

# The Special Characteristics of the Holy Prophet of Islam(S.A.W.)

## Some Qualities of Holy Prophet that make him Model of Excellence

### **Honesty:**

The Holy Prophet, prior to his being raised to Prophethood, made a journey to Syria on behalf of Khadija who subsequently became his wife. This journey, more than ever before made his honesty and efficiency clear. His honesty and reliability became so well known that he received the epithet of Muhammad, the trust-worthy. People entrusted their valuables to him for safe custody. Even after his being raised to Prophethood despite all their hostility to him, the Quraysh continued to deposit their valuables with him, for safe keeping. That is why at the time of his migration to Madina he left behind Imam Ali for a few days to return the deposits to their original owners.

### **Combat with Tyranny:**

During the pre-Islamic period a pact was concluded by the victims of cruelty and tyranny with a view to make common efforts for the protection of the oppressed against the unjust tyrants. This pact which is known as "Hilful Fuzul" was arranged in the house of Abdullah ibn Jad'in in Makkah by certain important personalities of the time. Later during the period of his Prophethood, the Holy Prophet often mentioned this pact and said that he was still willing to participate in a similar pact and not to violate its provisions.

### **Family Behaviour:**

He was kind to his family. To his wives he was never harsh. The Makkans (people of Mekkah) were not generally familiar with such a good behaviour. He tolerated the stinging remarks of some of his wives, though they were resented by others. He emphatically counseled his followers to be kind to their wives for, as he often remarked, men and women both had good and bad traits. Man must not take into consideration only the unpleasant habits of his wife and divorce her for that reason. If he disliked some qualities of his wife, she must be possessing some other qualities which he liked. Thus the whole thing was balanced. The Holy Prophet was extremely affectionate to his children and grand-children and showed love and tenderness to them. He loved them, seated them on his lap, put them on his shoulders and kissed them. All this was contrary to the custom and usage of the Arabs of those days.

### **Treatment of Slaves:**

He was extraordinarily kind to the slaves. He told people that the slaves were their brothers. He said: "Give them of the same food of which you eat yourselves, and provide them with the same kind of clothes as you put on yourselves. Do not force them to do jobs which are too difficult for them. Share with them their jobs and help them in the performance of them. Do not call them slaves, for all men are the bondsmen of Allah, who is the real Master of everyone. Call your male slaves young man and your female slaves young woman."

Islam gives to the slaves all possible facilities leading to their complete liberation. The Holy Prophet

described the slave-trading as the worst occupation and said that those who traded in human beings were the worst people in the sight of Allah.

#### **Cleanliness and Use of Perfume:**

The Holy Prophet was greatly interested in cleanliness and was fond of the use of perfume. He urged his friends and followers also to keep their body and house clean and perfumed. He especially exhorted them to have bath and use perfume on Fridays so that bad odor might not cause inconvenience to the congregation.

#### **Social Behaviour:**

In his social life the Holy Prophet was always kind, cheerful and courteous to the people, took a lead in greeting all, including the children and the slaves. He did not stretch his feet in front of anyone and did not recline in the presence of others. In his company all sat in a circular form, and none had any distinct place or position. He was watchful of his companions and if he did not see anyone of them for two or three days, he inquired about him. If anyone of them was ill, he went to see him and if anyone had any trouble, he made every effort to solve his problem. In a gathering he did not address or pay attention to any one individual, but equally attended to all. He did not like that he should be sitting and others be serving him. He personally took part in all that was to be done. He used to say that Allah hates to see a man who considered himself to be superior to others.

#### **Soft as well as Tough:**

In his personal matters the Holy Prophet was soft, sympathetic and tolerant. His tolerance on many historical occasions was one of the reasons of his success. But in the matters of principle where a question of public interest or of law was involved, he was tough and never showed any leniency. At the time of the conquest of Makkah and his victory over the Quraysh he overlooked all the wrongs which they had committed against him over a period of 23 years and declared general amnesty. He accepted the apology of the murderer of his well-beloved uncle, Hamzah. But on that very occasion he punished a woman of Banu Makhzum, who had committed theft. This woman belonged to a very respectable family, who regarded the enforcement of a punishment against her as a great insult to them. They persistently requested the Holy Prophet to pardon her. Some prominent companions of the Holy Prophet also interceded on her behalf. But the Holy Prophet said angrily that the Divine law could not be suspended for the sake of any individual. In the evening on that day he delivered a speech.

#### **Worship:**

He devoted a part of every night, sometimes half of it and sometimes one third or two thirds of it, to worship and adoration. Though his whole day was preoccupied, especially during his stay at Madina, he never curtailed the time of his worship. He found complete satisfaction in his worship and communication with his Lord. His worship was an expression of love and gratitude and was not motivated by a desire of securing paradise or by a fear of Hell. One day one of his wives asked him why after all he was so devoted to his worship? His reply was: "Should I not be thankful to my Lord?" He fasted very often. In addition of fasting during the whole month of Ramazan and a part of the month of Sha'ban, he kept fast every other day. He always passed the last 10 days of the month of Ramazan in

seclusion in the mosque, where he devoted his whole time to worship. Nevertheless, he told others that it was enough to observe fast for three days every month. He used to say that each one should carry out the acts of worship according to one's capacity and should not exert oneself more than one can bear, for such an exertion has an adverse effect. He was against monastic life, escape from worldly involvement and renunciation of family life. Some of his companions had expressed an intention to lead a monastic life, but he censured and reproved them. He used to say: "Your body, your wife, your children and your friends all have a claim on you and you must fulfil your obligations".

#### **Austerity and Simple Living:**

Simple living was one of the principles of his life. He took simple food; wore simple clothes and travelled in a simple manner. He slept mostly on a mat, set on bare ground and milked his goat with his own hands. He mounted saddle-less animals and did not like anybody to walk by his side while he was riding. His staple food mostly comprised barley bread and dates. He mended his shoes and patched his clothes with his own hands. Though he led a simple life, he did not advocate the philosophy of asceticism, and believed that it was necessary to spend money for the good of society and other lawful purposes. He used to say: "What a nice thing wealth is, if obtained through legal means by a man who knows how to spend it".

He also said: "Wealth is a good aid to piety".

#### **Resolution and Perseverance:**

He had a wonderful willpower which permeated among his companions also. The total period of his Prophethood was entirely a lesson in resolution and perseverance. In his lifetime several times the conditions so developed that no hope was apparently left, but he never allowed the idea of failure to enter his mind, nor was his conviction of his final success ever shaken for a moment.

#### **Leadership, Administration and Consultation:**

Though his companions carried out every order of his without any hesitation and repeatedly said that they had an unflinching faith in him and were willing even to plunge themselves into a river or a fire if he ordered them to do so, he never adopted any dictatorial methods. In regard to the matters about which he had received no specific instructions from Allah, he consulted his companions and respected their views, and thus helped them develop their personality. On the occasion of the Battle of Badr he left the questions of taking military action against the enemy, choosing the camping ground, and as to how the prisoners of war should be dealt with, to the advice of his companions. On the occasion of Uhud he made consultation as to whether the Muslim troops should fight from within the city of Madina or should go out of the city. He consulted his companions on the occasion of the Battles of Ahzab and Tabuk also.

The kindness and tolerance of the Holy Prophet, his anxiety to seek the forgiveness of the sins of his community, his giving importance to his companions and his consultations with them were the main factors which contributed to the wonderful and great influence that he exercised over his companions.

#### **Regularity and Orderliness:**

All his actions were governed by regularity and orderliness. He worked according to a well drawn time-

table, and urged others also to do likewise. His companions under his influence were fully disciplined. Even when he considered it necessary not to disclose certain decisions lest the enemy should get an inkling of them, his companions carried out his orders without any argument. For example, once he said that they would move the next day. Next day all those who were ordered proceeded with him without knowing the final destination of which they came to know only in the last moments. Sometimes he ordered some people to move in certain direction, gave a letter to their commander and said that he should open it on reaching such and such point and act according to the instructions given in it. They acted accordingly. Before reaching that particular point they did not know what was their destination and for what purpose they were going. In this way he kept the enemy and his spies in the dark and often took them unawares.

#### **Capacity to Listen to Criticism and Dislike of Flattery and Undue Compliments:**

Sometimes he had to face the criticism of his companions, but without being harsh to them, he explained his decision and gained their agreement and concurrence.

He absolutely disliked flattery and undue compliments. He used to say: "Throw dust on the face of the flatterers".

He liked solid work. He was in the habit of doing things correctly and firmly. When Sa'd ibn Mu'az died and was laid in his grave, the Holy Prophet with his own hands placed the bricks and stones in their right place on the grave and made them firm. He said: "I know that before long all this will be mined, but I like things to be done correctly and efficiently".

#### **Fight Against Weak Points:**

He did not exploit the weak points and the ignorance of his people. On the other hand he tried to rectify their weaknesses and acquainted them with what they did not know. The day his 17 months old son expired, by chance the sun was eclipsed. People said that the solar eclipse was due to the calamity suffered by the Holy Prophet. He did not keep quiet in the face of this silly notion, but ascended the pulpit and said: "Men! the moon and the sun are the two signs of Allah. They are not eclipsed on account of the death of anybody".

#### **Possession of the Necessary Qualities of Leadership:**

He had the maximum qualities of leadership such as the sense of knowing men, firmness, determination, boldness, having no fear of the possible consequences of a necessary action, foresight, capacity of bearing criticism, recognition of the ability of others, delegation of powers to others in accordance with their ability, flexibility in his personal matters, rigidity in regard to the matters of principle, giving importance to others, promotion of their intellectual, emotional and practical talents, refraining from despotism, not demanding blind obedience, modesty and humility, simplicity and contentment, dignity and elevation of manners and great interest in organizing human resources. He used to say: "If three persons of you travel together, choose one of you as your leader and commander". At Madina he organized a special secretariat, and appointed a group of persons for performing specific job. There were scribes of revelation who wrote the Holy Quran. Some people were entrusted with the job of drafting and writing special letters. Some recorded the deeds of legal transactions. Some others were made responsible to keep financial records. Still some others were responsible for drafting agreements and treaties. All these details are recorded in the books of history such as Tarikh by Ibn

Wazih, al-Ya'qubi, at-Tanbih wal Ishraf by Mas'udi, Mu'jam al-Buldan by al-Bilazari and at-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd.

**Method of Preaching:**

He took active interest in the propagation of Islam. Once he went to Taif for this purpose. During the Hajj season he used to call upon various tribes and convey the message of Islam to them. Once he sent Imam Ali and on another occasion Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen for preaching. Before going to Madina himself he sent there Mus'ab bin Umayr to preach Islam. He sent a good number of his companions to Ethiopia. Besides escaping from the persecution of the Makkans, they propagated Islam there and paved the way for the acceptance of Islam by the Negus, the king of Ethiopia and 50% of the population of that country. In the sixth year of migration he wrote letters to the heads of a number of States in the various parts of the world and intimated them about his Prophethood. About hundred letters which he wrote to various personalities are still extant.