

MUHAMMAD THE LAST PROPHET (S.A.W) PARAGON OF VIRTUES

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The Qur'an and the history testify that the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) was excellent in his character. His honesty was exemplary. His generosity was of legendary nature. His modesty was immutable. His simplicity was unprecedented. His humility was unique. His moderation was universal. His concept and practice of cleanliness was revolutionary. His sensitivity to moral uprightness was exceptional. It is hard to describe the Last Prophet's (s.a.w.) comprehensive qualities. The present article represents humble endeavor to highlight some of the Last Prophet's (s.a.w.) virtues, relevant to all times and places.

Introduction

The main issue here is the overall picture of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). The Qur'án introduces the Prophet (s.a.w.) to the mankind in these words: "You indeed keep to the sublime way of life" (68:4). This Éyah describes Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) as a man who possesses high standard of character. Undoubtedly, each and every single dimension of his life was perfect. There was no flaw at all in his behavior towards his Creator, his own self, his family, his followers, his enemies, the people in general, the environment, and the other non-human creatures. He himself time and again reiterated that the best among the people was the best in manners and interactions.¹ The mission of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was to perfect the noble character.² Nothing remains hidden of a man from his wife. If a woman sincerely and truly admires her husband, it has some significance. One of the wives of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) namely, 'Ó'ishah observes to some questioners about the life-conduct of the Prophet (s.a.w.): "His character represented the Qur'an". It implies that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was a living embodiment of the rules, principles, instructions, commands and precepts mentioned in the Qur'an. AnasibnMÉlik served as a personal assistant of the Prophet (s.a.w.) for around ten years. He bears witness to the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the most excellent in his manners among the people.³ When the news about the Prophet's (s.a.w.) message reached the tribe of GhifÉr, one of its leaders AbÉDharr sent his brother Unays to Makkah to enquire about the message of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Unays went to Makkah, lived there for quite some time, investigated about the Prophet

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(s.a.w.) from others and also heard him directly. Upon his return to his tribe, he shared his understanding of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Among other things he said to his brother was: “The Prophet (s.a.w.), indeed, taught the people the noblest moral values.”⁴ These statements and witnessing affirm that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the paragon of virtues. Yet, these declarations are mere abstract ones. The detail of this abstract description of the Prophet (s.a.w.) is being given here below.

1-Honesty

Honesty is the most appreciable and universally acclaimed principle of ethics. It is a comprehensive trait of a person, encompassing several qualities, sincerity, truthfulness, and trustworthiness. The Prophet (s.a.w.) was very sincere, highly truthful, extraordinarily trustworthy, and always mindful of his words given to others.

He was sincere to Allah. Throughout his life he submitted to Allah alone. He invited the people to Him alone. Allah taught him to be loyal to Him alone: “Say: Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds” (6:162). The Quraysh tried, time and again, to make some compromise with the Prophet on the issue concerning God but in vain. The Prophet always rejected their offer of that nature. The approach he adopted towards the non-believers’ proposal to slightly modify his concept of unity of God was explicitly mentioned in the Qur’Ēn: “Say: O disbelievers! I worship not that which you worship, nor will you worship that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping, nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your religion and to me be my religion” (109: 1-6). His uncle, AbĒÜĒlib who supported and defended him through all the rough and tumble of the life once asked him to tone down a bit his message. The Prophet (s.a.w.) loved his uncle very much but he did not accept the suggestion and he expressed his disagreement in these words: “Even if the sun is placed in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I will not give up this mission”.⁵

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was equally sincere towards the humanity. He always felt concerned about the people around him who rejected his message. He would feel sad that those who rejected the message would enter the hell fire. His deep concern for the

people's success has been described in the Qur'Ēn: (1) "It seems you will fret yourself to death, following after them, in grief, if they believe not in this message" (18:6), and (2) "Perhaps, you will kill yourself with grief that they do not become believers" (26:2). The Prophet (s.a.w.) himself expressed how much interested he was in the people's deliverance from the hell: "The similitude of mine is to the man who lit the fire and when it enlightens the surroundings, the insects begin falling into the fire. He keeps them away but these insects ignore his warnings and fall into the fire. This is exactly what I do to you. I drag you away from the hell fire, warning you about the danger of the fire but you ignore my warnings and fall into it".⁶

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was the embodiment of the truth. The Qur'Ēn says: "Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it comes to him?" (39:32). Here in this Ēyah the word "truth" (Īidq) may signify both the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Qur'Ēn. Allah assured the Prophet (s.a.w.) that the disbelievers did not consider him a liar: "It is not you whom they consider a liar but it is the messages of Allah that they deny" (6:33). The Prophet (s.a.w.) described the lie as a symptom of hypocrisy.⁷ He also counted the act of speaking lies among the most serious sins.⁸ His followers, his enemies, and the strangers all recognized his truthfulness. The brief speech JaŅfaribnAbĒŪĒlib delivered in the court of the Abyssinian king, Negus contained, among other things, the description of the Prophet (s.a.w.). He said: "We know well about his family background and his truthfulness; he commands us to speak truth".⁹ 'AlĒibnAbĒŪĒlib reports that AbĒJahl once said to the Prophet (s.a.w.): "We do not consider you a liar but deny what you have come up with".¹⁰ During the battle of Badr al-AkhnasibnShurayq asked AbĒJahl whether he really considered the Prophet (s.a.w.) a liar. The latter answered in the negative and confirmed the truthfulness of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in these words: "By God, Muhammad is a truthful man; he never uttered lies in his life; and he opposed the mission of Muhammad (s.a.w.) merely out of clan rivalry".¹¹ 'Abd Allah ibnSalĒm was a great rabbi of the Jews in Madinah. When he first met the Prophet (s.a.w.), he was very much impressed with the brilliance of the face of the Prophet (s.a.w.). He said later that when he saw the Prophet's face, he recognized that he was surely

the truthful person.¹² Once, the Prophet (s.a.w.) went outside Madinah. He saw there a Bedouin camp and the livestock. He saw a red camel and intended to buy. He talked to the owner of the camel in this regard. The deal was agreed upon by them both. Since the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not have the money on his person, he promised to send the price soon. After the Prophet (s.a.w.) went back to Madinah along with the camel, the Bedouin leader felt sad as he did not know about the Prophet (s.a.w.), the buyer; he felt aggrieved lest he should lose the money as well as the horse. When his wife saw him sad and asked him about its reason, he said that he was unsure of getting the price of the camel he sold to a stranger. Upon this she said: "I have seen the face of the buyer (the Prophet); it was bright like full moon".¹³ She meant to say that that extraordinarily shining face can be only of someone extraordinarily honest. The Prophet (s.a.w.) sent not only the price but also the dinner to the Bedouin family.¹⁴

Upon having read the Prophet's (s.a.w.) letter, the Roman Emperor wished to see an Arab. AbĒSufyĒn, one of the Makkan enemies of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was at that time in the Roman city for business purpose. He was brought to the royal palace. The Emperor asked him various questions concerning the Prophet (s.a.w.). Two of his questions and AbĒSufyĒn's answer to them are noteworthy. In response to the question whether the people ever blamed Muhammad (s.a.w.) for speaking lies before his Apostleship, AbĒSufyĒn said: "Never". The king asked: "What does Muhammad command you?" The answer AbĒSufyĒn gave was: "He invites to worship Allah alone and not to associate any partner with Him; he demands to forsake the ancestral traditions; and he commands us about prayer, truthfulness, chastity, and generosity."¹⁵

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was the most trustworthy person in his society. The Qur'Ēn declares him as the most trustworthy person (81:21). The followers of the Prophet (s.a.w.) were appreciated by the Qur'Ēn for their higher qualities which they had developed under the training of the Prophet (s.a.w.). One of those qualities as described by the Qur'Ēn is: "they are sincere to their trusts and promises" (23:8). This quality of the believers speaks volumes of the position of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Had the Prophet not been a trustworthy person, his followers would not have developed this

trait in their life. The people of Makkah called him the trustworthy (al-amîn). When the Quraysh agreed to the name of Muhammad as the arbiter in the dispute concerning the placement of the black stone of Ka'bah, they all unanimously said: "He is the trustworthy; we are satisfied; he is Muhammad".¹⁶ The Quraysh opposed the Prophet (s.a.w.) tooth and nail after he began his mission as the Prophet of God. They hated him, yet they trusted him. They would keep their valuables with the Prophet (s.a.w.). Before his flight to Madinah, the Prophet (s.a.w.) made 'Abû 'Abdullah his representative, gave him all the trusts the people including the enemies of the Prophet (s.a.w.) had kept with him, and instructed him to hand back the trusts to the right people in his absence.¹⁷

2-Generosity

The Qur'ân says: "Verily, Allah commands justice, generosity, and giving kith and kin" (16:90). The Prophet (s.a.w.) demonstrated these qualities in his daily life. His generosity towards the relatives, friends, neighbors, family members and the people in general was the practical implementation of this divine advice: "Be generous to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are of kin, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way-farer, and what your right hands possess" (4:36). The Prophet's (s.a.w.) were not alive. His father died before his birth and the mother at the age of six. He was brought up by his uncle, Abû 'Abdullah. He always loved and cared for his uncle. He shared his uncle's responsibility by taking his cousin, 'Abû 'Abdullah under his care. He had also encouraged another uncle, al-'Abbâs to share in the burden of Abû 'Abdullah. Al-'Abbâs took Ja'far under his care.¹⁸

Jâbir ibn 'Abd Allah bears witness that the Prophet (s.a.w.) never denied any favor to anyone when asked.¹⁹ A woman presented to the Prophet (s.a.w.) a valuable and exquisitely designed shawl. The Prophet (s.a.w.) accepted it as he was in need of such garment. A Companion appreciated the beauty of the shawl and appealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to give it to him. The Prophet (s.a.w.) readily gave it to the Companion.²⁰ Anas ibn Mâlik describes the Prophet (s.a.w.) as the most handsome, most generous, and the bravest of all.²¹

In the 8th year after hijrah the Prophet (s.a.w.) was challenged by the tribe HawÉzin. Consequently, a battle ensued between the Prophet's (s.a.w.) army and the HawÉzin. The Muslim army won the battle. Thousands of HawÉzin fighters and their women and youths were made captives. Among them was al-ShaymÉ' bint al-×Érith. She claimed to be the foster sister of the Prophet (s.a.w.). When it was confirmed that she was really what she claimed, she was treated well by the Prophet (s.a.w.). She was given two options to choose: (1) stay with the Prophet (s.a.w.) comfortably, or (2) return to her people honorably. She opted for her return to her people. The Prophet (s.a.w.) enriched her with presents and granted her two slaves, a male and the other female.²²

After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (s.a.w.) addressed the vanquished Quraysh: "What do you think about the way I should deal with you?" The audience said: "We expect generosity; you are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother". The Prophet (s.a.w.), then, decreed general amnesty: "You are all now free".²³ This is an unprecedented example of generosity on the part of the victor. The Quraysh were the same people who had persecuted, humiliated, tortured, and expelled the Prophet from his place. Had he wanted to take revenge from his old and formidable opponents, he would have easily settled the score. But he preferred generosity. It was his generosity towards the Quraysh that they embraced Islam on their free will. After the battle of ×unayn when the Prophet (s.a.w.) distributed the spoils of war among the combatants, he gave special shares to AbÉSufyÉnibn ×arb, ØafwÉnibnUmayyah, 'Uyaynahibn ×iĪn, 'AbbÉSibnMirdÉS. Each of them received a hundred camels.²⁴

'Abd Allah ibn 'AbbÉS reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the most generous of all particularly in the month of fasting.²⁵ The amount of dower he paid to his wives also indicates to how large-hearted the Prophet (s.a.w.) was. He paid to Khadijah and Umm Salamah in kind, twenty pulleys to the former and a mattress, some kitchen wares, plus a manually driven grinding machine to the latter. SafÉyyah was basically a gain from the Khaybar military expedition. The Prophet (s.a.w.) married her in exchange of her freedom. The remaining seven wives, 'Ó'ishah, Sawdah, zaynabbintJahsh, ZaynabbintKhuzaymah, ×afĪlah, Umm ×abÉbah, and MaymÉnah were given four hundred dirham each as dower.

The dower to Umm ḫabĒbah was paid by Negus the Abyssinian king; and that to MaymĒnah by al-‘AbbĒsibn ‘Abd al-MuĒlĒlib on behalf of the Prophet (s.a.w.). The dower to the other five wives was paid by the Prophet (s.a.w.) himself.²⁶

AnasibnMĒlik reported that while he was walking along with the Prophet (s.a.w.), a Bedouin came, caught hold of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) dress, started dragging it with force, and said: “instruct your men to give me from the riches of God with you”. The Prophet (s.a.w.) turned towards him, laughed, and issued the order for the giving to him.²⁷ A man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the month of fasting and reported that he established conjugal relation in the day. He was advised to free a slave. He said he did not have any slave. He was, then, asked to fast sixty days consecutively. He expressed his inability to do so. He was, then, commanded to feed sixty needy people. He said he could not afford it. Then, the Prophet (s.a.w.) arranged for him date fruits sufficient for sixty people and instructed the man to spend on the needy people. The man, then, observed that none in Madinah was poorer than his family. Upon this the Prophet (s.a.w.) smiled and allowed him to take some portions for his family.²⁸

The Prophet time and again encouraged his followers to be generous towards the other people in the society particularly the unfortunate. AbĒSaĒĒd al-KhudrĒ reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Any believer who provides clothes for the naked believer, Allah will provide for him the green dresses of the paradise; any believer who feeds the hungry believer, Allah will feed him from the fruits of the paradise; and any believer who quenches the thirst of a thirsty believer, Allah will give him the pure and sealed drink of the paradise”.²⁹ The Prophet (s.a.w.) once said in his sermon, as reported by ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amribn al-‘ŌĒ: “Keep away from the niggardliness; the people before you were destroyed because of parsimony”.³⁰ It is reported on the authority of AnasibnMĒlik that a man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) who gave him a great number of livestock. When he went back to his people, he said to them: “Embrace Islam; Muhammad demonstrates generosity so as to protect you from poverty”.³¹ JĒbiribn ‘Abd Allah reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) promised to grant him a large amount of wealth from the riches of Bahrain. But before the riches of Bahrain reached Madinah, the Prophet (s.a.w.) left this

world for the heaven. When AbĒBakr received the riches from Bahrain, he made a public announcement that whosoever had been promised by the Prophet (s.a.w.) or whosoever had given loan to the Prophet (s.a.w.) should come to him to take their dues. JĒbiribn ‘Abd Allah went to AbĒBakr and told him about the promise of the Prophet (s.a.w.). AbĒBakr gave him around one thousand five hundred dirham.³² This generosity of AbĒBakr was the re-demonstration of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) generosity. Had the Prophet (s.a.w.) been alive at the time of the arrival of Bahraini riches, he would certainly have done the same as AbĒBakr did.

3-Modesty

Modesty here signifies decency. It is related to mainly three dimensions of human life: (1) dress code, (2) physical gestures, and (3) the language. In order to gauge one’s decency these three things are to be looked at. The dress code of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was modest covering his ‘awrah. He never dressed any clothes of any make and design which could be considered immodest or indecent. The male’s ‘awrah (the parts of body to be covered), according to the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.), implies right from above the waist unto below the knee. The Prophet (s.a.w.) never opened his ‘awrah in public. Certain physical poses are considered indecent. A modest person loathes moving his own body sending shameless message; he does not even imagine doing that; he does not like anyone twisting the body immodestly. The Prophet (s.a.w.) always remained far away from such physical gestures as to be deemed below standard. This is a matter of common sense as to which physical poses are decent and which are indecent. The use of abominable words makes the language indecent. The Prophet (s.a.w.) never used a language which would be deemed as indecent. The Prophet’s (s.a.w.) abstinence from all sorts of shameful thoughts and deeds was consequent upon the command of Allah: (1) “Say: My Lord has indeed forbidden indecent deeds, whether open or secret” (7:33), and (2) “Come not nigh to indecent deeds, whether open or secret” (6:151).

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amribn al-‘ÓĪ reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) never behaved lewdly with anyone, and never used bad language for anyone.³³ AnasibnMĒlik reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) never reviled any one, never behaved shamelessly with anyone, and never cursed any one.³⁴ ‘Ó’ishah reported that a person whom the

Prophet (s.a.w.) considered a man of bad behavior met the Prophet (s.a.w.) who talked to him nicely. ‘Ó’ishah expressed surprise over the nice approach of the Prophet (s.a.w.) to a socially evil person. Upon this the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “O ‘Ó’ishah! The worst person in the society is one whom the people abandon merely due to his bad mouthing”³⁵.

AbĒSaŃĒd al-KhudrĒ described the modesty of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in these words: “The Prophet (s.a.w.) was more modest than the virgin in her seclusion. We would recognize from his face expression that he disliked the thing he saw”³⁶. It is reported on the authority of ‘ImrĒnibn ×uĒlayn that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “The modesty invariably leads to something good”³⁷. The Prophet (s.a.w.) once advised a man who was rebuking his brother for his immodesty: “Leave him; modesty is an ingredient of faith”³⁸. This statement of the Prophet (s.a.w.) makes it abundantly clear that the faith and the immodesty cannot go hand in hand. In other words, an immodest act indicates to one’s weak faith. AbĒMasŃĒd reported that one of the advises the Prophet (s.a.w.) made at the early stage of his mission was this: “If you do not feel ashamed of doing something shameful, you may do anything bad”³⁹. AbĒHurayrah reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) warned of serious consequences those who do something in their privacy at night and share it with the people the following day disclosing the detail of what they did.⁴⁰

One may appreciate the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) approach to modesty further if one looks at it against the Arabian Peninsula backdrop. Arabs in general were used to shameful thoughts, expressions, and acts. Arabic Poetry of the pre-Islamic period speaks volumes of the Arabs’ taste. They did not feel ashamed of composing poems on their sensual adventures detailing the adulterous experiences brazenly. An example of such poetry may suffice to bring the idea home. Imra’u al-Qays, one of the highly acclaimed classical Arab poets, shares his sexual engagement with women in this way:

“Many a fair one like you, though not like you virgin, have I visited by night. And many a lovely mother have I diverted from the care of her yearning in fact adorned with amulets. When the suckling behind her cried, she turned round to him with half her

body but half of it, pressed beneath my embrace, was not turned from me”.⁴¹

While the modesty is praiseworthy attitude, the Prophet (s.a.w.) declared it harmful in learning the knowledge. Muslim women would come to the Prophet (s.a.w.) asking him questions concerning exclusively feminine problems; and the Prophet (s.a.w.) would answer properly. Sources have recorded one particular case in which a woman namely, Umm Sulaym asked the Prophet (s.a.w.) whether the woman after the nocturnal discharge was required to take bath. This question seems to be sleazy but for the sake of knowledge it is allowed to be shared with the knowledgeable. The Prophet (s.a.w.) did not see anything wrong in this question and he answered: “Yes, if she saw the mark of water on her person”.⁴²

One may be wondering as to why, then, the Prophet (s.a.w.) cursed the people. It should be born in mind that the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not generally curse any particular person; he rather cursed certain bad acts, using the common nouns and not referring to any person in his name. For example, the Prophet cursed those involved in the riba-based monetary transaction, the person doing the tattoo work and the person getting his body tattooed, and the sculptor.⁴³ From this report it is obvious that the Prophet (s.a.w.) cursed not any particular person but rather the people in general for doing this or that. Besides, the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not apply any abominable word in his curse. He simply said: “The curse be on so and so”. Such statement may not be categorized as shameless or below standard. The Prophet (s.a.w.) never cursed anyone in his presence causing him to feel humiliated. He rather advised his followers not to humiliate anyone in his presence by using the word “curse”. Once when a few Jews came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) greeting him wrongly with the phrase “al-sÉm ‘alaykum” (death upon you), ‘Ó’ishah retorted back saying: “The same to you; the curse of Allah and His anger upon you”. The Prophet (s.a.w.) immediately said: “O ‘Ó’ishah! Relax; you should be polite; you must avoid harsh and foul words”.⁴⁴

4-Purity

Maintaining purity signifies keeping the body and the soul neat and clean. The very second revelation of the Qur’Én comprising some

of the first *Āyah* of *sūrah al-Muddaththir* (74:1-5) contained various instructions to the Prophet (s.a.w.). One of these first commands is: “Keep thy clothes clean” (74:4). In the very beginning of his mission, the Prophet (s.a.w.) was advised by Allah to keep his garments neat and clean. It is significant against the Arabian backdrop where cleanliness of the body and the clothes did not carry much weight. With the above instruction (74:4), the Prophet (s.a.w.) and, by implication, his followers were guided to lead a pure life. Pure soul and impure body are opposed to each other. Purity of the inner self entails the purity of the outer self. The soul of the Prophet (s.a.w.) had already been purified by his total submission to God, as instructed in the first revelation (96:1-5). He, then, was invited to maintain outward tidiness. Scholars such as al-Shaḥīdī, Mujāhid, Saḥībī, and al-Ḥāfiẓ are of the view that the above *Āyah*—“keep thy clothes clean”—constitutes a command to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to purify his conduct.⁴⁵ There is room in the *Āyah* for such interpretation, as the Arabic idiom “*Uḥir al-Thiyāb*” (one with clean clothes) signifies the purity of one’s character. But it is noteworthy that the succeeding *Āyah*—“and all abomination shun”—does speak about the cleanliness of the character. Thus in the same revelation the Prophet (s.a.w.) was invited to be mindful of both the kinds of purity, inner and outer. These two directives, then, implies the purification of everything, body, clothes, wares, residential place, and mosque, on the one hand and thoughts, faith, conduct and behavior, on the other. The Prophet (s.a.w.) truly maintained the purity of everything in his life.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) would, as Anasībī reported, perform ablution before every prayer.⁴⁶ He would perform ablution seriously so as to make the face, the hands, and the feet fully clean.⁴⁷ He advised his followers to wash their hands before thrusting them into the pot of water.⁴⁸ He warned of serious consequences those who urinated carelessly, did not mind if the urine got splashed on his body and clothes, and did not clean the effected places later.⁴⁹ One day a stranger entered the mosque in Madinah and urinated there. The Prophet (s.a.w.) immediately asked the people to wash the effected place with water.⁵⁰

Al-Bukh r  and other mu addith n have recorded a tradition that the Prophet (s.a.w.) enjoined upon some sick people to drink camel milk and urine.⁵¹ How can one accept this report reliable? Is it reliable merely because it has been recorded by al-Bukh r ? The urine, whether human or animal, is impure. The Prophet could not have advised some one to drink what was impure. This tradition contrasts with the Prophet's (s.a.w.) sensitivity to purity. He made it crystal clear that the purity was intrinsically connected with Islamic faith.⁵²

The Prophet (s.a.w.) once met  udhayfahibnYam n and intended to shake hand with him, but the latter informed him that he was physically impure and needed to take bath. Upon this the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Muslim does not remain impure (najis)".⁵³ On another occasion the Prophet (s.a.w.) met Ab Hurayrah on the way. Ab Hurayrah was impure (junub ) hence he ran away to take bath. When he came back, the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked him as to where he had been. Ab Hurayrah informed him that he was impure and disliked to be with him. Upon this the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Be glory to Allah (Sub n Allah)! Verily, Muslim does not remain impure".⁵⁴ The Prophet (s.a.w.) prescribed for himself as well as his followers, mandatory bath after the physical impurity caused by the physical union with wife.  mar ibn al-Kha b enquired the Prophet (s.a.w.) about whether one was allowed to sleep without taking bath after sex. The answer given by the latter was that he should at least wash his private part and perform ablution before sleep.⁵⁵

The dietary habit of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was governed by his divinely prescribed position: (1) "O Messengers! Eat out of what is good and pure, and do righteous deeds: I am indeed well acquainted with what you do" (23:51), and (2) "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel with them: he commands them what is just and forbids them from what is evil; he makes for them lawful what is good and pure and prohibits them from what is bad and impure" (7:157). The Prophet (s.a.w.) always used what was explicitly good and pure. He was so sensitive to the concept of purity that he never took the meat of lizard, even though he did not declare it unlawful. He explained that it was not included in the list of his edible dishes.⁵⁶

5-Moderation

The nation the Prophet (s.a.w.) developed was justly balanced (2:143). It was free from extremism. ‘O’ishah reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.) always preferred the relatively easy thing as long as it was not sinful.⁵⁷ He adopted a moderate approach in his social and spiritual life. Some people once enquired from the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) harem about the daily routine of the Prophet (s.a.w.). What they were briefed appeared little to them. They interpreted this as the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) special privilege and vowed not to sleep at night, abstain from eating meat, and remain celibate forever respectively. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) was informed about such decisions made by those people, he invited the people in general to assemble and delivered a speech clarifying that he was the most pious of all yet he lived a normal life. He emphatically conveyed the message that he prayed as well as enjoyed rest; he observed fasting as well as broke it; he also married. He further maintained that all this was his way of life and one who deviated from this had nothing to do with him.⁵⁸ ‘UthmĒn ibn MaĐĒn, a Companion who was more inclined towards spiritual austerity, requested the Prophet (s.a.w.) to allow him to castrate but he was strictly denied the permission.⁵⁹ Another Companion namely, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amribn al-‘ŌĪ used to fast in the day and devote his night to prayer. The Prophet (s.a.w.) advised him: “Do not do that; fast and break; pray and sleep; your body indeed has right over you; in fact your eyes have right over you; and verily, your wife has right over you”.⁶⁰

A stranger came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and wished to know about his message. The Prophet (s.a.w.) told him about the five times a day prayer, fasting in the month of RamaĒn, and charity. The former, then, said that he would do neither less than that nor more than that and left. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “If he was sincere, he would achieve success”.⁶¹

According to AbĒHurayrah, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Islam is indeed an easy way of life. Whosoever adopts extreme approach in it may ultimately get fed up of it; you have to follow the moderate pattern; do what you can easily do; you will, then, achieve success”.⁶² The Prophet (s.a.w.) one day entered the mosque, saw a rope secured between two columns, and asked as to why it was so.

He was told that it was for a woman namely, zaynab who prayed the entire night and when she felt tired she would take the support of that rope. The Prophet (s.a.w.) asked the people to remove the rope and said: “One should pray only as long as he can bear and upon getting tired he should take rest”.⁶³

The Prophet (s.a.w.) struck a balance between the painful poverty and the boisterous richness. In his regular invocation to Allah he would seek the refuge with Allah, among other things, from the tumult and the tribulation of both the poverty and the richness.⁶⁴ Allah had taught him a du‘ā—“O our Lord! Grant us the good in this life and the good in the life hereafter, and save us from the torment of the fire” (2:201)—which he recited more than any other invocations.⁶⁵ It shows that he was required to be moderate avoiding totally the two extremes, asceticism and materialism.

6-Simplicity

Simplicity is generally of three kinds: (1) that in the life of the unfortunate, (2) that in the life of the stingy, and (3) that in the life of the rich. The first category is merely consequential; the second extremely reprehensible; and the third highly commendable. The simplicity in the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.) falls under the third category. He was the head of the Islamic state having full access to the state treasury. He was the commander-in-chief of the army leading many a battle with victory which brought huge wealth. He was loved by his followers to the extent that they were prepared to do all kinds of possible sacrifices for his sake. He had his own personal property. Yet, he happily preferred to live a simple life. This choice was the result of his special attention to the life hereafter. He lived in the world but did not love it. He did interact wholeheartedly in this mundane life but never got obsessed with it. He neither abhorred it nor rejected it. He declared all comforts and pleasures of the life lawful as long as these did not infringe upon the rights of Allah, those of the self, and those of the society.

His residential place was not a palace, as was usual with the head of the state. It was single room ground floor apartment with no specific portion as the kitchen, bathroom, dining hall, and drawing corner. He would receive the guests outside the house or in the mosque. He would receive the delegates, hold meetings, settle the disputes, listen to the people’s complaints, pass judgments, adjudicate cases, issue orders, deliver public lectures, pray five

times a day in the mosque. In response to the call of nature he would go out away from the residential area.

There was no furniture in his house, no dining table, no sofa sets, no wardrobe, and no bed. In the name of the bed he had a simple mat made of date palm tendrils with a pillow stuffed with date palm leaves. Such simplicity, at times, moved the heart of his followers. They wanted to provide him the necessary comforts but he would nicely refuse. He used to say that this life was just like the shade of a tree under which the traveler takes a rest for a while and then proceeds to his destination.

His daily meal comprised not more than two items, bread and soup. Most of the times, whether breakfast, lunch or dinner, he got satisfied with only one thing, date fruits or milk or cheese or honey or sawiq (flour of the roasted barley grains) or sop. The bread was made of barley flour. The soup used to be of meat or vegetable. At times, the olive oil or the vinegar was served to him as soup which he took with bread. The most favorite dish of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was tharîd (sop). Another thing which he liked very much was honey.

He generally used three-piece dress, the lower as well as the upper garment and the turban. At a time he possessed only one single pair of clothes. He totally avoided the silky and thickly embroidered clothes. He would not discard his worn out dress easily, he would get it re-stitched and patched so as to make its life longer than expected. He rather declared silky dress unlawful for the male. He never wore jewelry like bracelet, bangles, necklace, and pendant. He did not put on the crown on his head. There was no special sign in his dress that the strangers would recognize him as the head of the state. Foreign delegates would find it difficult to identify him when he sat among his followers.

He did not amass wealth and property. The property he left behind comprised four things, the land, the donkey, the weapon, and the armor. The dress he was with on the death bed contained a shirt dotted with so many patches and a trouser made of coarse and thick fabric. His property was not distributed among his heirs as he had advised not to do so; it was given in charity. The armor was with a Jew who had taken it as pawn in exchange of thirty bags of barley grain.

7-Humility

Arrogance, conceit, haughtiness, self-admiration, and vainglory are the traits of those who consider themselves sufficient, on the one hand and superior to others, on the other. This sense of superiority and self-sufficiency could be from any angle and in any dimension of the life. One could feel superior to others and self-sufficient in piety, richness, health, intelligence, knowledge, power, beauty, or any kind of achievement. In this situation man forgets that he is a created being; all that he possesses is basically not his; he depends for his existence on others; and his physical strength and mental capacity are the gifts of God. It should be born in mind that all humans are interdependent upon one another. None is, then, superior over or inferior to the other. Only one is superior and He is the Creator who is All-Powerful, the Controller of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. It is thus only the humility and humbleness which suit man. Man's sense of superiority is bane for his life; his attitude of humility is boon of his life. The Prophet (s.a.w.) was far away from the sense of superiority. The only trait he demonstrated in his life was the humility. He knew that Allah seals up the heart of every arrogant (40:35).

The humility of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was not hidden from the eyes of those around him. They all observed the humbleness of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in his private as well as public life, personal as well as official life, religious as well as social life, and political as well as cultural life. As has been seen above under the simplicity of the Prophet (s.a.w.), he dressed cheap, coarse and patched clothes, ate simple meals, lived in humble apartment, and remained indifferent to the comfort of the life. Such attitude in the life represents the humility of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Pride and arrogance are manifested through pomp and show. There was nothing such demonstration in the Prophet's (s.a.w.) life.

Submission to Allah alone makes the man humble. The Prophet (s.a.w.) paid special attention to his relationship with Allah. His five times a day congregational prayer and other non-obligatory prayers made him firm in his humility. The prayer the Prophet (s.a.w.) performed and prescribed for his followers is constituted by two basic components, certain physical postures and mental

concentration. The physical postures of standing, bending, prostrating, and sitting with the head down are all by themselves the demonstration and regular practice of the humility. The mental concentration makes the man mindful of his position as a created being and that of Allah as the Creator. The Prophet (s.a.w.) would spend major portions of his nights in devotion to Allah. Such devotion was somewhat self-negation.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) would remember Allah in his heart as well as on his lips. He would glorify Allah with the phrases like “Allah Akbar” (Allah is Great), “SubÍÉn Allah” (Allah is Transcendent), “Al-×amdu li Allah” (all praise is due to Allah), and “LÉ IIÉhailÉ Allah” (there is no God but Allah). One who glorifies Allah sincerely can never fall victim to self-conceit.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) would, time and again, seek the forgiveness of Allah for his hidden or open errors. It should be born in mind that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was fully protected from all kinds of sins, major or minor. But he was after all a human being; minor mistakes not amounting to sins were still possible. The Qur’Én itself has mentioned around three such mistakes of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Even for such non-sinful mistakes he was asked by Allah to seek His forgiveness. ‘Ó’ishah once asked the Prophet (s.a.w.) as to why he would torment his body in his extraordinary night prayers, even though all of his past, present and future errors had been forgiven by Allah. The Prophet (s.a.w.) answered that he expressed his gratitude to Allah through his prayers.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) would try to greet the people first before he was greeted. He would even greet the children. He would, at times, enjoy talking to children. He would stretch his hands first to shake hands with the people; he would not take his hand away until the other person took his hand away. He preferred others to his own self. AbÉQatÉdah reported that once the Prophet (s.a.w.) made the arrangement of water for the people. When the turn of AbÉQatÉdah came after all the people drank water to their satisfaction, he wanted the Prophet (s.a.w.) to drink first before he drank but the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “the turn of the server comes in the end”.

The people respected the Prophet (s.a.w.) very much. When he visited them, they would stand in respect. The Prophet (s.a.w.)

advised them not to do that. On one such occasion he emphatically commented: "Do not honor me as exaggeratingly as the Christians did to Jesus the son of Mary". Whenever someone regardless of his position in the society approached the Prophet (s.a.w.) for his help, the Prophet (s.a.w.) would listen to him attentively and help him in the best way possible. He never hesitated to accept anyone's invitation to dinner or lunch.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) never felt angry or humiliated due to someone's argumentation and insistence on his own stand. Khawlah bint Tha'labah, a lady from Madinah was divorced by her husband through the system known as *Ḍihār* (the husband's comparison of his wife with his mother). Later the husband, Aws ibn Ḍamir was remorseful for his utterance. Both the husband and wife wanted to continue their marriage. For that matter, Khawlah contacted the Prophet (s.a.w.) but she was told that they were both separated from each other. She did not agree to the Prophet's (s.a.w.) observation and took a different stand that the divorce did not take place on the ground that *Ḍihār* was not divorce. This issue took a shape of dispute between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and that ordinary woman. The former insisted on his stand and the latter on hers. There is no report in the history referring to even the slightest anger on the part of the part of the Prophet (s.a.w.) due to the woman's continued argumentation against his stand. Almost a month after this dispute Allah sent down a revelation confirming the stand of the woman and explaining the solution to the problem (58:1-5).

Arabs in general and Quraysh in particular wanted the Prophet (s.a.w.) to maintain the age old Arab tradition of treating the people in accordance with their social status. They disliked the Prophet's (s.a.w.) equal treatment to all, noble and slave, rich and poor, urban and rural. They proposed to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to keep away from him the people of the so called lower status like Bilāl, Khabbāb, Ḍuhayb, and 'Ammār. The Prophet (s.a.w.) refused to do so. The Qur'ān conformed to what the Prophet (s.a.w.) did: "

The Prophet (s.a.w.) one day asked 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd to read the Qur'ān to him. Ibn Mas'ūd was surprised over this appeal and said: "O Prophet of Allah! You are asking me to read the Qur'ān to you, whereas it came down to you". The Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

“Yes, I like to hear from others”. The Companion, then, began reading SĒrah al-NisĒ’ (4). When he reached the Ēyah 4:41 (“”), the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked him to stop. He turned his face and saw the tears rolling down the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) cheeks.

Upon his return from the pilgrimage to Makkah, the Prophet (s.a.w.) informed his followers that his departure from the world to the heavenly abode was imminent and invited them to take revenge from him for any injustice he caused to them or pardon him. The people cried over this humility of the Prophet (s.a.w.). They all but one pardoned him. One who wanted to take revenge from the Prophet (s.a.w.) described how the Prophet once hurt him and the Prophet (s.a.w.) conformed to his claim and offered himself for the revenge. The Muslims in general felt very much disturbed and tried to persuade that man to pardon the Prophet (s.a.w.). But the man insisted to take revenge. The Prophet bared his back to be canned by the man. He lowered his face to the back of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and kissed him. He said that he actually wanted to kiss the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) back and not to take revenge. Is there any other example of such humility?

8-Consciousness of the Significance of the Life Virtues

Man commits mistakes only when he forgets the principles of life. The Prophet (s.a.w.) always remained mindful of the role the high moral values played in the life. He was so conscious of the divinely approved life virtues that he would regularly invoke Allah’s help in maintaining the excellence in his character. He would appeal to Allah in these words: “O Allah! You have made my physical features excellent, please make my character excellent” (AllahummaAĒsantaKhalqĒFaAĒsinKhuluqĒ).

Conclusion

The history stands witness to the excellence of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) character. He was honest to Allah and the mankind. He was generous to the people. He observed highest kind of modesty in his dress code, dietary habits, physical gestures, and speeches. He always maintained cleanliness of the soul as well as the body. He had struck just balance between the asceticism and the materialism. He proved that there was no conflict between the spirituality and the worldly affairs. He lived and preferred very simple life even though he had easy access to all kinds of comfort of the life. He demonstrated humility at every step of his life. He

never said or acted in a way which might be suggested as arrogance on his part. The main reason for him being so excellent in character was his consciousness of the life virtues. He was, indeed, a perfect man as cherished by the Qur'an.

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