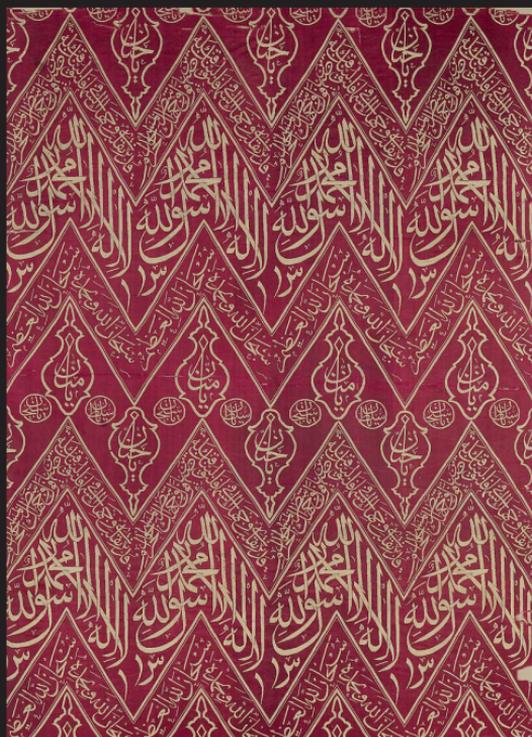


# *Al-Ghazali*

On the Adab [Proprieties]  
of Living & Virtues of Prophethood



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# *Al-Ghazali*

On the Adab [Proprieties]  
of Living & Virtues of Prophethood



BOOK TWENTY OF THE  
REVIVAL OF THE  
RELIGIOUS SCIENCES  
*IHYA' 'ULUM AL-DIN*

Translated by  
Abdul Aziz Suraqah

*Edited by Hashem Meriesh*



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## PROLOGUE

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

**P**RAISE BE TO GOD, Who created everything and excelled in His creation and arrangement thereof, Who taught His Prophet Muhammad (God bless him and give him peace) propriety and excelled in His teaching, and Who, having purified his traits and virtues, took him as His chosen and beloved. Those for whom God wills spiritual refinement are granted the good fortune of following him, while those for whom God wills misfortune are kept from emulating him and adopting his qualities of character. May God send plentiful blessings and salutations upon our master Muhammad, master of the Messengers, and upon his fine and pure Family.

To proceed: Certainly, the proprieties of the outward are the sign of the proprieties of the inward, and the movements of the limbs are the fruits of passing thoughts [*khawatir*]. Moreover, deeds are the outcome of virtues [*akhlaq*], and proprieties are the distillation of sciences [*ma'arif*]. The innermost contents of the hearts are the bedding grounds and sources of actions, and it is the lights of the innermost contents that dawn on the outward and adorn and beautify them, substituting their offensive and evil traits for good traits. He whose heart is not humbled will not have humbled limbs; and he whose breast is not a niche of divine lights

will not receive an outpouring of the beautiful prophetic proprieties upon his outward.

I had resolved to conclude the ‘quarter on the daily habits’ of this book with a comprehensive book detailing the proprieties of living, lest it prove difficult for a seeker to extract them from the rest of the book. I realized, however, that each book in the ‘quarter of daily habits’ had already covered a number of proprieties, and I found it burdensome to repeat them, for repetition is tiresome, and it is the nature of souls to dislike repetition. As such, I saw fit to limit myself in this book and mention only the proprieties and virtues of God’s Messenger (God bless him and give him peace) that are related from him through Tradition. So I set them forth, section by section, without their chains of transmission [isnads], in order that they be brought together here, along with all of the proprieties, a renewal and reemphasis of faith through the witnessing of [the Prophet’s] noble character traits—a single one of which unequivocally testifies that he is the noblest of God’s creation (Exalted is He!), the loftiest of them in rank and the greatest of them in esteem, so what say you of all his virtues combined?

I shall mention, in addition to his virtues, his physical form, followed by mention of his inimitable miracles [mu’jizat] that are authentically reported in the Traditions, in order that they articulate his noble qualities of character and nature and lift the cover of deafness from the ears of those who deny his prophethood. It is God who grants the enabling grace to emulate the master of the Messengers in character, virtues and all other signposts of the religion. Indeed, He is the guide of the perplexed, Who answers the supplications of those in dire need.

Let us first present an Exposition of God’s Teaching [the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace)] Propriety by

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Means of the Quran, which shall be followed by a Concise Yet Comprehensive Account of His Virtuous Character Traits, a Summary Account of His Proprieties and Virtues, an Exposition of His Speech and Laughter, an Exposition of His Proprieties and Virtues with Food, an Exposition of His Proprieties and Virtues with Dress, an Exposition of His Pardoning Despite His Ability Not to, an Exposition of His Overlooking of Things He Disliked, an Exposition of His Generosity and Munificence, an Exposition of His Bravery and Courage, an Exposition of His Humility, an Exposition of His Countenance and Physical Form and an Exposition of His Comprehensive Inimitable Miracles and Signs (God bless him and give him peace).

[20.1]

An Exposition of God's Teaching  
His Chosen and Beloved Muhammad  
(God bless him and give him peace)  
Propriety by Means of the Quran

THE MESSENGER OF God (God bless him and give him peace) was constant in his humility and submissiveness, ever asking God (Exalted is He!) to adorn him with excellent manners and noble qualities of character. He would pray, 'O God! Adorn my form and character,' and, 'O God! Turn me away from ill character.' And so God (Exalted is He!) answered his supplication in fulfilment of His words (Exalted and Sublime is He!), *Call upon Me; I will answer you,*<sup>1</sup> sending down to him the Quran and inculcating him with proprieties through it, and thus his character ﷺ was the Quran.

Sa'd b. Hisham said, 'I went to see 'A'isha—may God be pleased with her and her father—and asked about the character of God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace), whereupon she said, "Do you not read the Quran?" "Of course", I said. Then she said, "The character of God's Messenger was the Quran."

The Quran had inculcated him with propriety through the likes of God's words: *Keep to forgiveness, enjoin kindness and*

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<sup>1</sup> Quran 40:60.

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*turn away from the ignorant;<sup>2</sup> God commands justice and excellence and giving to relatives; and He forbids indecency, evil and transgression;<sup>3</sup> Bear with patience whatever befalls you, for that is of the matters that determine affairs;<sup>4</sup> And for the one who is patient and forgives, that is of the matters that determine affairs;<sup>5</sup> So pardon them and forgive them, for certainly God loves those who act with excellence;<sup>6</sup> And let them pardon and forgive. Would you not love for God to forgive you?<sup>7</sup>; Repel evil with that which is better, and then the one between you and whom there is enmity will be as an intimate friend;<sup>8</sup> Those who restrain rage and forgive people—and God loves those who those of spiritual excellence;<sup>9</sup> and: Shun much suspicion, for indeed some suspicion is sin. And do not spy on each other, and do not backbite each other.<sup>10</sup>*

When the Prophet's upper molar tooth was broken and he was wounded during the battle of Uhud, and blood began to flow over his face, he wiped the blood, saying, 'How can a people who dye the face of their Prophet with blood be successful, while he invites them to their Lord?' whereupon God (Exalted is He!) revealed, correcting him, *You have nothing to do with the decision.*<sup>11</sup> There are innumerable examples in the Quran of this type of inculcation of propriety.

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2 Ibid., 7:199.

3 Ibid., 16:90.

4 Ibid., 31:17.

5 Ibid., 42:43.

6 Ibid., 5:13.

7 Ibid., 24:22.

8 Ibid., 41:34.

9 Ibid., 3:134.

10 Ibid., 49:12.

11 Ibid., 3:128.

## A Summary Account of the Prophet's Virtuous Character Traits That Have Been Gathered by a Number of Scholars and Collected from the Reports

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the most forbearing, brave and just of men. He was the most chaste of people; his hand never touching the hand of a woman over whom he did not have possession or to whom he was not married, or who was not an unmarriageable kin [*mahram*]. He (God bless him and give him peace) was the most generous of men; he never spent the night with a dinar or dirham in his possession. If the night fell suddenly and something extra remained with him and he was unable to find one to whom he could give it, he would not retire to his home until he gave that excess to someone in need of it.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would not take of the things which God gave him save his provision of a year, and of that, only the simplest foodstuffs he found, such as dates and barley, the rest of which he gave in charity for the sake of God. He ﷺ was never asked for anything but that he gave it, after which he would return to his provision for the year and prefer [the seeker over himself], often being in need before the end of the year if nothing came to him. He (God bless him and give him peace) would mend his own

sandals, sow his clothes, help his womenfolk with household chores and eat meat with them.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was the shyest of men and did not stare into anyone's face. He answered the invitation of slave and freeman alike. He accepted gifts, even if they consisted only of a draught of milk, or leg of rabbit, and requited for them and ate of them, but he would not accept charity. He was not too proud to accept the invitation of a slave woman or pauper. He would become angry for the sake of his Lord and never for his own sake. He would enforce the truth, even if it brought harm to him or his Companions.

Once, while fighting against a group of idolaters, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was offered the help of other idolaters, but he refused, saying, 'I do not seek help in victory from an idolater'—this, even though he had meager supplies and men, and was in need of anyone who could increase the numbers of those with him. On another occasion, one of the Prophet's virtuous and choicest Companions was found slain amongst the Jews, but he did not retaliate against them or exceed the bounds of justice. Rather, he paid the blood money of one hundred she camels [to the family of the deceased], even though his Companions were in need of a single male camel by which they could be strengthened.

Because of hunger, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would at times fasten a stone around his stomach. He would eat what was present and would never refuse food that was available. He never refrained from lawful food: if he found dates without bread he would eat them; if he found roast meat he would eat it; if he found wheat or barley bread he would eat it; if he found sweets or honey he would eat them; if he found milk without bread he would suffice with

it; and if he found melon or ripe dates he would eat them.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) did not eat while reclining, nor did he eat from a tray [*khuwwan*]. His sole was his cleaning cloth. He ﷺ was never sated from barley bread three days in succession until he passed on to God (Exalted is He!), having preferred others over himself, not due to poverty or miserliness!

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would attend wedding feasts, visit the sick, and attend funeral processions. He ﷺ would walk alone amongst his enemies without guards. The Prophet ﷺ was the humblest of people and the most reposed, but without insolence, and he was the most eloquent of them, but without long-windedness. He had the best countenance and nothing of the ephemeral world awed him.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would wear attire that was readily at hand: at times he would wear a full cloak, at times a striped Yemeni mantle and at times a woollen cloak. He would wear any available garment that was lawful. His ring was of silver, which he would wear on his right little finger, and [occasionally] on his left little finger. He would mount his servant and others behind him on the same riding mount, and would ride on whatever was available to him. Sometimes he would ride on a horse, sometimes a male camel, sometimes a grey mule and sometimes a donkey. On other occasions he would walk on foot, barefoot without a cloak or a turban or cap [*qalansuwa*].

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would visit the sick on the outskirts of the city. He loved fine scent and disliked foul odours. He would sit with the indigent and eat with the poor. He would honour the people of virtue for their good character, and would win the people of nobility over through kind acts. He treated his kindred well, without preferring them to one who is more virtuous than they. He

never behaved coarsely with anyone. He would accept the excuse of the one who begged his pardon. He would joke, but would only say what is true. He would laugh without bel- lowing. He would watch permissible games and did not dis- approve of them. He would race with his womenfolk. Voices were raised against him, but he would remain patient.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) had milch camels and sheep from whose milk he and his family would take nourishment. He had male and female slaves, but did not eat finer food or wear better clothes than they. Never did a moment pass where he (God bless him and give him peace) was not doing an action for the sake of God (Exalted is He!), or an unavoidable task for the sake of his wellbeing.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would go to the orchards of his Companions. He would never look down on a poor person due to his poverty and misfortune. He was never afraid of a king because of his kingdom; instead, he would invite both, poor and potentate, to God equally.

God (Exalted is He!) has combined in the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) a virtuous lifestyle and perfect temporal rule [*siyasa*]. He was unlettered, neither reading nor writing. He came of age in a land of gross ignorance, in the desert, poor and shepherding sheep. He was an orphan with- out father or mother, and God (Exalted is He!) taught him every quality of good character and every praiseworthy path, and taught him the narratives of the early and latter nations, everything through which there is salvation and triumph in the Hereafter and everything that engenders beatitude and deliverance in this world. God taught him to cling to what is obligatory and to forsake what is superfluous—may God grant us the enabling grace to obey the Prophet’s commands and emulate his actions! Amen, O Lord of the Worlds!

[20.3]

## Another Summary Account of His Proprieties and Virtues

OF THAT WHICH Abu al-Bakhtari related: The Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) never scolded a believer save that he made it an expiation and mercy for that person. Furthermore, he never cursed a woman or a slave. Once, while in battle, it was said to him, 'Would that you invoke a curse [against the enemy]!' but he responded, 'I was only sent as a mercy; I was not sent as a curser.' Whenever he was asked to invoke against someone, whether a Muslim, a disbeliever, or of the common or elect, he would turn it from an invocation *against* to an invocation *for* the person.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) never struck anyone with his hand except for the sake of God, nor did he ever exact revenge for anything done to him except when the sanctity of God was violated. He was never put in the position to choose between two things except that he chose the easiest, unless that choice entailed sin or the forsaking of family ties, in which case he would be the furthest removed from it.

No one, whether free or slave, male or female, came to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) but that he supported him in his need. Anas said, 'By the One Who sent him with the truth! He never said to me regarding something he disapproved "Why did you do that?" and never did his wom-

enfolk blame me except that he would say “Leave him be; it was written in a book and decreed.”

The Companions said, ‘The Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) never found fault with a bedding. If they spread out a bed for him he would recline on it, and if no bed was spread out he would recline on the earth.’

In the Torah, God (Exalted is He!) described the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) before he was sent, saying in the first line: ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of God; he is My chosen servant. He is not harsh, coarse, or boisterous in market places. He does not repay evil with evil, but rather he pardons and forgives. His place of birth is Mecca, his place of emigration is Taba [i.e. Medina] and his kingdom is in the Levant [Sham]. He clothes himself with the loincloth, and he and those in his company are callers to the Quran and knowledge. He washes his extremities.’ This is also his description in the Gospel.

It was the Prophet’s  character (God bless him and give him peace) that he would initiate greetings of peace with whomever he met. Whenever a person would come to him for help, he would patiently assist him until it was he [the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace)] who was dismissed. When he would shake hands, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was never the first one to release his hand. Whenever he met with one of his Companions, he would be the first to initiate the shaking of hands; he would then take his Companion’s hand and clasp it, fingers intertwined, strengthening his grasp over it.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would never rise or sit without invoking God. No one ever sat in his presence while he was praying but that he would shorten his prayer and turn to the person and say, ‘Have you any need?’ And after fulfilling his need the Prophet (God bless him and

give him peace) would recommence his prayers.

When sitting, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would usually sit with his shins together, grasping them like a cloth wrap used for support. His sitting place could not be distinguished from the sitting places of his Companions because he would sit wherever space remained in the gathering. He was never seen stretching out his legs in the presence of his Companions, lest his legs take up room and make it constricted for them—the exception being when there was ample space with no narrowness. On most occasions, the Prophet ﷺ sat facing the direction of the prayer [*Qibla*].

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would honour those who visited him, often spreading out his garment and having sit upon it those with whom he had no ties of kinship or suckling. He would prefer his guest [over himself] by [offering him] the cushion on which he reclined; if the guest refused he would urge him until he accepted it. No one took the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) as a friend except that he thought he was the noblest person in the Prophet's eyes; each person sitting in his company would receive an ample share of his attention, and he would listen to him, converse with him, and give him of his subtle qualities of excellence and guidance. Moreover, his gatherings were gatherings of modesty, humility, and trust. God (Exalted is He!) has said, *So because of mercy from God you were mild with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.*<sup>12</sup>

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) used to address his Companions by their agnomens [*kunyas*] so as to honour them and win their hearts' affection. He would confer an agnomen on the one who did not have an agnomen and

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<sup>12</sup> Quran 3:159.

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would address him by it. He would also confer agnomens on women, both those with children and those without, starting with the latter. He would also confer agnomens on young children, softening their hearts by it.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was the furthest of people from anger, the swiftest of them to satisfaction [*rida*]. He was the most merciful, providential, and beneficial of men to people. Voices were not raised in his gatherings, and when he would arise he would say, 'Exalted and transcendent are You, O God, and unto You is all praise! There is no god but You; I seek Your forgiveness and repent unto You', and would say, '[The Angel] Jibril taught [these words] to me.'

[20.4]

## An Exposition of His Speech and Laughter

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the most eloquent of men and the most pleasant of them in speech. He would say, 'I am the most eloquent of the Arabs, and verily, the inhabitants of the Garden shall speak the language of Muhammad therein.' He was few of words, forbearing in speech. When he spoke he was not a babbler; his speech was like a string of pearls. A'isha said, 'He did not construct his speech the way you do; he was few of words, while you speak profusely.'

His Companions said, 'He was the most concise of people in speech, which had been taught to him by the Angel Jibril. And in addition to its brevity, it conveyed everything he wanted to say.' He spoke with compendious speech [*jawami' al-kalim*]: neither prolix nor terse. His sentences followed each other in succession and he would pause between them, in order that the one who hears him can commit his words to memory and understand them.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) had a powerful voice and was the most melodious of people. He would remain silent for long bouts and did not speak without necessity. He never uttered ill words, and only spoke the truth, whether pleased or angry. He would turn away from anyone who uttered undignified speech. Whenever he had

to speak about something he disliked, he would speak metonymically to allude to it. When he was silent his Companions would speak, and arguments would not take place in his presence. In one Tradition it states: ‘He ﷺ exhorted through earnestness and sincere counsel.’ He ﷺ would also say, ‘Do not strike one part of the Quran with another, for certainly it has been sent down with multiple angles of interpretation.’

Of all people, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was the most constant in smiling and laughter in the presence of his Companions, ever expressing amazement with what they spoke of to him, always mingling with them. He would sometimes laugh till his molars showed. Out of their respect for and emulation of him, his Companions’ laugh was but a smile. They mentioned: ‘One day a Bedouin came to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) but his demeanour had changed and was unrecognizable to his Companions. The man wanted to ask something of the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) but they said, “O Bedouin! Don’t do it, for we do not recognize his demeanour.” To this, the Bedouin replied, “By Him Who sent him with the truth as a Prophet! I will not leave him until he smiles”, whereupon he said, “O Messenger of God! It has reached us that the Anointed [the Anti-Christ (*Dajjal*)] shall bring *tharid*<sup>13</sup> to people who are dying of hunger. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Do you think I should abstain from his *tharid* out of modest restraint [*ta’affuf*] and dignity until I die of emaciation, or should I partake of his *tharid* and when I am satiated I will believe in God and reject him?” Upon hearing this, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) laughed until his molar teeth showed and said, “No. Instead, God shall suffice you with that by which He suffices the believers.”’

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13 An Arab dish of bread soaked in vegetable or meat broth. —Tr

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The Companions said that the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was the most smiling and affable of people, except when the revelation of Quran was descending upon him, or when he was mentioning the Last Hour or delivering an exhortation. When he was joyful and pleased he was the best of people in pleasure; when he delivered an exhortation he would do so with seriousness; and when he would become angry—and he would not become angry except for God’s sake—nothing would settle his anger. This is how the Prophet ﷺ was in all of his affairs.

When the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would begin a task he would resign the matter to God and renounce any claim to strength and power, asking for guidance and saying, ‘O God! Show me the truth as truth that I may follow it, and show me evil as evil and grant me the ability to turn away from it; and protect me lest the two are made obscure to me and I am led thereby to follow my passions without guidance from You! Make my desires follow Your obedience, and be pleased with me while I am in a state of wellbeing. And guide me, with Your permission, concerning that of the truth over which differences have occurred. Indeed, You guide whom You will to the Straight Path.’

[20.5]

## An Exposition of His Proprieties with Food

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) would eat whatever was available. The most beloved food to him was that over which there are many hands sharing it. He would say when the table spread was laid out, 'In the Name of God, render this meal a blessing that is thanked, and one that causes us to attain the bounty of the Garden.'

When he sat to eat, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) frequently joined his knees and feet together as one praying sits down; however, one knee would be over the other knee, and one foot over the other foot. He would say, 'I am but a servant; I eat as a servant eats, and sit as a servant sits.'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) did not eat very hot food, regarding which he would say, 'It is without blessing; God did not feed us fire, so make it cool.' He would eat from what is nearest to him. He would eat with three, occasionally four, fingers, but did not eat with two fingers, regarding which he (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'That is the way Satan eats.'

'Uthman b. 'Affan brought the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) some *faludhaj* [a sweet made of flour and honey] and he ate of it. He asked, 'What is this, O 'Abdullah?' 'Uthman said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! We take some clarified butter and honey and put it in a

stone cooking pot, put it over a fire and boil it. Then we take the choice kernels of wheat when it is milled, and roast it over the clarified butter and honey in the pot. We then mix it until it is fully cooked, and the result is what you see.' The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Verily, this food is good.'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) ate of unsifted barley bread, as well as cucumbers with fresh dates and salt. His favourite fresh fruit was melon and grape. He would eat melon with bread and sukkari dates, and would sometimes eat it with fresh dates, using both hands. One day, as he was eating fresh dates with his right hand and holding the date stones in his left hand, a sheep passed by, whereupon he showed her the date stones, and the sheep began eating out of his left hand while he ate with his right hand, until, when he was finished, the sheep left.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would sometimes eat grapes by putting the bunch in his mouth and drawing out its stalk bare; and in doing this, the drops of water [from the grapes] would glisten on his beard, appearing like pearls. His most common food was water and dates. He would combine milk and dates and call them 'the two fine things'. The most beloved food to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was meat, of which he would say, 'It strengthens hearing and is the master of all foods in this life and the Next. Had I asked my Lord to feed it to me every day He would have done so.'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would [also] eat *tharid* with meat and pumpkin. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) loved pumpkins and said concerning them, 'It is the tree of my brother Yunus.' 'A'isha said, 'The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) used to say, "O 'A'isha! When you cook a pot of food, be sure put in it

many gourds, for certainly gourds help strengthen the heart of one aggrieved.”

The Prophet used to eat hunted fowl, but did not follow the hunt or hunt it himself. Instead, he preferred that it be hunted for him and brought to him, of which he would eat. When he ate meat he did not lean his head towards it; instead, he would raise the meat to his mouth and bite into it firmly. He used to eat bread and clarified butter, and liked the forearm and shoulder of sheep. Of stews he like gourds; of seasonings he liked vinegar; and of dates he liked the ‘*ajwa* dates [native to Medina]. He called ‘*ajwa* dates blessed and said, ‘It is of the Garden and is a remedy for poison and sorcery.’

Of vegetables, the Prophet  liked endive,<sup>14</sup> mountain balm,<sup>15</sup> and purslane,<sup>16</sup> which is called *al-rijla*. He disliked kidneys on account of their proximity to urine. There were seven parts of sheep that he disliked and would not eat: the male organ, the ovaries, the bladder, the gall bladder, the thyroid gland, the vulva, and blood. He did not eat garlic, onions, or leeks.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) never found fault with food; if he liked a food he would eat of it, if he disliked it he would leave it, and if he excused himself from eating it he would not render it disliked to another person. He refrained from eating lizard and spleen but did not declare them unlawful.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would use his fingers to collect the remaining portions of food in a plate, and would say, ‘The last portion of food has the most blessings.’ He would lick his fingers free of food until they turned red, and would not wipe his hands with a cloth un-

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14 *Cichorium endivia*.

15 *Eriodictyon californicum*.

16 *Portulaca oleracea*.

til he licked each finger individually. He would say, 'It is not known in which portion of the food there contains blessings.' And when he would conclude his meal the Prophet would say, 'All praise is due to God. O God! To You is all praise. You have fed and sated, given drink and quenched thirst. To You is all praise, Who cannot be denied, Who is never shunned, and Who is utterly indispensable.'

When the Prophet ﷺ would eat bread and meat, he would wash his hands vigorously and wipe his face with the excess water. When he drank, he would take in three sips invoking God's name each time, and when he finished he would praise God thrice. He would sip water and not gulp it.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would give his leftover food to the one who was on his right side. If there was someone on his left who was of a higher rank, he would say to the one on his right, 'It is the prophetic wont [*sunna*] that it be given to you, but if you wish I will prefer them [to the left].'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) sometimes drank with one breath until he was finished. He would not breathe into a container; rather, he would move it away [from his mouth]. On one occasion a container was brought to him containing milk and honey, but he refused to drink it, saying, 'There are two drinks in one and two foods in one container.' Then he said, 'I do not forbid it, but I dislike boasting and being subject to reckoning on the morrow due to the excesses of this world, and I love humility, for whoever is humble for God's sake shall be elevated by Him.'

In his house, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was more modest than an emancipated servant. He did not ask the members of his household for food or inconvenience them with requests for meals. If they fed him, he ate. He accepted whatever they fed him, and drank whatever

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they gave him to drink. He would, on occasion, rise and serve himself, taking what he ate and drank.

[20.6]

## An Exposition of His Proprieties and Virtues with Dress

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) used to wear whatever articles of clothing were at hand, such as a loincloth [*izar*], an outer garment [*rida*], a long shirt [*qamis*], a full sleeved robe [*jubba*], or other garments. He liked green garments. He would wear white garments most frequently, and said about them, 'Dress your living with them and shroud your deceased in them.' He also wore a padded long-sleeved shirt [*quba'*] in battle and outside of battle. He had a fine green tunic of silk brocade whose green colour looked pleasant on him due to his white complexion.

All of the Prophet's garments were lifted up, above the ankles, and his loincloth was over them up to the middle portion of his shank. His long shirt [*qamis*] was fastened by buttons, which he would occasionally unfasten during prayer and on other occasions. He also had a cloak of dyed saffron [*milhafa*] which he would occasionally wear while leading the prayer. He would sometimes wear a single piece garment [*kisa'*], wearing nothing else. He also had a thick padded garment [*kisa' mulabbad*], which he would wear, saying, 'I am but a servant; I dress as a servant dresses.' He had two special garments for the Friday Prayer, excluding his other garments [that he would wear] outside of Friday.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would,

on occasion, wear a single loincloth with nothing else. He would take its two ends and tie them between his shoulder blades, and sometimes lead the funeral prayer whilst wearing it. He would, at times, pray in his home wearing a single loincloth whose ends he would tie crosswise, and that would be the loincloth he would wear on the day in which he had intimate relations. Every now and then the Prophet ﷺ would pray during the night in a loincloth; he would wrap himself in the end part of the garment in his reach and lay the remainder over one of his wives and pray in that manner.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) owned a black garment [*kisa*'] that he gifted to someone. Thereupon, Umm Salama said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Whatever happened to that black garment?' The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) replied, 'I clothed [someone] with it.' Umm Salama said, 'I never saw anything finer than your white [complexion] against its blackness!' Anas said, 'I would sometimes see him [the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace)] leading us in the Midday Prayer wearing a wrap [*shamla*] whose two ends were tied in a knot.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) used to wear a ring. He would sometimes go out with a string attached to his ring in order to remind him of something. He used to put a seal on his letters, and would say, 'A seal on a letter is better than suspicion.' He used to wear a cap [*qalanis*] under [his] turban, and [occasionally] wear it without a turban. Now and again he would remove his cap from his head and place it in front of him as a barrier, after which he would pray towards it. At times, when he had no turban, he would tie a black cloth over his head and forehead. He had a turban called al-Sahab (the cloud) that he received from 'Ali as a gift. At times, 'Ali would go out wearing it and the Prophet (God

bless him and give him peace) would say, “Ali comes to you in a cloud!”

When the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would dress in a garment he would dress from his right side and say, ‘All praise is due to God Who clothed me with that by which I cover my nakedness and that by which I adorn myself amongst the people.’ And when he would undress he would remove his clothing from his left side. When he would don a new garment, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would give his worn out garment to a poor person and say, ‘There is no Muslim who clothes another Muslim with his worn out cloths, doing so only for God’s sake, but that he [the giver] will enjoy God’s security, protection and providence, provided he conceals [the identity of the recipient] during his lifetime and after his death.’

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) had a leather bedding mat stuffed with palm fibres; its length was approximately two cubits, its width approximately one cubit and a hand span. He had a wide outer garment that was spread out for him; whenever he would go it would be spread out for him and folded into two layers. He used to sleep on a [thin] mat with nothing else beneath him.

It was of the qualities of the Prophet’s character that he would name his beasts of burden, his weaponry and his belongings. The name of his flag [*raya*] was al-‘Uqab [the eagle] and the name of his sword with which he faced battle was Dhu al-Fiqar [possessor of vertebrae]. He had a sword named al-Makhdham, another named al-Rusub, and another called al-Qadib (the sharp). The hilt of his sword was adorned with silver.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) used to wear a tanned leather belt in which there were three rings of silver. The name of his bow was al-Katum, and the name of

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his quiver was al-Kafur. His she-camel's name was al-Qaswa', and she was also called al-'Adba'. The name of his mule was al-Duldul and the name of his donkey was Ya'fur. The name of his ewe whose milk he drank was 'Ina.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) had a washing vessel of baked clay that he used for ritual ablutions and drinking. The people would send their young children who had reached the age of discernment and they would go see the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) and not leave his presence. When they found water in his washing vessel they would drink of it and wipe their faces and bodies with it in search of blessings.

[20.7]

## An Exposition of His Pardoning Despite His Ability Not To

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the most forbearing of men and the most desirous of pardoning, despite his ability not to [if he had so wished]. [So great was his forbearance] that once, when he received some necklaces of gold and silver and began to apportion them to his Companions, there arose a man from the remote desert wastelands who called out, 'O Muhammad! By God, if He has commanded you to act justly, then I do not see you acting justly!' Thereupon the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Woe unto you! Who will act justly towards you after me?' After the man went away the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Bring him back to me gently.'

Jabir reported that on the day of [the battle of] Khaybar,<sup>17</sup> the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was distributing silver [held] in Bilal's garment, whereupon a man said to him, 'O Messenger of God! Be just!' The Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) replied, 'Woe unto you! Who will act justly if I do not act justly? Had I not acted justly I would have assuredly failed and lost!' At that moment, 'Umar [b. al-Khattab] stood up and asked, 'Shall I not smite his neck, as he is a hypocrite?' The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'God's refuge is sought,

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<sup>17</sup> In al-Zabidi's commentary Hunayn is mentioned in place of Khaybar.

that the people should say I kill my companions!’

Once, as the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) was in battle and the Muslims were taken unawares, there approached a man [from the enemy] who stood over the Messenger of God, sword in hand, and asked, ‘Who shall deliver you from me?’ The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, ‘God,’ and the sword immediately fell from the man’s hand. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) then seized the sword and said, ‘And who shall deliver you from me?’ ‘Kill me swiftly,’ the man said, to which the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Say: “I bear witness that there is no God but God and that I am the Messenger of God.”’ The man replied, ‘No; I say only that I will neither fight against you nor support you, nor will I support a people fighting against you.’ Thereupon the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) let him go. When the man finally made his way back to his compatriots he said, ‘I have come to you from the best of men.’

Anas reported that a Jewess brought the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) a poisoned sheep for him to eat thereof. She was later brought before the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), who asked her about it. She said, ‘I desired to kill you.’ To this, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, ‘God shall not grant you authority over that.’ ‘Shall we not kill her?’ asked the Companions, and he said, ‘No.’

On another occasion a Jewish man performed sorcery against the Prophet ﷺ, and Jibril informed him of it, after which he pulled it [the tool of the magic operation that was placed in the well of Dharwan] out and untied its knots, bringing him relief—and despite all this, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) neither mentioned nor revealed this matter to the Jew.

‘Ali said, ‘The Messenger of God (God bless him and give

him peace) dispatched Zubayr, Miqdad, and I, saying, “Go forth until you come to Rawdat Khakh. There you will find a woman journeying by camel with a letter in her possession. Take it from her.” We went forth until we reached Rawdat Khakh, and we said [to the woman], ‘Bring forth the letter!’ but she replied, ‘I have no letter.’ Then we said, ‘Bring forth the letter or we will remove [your] garments!’ Complying with our demand, she took out the letter from her plaited hair. We delivered that letter to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) and lo and behold, therein was written a message from Hatib b. Abi Balta’a to a group of people from the idolaters of Mecca, informing them of some of the [military] preparations undertaken by God’s Messenger (God bless him and give him peace). The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said to him, ‘O Hatib, what is this?’ ‘O Messenger of God,’ said Hatib, ‘Do not hasten against me. I was a man who was adopted amongst my people, and the Migrants [*al-Muhajirin*] with you have relatives in Mecca to safeguard their families, so since I do not have such family ties amongst them I desired to garner support from some of them so that they look after my kindred. I did not do that out of disbelief [*kufir*], nor out of pleasure with disbelief after Islam, nor with the intention of apostasy from my religion.’ The Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) said, ‘Hatib has told you the truth,’ whereupon ‘Umar [b. al-Khattab] said, ‘Let me smite the neck of this hypocrite!’ The Prophet replied, ‘He witnessed the battle of Badr, and how do you know, perhaps God (the Exalted and Sublime!) looked upon the participants at Badr and said, “Do what you will, for I have forgiven you!”’”

On one occasion, the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) was distributing war booty when a man in the company of the Helpers [*Ansar*] said, ‘This distribution

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is not done sincerely for God's sake!' When this was mentioned to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), his face reddened and he said, 'May God show mercy to the brother of Musa; he suffered much greater than this and he maintained patience.' And the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would say, 'Let none of you inform me of anything [negative] concerning one of my Companions, for I like to come out to you with a sound breast [*salamat al-sadr*].'

## An Exposition on His Overlooking of Things He Disliked

THE MESSENGER OF GOD (God bless him and give him peace) had soft, delicate skin and was gracefully refined both inwardly and outwardly. His anger and pleasure were visibly recognized in his face. When he would become very angry he would touch his noble beard frequently. He never talked to anyone in a way the person disliked. A man once entered in his presence wearing [a garment of] yellow dye. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) disliked it but refrained from saying anything to the man, until finally, when the man left, he said to some of the people, 'Would that you tell this man to forgo this,' i.e. the garment of yellow dye.

A Bedouin once urinated inside the Mosque in the presence of the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace). The Companions thought to stop him, but the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Do not stop him.' (That is to say, 'Do not interrupt his urination'.) Then he said to the man, 'These mosques are not suited as places of filth, urine, or excrement.' And in another narration of this report the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Draw people close and do not drive them away.'

One day a Bedouin came to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) and asked him for something. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) gave it to him

and said, 'Have I treated you with excellence?' The Bedouin answered, 'No. Nor have you acted beautifully!' Upon hearing this, the Muslims became angry and rose against the man, but the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) signalled for them to desist. Afterwards, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) stood up and entered his home and sent more [provisions] to the Bedouin, adding more than [what he gave] the previous time. He later asked the man, 'Have I treated you with excellence?' to which the man said, 'Yes! May God reward you with good on behalf of family and kin!' The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said to him, 'You uttered a statement earlier and something of it remains fresh in the minds of my Companions; if you like, repeat to them what you said to me [now] so that their feelings against you can leave their breasts.' The Bedouin said, 'Yes.' The next day or later that evening, the Bedouin came and the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Verily, this Bedouin said what he said, and so we increased the amount of what was given to him, and he said that he was pleased. Is that so?' The Bedouin said, 'Yes. May God reward you with good on behalf of family and kin!' The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'The likeness of me and this Bedouin is that of a man who had a she camel that ran away from him. The people pursued her, which only increased her in avoidance. Thereupon the she camel's owner cried, "Leave me to my she camel, for I am gentle with her and know best [how to retrieve her].'" The she camel's owner then turned to it, took some sweepings for her and returned her gently until she came and kneeled and he saddled her and sat upon her. Had I left you after the man said what he said you would have killed him and he would have entered the Fire!'

## An Exposition of His Generosity and Munificence

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the most generous and munificent of men. In the month of Ramadan he was like a generous wind bringing forth rain [*rih mursala*], withholding nothing. When describing the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), 'Ali would say, 'The Messenger of God was the most generous of men. His breast was the most generous of breasts, and he was the most truthful of men in speech. He was the most diligent in fulfilling promises, the gentlest of nature and the kindest of them in companionship. Whoever saw him unexpectedly would be awe-stricken, and whoever got acquainted with him would love him. Whoever described him would say, "I saw neither before him nor after him anyone like him."

Never was the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) asked for anything for Islam but that he gave it. A man once came to the Prophet asking him for something, and he gave [a flock of] sheep so large as to close the gap between two mountains. The man returned to his people and said, 'Accept Islam, for Muhammad give as one who fears not poverty!' He (God bless him and give him peace) never said 'No' when asked for something. When ninety thousand dirhams were brought to him (God bless him and give him peace) he placed them on a mat, stood up and divided them

up, and did not refuse anyone who asked until he distributed them all. On one occasion, a man came to him and asked him [for money], to which he said, 'I have nothing, but go and purchase [something] in my name, and when something [of wealth] comes to us we will pay its price on your behalf.' Upon hearing this, 'Umar said, 'O Messenger of God! God has not imposed upon you what you cannot do!' But the Prophet ﷺ disliked that, and the man said, 'Spend, and fear not reduction of wealth from the Possessor of the Throne [God]!' The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) then smiled and his happiness was visible on his face.

On the Prophet's return from Hunayn, Bedouin Arabs came to him and persisted in asking him until they compelled him to climb up a tree, resulting in his cloak being snatched from him. The Messenger of God then stood up and said, 'Give me back my cloak! If I had camels equal to the number of these trees, I would have divided them amongst you, and you will not find me miserly, a liar or a coward!'

[20.10]

## An Exposition of His Bravery

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the most courageous and bravest of men. 'Ali said, 'You have indeed seen me during the battle of Badr when we were seeking refuge in the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), who was the closest to the enemy. On that day he was the most courageous of men.' 'Ali also said, 'When the heat of battle intensified and the two parties met [in combat], we would seek protection behind the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) and there would be no one closer to the enemy than he.'

It is said that the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) spoke little and was few of words, but when he would order the people to fight he would go forth resolutely. He was courageous in battle. The brave man would be the one nearest to the Prophet ﷺ since the Prophet was the nearest to the enemy. 'Imran b. Husayn said, 'The Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) never came upon a squadron but that he was the first to strike.' They said, 'He was immensely courageous. When the idolaters surrounded him, he alighted from his mule and cried out:

*I am the Prophet; that is no lie!*

*I am the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib!*

No one was witnessed that day anyone more powerful than him!'

[20.11]

## An Exposition of His Humility

THE PROPHET (God bless him and give him peace) was the humblest of men despite his immense rank. Ibn 'Amir said, 'I saw him casting stones [*al-jamara al-'aqaba* in the Hajj] whilst riding upon a grey she camel.<sup>18</sup> He neither struck nor whipped it, nor did he say, "Betake yourself!" He rode on a donkey bare back and notwithstanding that he had others ride behind him. He used to visit the sick, follow the funeral procession and respond to the invitation of the slave. He (God bless him and give him peace) would mend his own sandals, sow his clothes and help his family in their household needs.

The Prophet's Companions would not rise for him because they knew of his dislike for that. When he passed by young children, he would greet them. A man was brought to the Prophet's presence and felt frightened due to his awe, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ said to him, 'Be at ease. I am not a king; I am but a son of a woman from Quraysh who eats cured meat.'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would sit amongst his Companions and intermingle with them as if he was one of them. When a stranger would come he would not know which of them is the Prophet (God bless him and

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<sup>18</sup> In al-Zabidi's edition, 'a reddish she-camel.'

give him peace) until he asked about him. Because of this, the Companions asked the Prophet to sit in such a way that he would be recognized by a stranger, and so they constructed for him a mud bench that he sat upon.

‘A’isha said to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), ‘Eat while reclining, may God make me a sacrifice on your behalf, for it is easier for you!’ The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) replied whilst inclining his head until his forehead nearly touched the ground, saying, ‘Nay, rather I eat as a servant eats, and sit as a servant sits.’ He never ate off a tray or bowl until he met God (Exalted is He!). No one of his Companions—or anyone else—invited him but that he said, ‘At your service!’ When he sat with the people and they spoke about the Hereafter he participated with them; when they spoke about food or drink he did likewise; and when they spoke about worldly matters he did likewise—all out of kindness and humility towards them. The Companions would occasionally rehearse poetry in his presence and humorously recall events that took place in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance [*jahiliya*]. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would smile as they would laugh and did not rebuke them except for what was unlawful [*haram*].

[20.12]

## An Exposition of His Countenance and Physical Form

AND OF THE descriptions of God's Messenger (God bless him and give him peace): He was neither excessively tall nor short, but rather was described as being of medium stature when he walked alone. Never did a tall person walk in his company but that the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) was taller than him. At times he would be flanked by two tall men yet he would appear taller than they; and when they would leave him they would be described as tall and he would be described as having medium stature, and he would say, 'All goodness has been placed in moderation.'

As for the Prophet's complexion (God bless him and give him peace), he was *azhar*, neither brown nor very white. The term *azhar* means pure white without a mixture of yellow or red or any other colour. His uncle Abu Talib described him as such:

*A fair one, by virtue of whose face the rain is sought  
A caretaker of the orphans, a guardian of the widows*

Others have described the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) as fair complexioned with a bit of redness. They said, 'Only the parts that were exposed to the sun and wind, such as his face and neck, were of a reddish hue, whereas the unexposed parts of his body were pure *azhar* colour without

reddishness.' The beads of his sweat upon his face were like pearls and more fragrant than the most pungent musk.

As for the Prophet's hair, he had beautiful wavy hair that was neither [excessively] curly nor straight. When he combed his hair it appeared as streaks of sand. It is said that the Prophet's hair (God bless him and give him peace) touched his shoulders, and most of the reports state that it reached his ear lobes. He would occasionally plait his hair into four braids; each ear would come out between the two braids [on each side]. At other times, he would put his hair over his ears and the locks of hair on his temples would shine. The total number of grey hairs on his head and beard did not exceed seventeen.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was the handsomest and most resplendent of men. No one would describe him without comparing him to the full moon. Because of the purity of his skin, the Prophet's anger and pleasure were visibly recognized in his face. They [his Companions] used to say that he is as his companion Abu Bakr al-Siddiq used to describe him:

*Honest, the Chosen One, calling unto good*

*Like the light of the full moon that cleaves darkness*

The Prophet's forehead was broad, with long arched eyebrows, and the beauty [of the gap] between his eyebrows was as if the space was of pure silver. His eyes were very large with dark pupils, showing a slight reddishness. He had long, lush eyelashes. His nose had slight elevation, that is, it was aquiline, and there was a space between his teeth, that is, they were separated. When he would laugh it was mostly smiles, revealing something akin to hailstones, and when he would speak a light would be seen emitting from between his teeth.

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The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) had the most beautiful lips and most delicate closed mouth of all of God's servants. His cheeks were broad and even. His face was neither completely circular nor elongated. His beard was thick, which he would let grow while clipping from his moustache. He had the most beautiful neck of all of God's servants—described as neither long nor short. That part of his neck exposed to the sun or the wind was like a pitcher of silver mixed with gold, shining on account of the whiteness of the silver and the redness of the gold.

The Prophet's chest was broad, and his flesh did not overlap; he was like a mirror in its evenness, like the moon in its whiteness. There was a thin line of hair that ran between his navel and upper chest, stretching like a rod, there being no other hair on his chest or stomach. His stomach had three folds; one of them was covered by his loincloth, and the other two were visible. He had broadly spaced, hairy shoulders and large joints (that is, his chief bones of the shoulders, elbows, and hips). He had a wide back; between his shoulder blades was the Seal of Prophethood [*khatam al-nubuwwa*], which was adjacent to his right shoulder: a black mole with slight yellowish tint with a number of hairs around it that resembled a horse's mane. His upper arms and forearms were well-built, and the bones of his forearm were long.

His palms were wide and his extremities long. His fingers were as rods of silver. His palms were softer than silk, and they were fragrant, as if they were the hands of a perfumist, whether he applied scent to them or not. When someone would shake his hand it would leave a fragrance that stayed with the person for the remainder of his day. And when the Prophet would pat the head of a child that child would stand out from among the other children due to the fragrance on his head.

His lower extremities underneath the loincloth were well-built, such as his thighs and shanks. He was well proportioned and fully fleshed. Towards the end of his days his body became stout, but his flesh was almost as firm as it was in his early years, unharmed by age.

As for the Prophet's manner of walking , it was as if he was descending from a rock or walking down a slope. He inclined forward as he walked 'huwayna' without swaggering. The term *huwayna* means bringing one's footsteps close together. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would say, 'I most resemble Adam of all people, and my father Ibrahim most resembled me in character and in form.' He also said, 'I have ten names with my Lord. I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am al-Mahi [the Obliterator] by whom God obliterates disbelief, I am al-'Aqib [the Last] after whom there is no [prophet], I am al-Hashir [the Gatherer] under whose feet God shall gather the servants, and I am Rasul al-Rahma [the Messenger of Mercy], Rasul al-Tawba [the Messenger of Repentance], Rasul al-Malahim [the Messenger of Tumultuous Battles], al-Muqaffi, [the Follower] having come after all the people [i.e. the Prophets], and I am al-Qutham.' Abu al-Bakhtari said, 'Qutham means the one of consummate perfection.' And God knows best!

[20.12]

## An Exposition of His Comprehensive Inimitable Miracles and Signs Pointing to His Veracity

KNOW THAT IF one witnesses the Prophet's states and lends an attentive ear to the transmitted reports detailing his qualities of character and his actions, virtuous states, habits, disposition, his manner of ruling over various classes of people, his guiding them to uprightness, his bringing together the diverse strata of people and his leading them to his obedience, together with what is related of his wondrous answers to perplexing questions, his astonishing manner of managing the wellbeing of the creation, his excellent indications about the details of the exoteric law, its most basic intricacies being out of the grasp of the jurists and sages even if they expend their entire lifetime [in their pursuit]—[if one witnesses these things and lends an ear to the reports detailing them] there shall remain for him no doubt or misgiving that these traits were *not* attained by human means. Nay, that is utterly inconceivable save by seeking help and heavenly support and divine power. None of the abovementioned can conceivably come from a liar or deceiver.

Indeed, the Prophet's traits and virtuous states are unequivocal testimonies to this veracity, so much so that when an unrefined Arab saw him, he said, 'By God, this is not the

face of a liar', He bore witness to his veracity, having only seen his physical traits, so what say you of he who witnessed his qualities of character and had first-hand experience with his virtues in all of his comings and goings?

Here we cite only some of the Prophet's qualities of character so that excellent character [as such] may be known, and that attention may be brought concerning his veracity (upon him blessings and peace!), lofty rank and immense position in the sight of God. For God granted all of that to him, even though he was an unlettered man who had not occupied himself with learning or with the perusal of books, and had never once travelled in pursuit of knowledge, and even though he was in the midst of ignorant Arabs as a weak and powerless orphan! Were it not for unequivocal revelation [*sarih al-wahi*], then from where did he obtain excellent character and proprieties and gain awareness of beneficial religious knowledge—these being only an example—in addition to the other sciences, and not to mention [his] knowledge of God, His angels, and His scriptures, and other elect properties of prophethood [*nubuwwa*]? From whence can the human faculty attain unto these independently? Had he possessed only these outward qualities it would have been enough. Such were the signs and miracles that manifested from him that no one who is acquainted with them can entertain doubts concerning him. Let us then mention a number of these miracles that are found in abundance within the reports, and which are included in the authentic collections, that we may point to the rest, without being longwinded in quoting the details [of their chains of transmission].

On several occasions God effectuated breaks with natural phenomenon through the Prophet's hands. [Of these:] The moon was split for him in Mecca when Quraysh asked for a sign. He fed a large group of people in the home of Jabir

[b. ‘Abdillah al-Ansari], as well as in the home of Abu Talha, and at the battle of Khandaq. On one occasion he fed eighty people from four *mudds* [2.04 litres] of barley and a she-goat .... Once, he fed more than eighty men from some round barley cakes that Anas [b. Malik] carried in his hand, and on another occasion he fed the army a small quantity of dates that the daughter of Bashir [b. Sa’d] carried in her hand; all of them ate until they were satiated and their remained with them extra dates.

Water gushed forth from the Prophet’s fingers and the whole army, who were parched, drank from it. They also performed ablutions from a small bowl which was so narrow that the Prophet could not stretch his hand inside it. There being no water in them, the Prophet ﷺ poured out his excess ablution water [*wadu’*] into the spring of Tabuk and in the well of Hudaybiyya on two separate occasions, and both swelled with water, so the army, who numbered in the thousands, drank from the spring of Tabuk until their thirst was quenched, and one thousand five hundred people drank from the well of Hudaybiyya, even though previous to that the well had no water.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) ordered ‘Umar b. al-Khattab to supply four hundred cavalry with dates which were arranged in the form of a camel lying on its breast (which is the position a camel assumes when kneeling). And so ‘Umar supplied all of them with dates and there remained some leftover dates which he retained.

[While in battle] the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) threw a handful of dust at the opposing army, which blinded their eyes. In this connection the Quran revealed God’s words, *And you threw not when you threw, but it was God who threw.*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Quran 8:17.

Through His tasking the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) with the prophetic mission, God thwarted the practice of soothsayers, causing their disappearance, whereas [before that] divination existed openly. When the Prophet's pulpit was constructed, the date-palm trunk that he leaned upon as he delivered his sermons began to moan, so much that all of his Companions heard a sound like that of a camel. Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ embraced the date-palm trunk and it settled.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) invited the Jews to covet death while at the same time informing them that they would not covet it, and so an obstacle came between them and the expression of this desire and they were unable to utter it. This incident is mentioned in the Quran in a chapter that is recited audibly on Friday in all of the congregational mosques in the Islamic world from east to west, as an exaltation of the sign contained therein.<sup>20</sup>

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) related matters from the unseen: he warned 'Uthman [b. 'Affan] of a tribulation that would befall him, after which he would enter the Garden; he informed that 'Ammar [b. Yasir] would be killed by the rebellious party; he informed that God would make peace between two great factions of the Muslims through al-Hasan [b. 'Ali]; and he related about a man who fought in the path of God [*jihad fi sabilillah*] that he is among the denizens of the Fire. That soon became apparent when it was discovered that the man in question had committed suicide.

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<sup>20</sup> This chapter being the chapter of *Jumu'a*, customarily recited during the Friday congregational prayer. The verses in question are: *O Jews! If you claim that you are God's friends to the exclusion of others, then wish for death, if you are truthful. But they shall never wish for it, because of what their hands have sent forth, and God is All-Knowing of the oppressors.* (62:6-7)—Tr

Now, these are all matters in the divine realm which cannot be known by any of the ways by which knowledge was [customarily] gained—not by astrology or scapulimancy,<sup>21</sup> nor by geomancy or the auguring of birds [*zajar*], but only by God's teaching and revelation to him.

Suraqa b. Malik pursued the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace), but the feet of his horse sank into the ground and he was assailed by dust, until he sought [the Prophet's] aid and the Prophet prayed for him and freed his horse and informed him that he shall wear the bracelets of Chosroes on his arms, and so it was.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) related the news of the killing of al-Aswad al-'Ansi the Liar on the same night the latter was killed in Sana'a, Yemen. He also related the identity of his killer.

The Prophet confronted one hundred of Quraysh who awaited him, casting dust over their heads, and they did not see him. On one occasion, a camel complained to the Prophet ﷺ and was submissive to him in the presence of his Companions.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said to a group of his Companions as they were gathered together, 'One of you shall be in the fire and his tooth [therein] shall be as large as Mount Uhud.' All of those in attendance died upon the upright path, save one who was later killed as an apostate. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said to another group of his Companions, 'The last of you to die shall die in a fire', and so it was that the last of them later fell into a fire and was burnt to death.'

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) called two trees, whereupon they came to him and together he or-

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<sup>21</sup> A form of pre-Islamic divination using shoulder bones.—Tr

dered them and then returned [from whence they came].

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was of medium stature, yet when he walked with tall people he would [appear] taller than them.

On one occasion, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) invited some Christians to perform *mubahala*,<sup>22</sup> but they refused, and the Prophet informed them that if they had performed it they would have died—and since they recognized the truth of his statement they refused.

‘Amir b. al-Tufayl b. Malik and Arbad b. Qays—two powerful horsemen of the Arabs—came to the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) intent on killing him; however, they were obstructed from their aim and the Prophet supplicated against them, resulting in ‘Amir’s death through plague and Arbad’s death through a lightning strike that burned him.

The Prophet related that he would kill Ubayy b. Khalaf al-Jumahi, and at the battle of Uhud he scratched him slightly thereby causing him to die.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) was fed a poisoned [lamb]. The one who ate along with him died [from it] but he ﷺ lived on for four more years. Moreover, the poisoned leg [of lamb] spoke to him.

During the battle of Badr, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) related the exact locations where the chiefs of Quraysh would be slain, man by man, and not a single man amongst them deviated from his place. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said that groups of his nation would battle at sea, and so it came to pass. The earth was rolled up for him and he was shown its eastern and western parts, and he related that the dominion of his nation shall reach those areas rolled up for him. And so it, too, came to

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<sup>22</sup> When two contesting parties jointly invoke the curse of God upon whichever of the two are lying.—Tr

pass: the dominion of the Muslims reached from the beginning of the East from the land of the Turks to the reaches of the West from the Mediterranean and the land of the Berbers, yet, just as the Prophet said, they did not expand southward or northward.

The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) told his daughter Fatima that she would be the first of his family to join him [i.e., in passing], and so it was. He also informed his womenfolk that she who had the longest hand amongst them would be the quickest to join him, and Zaynab b. Jahsh al-Asadiya had the longest hand with respect to giving charity, and was the first of his wives to pass away after him.

The Prophet wiped the udder of a barren ewe that gave no milk and milk flowed from her. This was the cause of Ibn Mas'ud becoming Muslim. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) did this a second time when at the tent of Umm Ma'bad al-Khuza'iyya.

The eye of one of his Companions had dislodged itself, so the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) restored it with his hand, and it became the healthiest and best of his two eyes. On the day of the battle of Khaybar, 'Ali's eye was suffering from an ailment, so the Prophet blew spittle upon it and it was healed instantly, and he dispatched 'Ali with the flag.

While in the Prophet's presence, the Companions used to hear food uttering glorification [of God]. One of his Companions once suffered a leg injury, so the Prophet ﷺ wiped it with his hand and it was healed instantly. On one occasion, a group of fighters with the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) were running out of provisions, so the Prophet called for them to assemble all that remained. When this small quantity was collected, he invoked God, asking for blessings, and then ordered the fighters to retrieve the belongings. Thus they did, and there was not a single vessel but that it was full.

Al-Hakam b. al-'As b. Wa'il derisively imitated the Prophet's manner of walking, and the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Be like that.' As a result of the Prophet's invocation, al-Hakam did not cease trembling until he died.

On another occasion, the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) asked for a woman's hand in marriage, but her father, seeking to thwart his proposal and make excuses, said to him, 'She suffers from leprosy', although she was not leprous. Thereupon the Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) said, 'Let her be as such', and she became leprous. This woman was the mother of Shabib b. al-Barsa' the Poet.

There are several other accounts of the Prophet's signs and inimitable miracles, but we have confined ourselves to those reports which are widespread.

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The one who entertains doubts concerning the preternatural phenomena that occurred at the Prophet's hand and claims that none of these incidents have been related through mass-transmission [*tawatur*], and that only the Quran is mass-transmitted, may be likened to the one who doubts the bravery of 'Ali, or the generosity of Hatim al-Ta'i. It is known that their individual acts are not mass-transmitted, yet the sum total of their [transmitted] actions brings about self-evident knowledge [*'ilman daruriyan*]. Furthermore, this same person does not doubt that the Quran is mass-transmitted, which is the greatest and enduring miracle among creation (there being no other enduring miracle for any other Prophet besides him).

By means of this miracle [the Quran], the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace) challenged the well-spoken of the people and the eloquent orators of the Arabs—and at that time the Arabian Peninsula was filled with thousands of such people, and eloquence was their craft and

a point of pride and boast among them. The Prophet (God bless him and give him peace) would call out in their midst, reciting, [*If mankind and jinn assembled in order to produce the like of this Quran,*] *they could not produce the like thereof, even if they were helpers to one another.*<sup>23</sup> He said this to assert their incapacity, and thus they were rendered incapable of producing a like thereof, until they finally exposed themselves to slaughter, and exposed their womenfolk and offspring to capture. In all of that, they were unable to object to or impugn the Quran's purity of style and excellence.

After the Prophet's time the Quran spread throughout the world, east and west, generation after generation, age after age, there having elapsed now nearly five hundred years and no one has been able to oppose it.

So how great is the foolishness of the one who, considering the Prophet's virtues, statements, deeds, qualities of character, and inimitable miracles, and looking to the continuance of his law till the present, its spreading around the corners of the earth, and the submission rendered to it by the kings during and after his age notwithstanding his being weak and an orphan, continues to entertain doubts about the Prophet's veracity! And conversely, how great is the grace conferred on those who believed in him, confirmed his veracity, and follow him in everything related about him! We beseech God (Exalted is He!) with His generosity and largesse to enable us to emulate the Prophet in his qualities of character, his deeds, his virtues, and his statements!

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<sup>23</sup> Quran 17:88.