himself after that.”

He would, however, not partake with people in their vain and misguided affairs. He never venerated an idol, nor ate from that which was slaughtered on its altars. He never drank intoxicants, nor did he gamble. He never attended the gatherings of music and dance which were prevalent during his time. Allah, the Exalted, instilled in him the dislike of these things. He loved quietness, and would often ponder and reflect on the creation of Allah and universe. It was as though Allah was preparing him for Prophethood and to preach the Divine Message.

The Prophets characteristics were refined even more after he was commissioned as a prophet, due to the guidance found in the heavenly revelation of the Quran. For this reason, When his wife Aa'ishah (Rasiallahahu) was asked about his character, she said:

“His character was the Quran.”

The first noteworthy characteristic of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was his moderateness, and fulfillment of spiritual and physical needs Allah, the Exalted, says:

(But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not those who commit great crimes.) [28:77]

For this reason, when three people came to the house of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and asked about his worship, they saw it as little and said:

“Where are we in relation to the Prophet (Peace be upon him)? Allah has forgiven him his past and future sins!”

One of them said: “As for me, I will continuously fast and will not break it.” The second said, “I will pray the whole night without sleeping,” and the third said, “As for me, I will never marry a woman.”

When the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was told about what they said, he became angry and said:

“As for me, I fast and eat, I pray and sleep, and I marry women. Whoever desires other than my Sunnah is not from me!”

As for his trait of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as a husband, we see that he was loving, kind, and caring towards his wives. He understood the nature of women. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) sported and joked with them before he slept. He was extremely friendly towards them. He even raced with Aa’ishah (Rasiallahahu) to demonstrate his love for her. She said:

“The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) raced me and I won, but that was before I gained weight. After that I raced with him and he won, and then he exclaimed, ‘This (win of mine) for that (win of yours)!’”

Indeed the love, compassion, and kindness in this example is clear. Aa’ishah (Peace be upon him) said that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

“Indeed I know when you are angry and when you are pleased.”

She responded, **“How do you know that O Messenger of Allah? (Peace be upon him)**

He said, **“When you are pleased, you say, ‘... by the Lord of Muhammad,’ and when you are angry, you say, ‘...by the Lord of Ibraheem.’ ”**

She said: **“Yes, by Allah O Messenger of Allah! I only leave the mention of your name.”** (Bukhari & Muslim)

As for his trait as a father, it can be said that he was merciful and caring. He once prayed while carrying Umaamah, his granddaughter. He carried her when he was standing up and put her down when he prostrated and sat down. Sometimes when he prostrated, his two grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husain, would climb on his back. He would remain in prostration until they had their share of fun. He did not want to interfere in their gaming.

When his son Ibraheem died, the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) shed tears, and it was said to him. “Do you cry [at this] O Messenger of Allah?” He responded, “Yes, for it is a mercy.” He then said, “Indeed the eyes shed tears, the heart is saddened, but we only say that which is pleasing to our Lord. Indeed we are sad to part with you O Ibraheem.”

He was the best teacher and nurturer, for he said:

“Indeed I have been commissioned as a teacher.” (Ibn Maajah, ad-Daarimi)

He also said:

“Allah did not send me to incur hardships or harshness; rather, He sent me to teach and make things easy.”

An example of his kindness towards people when he taught them is clearly demonstrated in the Hadeeth of Anas b. Malik (Rasiallahuanhu). He said:

Once we were in the Masjid with the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), and a Bedouin entered and urinated in the Masjid! The Companions of the Messenger (Peace be upon him) said: **“Mah! Mah!** (i.e. a sign of displeasure)” The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said **“Leave him! Do not interrupt his urination [so he would not be harmed],”** so they left him to urinate! The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) then called him and said, **“Indeed these houses of worship are not suited for any of this filth such as urine or feces. They are only for the remembrance of Allah, Prayer, and recitation of Quran.”** He then ordered one of his companions to bring a bucket of water and pour it on the spot where the person urinated.

Many times, he would not confront a person who erred, but rather he corrected the matter indirectly. He would say:

“What is wrong with a type of people who do such and such...”

In doing this, he would preserve the status of the erring party and avoid exposing his fault in front of others. With this, a person would accept the advice, correct the mistake, and not return to it.

As for this attributes as a judge, one can say that he was an example of justice. The Prophet(Peace be upon him) set the foundation of justice which guarantees that all parties enjoy rights found in laws not based upon desires, love and hate, not influenced by relations, social status. Rather, it measures all with the same scale.