

Muhammad PBUH as An Individual

"And You (Muhammad PBUH) are on an exalted standard of character" (68: 4)

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Introduction

The Muslims form a nation over Fourteen centuries old, and comprise at present more than six billion human beings in all parts of the world. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH was the first citizen of the nation, its teacher and guide. He lived and died in the full memory history. The evolution of his personality, religion, and nation assumed the force of a human drama of the greatest magnitude.

EVEN after the passage of nearly fifteen hundred years the personality and character of Hazrat Muhammad PBUH continues, still, to amaze and fascinate thinkers, historians and intellectuals. And not only Muslims but even those who have little love lost for him — even the Jews, Christians, and others — are impressed and charmed. Countless treatises have been written on the subject but there always remains something more to be said.

1. His Personality and appearance

The Holy Prophet PBUH was a man of little more than average height, but of sturdy frame with broad shoulders, wide chest long arms and strong bones and muscles. He had dark hair, slightly curled, and properly combed, flowing in dense mass almost to his shoulders. His great black eyes with a touch of brown, shone under long, heavy eyelashes. His nose was large and somewhat aquiline; his teeth, on which he bestowed great care, were well-set and dazzling white. His head was massive and his forehead large and prominent. In complexion he was fair, red and white with clear and soft skin and delicate hands, even as those of a woman. His steps were light and brisk. He talked little and laughed rarely, but a beaming smile constantly played upon his bright face.

2. Habits

In His habits, He PBUH was simple and loved cleanliness of person and dress. His needs were few and rigidly controlled. His dress and daily article of use remained simple and meager. Though a sovereign lord of Arabia, He lived in a cottage made of mud walls of sun dried bricks and with leather curtain, instead of doors. He loved to do his work by himself. He mended His clothes, repaired His shoes, milked His goats, cleaned His rooms and helped his wives in their household duties. And all this He continued to do even when He was the Lord of Arabia. Among foods, milk and honey he liked most, but He mostly got coarse barley bread. Strong smelling things, like onion and garlic, He disliked. His dress was consisted of two garments, all patched over. But they were neat and clean, silk He disliked as unmanly wear.

3. His disposition and manners

By temperament the Holy Prophet PBUH was sad, silent and pensive. For hours He would sit silent, oblivious of talks and murmurs around Him. He PBUH never spoke unnecessarily. But when He PBUH spoke he spoke in low voice distinctly and rapidly but to the point. Over his feeling He had a firm control. He PBUH was not easily annoyed. When angry, he would turn aside, and when pleased, he would lower his eyes. "*He PBUH was more bashful than a veiled virgin*" said Ayesha R.A. He PBUH was the sweetest and the most agreeable in conversation even with the humblest of his followers. Neither He humiliated anyone nor did He PBUH like to be treated with disrespect.

4. Character

What put him way above other humans was Muhammad's PBUH character. His character was born of sincerity and nurtured by truth. His companions, friends and relatives named him Al Amin, "The Faithful, the Trustworthy." Even at a young age, he was recognized as a man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spoke and thought. From an early age he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. He was silent when there was nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise and sincere, when he did speak. Throughout his life he was regarded as an altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man, a serious and sincere character, amiable, cordial, and companionable.

He PBUH possessed all great qualities of head and hearts. Yet he also has his detractors, especially in Europe and America. Of all the world great men "as Montgomery Watt has aptly remarked, "none has been so much maligned as Muhammad PBUH" We shall not go into their scurrilous and groundless charges of cruelty, treachery, deception and

sensuality. They are obviously false. Instead, we shall delineate the sublimity, nobility and greatness of his head and heart his mind and intellect.

5. Earnestness and honesty in his Prophetic Mission

First trait of his personality and mind was his earnestness, sincerity and honesty of purpose. His whole life was devoted to one single cause; the belief and worship of one supreme God and submission to his will. From this path he never deviated by a fraction of an inch through all his trials and tribulations, under all circumstances, whether of poverty and persecution of success, victory and sovereignty over all Arabia. In the service of this supreme cause, the Holy Prophet PBUH displayed superb qualities of courage, resoluteness, impartiality, firmness tempered with generosity and above all humility and self-effacement.

Bosworth Smith writes, "*Muhammad never wavered in his belief and in his own mission, nor, what are more extraordinary, in his belief as its precise nature and well defined limits. He was a prophet charged with the mission of God, nothing less, and nothing more. the words he spoke were the very words of God*"

6. His Justice and Moderation

Another trait of Prophet PBUH was his deep sense of justice, moderation and scrupulous fairness. Muslim and non-Muslim, friends and foes, were all alike in his eyes, if it was not a matter of serving the supreme mission of Islam or the worship and belief in the Oneness of God. Even before the call, He PBUH was famous in Makkah for his honesty, his integrity and trust-worthiness, as is warranted by such titles as "Al-amin" etc.

After the conquest of Makkah Muhammad PBUH, except a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past. He treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration. And justice in his eye meant not only equitable reward and punishment with regard to the debts and duties of this world but also of the next.

7. Sympathy for poor and weak

His sympathy for the poor, the weak and the distressed was boundless, which extended even to the dumb creatures. He would feed the hungry while he himself would remain hungry. Throughout his life he had a deep sympathy for widows, the orphan and afflicted. His fondness for the children was limitless. Though he did not prohibited slavery, he himself never kept a slave, but set him free as soon as he got one. "*A man who ill-treats his slave, "He said "will not enter paradise."* And, "*Forgive your servant seventy times a day.*"

8. Humility

Humility was one of the most important trait of his character. He would conduct himself just as a man like others. He disliked being treated with special regard or placing on a higher pedestal. "*I am no more than a man*" His humility was shown by the fact that he rode upon asses. He accepted invitation to a feast even of a slave. Once as he came the people rose to greet him. But he forbade them. He used to say "*I sit at meal as a servant does, and I eat like a servant; for I am really like a servant.*"

In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, He PBUH remained the same. As Washington-Irving noted "*His military triumphs awakened no pride or vain.*"

9. His steadfastness

The secret of his success as a leader and as a statesman was his fortitude, consistency, thoroughness in work, planning and policy. "Thorough and complete in all his actions, Writes Muir, "he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. Hence he loved to do things himself and plan every action carefully, thoroughly and beforehand. This was the secret of his success as a general, an administrator and a statesman." His daily life was strictly regulated by a rigid time-table.

10. His Mind and Knowledge

The Holy Prophet PBUH was gifted with "mighty power of imagination, a very good memory; and a lively conception, elevation of mind, and an excellent genius and capacity. Though unlettered, He had observed and studied human life and nature with the profundity of a philosopher. C.S. Mill writes, *"deeply read in the volume of nature, though entirely ignorant of letters, his mind could expand into controversy with the wisest of his enemies, or contract itself to the apprehension of the meanest of his disciple"*

Imam Nawawi (Mercy of Allah is on him) has written in his Tahzib that Allah had assembled all the *Excellencies* and virtues of character and habits in the person of the Holy Prophet PBUH. Allah had endowed him with all the knowledge of the ancient and later peoples, even though he was unlettered – being unable to read and write, and had no human teacher; yet He had been endowed with such knowledge as Allah had not bestowed on anyone else. He was offered keys to the mundane treasures but He preferred the hereafter to the worldly riches. The Holy Prophet PBUH was therefore, the *Agglomeration* of all the qualities of bodily and spiritual perfection.

11. His Modernity

One of the most important features of the Prophet PBUH mind was its modern attitude towards life and nature. "The mind of this remarkable teacher" writes Syed Ameer Ali "was in its intellectualism and progressive ideals, essentially modern." He taught that the world was not a chaos but "a well-ordered creation, regulated and guided by a supreme intelligence overshadowing the Universe – everything is pledge to its own time." He claimed no miraculous or supernatural powers, and disclaimed all powers to perform miracles, except what God gave him, i.e. the miracle of Quran, the greatest of the miracles, for it is a book revealed to an ignorant and unlearned man.

12. Long suffering and Forgiveness

The patience, long suffering and forgiveness of the Holy Prophet PBUH are the highest qualities of prophet-hood. According to a tradition, the Holy Prophet PBUH never revenged himself for any personal or financial matter. He did so only from one who declared anything 'Halal' (Lawful) that Allah (the most High) has prescribed as 'Haram' (Unlawful) but even this revenge was only for the sake of Allah himself. The hardest suffering fell to the lot of the holy Prophet PBUH in the battle of Ohad, when the unbelievers fought against him and caused him severest grief and affliction, but he not only contended himself to suffer and forgive, but taking pity on them also excused them for their misbelieve and ignorance, and said: "O Allah! Show my people the right path, for they know not" in another tradition the words: "O Allah! Forgive them" When the companions who felt grieved at this said "O Apostle of Allah! Would that you had cursed them, so that they were annihilated" He replied,

"I have not been sent to curse, but to call people to the truth, and as a mercy for the creation"

13. Keeping His Word

On the occasion of the battle of Badr the number of the Muslims was very small and they stood in need of every hand they could muster, Huzaifa bin-al-Yaman and Abu Husail two of his companions came to the Holy Prophet PBUH and said, "O Apostle of Allah! We are just coming from Makkah. The unbelievers had captured us on the way and have released us on the condition that we do not fight on your side. We agreed under coercion, but we will certainly fight the unbelievers". The Holy Prophet PBUH said "Not at all! Keep your word, and leave the battled field, We (Muslims) will keep our word in all circumstances. We need the help of Allah only" (Muslim).

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abil Hammad (May Allah pleased with him) has related: Before His Prophet-hood I bought something from the Holy Prophet PBUH As my money fell short I requested him to wait at the spot, and promised to come back in a while. But the matter slipped out of my mind somehow and after three days when I returned to the spot I found the Holy Prophet PBUH still waiting here. He only said, "You put me to great trouble. I have been waiting for you here for three days" In this instance we find an excellent instance of the modesty of the Holy Prophet PBUH and his faithfulness in fulfilling a promise. (Madarij-un-Nubuwwah)

14. Tolerance

History bears witness to the high level of tolerance demonstrated by the Prophet PBUH in His dealings with the *dhimmī* (i.e. non-Muslims under the protection of Islam). He even issued a verdict in their respect thus: "Whoever hurts a *dhimmī* shall be his complainant and for whosoever I am a complainant, I shall ask for his right on the Day of judgment".

15. Mercy

Being extremely kindhearted, His eye brimmed with tears at the slightest sign of inhumanity. Ibn Abbas relates that a man threw a goat then he started sharpening his knife. When Prophet PBUH saw him he said, "Do you want to kill it twice? Why did you not sharpen the knife before throwing it on the ground?" Abdullah bi Umar told that Prophet PBUH said, "A woman was cast away into the hell only because she had denied food and water to her cat and refused to set it free" Abdullah bin Umar also said, once a nomadic Arab came and asked Prophet PBUH, "How many times should I pardon my servant in a day?" The Prophet replied "Seventy times"

14. His Courage and Shyness

Courage and shyness are often considered as conflicting traits, but the two poise the Prophet's character in a like manner. Ali R.A the lion of God says, "When the battle used to become fierce and the eyes seemed to be coming out of Sockets, we look for the Prophet PBUH in order to find a refuge behind Him. Then we found none closing up with the enemy as the Prophet PBUH. This was how it happened in Badr, we were taking shelter behind the Prophet PBUH who was going to the enemy more closely than anyone of us. Similarly, in the battle of Uhad and Hunayn when the bravest Muslim had fallen back from the charge of

enemy, the apostle of God had stuck to his position, as if nothing has happened, and was calling "I am the Prophet, I am the son of *"Abdul Muttalib"* (His grandfather)

At the same time, He PBUH was so shy that even He could not express anything disagreeable to one's face and usually asked somebody else to do the job for him.

Conclusion

The noble person of the Holy Prophet PBUH stands pre-eminent, dignified and mighty in all qualities, habits and manners. To comprehend and to describe all these noble qualities and merits, is beyond human capacity, since all those excellencies which can be imagined as attainable are possessed by the Holy Prophet PBUH. All the messenger prophets are only reflection of his light. So praise be to Allah.

Prophet Muhammad PBUH had taught humanity through his exemplary life that nobility of character is an essential asset that everyone must strive to acquire. The Prophet PBUH did not preach the words of Allah only by mouth, rather, he exemplified and even epitomized the messages. People like Abu Sufyan, Khalid Bin Walid and a host of many others did not embrace Islam solely on account of the Prophet's PBUH preaching but because they were convinced of the noble character.
