

The Attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ As Highlighted in the Qur'an

Translated Excerpts from Imam al-Ghazali's

Ihya Uloom Ad-Deen

(Translation from Urdu to English)

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The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was in full awe and absolute submission before Allah ﷻ, asking Allah ﷻ to beautify his character. He would supplicate,

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ حَسَّنْتَ خُلُقِي فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِي

O Allah, you have beautified my outward form, so make beautiful my inward form as well. (Silah al-Mumin, 879)

Along with the supplication,

اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنِي مُنْكَرَاتِ الْأَخْلَاقِ

O Allah, distance me from evil character. (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, 3591)

Rasulullah ﷺ is the one who embodied to the utmost the Qur'an's teaching on *akhlaq* (etiquettes). The supplication of the Messenger ﷺ was answered as promised to him in the Qur'an,

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

Call upon Me, I will respond to you. (Surah al-Ghafir, 60)

Upon him, the Qur'an was revealed, and through it, he perfected his character; thus, his character was the Qur'an. Accordingly, Sa'd ibn Hisham narrates that he asked Aisha رضي الله عنها about the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and she replied that his character was the Qur'an. An example of this is when Allah ﷻ says,

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

[O Prophet] take forgiveness [as your habit], enjoin virtue, and ignore the ignorant. (Surah al-A'raf, 199)

Similar commands are found in the following verses,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ

Allah enjoins towards justice, good behavior, and giving relatives (their due rights), and forbids shameful acts, evil deeds, and an oppressive attitude. (Surah an-Nahl, 90)

وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

Observe patience on what befalls you. Surely, this is among the matters of determination. (Surah Luqman, 17)

وَلَمَن صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

And whoever observes patience and forgives, it is, of course, one of the courageous conducts. (Surah ash-Shuraa, 43)

فَاغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

So, forgive them and forego. Indeed, Allah loves those who are good in deeds. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 13)

وَلْيَغْفِرُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

They should forgive and forego. Do you not like that Allah forgives you? Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. (Surah an-Nur, 22)

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Repel (evil) with what is best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with will turn as if he were a close friend. (Surah Fussilat, 34)

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

Those who control anger and forgive people. (Surah Aal Imran, 134)

اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا

Abstain from many of the suspicions. Some suspicions are sins. And do not be curious (to find out faults of others), and do not backbite one another. (Surah al-Hujurat, 12)

During the battle of Uhud, when the blessed teeth of the Prophet ﷺ were broken, and his blessed head was injured and bleeding, he continued to wipe away the blood, saying:

كَيْفَ يُفْلِحُ قَوْمٌ شَجُّوا نَبِيَّهُمْ وَكَسَرُوا رَبَاعِيَّتَهُ وَهُوَ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ

“How will those people attain salvation who have wounded their Prophet and broken his tooth while he called them towards God”? (Sahih Muslim, 1791)

Then Allah ﷻ revealed the verses:

لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

You have no authority in the matter, unless Allah forgives them or punishes them, as they are unjust. (Surah Aal Imran, 128)

These types of moral teachings are found throughout the Qur'an. The objective of the moral teaching and refinement was primarily for the Prophet ﷺ, and from his noble being, it diffuses into the rest of creation. Hence, the Prophet ﷺ receives divine instruction, and the creation receives instruction from him. So, he stated in a narration:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

"Indeed I was only sent in order to perfect noble character." (Al-Adab al-Mufrad, 273)

Then when Allah ﷻ perfected his character He praised him:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you are surely on an excellent standard of character. (Surah al-Qalam, 4)

Glory be to Allah ﷻ! How lofty is His status and how perfect is the favour and enormous bounty and generosity that He himself perfects the character of His Prophet, and He Himself praises his character. Nabi ﷺ explains that Allah ﷻ is pleased with noble character and that He is displeased with evil character.

Hadhrat Ali رضي الله عنه once expressed his astonishment at a Muslim who failed to assist another Muslim in need. He stated that if one truly hopes for divine reward and fears divine punishment, one should swiftly engage in good deeds, as such actions guide one towards salvation. A man then asked Hadhrat Ali رضي الله عنه if he had directly heard this from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Hadhrat Ali رضي الله عنه affirmed, saying, "Yes, I have heard even more profound advice from him."

When the prisoners from the tribe of Hatem Tai were brought before the Prophet ﷺ, one of them, a young woman, approached him and pleaded, "O Muhammad, if it is within your power, release me, but do not bring dishonour upon me before the Arab tribes. I am the daughter of the leader of my people. My father was a protector and provider for our community; he would free captives, feed the hungry, promote peace, and never turn away a beggar in need. I am the daughter of Hatem Tai." The Prophet responded, "O young woman, the qualities you have described of your father are the attributes of a true believer." Then, turning to his companions, he affirmed these virtues. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed that the young woman be released, acknowledging that her father was a man who cherished good character and conduct.

Abu Burdah ibn Niyar رضي الله عنه asked, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, does Allah ﷻ love good conduct?" The Prophet replied, "By the One in whose hand my life rests: No one shall enter Paradise except those who possess good conduct."

Muadh ibn Jabal رضى الله عنه narrates that the Messenger ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ has made the completion of Islam with virtues of good character and righteous actions. He summarized these as being inclusive of living a good life, completing noble actions, being gentle, giving in charity, feeding the hungry, spreading peace, visiting the ill—whether they are pious or sinners—following the funeral of a Muslim, treating neighbours well regardless of their faith, honouring Muslims, accepting invitations, hosting guests, forgiving others, reconciling differences, greeting others with generosity and peace, pardoning faults, avoiding the prohibited matters such as worldly amusement, frivolity, refraining from backbiting, speaking the truth, avoiding stinginess, greed, and deceit, treating enemies fairly, maintaining family ties, avoiding bad behaviour, pride, arrogance, indecency, hatred, rebellion, enmity, oppression, and other such negative traits.

Hadhrat Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه reported that there was no good counsel except that the Prophet ﷺ invited towards it and no sin except that he warned against it. The verse that suffices all of this is:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ

Allah enjoins to do justice, adopt good behavior, and give relatives (their due rights), and forbids shameful acts, evil deeds, and an oppressive attitude. (Surah an-Nahl, 90)

Hadhrat Mu'adh رضى الله عنه recounted that the Prophet gave him the following advice: "O Mu'adh, I advise you to fear Allah ﷻ, speak the truth, fulfill promises, honour trusts, avoid betrayal, protect your neighbour, show kindness to orphans, speak modestly, spread peace, perform good deeds, hope less in the world, stay committed to your faith, seek knowledge of the Qur'an, love the Hereafter, fear the reckoning, and lower your self. I forbid you to curse a wise man, label a truthful person a liar, follow the impious, disobey the just ruler, and create disorder on the earth. I call on you to fear Allah ﷻ wherever you go—whether by a stone, tree, or heap of earth. Make repentance anew after committing any sin, repent in secret for secret sins, and repent openly for open sins." It is like this that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called upon people to noble conduct and righteous actions.