THE PROPHET'S SIRAH

SERIES 31

AS IF YOU COULD SEE HIM

The Shama'il of the Prophet ﷺ: His Appearance, Character and Daily Life, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

SURAH AL-QALAM 68:4

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent His Messenger with a great character, and made him an excellent example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the most beautiful of people in form and the noblest in character, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This thirty-first book of The Prophet's Sirah gathers the Shama'il of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — his appearance, how he walked and spoke, his clothing, food, sleep, worship, and his character at home and among people — as narrated by the Companions who saw him. May we come to know him, as if we could see him.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows **a bright full moon** above **a quiet grove of date palms** at night, its soft light falling on the palm fronds and the sand below.

The full moon recalls the Companions' description of the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Al-Bara' was asked: "Was his face like a sword?" He said: ***"No, rather like the moon"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3552). We do not portray him in pictures; we know him only through ***the words of those who saw him***, as if we could see him.

The dark blue band at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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AS IF YOU COULD SEE HIM

Books 1 to 30 followed the ***life journey*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from birth to death. This Book 31 takes a different approach: no longer following a timeline, but ***getting to know his person*** — what he looked like, how he walked and spoke, what he ate and wore, how he slept and worshipped, and how he treated his family, servant, children and enemies.

This field is called ***ash-Shama'il*** (qualities and manners). We have no picture of him, and Islam does not portray him in images. Yet the Companions left ***descriptions in words*** so precise that the reader can know him ***as if seeing him***.

We will use ***sahih and hasan*** hadiths, mainly from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and Jami' at-Tirmidhi. Famous descriptions with weak chains will be placed in "Sirah Note" boxes.

A Day in the Life of the Prophet ﷺ

Last third of the night	Wakes, uses siwak, prays at night until his feet swell (Bukhari 4837)
Dawn	Two sunnah rak'ahs, Fajr in congregation; sits in remembrance until sunrise (Muslim 670)
Morning	Teaching, receiving guests and delegations, managing the affairs of the Ummah
Midday	Zuhr prayer; qaylulah (short rest)
Afternoon	Asr prayer; visiting his wives and asking after them (Bukhari 5216)
Sunset	Maghrib prayer; time with family
Night	'Isha' prayer; disliked talking after it, slept early with remembrance (Bukhari 568, 6314)

A general picture from authentic hadiths; his schedule varied with circumstances, travel and campaigns.

Figure 1: A day in the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

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Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. The physical description of the Prophet ﷺ in this eBook is given in words only, without any drawing, out of respect for him.

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WHAT ARE THE SHAMA'IL?

The most famous book in this field is ***ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyyah*** by ***Imam Abu 'Isa at-Tirmidhi*** (d. 279 AH), a student of Imam al-Bukhari. He gathered over 400 narrations on the appearance, clothing, food, worship and character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in more than 50 chapters.

Why should we know his qualities? First, because ***love requires knowing***; we cannot love someone we do not know. Second, because Allah made him ***an example to follow*** (Al-Ahzab 33:21); we need to know how he lived to follow him. Third, because knowing the perfection of his character ***strengthens faith*** that he truly was the Messenger of Allah.

Scholars also mention that knowing his physical description helps a person ***recognise him in a dream***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever sees me in a dream has truly seen me, for Satan cannot take my form" (Sahih al-Bukhari 110).

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HEIGHT AND BUILD

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, who served the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ten years and saw him every day, gives the most complete description:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3547

حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي هِلاَلٍ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، يَصِفُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ كَانَ رَبْعَةً مِنَ الْقَوْمِ، لَيْسَ بِالطَّوِيلِ وَلاَ بِالْقَصِيرِ، أَزْهَرَ اللَّوْنِ لَيْسَ بِأَبْيَضَ أَمْهَقَ وَلاَ آدَمَ، لَيْسَ بِجَعْدٍ قَطَطٍ وَلاَ سَبْطٍ رَجِلٍ، أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ وَهْوَ ابْنُ أَرْبَعِينَ، فَلَبِثَ بِمَكَّةَ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ يُنْزَلُ عَلَيْهِ وَبِالْمَدِينَةِ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، وَلَيْسَ فِي رَأْسِهِ وَلِحْيَتِهِ عِشْرُونَ شَعَرَةً بَيْضَاءَ. قَالَ رَبِيعَةُ فَرَأَيْتُ شَعَرًا مِنْ شَعَرِهِ، فَإِذَا هُوَ أَحْمَرُ فَسَأَلْتُ فَقِيلَ احْمَرَّ مِنَ الطِّيبِ.

TRANSLATION:

Rabi'ah ibn Abi 'Abd ar-Rahman said: I heard Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه describe the Prophet ﷺ: ***"He was of medium stature among the people, neither tall nor short. His complexion was radiant, neither pale white nor dark brown. His hair was neither tightly curled nor completely straight.*** Revelation came to him when he was forty. He stayed in Makkah ten years receiving revelation, and in Madinah ten years. ***There were not twenty white hairs in his head and beard."*** Rabi'ah said: I saw one of his hairs, and it was reddish. When I asked, I was told: "It became red from perfume."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Khalid ibn Yazid, from Sa'id ibn Abi Hilal, from Rabi'ah ibn Abi 'Abd ar-Rahman (Rabi'at ar-Ra'y), from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3547; also No. 3548, 5900 and Muslim No. 2347.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3547

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The key word in Anas's description is ***"moderate"***: not tall, not short; not too pale, not dark; hair neither curly nor straight. It is as if Allah made his physical form reflect the ***balance*** that underlies his teaching.

SIRAH NOTE: THE FAMOUS DESCRIPTION BY 'ALI

There is a famous long description from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه: he was neither very tall nor very short,

his face was slightly round and fair with a reddish tint, his eyes intensely black with long lashes, his shoulders broad, and when he walked he stepped firmly as if descending a slope. ‘Ali said: “I never saw anyone like him, before or after.”

This long narration (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3638) is graded ***weak*** in its chain. Yet much of its content is supported by other sahih and hasan narrations, such as Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3637 (hasan sahih).

REFERENCES:

at-Tirmidhi, ash-Shama’il al-Muhammadiyyah; Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3637, 3638. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3638

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A FACE LIKE THE MOON

The Companions often described the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with the most beautiful words they knew. Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنه said:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3549

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ، يَقُولُ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ وَجْهًا وَأَحْسَنَهُ خَلْقًا، لَيْسَ بِالطَّوِيلِ الْبَائِنِ وَلاَ بِالْقَصِيرِ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Ishaq said: I heard al-Bara' رضى الله عنه say: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most handsome of people in face and the finest in form; he was neither very tall nor short."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Sa'id Abu 'Abdillah, from Ishaq ibn Mansur, from Ibrahim ibn Yusuf, from his father, Yusuf ibn Ishaq, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3549; also No. 3551, 3552 and Muslim No. 2337.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3549

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

When someone asked al-Bara': "Was his face like a sword (long and gleaming)?" He said: ***"No, rather like the moon"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3552). Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه said: ***"No, rather like the sun and the moon, and it was round"*** (Sahih Muslim 2344).

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anything more beautiful than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; it was as if the sun were moving across his face"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648 — sahih). His face also ***shone when he was happy***, as 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates: "The lines of his face were glowing" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3555).

Yet the beauty of his face was not for pride. He used to pray: "O Allah, as You have made my form beautiful, make my character beautiful" (Musnad Ahmad — graded sahih by al-Albani). True beauty, according to his teaching, is ***beauty of heart and character***.

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Ka'b ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: ***"Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was pleased, his face would shine as if it were a piece of the moon, and we would recognise that in him"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3556). The Companions read his feelings in his face, for he hid nothing harmful in his heart.

The beauty of his face was matched by the beauty of his heart. Those who met him for the first time often felt awe, and those who stayed with him came to love him — for his outward beauty was only a sign of the light of guidance within.

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COMPLEXION, HAIR AND GREY HAIRS

Anas described his complexion as ***azhar al-lawn*** — a radiant, luminous fairness, neither pale nor dark (Sahih al-Bukhari 3547). His hair was ***wavy***, neither curly nor straight. Al-Bara' mentions that his hair ***reached his earlobes*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3551), and in other narrations it reached his shoulders.

At first he let his hair hang forward like the People of the Book, then he ***parted it in the middle*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3558). He took good care of his hair, oiling and combing it, and said: "Whoever has hair, let him honour it" (Sunan Abi Dawud 4163 — hasan sahih).

Though he died at 63, his grey hairs were ***very few — fewer than twenty*** in his head and beard (Sahih al-Bukhari 3547). Jabir ibn Samurah mentions that when he oiled his hair, the grey did not show (Sahih Muslim 2344). He also had ***a thick beard***.

From this we learn that ***caring for one's appearance*** is part of the Sunnah. Islam does not teach dishevelment or dirtiness in the name of asceticism; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was always neat, clean and fragrant.

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THE SEAL OF PROPHETHOOD

Between the shoulders of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a mark known as ***the Seal of Prophethood*** (Khatam an-Nubuwwah). As-Sa'ib ibn Yazid رضى الله عنه relates that as a child, his aunt brought him to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because he was ill. He wiped his head and prayed for him, then made wudu'; as-Sa'ib drank the leftover water, then stood behind him and ***saw the seal between his shoulders*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3541).

Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه described it: ***"I saw the seal near his shoulder, the size of a pigeon's egg, its colour like that of his body"*** (Sahih Muslim 2344).

This seal was one of ***the signs of prophethood*** mentioned in earlier scriptures. In the story of Salman al-Farisi رضى الله عنه, narrated by Imam Ahmad in al-Musnad, he looked for these signs — including the seal between the shoulders — before embracing Islam. It also reminds us that he is ***the seal of the prophets*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40).

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SOFT HANDS AND FRAGRANT BODY

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, who was often with him, describes two things he felt:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3561

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادٌ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَا مَسِسْتُ حَرِيرًا وَلاَ دِيبَاجًا أَلْيَنَ مِنْ كَفِّ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم، وَلاَ شَمِمْتُ رِيحًا قَطُّ أَوْ عَرْفًا قَطُّ أَطْيَبَ مِنْ رِيحِ أَوْ عَرْفِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never touched silk or brocade softer than the palm of the Prophet ﷺ, and I never smelled a scent or fragrance more pleasant than the scent or fragrance of the Prophet ﷺ."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sulayman ibn Harb, from Hammad ibn Zayd, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3561; also No. 1973 and Muslim No. 2330.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3561

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The hands of a leader who had dug the Trench, carried stones to build the mosque and held a sword in battle, yet ***soft as silk***. And his body was always ***fragrant*** — not only from the perfume he wore, but his own scent.

The Companions mention that ***his sweat was like pearls*** and more fragrant than musk. Umm Sulaym رضى الله عنها once collected his sweat while he slept at her house and mixed it with her perfume (Sahih Muslim 2331).

The softness of his hands also symbolises ***the gentleness of his touch*** towards people: he stroked the heads of orphans, placed his hand on the chest of an anxious Companion, and shook hands warmly, never being the first to let go.

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HOW HE WALKED

'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه said: ***"When he walked, he leaned forward, as if descending a slope"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3637 — hasan sahih). This describes a stride that was ***firm, energetic and purposeful***, not lazy or arrogant.

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anyone walk faster than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; it was as if the earth were folded up for him. We would exert ourselves (to keep up), while he was not straining"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648).

His walk reflected the description of the servants of the Most Merciful: ***"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily"*** (Al-Furqan 25:63) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 25:63.

Walking firmly but not arrogantly, briskly but not hurriedly — this is the ***balance*** he taught. A Muslim walks with purpose, not swaggering or showing off.

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HOW HE SPOKE

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ spoke in such a way that if someone wanted to count his words, he could"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3567). She rebuked a man who narrated hadith quickly: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not speak rapidly as you do."

In another narration she said: ***"He spoke clearly and distinctly, so that those sitting with him could memorise it"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3639 — sahih). Anas رضى الله عنه also mentions that he ***repeated important words three times*** so they would be understood (Sahih al-Bukhari 95).

He also ***never used foul language***. 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما said: "The Prophet ﷺ was neither obscene nor did he deliberately speak obscenely," and he said: ***"The best of you are those with the best character"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3559).

His manner of speaking is ***a model of effective communication***: measured, clear, repeating important points, and always free of harsh words. Teachers, parents and leaders can learn much from it.

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HIS SMILE AND LAUGHTER

'Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Jaz' رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3641 — hasan). Though he carried the heavy burden of the message, he still met people with ***a pleasant face***.

Yet his laughter was ***moderate***. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"I never saw the Prophet ﷺ laugh so heartily that his uvula could be seen; he would only smile"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6092). Sometimes he laughed until his molars showed, when something truly delighted him.

He also taught that ***a smile is charity***: "Your smile in the face of your brother is charity" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1956 — hasan). Jarir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنه said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never saw me, since I accepted Islam, except that he smiled at me" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3035).

He also ***joked***, but his jokes never contained a lie. An old woman asked whether she would enter Paradise; he replied playfully that old women do not enter Paradise — meaning they will be made young again (ash-Shama'il of at-Tirmidhi — graded hasan by al-Albani). His humour ***delighted without hurting***.

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MORE MODEST THAN A SECLUDED MAIDEN

One of the most prominent qualities of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ***modesty (haya')***. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه describes it:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3562

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي عُتْبَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَشَدَّ حَيَاءً مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ فِي خِدْرِهَا.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was more modest than a secluded virgin behind her curtain."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad ibn Musarhad, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Qatadah ibn Di'amah, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi 'Utbah, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3562; also No. 6102 and Muslim No. 2320.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3562

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A secluded maiden in those days was very shy, rarely going out or speaking with strangers. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***was shyer than that***. In the same narration, Abu Sa'id added: ***"When he disliked something, we could tell from his face"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6102) — he did not rebuke harshly in front of people.

This modesty did not stop him from ***speaking the truth firmly*** when Allah's rights were violated. His was a noble modesty: shy of hurting people, shy of shaming people, and shy before Allah. He said: ***"Modesty is part of faith"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 24).

When he needed to correct someone's mistake, he often said: ***"Why do some people do such-and-such?"*** without naming anyone. This is the etiquette of correction that preserves others' dignity.

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Modesty in Islam is not shyness that stops a person from learning or speaking the truth. The Prophet ﷺ was the most modest of people, yet he taught, corrected and spoke firmly when truth required it. True modesty holds a person back from what is shameful, not from what is right.

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Modesty brings nothing but good"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6117). In an age that often celebrates boldness without restraint, his example reminds us that modesty in speech, dress and conduct is a strength and a branch of faith.

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HIS CLOTHING

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The garment most beloved to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the qamis (long shirt)"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1762 — hasan). The qamis is a long garment that covers the body fully and is easy to wear.

He also encouraged ***white clothing***: "Wear white among your garments, for it is among the best of your garments, and shroud your dead in it" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 994 — hasan). Yet he also wore other colours; al-Bara' رضى الله عنه once saw him in ***a red cloak*** and said: "I never saw anything more beautiful than him" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3551).

His clothing was ***simple and clean***, neither luxurious nor ragged. He forbade men to wear silk and gold, and forbade trailing garments out of arrogance. He also taught a supplication when putting on new clothes, as thanks to Allah.

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RING, SANDALS AND TURBAN

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wished to write to kings (Book 17), he was told they would not accept a letter without a seal. So he had ***a silver ring*** made, engraved with ***"Muhammad Rasul Allah"***. Anas said: "It is as if I can still see the gleam of that ring on his finger" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5872).

The ring was ***entirely of silver***, including its stone (Sahih al-Bukhari 5870). He did not wear gold rings, and forbade men to wear them. Scholars mention that the engraving was arranged in three lines: "Allah" at the top, "Rasul" in the middle, and "Muhammad" at the bottom, out of reverence for the name of Allah.

His footwear was ***a pair of sandals with two straps*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5857). On the day of the conquest of Makkah, he addressed the people with ***a black turban*** on his head (Sahih Muslim 1359). All this shows he dressed like an ordinary Arab of his time, ***without luxury and without arrogance***.

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PERFUME

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved ***perfume***. Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ never refused (a gift of) perfume"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 2582). He wore the best perfume, and 'A'ishah once saw the glint of musk in the parting of his hair.

The Companions could tell which way he had passed because of the ***fragrance*** he left. Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه relates that the Prophet ﷺ stroked his cheek when he was a child, and he felt his hand cool and fragrant, as if it had just been taken out of a perfumer's bag (Sahih Muslim 2329).

Wearing perfume, especially for the mosque and Friday prayer, is ***Sunnah***. It honours others and makes gatherings more pleasant. For women, however, he forbade wearing perfume that unrelated men could smell when going out.

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"THE TWO BLACK THINGS": HIS FOOD

How did the leader of all Arabia eat? 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها gives a surprising answer:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6459

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأُوَيْسِيُّ، حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ رُومَانَ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ لِعُرْوَةَ ابْنَ أُخْتِي إِنْ كُنَّا لَنَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْهِلاَلِ ثَلاَثَةَ أَهِلَّةٍ فِي شَهْرَيْنِ، وَمَا أُوقِدَتْ فِي أَبْيَاتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم نَارٌ. فَقُلْتُ مَا كَانَ يُعِيشُكُمْ قَالَتِ الأَسْوَدَانِ التَّمْرُ وَالْمَاءُ إِلاَّ أَنَّهُ قَدْ كَانَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم جِيرَانٌ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ كَانَ لَهُمْ مَنَائِحُ، وَكَانُوا يَمْنَحُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنْ أَبْيَاتِهِمْ، فَيَسْقِينَاهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said to 'Urwah: "O son of my sister, ***we would see the new moon, then the new moon, then the new moon — three new moons in two months — and no fire would be lit in the houses of the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ." I asked: "What sustained you?" She said: ***"The two black things: dates and water."*** Except that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had neighbours from the Ansar who had milk-camels, and they would send milk to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from their houses, and he would give it to us to drink."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah al-Uwaysi, from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, from his father, Abu Hazim Salamah ibn Dinar, from Yazid ibn Ruman, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening Hearts, Chapter: How the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions lived, Hadith No. 6459; also No. 2567 and Muslim No. 2972.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6459

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Two months without a fire lit in the kitchen — no bread baked, no meat cooked. Only dates and water. This was not because he could not afford it; great spoils and zakat passed through his hands, but all was distributed to the poor, the Companions and the needs of the Ummah.

'A'ishah also said: ***"The family of Muhammad ﷺ never ate their fill of wheat bread for three consecutive days from the time he came to Madinah until he died"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5416). Yet he

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never complained. Note too how ***the Ansar neighbours*** shared milk with his household — a community that helped one another.

The lesson for us: moderation in eating is not only Sunnah but also ***healthy***. He said: "No human fills a vessel worse than his stomach… a third for food, a third for drink and a third for breath" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2380 — sahih).

He also taught us to share: ***"The food of two is enough for three, and the food of three is enough for four"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5392). The blessing of food lies not in its quantity, but in ***togetherness and gratitude***.

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TABLE MANNERS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had beautiful table manners. First, he ***never found fault with food***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3563

حَدَّثَنِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْجَعْدِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَا عَابَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم طَعَامًا قَطُّ، إِنِ اشْتَهَاهُ أَكَلَهُ، وَإِلاَّ تَرَكَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ never found fault with any food. If he liked it, he ate it; otherwise he left it."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Abu Hazim al-Ashja'i, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3563; also No. 5409 and Muslim No. 2064.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3563

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'Umar ibn Abi Salamah رضى الله عنهما, his stepson, relates that as a boy his hand wandered all over the dish. The Prophet ﷺ corrected him gently: ***"O boy, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near you"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5376). 'Umar said: "Ever since, that is how I have eaten."

He also said: ***"I do not eat while reclining"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5398) — a sign of humility. He ate with three fingers, licked his fingers after eating, and praised Allah when finished. He also liked ***eating together***, for there is blessing in eating in company.

These manners are very easy to practise, but their effect is great: ***gratitude, respect for provision, and care for the feelings of the cook***. Criticising food can hurt a wife, mother or host who took pains to prepare it.

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FOODS HE LOVED

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved sweet things and honey"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5431). Anas رضى الله عنه saw him ***picking out pieces of gourd*** from the dish when a tailor invited him to a meal, and said: "Since that day I have loved gourd" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5379).

He also loved ***milk***, ***dates***, ***vinegar*** — he said: "What an excellent condiment vinegar is" (Sahih Muslim 2051) — and ***the foreleg meat***. He broke his fast with fresh dates, or dried dates, or water if there were none.

Notice Anas's attitude: ***out of love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he loved what the Prophet loved***, even gourd. That is true love — not mere words, but a desire to resemble the beloved even in small things.

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HOW HE SLEPT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***disliked sleeping before 'Isha' and talking after it*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 568).

He slept early so he could rise for night prayer. When going to sleep, he placed his hand under his cheek and said: ***"Bismika Allahumma amutu wa ahya"*** — "In Your name, O Allah, I die and I live" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6314).

He also taught the Companions to make wudu' before sleeping, ***lie on the right side***, and recite the supplication of submission: "O Allah, I submit myself to You…" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6311). On waking, he said: "All praise is for Allah who gave us life after causing us to die, and to Him is the resurrection" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6314).

His bedding was ***very simple***. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه relates that he slept on a mat until it ***left marks on his side***. When the Companions offered to get him a mattress, he said: ***"What have I to do with this world?"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2377 — hasan). We will return to this hadith in Chapter 29.

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NIGHT PRAYER: "A GRATEFUL SERVANT"

At night, while people slept, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ rose to commune with his Lord. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4837

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا حَيْوَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي الأَسْوَدِ، سَمِعَ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَانَ يَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ حَتَّى تَتَفَطَّرَ قَدَمَاهُ فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ لِمَ تَصْنَعُ هَذَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ قَالَ أَفَلاَ أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَكُونَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا. فَلَمَّا كَثُرَ لَحْمُهُ صَلَّى جَالِسًا فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَرْكَعَ قَامَ، فَقَرَأَ ثُمَّ رَكَعَ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ ***used to stand (in prayer) at night until his feet became cracked (swollen)***. 'A'ishah said: "Why do you do this, O Messenger of Allah, when Allah has forgiven your past and future sins?" He said: ***"Should I not love to be a grateful servant?"*** When he put on weight (in old age), he prayed sitting; when he wished to bow, he stood, recited, then bowed.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Hasan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, from 'Abdullah ibn Yahya, from Haywah ibn Shurayh, from Abu al-Aswad Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-Fath, Hadith No. 4837; also No. 1130, 4836 and Muslim No. 2820.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4837

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'A'ishah's question was reasonable: if all sins are forgiven, why such effort? His answer changes how we understand worship: ***worship is not merely atonement for sins, but an expression of gratitude***. The more blessings one receives, the more gratitude one should show.

His night prayer was ***long***: in one rak'ah he once recited al-Baqarah, an-Nisa' and Ali 'Imran (Sahih Muslim 772). Yet when his body grew heavier in old age, he prayed sitting — showing that worship is adapted to one's ability, ***never abandoned***.

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For those of us who are busy and tired, his counsel is: ***the deeds most beloved to Allah are those done consistently, even if small*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6464). Two rak'ahs before sleep or before Fajr, done steadily, are better than a long prayer once in a while.

Night prayer need not be long to be valuable. Even two short rak'ahs before witr, offered sincerely in the quiet of the night, follow his Sunnah and bring the heart closer to Allah.

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REMEMBRANCE AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***remembered Allah constantly*** in every state — on waking, sleeping, entering and leaving the house, eating, dressing, riding and travelling. 'A'ishah said: "The Prophet ﷺ remembered Allah at all times" (Sahih Muslim 373).

Though sinless, he ***sought forgiveness more than seventy times a day***. He said: ***"By Allah, I seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times a day"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6307).

If the noblest of people sought forgiveness that often, how much more should we, who are full of faults. Istighfar is not only for major sins; it is ***a way of life*** that cleanses the heart, opens doors of provision and draws one near to Allah.

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HIS FASTING

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would fast until we said he would not break his fast, and he would not fast until we said he would not fast. I never saw him fast a full month except Ramadan, and I never saw him fast more in any month than in Sha'ban"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1969).

He also fasted on ***Mondays and Thursdays***, as deeds are presented to Allah on those days, and ***three days each month***. Of Monday he said: "That is the day I was born and the day I was sent" (Sahih Muslim 1162).

Yet he ***forbade excess***. When some Companions wished to fast every day without break, he forbade them, saying that he himself fasted and broke his fast, prayed at night and slept, and married — and whoever turns away from his Sunnah is not of him (Sahih al-Bukhari 5063).

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AT HOME

What was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ like at home? Al-Aswad asked ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 676

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنِ الأَسْوَدِ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ مَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَصْنَعُ فِي بَيْتِهِ قَالَتْ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مِهْنَةِ أَهْلِهِ ـ تَعْنِي خِدْمَةَ أَهْلِهِ ـ فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلاَةُ خَرَجَ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ.

TRANSLATION:

Al-Aswad said: I asked ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها: “What did the Prophet ﷺ do in his house?” She said: ***“He used to be occupied in the service of his family*** — meaning helping his family — ***and when the time of prayer came, he went out to pray.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shu‘bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, from Ibrahim an-Nakha‘i, from al-Aswad ibn Yazid, from ‘A’ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, Chapter: One busy with his family when the iqamah is called, Hadith No. 676; also No. 5363, 6039.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:676

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

In another narration, ‘A’ishah mentions that he ***mended his own clothes, repaired his sandals and milked his goat*** (Musnad Ahmad — sahih). Head of state, army commander and Messenger of Allah — yet at home he was ***a husband who helped and did not burden***.

He was also ***affectionate with his wives***: racing ‘A’ishah on foot (Sunan Abi Dawud 2578 — sahih), drinking from where ‘A’ishah had drunk, and listening patiently to her stories. His household was full of ***love, humour and mutual respect***.

For husbands today, the example is clear: ***helping with housework does not lower a man’s dignity***; it follows the Sunnah of the noblest of men. And when the call to prayer came, he left it all for prayer — balancing ***the rights of family and the rights of Allah***.

His home life was also marked by simplicity. ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها mentioned that a month or two could pass with no fire lit for cooking in the houses of the Prophet ﷺ; they lived on dates and water (Sahih al-Bukhari 2567). Yet his home was never without contentment, remembrance and love.

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For us, this is a reminder that the greatness of a home is not measured by its size or furniture, but by the faith, mercy and good character of those who live in it.

His home was also a place of learning: the Companions, men and women, came to his door to ask about their religion, and his wives transmitted to the Ummah much of what they saw of his life at home.

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WITH HIS SERVANT

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه began serving the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the age of ten, when his mother Umm Sulaym brought him to the Prophet. After ten years, he gave this testimony:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6038

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، سَمِعَ سَلاَّمَ بْنَ مِسْكِينٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ثَابِتًا، يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسٌ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ خَدَمْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، فَمَا قَالَ لِي أُفٍّ. وَلاَ لِمَ صَنَعْتَ وَلاَ أَلاَّ صَنَعْتَ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"I served the Prophet ﷺ for ten years, and he never said to me 'uff', nor 'Why did you do that?' nor 'Why did you not do that?'"***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musa ibn Isma'il, who heard Sallam ibn Miskin, who heard Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Manners, Chapter: Good character and generosity, Hadith No. 6038; also No. 2768 and Muslim No. 2309.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6038

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ten years — thousands of days with a child's many mistakes — yet ***not once*** did he say "uff", or ask "why did you do that?" In one narration, Anas was sent on an errand but stopped to play with children in the market. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came, took hold of the back of his neck while ***smiling***, and asked: "O little Anas, did you go where I told you?" (Sahih Muslim 2310).

Today, many have domestic helpers or employees. The Prophet's ﷺ example teaches: ***be patient with their mistakes***, do not curse or demean them, and treat them like family. He said: "Your brothers (servants) are your responsibility… feed them from what you eat, and clothe them from what you wear" (Sahih al-Bukhari 30).

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WITH CHILDREN

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***loved children dearly***. Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه relates that he kissed his grandson al-Hasan ibn 'Ali in front of al-Aqra' ibn Habis. Al-Aqra' said: "I have ten children and have never kissed any of them." He looked at him and said: ***"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5997).

He ***greeted children*** when passing by them — Anas رضى الله عنه continued this Sunnah and said: "The Prophet ﷺ used to do so" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6247). He also stroked children's cheeks one by one (Sahih Muslim 2329), and shortened his prayer when he heard a baby cry so its mother would not be distressed (Sahih al-Bukhari 707).

He once prayed ***carrying his granddaughter Umamah***; when he prostrated he put her down, and when he stood he picked her up again (Sahih al-Bukhari 516). Children were not seen as a nuisance, but as ***a beloved trust***.

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MORE GENEROUS THAN THE WIND

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of people, and he was most generous in Ramadan when Jibril met him... The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was more generous in doing good than the blowing wind"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6).

Jabir رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was never asked for anything to which he said 'no'"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6034). If he had nothing, he promised to give later, or prayed well for the one asking. He once gave a man ***a whole valley of sheep***, so that the man returned to his people saying: "Accept Islam, for Muhammad gives like one who does not fear poverty" (Sahih Muslim 2312).

His generosity was not to win praise, but out of ***certainty in Allah's promise***: wealth does not decrease through charity. He lived poor not because he had no wealth, but because ***he gave it all away***.

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HIS COURAGE

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was the best and bravest of people."*** One night, the people of Madinah were alarmed by a frightening noise. They went out towards it, but ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had gone ahead of them***, riding Abu Talhah's horse bareback, with a sword hanging from his neck, saying: "Do not be afraid, do not be afraid" (Sahih al-Bukhari 2908).

'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه — himself a famous warrior — said: ***"When the fighting grew fierce, we sheltered behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; none of us was closer to the enemy than he"*** (Musnad Ahmad — sahih). At Hunayn, when many fled, he stood firm on his mule calling: "I am the Prophet, no lie" (Book 22).

His courage was joined with ***compassion***: he faced danger to protect others, not to show off. A true leader ***is at the front*** in times of danger, not hiding behind.

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CHOOSING THE EASIER, FORGIVING

Two qualities 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها often paired were ***making things easy*** and ***forgiving***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3560

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ مَا خُيِّرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ إِلاَّ أَخَذَ أَيْسَرَهُمَا، مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ إِثْمًا، فَإِنْ كَانَ إِثْمًا كَانَ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ، وَمَا انْتَقَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لِنَفْسِهِ، إِلاَّ أَنْ تُنْتَهَكَ حُرْمَةُ اللَّهِ فَيَنْتَقِمَ لِلَّهِ بِهَا.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given a choice between two matters, he chose the easier, as long as it was not sinful; if it was sinful, he was the furthest of people from it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never took revenge for himself, unless the sanctities of Allah were violated, in which case he took retribution for Allah."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf at-Tinnisi, from Imam Malik ibn Anas, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3560; also No. 6126, 6786 and Muslim No. 2327.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3560

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

See how many people hurt him: the people of Ta'if who stoned him (Book 5), Quraysh who expelled and fought him, the Jewish woman who poisoned him (Book 16), the Bedouin who roughly pulled his cloak. Yet he ***never took revenge for himself***. On the day Makkah was opened, he said to his enemies: "Go, you are free" (Book 21).

Yet his forgiveness ***was not weakness***. When Allah's limits were violated — justice corrupted, the weak oppressed — he acted firmly. A Muslim forgives wrongs against himself, but ***defends the rights of Allah and of others***.

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Anas رضى الله عنه relates that a Bedouin once pulled his cloak so roughly that it left a mark on his neck, and demanded to be given from the wealth of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ turned to him, ***smiled***, and ordered that he be given something (Sahih al-Bukhari 3149).

This is the balance we need today: to be easy-going and forgiving in our personal dealings, while remaining firm in upholding justice and the limits set by Allah.

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"HIS CHARACTER WAS THE QUR'AN"

Allah Himself praised the character of His Messenger: ***"And indeed, you are of a great moral character"*** (Al-Qalam 68:4) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 68:4.

When Sa'd ibn Hisham asked 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها about the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she asked back: "Do you not read the Qur'an?" He said: "Yes." She said: ***"The character of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was the Qur'an"*** (Sahih Muslim 746).

That is: every command of the Qur'an, he ***practised***; every prohibition, he ***avoided***; every praiseworthy quality the Qur'an praises was found in him. He was ***the Qur'an walking on earth***. To know his character, read the Qur'an; to understand the Qur'an, look at his life.

He himself said: ***"I was sent only to perfect noble character"*** (al-Adab al-Mufrad 273 — sahih). Character is not a mere add-on to religion; it is ***a central purpose*** of his mission.

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GENTLENESS

Allah explains why people were drawn to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ***"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you"*** (Ali 'Imran 3:159) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:159.

Once a group of Jews came to him and gave a mocking greeting: "As-samu 'alaykum" (death be upon you). 'A'ishah replied angrily. He said: ***"Gently, 'A'ishah. Allah loves gentleness in all matters"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6024). He simply replied: "Wa 'alaykum" (and upon you).

A Bedouin once urinated in the mosque. The Companions rose to scold him, but he said: "Leave him," then had a bucket of water poured over it, and said: ***"You were sent to make things easy, not to make them difficult"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 220). The Bedouin then prayed: "O Allah, have mercy on me and on Muhammad."

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"WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THIS WORLD?"

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ slept on a mat and rose with ***its marks on his side***. We said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall we make you a mattress?" He said: ***"What have I to do with this world? I am in this world only like a rider who shades himself under a tree, then moves on and leaves it"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2377 — hasan sahih).

'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه once entered his room and saw him lying on a bare mat, with a leather pillow stuffed with fibre, and the marks of the mat on his side. 'Umar wept and said: "Chosroes and Caesar live in luxury, while you are the Messenger of Allah!" He said: ***"Are you not content that they have this world and we have the Hereafter?"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4913).

He also advised Ibn 'Umar: ***"Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveller"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6416). His detachment was not from hatred of blessings, but because ***his heart was tied to the Hereafter***. This world is a brief resting place, not a permanent home.

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A MERCY TO THE WORLDS

Allah sums up the whole mission of His Messenger in one verse: ***"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds"*** (Al-Anbiya' 21:107) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:107.

When asked to curse the idolaters, he said: ***"I was not sent as one who curses; I was sent as a mercy"*** (Sahih Muslim 2599). After being driven out and stoned at Ta'if, when the angel of the mountains offered to crush them, he replied: "Rather, I hope Allah will bring forth from their descendants those who worship Allah alone" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).

His mercy extended to ***animals***. He told of a man forgiven for giving water to a thirsty dog (Sahih al-Bukhari 2363), and a woman punished for locking up a cat until it died (Sahih al-Bukhari 3482). Allah also describes him as one to whom "grievous is what you suffer" (At-Tawbah 9:128).

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AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE

Allah made him the model for every believer: ***"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:21) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:21.

This model can be followed because he was ***a human being***, not an angel. Allah commanded him to say: ***"I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed"*** (Al-Kahf 18:110). He ate, slept, married, fell ill, grieved and rejoiced — so every side of our lives has an example in his.

He said: ***"Pray as you have seen me pray"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 631). The Shama'il are not merely stories to admire, but ***a guide to practise***: how to eat, sleep, speak, dress, live with family and deal with people.

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LOVING HIM

The proof of loving Allah is following His Messenger: ***"If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins"*** (Ali 'Imran 3:31) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:31.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his father, his child and all people"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 15).

A man asked him when the Hour would come. He asked: "What have you prepared for it?" The man said: "Nothing, except that I love Allah and His Messenger." He said: ***"You will be with those you love."*** Anas رضى الله عنه said: "We were never so happy with anything as we were with those words" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3688).

Knowing his Shama'il is the path to ***loving*** him; loving him leads to ***following*** him; and following him leads to ***the love of Allah***.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The Companions carefully preserved the image of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so that we might "see" him.

Among the most important lessons:

LESSON	FROM THIS BOOK
Physical perfection	"Like the moon"; medium height, radiant face
Modesty	More modest than a maiden behind her curtain
Simplicity	A mat, barley bread, "what have I to do with this world"
Worship	Night prayer until his feet swelled; seeking forgiveness 70 times a day
Family and helpers	Helping at home; Anas never rebuked
Generosity and courage	"More generous than the wind"; first towards danger
Forgiveness and gentleness	Never avenging himself
The character of the Qur'an	"His character was the Qur'an"

A MESSAGE FOR US

We never saw his face, but we can ***bring his Sunnah to life*** in our smiles, gentleness, generosity and worship. May knowing him increase our love, and through that love may we be united with him in Paradise — ***"You will be with those you love."*** Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad.

In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***Book 32 — The Mothers of the Believers***: the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, from Khadijah to Maymunah رضى الله عنها. And Allah knows best.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

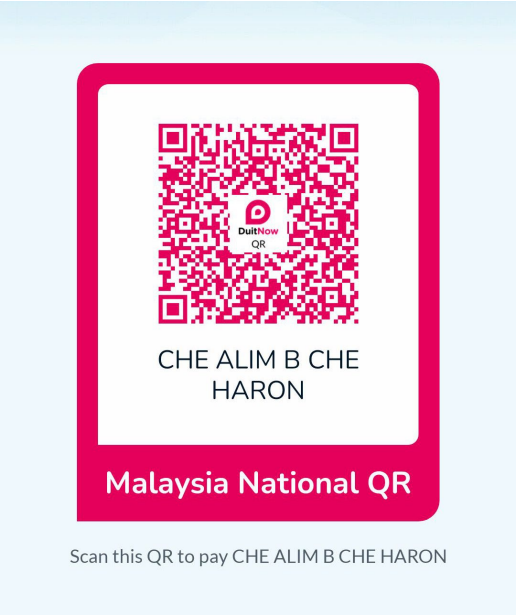
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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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