

A Mercy to the Universe

Author:

Sa'eed ibn 'Ali bin Wahf Al-Qahtani



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Author: Sa'eed ibn 'Ali bin Wahf Al-Qahtani

Translator: Faisal bin Muhammad Shafeeq

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Introduction

Indeed, all praise is for Allah; we praise Him, repent to Him, and seek His forgiveness and help. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own selves and of our wicked deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can lead astray; and whomsoever Allah leads astray, none can guide. And I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, and He has no partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allah (SWT) has sent Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as a mercy not just to mankind, but to the world of jinns as well. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

"And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)." (Qur'an 21:107)

Mercy is clemency and forbearance; mercy is the disposition to forgive or show compassion; mercy means a favor or a blessing; mercy further denotes the qualities of kindness, sympathy, generosity, and beneficence. Suffice is to say all of these qualities were present in abundance in the character of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a mercy not just to believers, but to disbelievers as well, for he would invite them to come out of darkness and into the light of true guidance. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِى وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ٱلنَّبِىِّ ٱلَّذِى يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾

"Say [(O Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him))]: "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah — to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger [(Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him))], the Prophet who can neither read nor write [(i.e. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who believes in Allah and His Words [(this Qur'an), the Taurat (Torah) and the Injil (Gospel) and also Allah's Word: "Be!" - and he was, i.e. 'Iesa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)], and follow him so that you may be guided." (Qur'an 7:158)

And in another verse, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّنذِرِينَ﴾

"And (remember) when We sent towards you [Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] Nafran (three to ten persons) of the jinns, (quietly) listening to the Qur'an, when they stood in the presence thereof, they said: "Listen in silence!" And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners." (Qur'an 46:29)

That Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is a favor and blessing for mankind is clearly stated in this Verse:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
 ءَايَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي
 ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

"Indeed Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger [Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur'an), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) (i.e. his legal ways, statements, acts of worship, etc.)], while before that they had been in manifest error." (Qur'an 3:164)

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a favor and blessing not just for Arabs, the people among whom he was sent, but for people of all races and colors. In a speech he gave during his Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن رَّبُّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ
 لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى أَعْجَمِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا لِأَحْمَرَ عَلَى
 أَسْوَدَ، وَلَا لِأَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى»

"O people, your Lord is One, and your father is one (i.e., Adam). Lo! An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, a non-Arab is not superior to an Arab, a red-skinned person is not superior to a black-skinned person, and a black-skinned person is not superior to a red-skinned person - except through At-Taḡwa (piety, righteousness, fear of Allah)" [Musnad Ahmad with the numbering of Al-Banna (12/226). Commenting on the level of authenticity of this narration, Al-Haithami wrote in Mujma' Az-Zawaid (3/266), "Ahmad related it, and all of the men in its chain (i.e., all of the narrators) are men of As-Sahih (i.e., are men who were so trustworthy that their narrations were related in As-Sahih - Sahth Bukhari or Sahft Muslim).]

While today's non-Muslims acknowledge that Islam spread with lightning-like speed throughout the Arabian Peninsula - and beyond - many among them refuse to honestly investigate the reasons why. Prejudiced beyond reason - through their upbringing and the lies they hear and read about in all forms of media - many non-Muslims attribute the rapid spread of Islam in the 6th century to utterly false causes: primarily, the sword and tribal loyalties. To be sure, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) could not have gained many converts by the sword, since, throughout most of his life, he was either persecuted or led armies that were inferior in size and arms to the armies of enemy forces. And tribal loyalties played a role not in bringing people to Islam, but in turning them away from it, since the vast majority of people from the Prophet's tribe initially - and for many years afterwards - rejected his message.

Then what was the reason why so many people embraced Islam so quickly? Well, the reasons are many, one of the main ones being that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came with the truth, the truth being something that is appealing to the hearts of, if not most, then at least a good many men.

Another reason - and it is one that is very pertinent to the subject-matter of this book - is the noble qualities with which Allah (SWT) blessed the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). If one were to study in detail the Prophet's biography, one would find numerous examples of men who embraced Islam because they were impressed by at least one of the many noble characteristics of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) - such as his generosity, forbearance, kindness,

compassion, gentleness, patience, humbleness, justice, mercy, bravery, or strength.

His staunchest enemies became his closest followers when the cloud of blind prejudice was removed from their sight, and when they were able, for the very first time, to see with clarity the true nature of the Prophet's character. Thumamah ibn Uthal (May Allah be pleased with him), having been forgiven by the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), expressed a sentiment that was shared by many other former enemies of Islam. He (May Allah be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him),

«وَاللّٰهُ! مَا كَانَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَجْهٌ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ وَجْهِكَ، فَقَدْ
أَصْبَحَ وَجْهُكَ أَحَبَّ الْوُجُوهِ كُلِّهَا إِلَيَّ، وَاللّٰهُ! مَا كَانَ مِنْ دِينٍ أَبْغَضَ
إِلَيَّ مِنْ دِينِكَ، فَأَصْبَحَ دِينُكَ أَحَبَّ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ إِلَيَّ، وَاللّٰهُ! مَا كَانَ
مِنْ بَلَدٍ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ بَلَدِكَ، فَأَصْبَحَ بَلَدُكَ أَحَبَّ الْبِلَادِ كُلِّهَا إِلَيَّ»

"By Allah, throughout the entire earth, no face was more despised by me than your face; and yet now your face has become the most beloved of faces to me. By Allah, throughout the entire earth, no religion was more despised by me than your Religion; and yet now your Religion is the most beloved of all religions to me. By Allah, throughout the entire earth, no land was more despised by me than your land; and yet now your land is the most beloved of all lands to me." [Bukhari (4372) and Muslim (1764).]

While Thumamah (May Allah be pleased with him) was deeply affected by the Prophet's forgiveness, to the point that it led to his entry into the fold of Islam, Mu'awiyah ibn Al-Hakam (May Allah be pleased with him) was moved by the Prophet's gentleness and by his kind way of teaching others. So moved, in fact, was Mu'awiyah (May Allah be pleased with him) that he said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for him; neither before nor after his time have I met anyone who teaches better than he does. By Allah, he neither cursed me, nor hit me, nor frowned at me." [Muslim (537)] A Bedouin was similarly moved when, due to his ignorance and uncultured habits, he made the mistake of urinating in the Masjid. While others reproached him, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was gentle with him, all the while making it clear to him why his act of urinating in the Masjid was wrong. The Bedouin then exclaimed, "O Allah, have mercy on me and on Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and do not have mercy on anyone other than us." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then pointed out that it was wrong of him to limit Allah's mercy to just two people, since Allah's mercy is vast and encompasses all things. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«لَقَدْ حَجَّرْتَ وَاسِعًا»

"Verily, you have made narrow that which is wide and vast. [Bukhari (6010).]

Later on during the Prophet's lifetime, the last holdouts from the Quraish were deeply moved by the Prophet's forgiveness and generosity. These were people who had shown enmity towards the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for many years. In spite of their past evils, and in spite of the fact that the Muslims did not need their help - for Islam by that time had many adherents - the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) not only forgave them, but acted generously towards them as well. For example, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave one-hundred sheep to Safwan ibn Umayyah, one of the bitterest foes of Islam. Then during the same meeting the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him one-hundred more sheep; and then he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him yet another one-hundred sheep. At the time, Safwan was a polytheist, but he was so moved by the Prophet's generosity that he embraced

Islam. He (May Allah be pleased with him) later said,

«فَبِأَبِي هُوَ وَأُمِّي مَا رَأَيْتُ مُعَلِّمًا قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ أَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمًا مِنْهُ،
وَاللَّهِ! مَا كَهَرَنِي، وَلَا ضَرَبَنِي وَلَا شَتَمَنِي»

"May my father and mother be sacrificed for him; by Allah I have never seen a better teacher or better teachings before or since; he did not rebuke me, hit me or revile me." [Muslim (537)]

«وَاللَّهِ! لَقَدْ أَعْطَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَا أَعْطَانِي، وَإِنَّهُ لَأَبْغَضُ النَّاسِ
إِلَيَّ، فَمَا بَرَحَ يُعْطِينِي حَتَّى إِنَّهُ لَأَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَيَّ»

"By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave me a great deal, and that at a time when he was the most despised of people to me. He then continued to give me more and more until he became the most beloved of people to me." [Muslim (2313).]

On another occasion the Prophet's generosity led to positive results for an entire tribe. For while a man from a foreign tribe was in his company, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him a quantity of sheep that filled the entire valley that separated two mountains. The man then returned to his people and said,

«يَا قَوْمُ! أَسْلِمُوا، فَإِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا ﷺ يُعْطِي عَطَاءً لَا يَخْشَى الْفَقَاءَ»

"O my people, embrace Islam, for Muhammad gives like one who has no fear of poverty." [Muslim (2312).]

On yet another occasion, almost an entire tribe embraced Islam as a result of the Prophet's generosity and forgiveness. That story began when a man went to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), intending to assassinate him with his sword. Allah (SWT) not only protected the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) from the man's plot, but also, in the end, gave the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) the upper hand over him, so that he could have killed him had he wished. But instead the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forgave him, [Bukhart (along with Ibn Hajar's Al-Fath - 2/96, 97) (Hadith number: 2910), and Muslim (4/1786) (Hadith number: 834).] an act of mercy that had such a profound impact on the man's heart that he embraced Islam. What is more, he went back to his people and conveyed to them the Prophet's message; only a short while passed before a great many of his fellow tribesmen accepted his invitation and became Muslims. [Fathul-Bari, by Ibn Hajr (7/428), and Sharh An-Nawawt (15/44).]

The Prophet's message was universal; the truth he conveyed and the character he displayed appealed not only to polytheistic Arabs, but to Jews and Christians as well. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) first arrived in Al-Madinah, he was visited by the famous Jewish scholar 'Abdullah ibn Salam. 'Abdullah (May Allah be pleased with him) later recounted his first encounter with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) "I went to where the people [of Al-Madinah] were gathered, so that I could see [the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)]. When I saw his face, I immediately knew that his was not the face of a liar. And the first thing I heard him say was,

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ، وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ، وَصِلُوا الْأَرْحَامَ،
وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ»

"O people, spread greetings of peace, feed others [from your] food, join ties of family relations, pray at night when people are sleeping, and, as a result of doing all of that, you will enter Paradise in peace." [At-Tirmidhi (2485) and Ibn Mdjah (3251) and its wording; also, refer to Sahfli At- Tirmidhi (2/303).]

Another Jewish man, Zaid ibn Sa'yah, wanted to test the Prophet's patience by doing something harmful to him. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) not only forgave Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him), but also ordered 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) to give Zaid a gift on his behalf. Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him), who was an eminent Jewish scholar, said, "Just by looking at the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), I could discern in his face all of the signs of Prophethood, except for two, which could not be discerned simply through the act of looking. Those two signs were, first, his mercy precedes and beats out his ignorance (i.e., when faced with ignorance, and when the one who wronged him anxiously waits to see whether he shows forbearance or anger, it is forbearance that he shows); and second, the more ignorance he is confronted with, the more forbearing he becomes. I tested the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in order to see whether he possessed these qualities." Answering his own question, Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him) said to 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) (to whom he was recounting the above narrative), "O 'Umar, I am indeed pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islam as my Religion, and with Muhammad as my Prophet. And I make you bear witness that I am giving away half of my wealth as charity to the Nation of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)." [Al-Isabah Fee Tamyiz As-Sahabah, by Ibn Hajr (1/566).

Another Jewish man, while on his deathbed, said to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), "By the One Who revealed the Torah, we indeed find in our Books your description as well as the place in which you were to appear. And I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)." [Ahmad (5/411). In his famous Tafstr book, Ibn Kathir expressed his faith in the strength of this narration (2/252).]

Some people who did not even meet the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) believed in his message; it was enough for them to learn about the truthfulness of the Prophet's words as well as news of his noble characteristics. Take for instance An-Najashi, the King of Abyssinia: When he heard Muslim delegates inform him about the Prophet's saying, "Verily, 'Eesa is the slave and Messenger of Allah," he said to them, "Welcome to you and to the one whom you came from. I bear witness that he is indeed the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and that he is the one about whom 'Eesa gave glad tidings. And were it not for my situation as King [of this land], I would have gone to him and kissed his sandals." [Siyar A'lam An-Nubala, by Adh-Dhahabi (1/438)]

Haraql, the Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, had a similar reaction when hearing about the Prophet's message, but with two important differences: First, he was being informed about the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) not by Muslims, but by Abu Sufyan, who at the time was one of the Prophet's fiercest detractors; and second, although Haraql acknowledged the truthfulness of the Prophet's message, he refused to embrace Islam. Abu Sufyan, despite being a disbeliever, possessed certain noble characteristics, which is why he could not help but tell the truth to Haraql when he was describing to him the character of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him): "Verily, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) does not act treacherously; he orders others to worship Allah alone, without associating any partners with Him and he forbids others from worshipping idols. He further commands others to perform Prayer, to be truthful and to be modest and chaste." Just that description alone was enough for Haraql, who then said in reply, "Verily, if what you say is the truth, then he will rule over the piece of land that is beneath these two feet of mine. Indeed, I knew that he (i.e., the Prophet that has been foretold in our scriptures) was to appear, but I did not think that he would be one of your people. Had I known that I would be able to safely reach him, I would have taken it upon myself to meet him. And had I been with him, I would have washed his foot (as a means of honoring him)." [Bukhari (7).]

What Allah (SWT) said, what the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said and what 'Aaisha said are enough to gain a general appreciation of the Prophet's lofty manners. Allah it said:

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

"And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted (standard of) character." (Qur'an68:4)

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ»

"Verily, I have been sent only to make complete (in myself and in others) the noblest of manners." [Al-Baihaqi (1 /192) and Ahmad (2/381); also, refer to As-Sahihah, by Al-Albani (45).]

And finally, when asked about the character of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), 'Aaisha (May Allah be pleased with her) said,

«فَإِنَّ خُلُقَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ الْقُرْآنَ»

"Verily, the character of the Prophet of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the Qur'an." [Muslim (746).]

To know the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is of paramount importance in the life of every Muslim; in fact, it is the second of three principles that all Muslims must learn about as it is the second question they will be asked about in the grave.

Therefore, given the importance of gaining knowledge about the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), we decided to present this simple and summarized guidebook, a book that provides basic and key information about the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). We have given it the title,

«رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ: مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ»

"A Mercy to the Universe: Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)."

And in it, it has been dealt with the topics of his lineage, his upbringing, his manners, his physical description, his miracles, and his mission in general. I have divided this work into thirty- three chapters.

We ask Allah (SWT) to bless and make beneficial this humble work; to make it sincere for Him; to make us benefit from it both during our life and after we die; and to make it beneficial for all who read it. Verily, there is none better than Allah (SWT) to ask for help from or to place one's hopes in; He is sufficient for us, and He is the best of Guardians. There is neither might nor power except with Allah, the Most-High, the All-Mighty. O Allah, send prayers and salutations upon Your slave and Messenger, Your chosen one among the creation, the one to whom You have entrusted revelation - our Prophet, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah; and upon his family, his Companions and those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Resurrection.

His Lineage: The Best of the Best

The Prophet's lineage is clearly documented in books of history; every one of his fathers is known all the way back until 'Adnan. And even though historians disagree about the names of 'Adnan's forefathers, they agree that 'Adnan - and by extension the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) - was a direct descendant of the Prophet Ibrahim (Peace be upon him). In Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah, Ibn Kathir (May Allah have mercy on him) describes the Prophet's lineage all the way back until Adam (Peace be upon him); in Zdd Al-Ma'ad, however, Ibn Al-Qayyim (May Allah have mercy on him) pointed out that scholars of genealogy agree about the names of the Prophet's forefathers up until 'Adnan, who was a direct descendant of Ibrahim (Peace be upon him), but they disagree about how many of 'Adnan's forefathers separated him from Ibrahim (Peace be upon him). [Refer to Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah, by Ibn Kathir (2/195); and to Seerah Ibn Hisham (1/1). Having enumerated all of the Prophet's forefathers until Adnan, Ibn Al-Qayyim wrote in Zdd Al-Ma'dd (1/71), "Until here the Prophet's lineage is known for certain, and is a point of agreement among genealogists. Who comes after 'Adnan is a point of disagreement among scholars, who, however, do agree that 'Adnan is from the children of Isma'il And Isma'il - at least according to the correct view that is held by scholars from the Companions, the Tabi'oon (the generation that followed the generation of the Companions), and those that came afterwards - is "The Slaughtered One (i.e., the one that Ibrahim during a dream, was commanded to slaughter)."] Keeping in mind that the word "ibn" means "son of," here then is the Prophet's full name and lineage: Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd-Manaf ibn Qusai ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'ab ibn Luaiy ibn Ghalib ibn Faihr ibn Malik ibn An-Nadr ibn Kinanah ibn Khuzaimah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Mu'idd ibn 'Adnan. [Al-Bukhdn (along with Ibn Hajar's famous commentary, Al-Fath), the Book of the Ansar's Virtues; chapter, "The Sending of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)," before Hadith number: 3851.]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the best from the best, as is made clear in this Hadith:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ كِنَانَةَ، مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، وَاصْطَفَىٰ قُرَيْشًا مِنْ
كِنَانَةَ، وَاصْطَفَىٰ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، وَاصْطَفَانِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ»

"Verily, Allah chose Kinanah from the children of Isma'il; He chose Quraish from Kinanah; from Quraish He chose the children of Hashim; and from the children of Hashim He chose me." [Muslim (2276).]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was bom during the "Year of the Elephant," or the year during which Abraha led an army towards Makkah with the intention of bringing down the Ka'bah. [Abraha of course failed in the attempt; the point here is that, because of the significance of his failed attempt, and because his army was accompanied by elephants. The year during which he tried to destroy the Ka'bah became famously known as the "Year of the Elephant."] More precisely, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was bom on a Monday, in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal, [It is widely and correctly accepted among scholars that the Prophet was born during the "Year of the Elephant," in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal; in fact, some scholars went as far as saying that there is a consensus on those two points among the people of knowledge. Refer to TahdhibAs-Seerah, by Imam An-Nawawi (pg. 20).] in the year 571 CE. It is an established fact; in an authentic Hadith, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), while responding to a question about why he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) fasted on Mondays, said, "It was on this [day] that I was born, and it was on this [day] that revelation came down to me." [Muslim (2/820).] The exact date of the Prophet's birth, on the other hand, is not known for certain; scholars have put forth a number of views: some say he was born on the 2nd of Rabi'ul Awwal; others, that he was born 8 days after the beginning of the month; others still, that he was born after the passing of seventeen days; and

yet others, that he was born on the 12th of the month. Two of these views stand out as being not only the most widely-held, but also the most likely to be correct. The first is that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was born after eight days expired from the month of Rabi'ul Awwal; this view was defended by Ibn 'Abdul- Barr, [Refer to Al-Biddayah Wan-Nihayah (2/260).] who said that it was the more clearly established [view] by way of authentic accounts. The second is that he was born on the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal; regarding this view, Ibn Kathir said, "This is the opinion that is held by the majority of scholars." [Refer to Al-Biddayah Wan-Nihayah (2/260).] In his famous biography of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Ibn Ishaq stated with certainty that this latter view is correct. [Seerah Ibn Hishdm (1/171).]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) died at the age of 63. Forty of those years took place prior to his prophethood, and the remaining 23 years he spent as a Prophet and Messenger. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) became a Prophet with the revelation of Iqra (i.e., chapter "Al-'Alaq" of the Qur'an), and then he was officially made a Messenger with the revelation of chapter "Al-Muddaththir." His hometown was Makkah, but then later, because of how he was persecuted by his fellow tribesmen, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was forced to migrate to Al-Madinah.

Allah (SWT) sent the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with a mission that had two primary - and complementary - goals: The first was to warn people not to associate partners with Allah (SWT) in worship, and the second was to invite people to embrace Islamic Monotheism (Tawhid). The first ten years of his prophethood he spent promoting only these two goals. Then he was taken on a night journey to the heavens, a journey during which the five daily Prayers - Fajr, Dhuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib, and 'Esha - were made obligatory upon him and the members of his Nation. The next three years the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed his five daily Prayers in Makkah. At the end of those three years, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was ordered to migrate to Al-Madinah, since living in Makkah was no longer possible. Years of persecution culminated that year in a joint effort by the various sub-tribes of the Quraish to assassinate the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

After the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) settled down in Al-Madinah, [The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) arrived in Al-Madinah on a Monday, in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal; some scholars specified that date as being the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal. Refer to Fathul-Bdri (7/224).] he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was ordered, in stages, to apply the rest of Islam's legal duties: Zakat (obligatory charity), fasting, Hajj (the greater pilgrimage to Makkah), Jihad, the call to Prayer, enjoining good, forbidding evil, and so on from the various legislations of Islam. These Islamically obligatory duties he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) continued to apply and teach for a period of ten years; or in other words, until he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) died. The Religion he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) taught for so many years, with all of its detailed legislations, is the Religion that we are commanded to follow today. Anything that is good and beneficial, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has guided us to follow; and anything that is evil, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has warned us to stay away from.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is the seal of all Prophets (Peace be upon them) and Messengers (Peace be upon them) many Prophets (Peace be upon them) and Messengers (Peace be upon them) came before him, but none will come after him. While other Prophets (Peace be upon them) and Messengers (Peace be upon them) were sent to specific communities or groups of people, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to all of mankind, and to jinns as well. The simple fact, therefore, is this: Whoever obeys him, will enter Paradise; and whoever disobeys him, will enter the Hellfire. [Refer to Sahih Al-Bukhari (3851), and to Al-Usool Ath-Thalathah, by Shaikh Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhab (75, 76).]

The Lessons and Morals of this Chapter

In this world, people pride themselves based on various factors. Some think that they are superior because of their wealth; others, because of their status; and yet others, because of their noble ancestry. Well, in all regards, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is the best among all human beings. Even among Prophets (Peace be upon them) the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is of the highest ranking with Allah (SWT), and will have the most followers on the Day of Resurrection. And in terms of lineage, his is unparalleled: he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was from the best tribe on earth, and he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was then chosen to be the best tribesman from among them.

To celebrate the Prophet's birthday every year on the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal is an evil innovation that should be avoided, not to mention shunned, by all Muslims. We are commanded to follow the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), his rightly-guided Khalifahs, and his Companions (May Allah be pleased with them). And yet we find that, during his lifetime, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never celebrated his birthday; nor did the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) do so after he died; and nor did the Tabi'un [the generation that followed the generation of the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them)] do so during their lifetimes.

Furthermore, given the number of scholarly views regarding the matter, we cannot even be sure that the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal is the correct date of the Prophet's birth. But even if we were certain that the 12th was the day on which the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was born, we may not, based on the reasons mentioned above, celebrate it on an annual basis. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

"Whoever introduces something new into this affair of ours (i.e., the Religion of Islam), then he (and his act of innovation) is rejected." [Bukhari (2697) and Muslim (1718).]

According to the narration of Imam Muslim, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

"Whoever does an act [pertaining to matters of worship] that is not from our affair (i.e. that is not from the established teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah), then he (and his act of innovation) is rejected." [Refer to Risalah At-Tahdhir Minal-Bid'ah, by our noble and esteemed Shaikh, 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz (May Allah have mercy on him)]

As can be appreciated from the focus of the first thirteen years of his mission, the primary duties of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) were to invite people to embrace Islamic Monotheism (Tawhid), to save them from the evil of polytheism, to bring them from the darkness of sins to the light of good deeds, and to steer them away from ignorance and towards knowledge. In short, anything that is good and noble, he has ordered us to follow and embrace; and anything that is evil and wicked, he has commanded us to avoid and shun. May the peace and blessings of Allah (SWT) be upon him.

His Upbringing

Both of his parents having died by the time he was only six years old, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) grew up as an orphan. As difficult as the life of an orphan usually is, Allah (SWT) blessed the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), providing him with refuge, the love and care of his uncle, and all of his basic material needs.

His father, 'Abdullah, died while he was still in his mother's womb. After he was born, he was nursed for a number of days by Thuwaibah, [Al-Bukhdri (along with Ibn Hajr's famous commentary, Al-Fath) (9/124)] who was a servant of Abu Lahab. Then the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent away to be cared for in the pure atmosphere of the desert, and there he was nursed by Halimah As-Sa'diyyah. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) remained under the care of Halimah, and in the company of the Banu Sa'ad tribe, for approximately four years. It was during his stay with Halimah that he underwent the first major step towards becoming a Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). It was a preparatory and highly symbolic step, one that involved the literal washing of his heart; and it was a miraculous occurrence that took place in the presence of a group of children from the Banu Sa'ad tribe. In a narration that is related in Sahth Muslim, Anas ibn Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "While the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was playing with some other boys, Jibril (Peace be upon him) came to him, took him, forced him to the ground, and split him open, revealing his heart. Jibril extracted his heart, removed from it a blood clot, and said, 'This is the portion of Shaitan (the Devil) in you.' He then washed the heart with Zamzam water in a basin made of gold. He then joined the heart together, and returned it to its place. The children hurried off to his mother - i.e. nursing suckling mother. They said to her, 'Verily, Muhammad has been killed.' They went to him and found that his color had changed (though he was otherwise fine)." Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "I used to see the marks of that stitching on his chest." [Muslim (261) (162). Also, refer to Ibn Kathir's Al-Bid'ah Wan-Nihayah, to the edition that contains the commentary of Dr. 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin At-Turki (3/413).]

Halimah loved the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) a great deal; her life changed completely after she took it upon herself to nurse him, for Allah (SWT) then blessed her with more than sufficient sustenance. Keeping the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was in Halimah's best self-interest, she loved him too much to think selfishly about her own comfort and material well-being. After the above-mentioned incident took place, she became afraid for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and felt that it was no longer safe for him to stay with her. And so she decided to return the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to his mother, Aminah bint Wahb.

Later on, Aminah took the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with her to Al-Madinah, where she was going in order to visit her brothers. During their return journey to Makkah, at a place called Al-Abwa, Aminah died. At the time, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was 6 years, 3 months, and 10 days old. Al-Bid'ah Wan-Nihayah (4/423); Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), by Ibn Kathir (pg. 92). Both of the Prophet's parents died while being upon the polytheist faith of the Quraish - refer to Sahih Muslim (203).

Even though the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was an orphan, he never lacked the love and care that every child needs. Whenever he would lose one loving caregiver, Allah (SWT) would replace that caregiver with another who loved him just as much. With the death of his mother, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was taken and cared for by his grandfather, the eminent chieftain, 'Abdul-Muttalib. For the next two years of his life, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoyed the healthy and loving atmosphere of his grandfather's home. 'Abdul-Muttalib saw in the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) signs of greatness, and he took special care of him; for instance, he allowed the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), instead of his many sons, to sit beside him on his mat in front of the Ka'bah.

Then, with his death imminent, 'Abdul-Muttalib ordered that his grandson be placed in the custody of his uncle Abu Talib. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who was eight years old at the time, could not have been placed under the care of a better guardian - a guardian that cared for and protected him not just as a child, and not just as a young adult, but also during the difficult early years of his prophethood.

'Abu Talib loved the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) deeply, so much, in fact, that despite remaining a polytheist, he supported the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) during the most difficult years of his prophethood - the years during which he faced constant persecution at the hands of the Quraish. Abu Talib was motivated by avuncular love, and not by faith in his nephew's mission; that being said, he did know deep down in his heart that his nephew was preaching the truth. But even his love for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his inner convictions were not enough to counteract his overriding loyalty to the ways, customs, and beliefs of his forefathers. As such, despite being a staunch supporter of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Abu Talib died a polytheist.

Because of the ultimate justice of Allah (SWT), not all polytheists are the same. Some will suffer more than others in the Hellfire; some will be in the Hellfire's lowest depths, while others will be in a shallower, but still horrible, part of the Hellfire. The Prophet's intercession will decrease, but not cancel out completely, Abu Talib's punishment in the Hellfire. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«هُوَ فِي ضَحْضَاحٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَلَوْلَا أَنَا لَكَانَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ»

"He is in a shallow part of the Hellfire. And were it not for me, he would have been in the lowest depths of the Hellfire."

In another wording of the same Hadith, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَعَلَّهُ تَنْفَعُهُ شَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَيُجْعَلُ فِي ضَحْضَاحٍ مِنَ النَّارِ
يَبْلُغُ كَعْبِيهِ، يَغْلِي مِنْهُ دِمَاغُهُ»

"Perhaps he will benefit from my intercession on the Day of Resurrection, so that he will be placed in a shallow part of the Hellfire: The Fire will reach his ankles, and as a result of that, his brain will boil." [Bukhari (3883,3884,3885,6208, and 6572), and Muslim (209). Also, refer to Ibn Kathir's Al-Fusool (pg. 93) and to Al-Biddayah Wan-Nihayah (5/431-434).]

Although his youthful years were relatively uneventful, various incidents occurred to show that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was being prepared for great things to come in the future; and at least on one occasion, he was recognized as being the awaited Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that was mentioned in the revealed scriptures of both Jews and Christians. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was only 12 years old, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) accompanied his uncle on a business trip to Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), a land that was inhabited primarily by Christians. During that trip, Abu Talib saw things that confirmed his faith in the bright and great future of his nephew, and as a result, he tried even harder to protect and take care of him. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari said, "Along with a group of Quraishi chieftains, Abu Talib went to Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), taking with him the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). When their traveling party overlooked [the monastery of] a well-known monk, they descended [towards him] and unpacked their things in order to make temporary camp there. The monk came out to them, which was strange since, in the past, he would never come out to them whenever they passed by him; he wouldn't even look in their direction or pay any attention to them. While they were unpacking their things, the monk walked

slowly by each one of them until he reached the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He then took the Messenger of Allah's hand and said,

«هَذَا سَيِّدُ الْعَالَمِينَ، هَذَا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً
لِلْعَالَمِينَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ أَشْيَاخُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ مَا عَلِمُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ حِينَ
أَشْرَقْتُمْ مِنَ الْعَقَبَةِ لَمْ يَبْقَ حَجَرٌ وَلَا شَجَرٌ إِلَّا خَرَّ سَاجِدًا، وَلَا
يَسْجُدَانِ إِلَّا لِنَبِيِّ، وَإِنِّي أَعْرِفُهُ بِخَاتَمِ النُّبُوَّةِ أَسْفَلَ مِنْ غُضْرُوفٍ
كَتِفِهِ مِثْلَ التُّفَّاحَةِ . . .»

"This is the chief of all created beings; this is the Messenger of the Lord of all that exists: Allah has sent him as a mercy to all created beings." The chieftains of the Quraish said, 'And how do you know this?' The monk replied, 'When you overlooked this spot from the mountain road, every tree and stone [in this area] fell down to the ground and performed prostration. And they perform prostration only for a Prophet. And verily, I recognize him (i.e., as being the awaited Prophet) by the seal of Prophethood that is like an apple [in shape] and that is situated beneath the soft bone of his shoulder."

The same narration goes on to describe how, in an empty sky, a single cloud appeared in order to provide shade for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him); similarly, it describes how a tree near the monastery literally leaned over in order to provide shade for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). [At-Tirmidhi (3620). In Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool (pg 94), Ibn Kathir (May Allah have mercy on him) said about this Hadith, "All of the narrators of this Hadith are trustworthy"; furthermore, Al-Albani ruled it to be an authentic Hadith in Sahth At-Tirmidhi (3620). Also, in Fiqhus-Seerah (pg. 68), Al-Ghazali wrote, "Its chain is authentic"; however, Al-Ghazali did add, "The mention of Bilal in this narration is, as has been mentioned, Munkar (false, strange). In Al-Bazzar's narration of the Hadith, Bilal is not mentioned; instead, a man is referred to, but his name is not mentioned: "And his uncle sent with him a man."]

The monk ordered Abu Talib to send the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) back to Makkah; he had every reason to fear for the Prophet's life, since he knew that if the Jews were to find out about his existence, they might try to harm him, angry and bitter because the awaited Prophet was not one of them, but instead an Arab.

Having returned safely to Makkah, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) worked first as a shepherd and then later as a businessman under the employment of a woman, whose hand in marriage was more sought after than any other member of the Quraish. That woman was Khadijah bint Khuwailid (May Allah be pleased with her), and it was because of her honor and chastity that she was so highly regarded by Makkah's chieftains. After her last husband died, a number of Arab chieftains, including the evil Abu Jahl, proposed to her, but she refused all of their offers. A strong and wise woman, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) herself chose and proposed to the man with whom she wanted to spend the rest of her life.

At first, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would simply do business on Khadijah's behalf. But as their business relationship blossomed, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) found that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was not only bringing in the most profits from the various men she employed, but also was supremely honest and trustworthy. His noble qualities captured her interest, and she decided to order her servant, Maisarah, to accompany the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) on one of his business trips and to learn as much about him as possible. Maisarah was amazed by the wonderful character of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and upon returning to Makkah, he informed his mistress about

everything that he had learned about the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while being in his company. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) realized that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the man she wanted to marry, and so she proposed to him. Their marriage took place shortly afterwards; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was 25 years old, and she was 40. [Refer to Ibn Al-Qayyim's famous work, *Zadd Al-Ma'ad* (1/105); less known among Muslims is what Ibn Kathir wrote in *Al-Bid'ayah Wan-Nihayah* (3/466): "At the time, she was 35 years old; however, it has also been said that she was only 25."]

During his youth, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not receive revelation; nonetheless, he was still protected from the evils of polytheism and wicked acts, an amazing feat considering the fact that he lived in a society that thrived on evil, wicked, and lewd acts. So although the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was not a "Prophet" at the time, he was protected from all moral defects.

The greatest moral defect of all - associating partners with Allah in worship - he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was innocent of his entire life. Although he was asked to do so on numerous occasions, he never worshipped, glorified, or bowed down to an idol; he never attended a gathering in which idols were glorified; he never drank alcohol; and he never perpetrated a vile or lewd act. He knew that his people were upon falsehood, and were prone to perpetrate inappropriate acts at any given time, and so he avoided attending their parties and celebrations. [Refer to *Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool* (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), by Ibn Kathir (pgs. 91-95); to *Al-Bid'ayah Wan-Nihayah* (3/406-451); and to *Tahdhib Al-Asma Wal-Lughat*, by An-Nawawi (1/24).]

That the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) remained innocent of even the most minor of wrongful acts was a clear indication that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was receiving divine protection from Allah (SWT). After all, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was not living in an atmosphere of innocence; to the contrary, the society in which he lived is best described as one that condoned rampant evil and wicked deeds. Almost everyone associated partners with Allah (SWT); people murdered others without provocation, and often times with impunity. Prostitution and widespread fornication were the norms in society; oftentimes, fornication involved a number of participants with many men fornicating with the same woman. People stole from and harmed one another on a regular basis. Parents would bury female infants alive, fearing poverty and the shame and lifelong stigma that came with having daughters. Gambling and the drinking of alcohol were rampant, with the latter leading up to many of the above-mentioned evils. Not every single member of society perpetrated these evils; that being said, many people were doing so, and it was not as if significant numbers of people stood up to protest, for instance, the burying of children alive. That almost no one protested evil deeds indicates that people condoned, if not championed, the status quo in society. Of the few who avoided the above-mentioned evils, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stood out in that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) didn't perpetrate a single one of them; whether he knew it or not, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was slowly but surely being prepared for greatness. [In regard to the Prophet's lofty morals during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, many historians have used the phrase, "Allah refined his character, and He did so in a beautiful way." This phrase is so oft-repeated in books and narrations that some have speculated as to whether or not it is a Hadith. Weighing in on the issue, Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah wrote, "The meaning of the phrase is true; however, it is not related through any authentic chain"; refer to *Majmoo' Ar-Rasail Al-Kubra* (2/336). As-Sakhawi and As-Suyooti concurred with Ibn Taymiyyah's assessment of the matter; refer to *Kashf Al-Khafa* (1/70) and to *Silsilah Al-Ahadith Ad-Da'ifah*, by Al-Albani (72).]

For his noble qualities, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was praised by the other members of the Quraish; in fact, while he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was just a young man, they gave him the title, "Muhammad, the Trustworthy One." [Ahmad in *Al-Musnad* (3/425). While grading the narrations that are found in Muhammad Al-Ghazzali's *Fiqhus-Seerah* (pg. 84), Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is Hasan (acceptable).]

At the age of thirty-five, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did his people a great service, helping to avert inner strife that would have lasted for many years and would likely have resulted in the demise of the Quraish. This occurred when the leaders of the Quraish decided to rebuild the Ka'bah, as it was badly in need of repair. When they finished rebuilding it, the only task that remained was placing the famous Black Stone in its place. There was, however, one serious problem: the people of each sub-tribe wanted the prestige that came with performing that honorable task. They were on the verge of fighting when a wise, old man among them suggested that they allow the first man who would enter the gate of the Masjid to judge between them. They agreed, and much to their pleasure and satisfaction, the first man who entered upon them was the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They were pleased because they knew he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was trustworthy and that he wouldn't take sides.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), fulfilling their expectations, asked them to bring a garment and to place the Black Stone on it. Then he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered the leader of each sub-tribe to hold and pick up a corner of the garment, and then walk together towards the side of the Ka'bah. When they finished obeying his command, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) took the stone and put it with his noble hands in its proper place; as a result, everyone was satisfied and fighting was averted. [Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), by Ibn Kathir (pg. 95).]

In the years that followed, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led a more solitary life. Allah (SWT) instilled in him love for solitude, not as a random practice without any real purpose, but so that he could devote himself to the worship of Allah (AWT). For many nights at a time, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would seek solitude in the cave of Hira. At the time, he had no direct link to Allah (SWT), in that Jibril (Peace be upon him) had yet to come to him with revelation. And so he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would worship Allah (SWT) as best as he knew how; primarily, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would follow what he knew from the Religion and Shariah of Ibrahim (Peace be upon him), of whom both he and his people were descendants.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) continued to spend longer and longer periods of time in the cave of Hira until he reached the age of 40, when Allah (SWT) blessed him with Prophethood. Scholars agree that he officially began his mission as a Prophet on a Monday. As for the month, most scholars say that it was Rabi'ul Awwal, of the year 41 (i.e., the 41st year after the Year of the Elephant). [Zdd Al-Ma'ad, by Ibn Al-Qayyim (1/78); according to another view, however, his Prophethood began in Ramadan; and yet another view is that it was the month of Rajab.]

One day, while the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was busy worshipping Allah (SWT) in the cave of Hira, the angel Jibril (Peace be upon him) came to him and said, "Read." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I cannot read." Again, Jibril (Peace be upon him) said, "Read." And again, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I cannot read." This time, Jibril (Peace be upon him) embraced him so tightly that he was not able to breathe; Jibril (Peace be upon him) continued to embrace him thus until he could take it no longer. Then for a third time Jibril (Peace be upon him) said, "Read!" And for a third time the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I cannot read." Jibril (Peace be upon him) then recited these verses of the Noble Qur'an:

﴿أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ① خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ② اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ③
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ④ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ﴾

"Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (apiece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idris (Enoch)], Has taught man that which

he knew not." (Qur'an 96:1-5)

With the revelation of this verse, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) became a Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). The experience was a shock for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and so, with his heart trembling, and his body shivering, he returned to his most trusted friend, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and said, "Cover me, cover me." When he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was comfortably wrapped in a garment, and when the terror of his experience died down to some extent, he told Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) what had happened. Although the terror of the experience had diminished, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was still confused and unsure of himself. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), "I fear for myself." Faithful, wise, and confident in her husband's sound character, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) responded with words that at once comforted and reassured the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him): "Never! By Allah, Allah will never forsake you, for you join ties of family relations, you bear the burdens of the weak, you give to people what no one else is able to give (in terms of benefits and good manners), you hospitably entertain your guests, and you help people who are afflicted with calamities." [Bukhari (3) and Muslim (160).]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then further became a Messenger when Allah (SWT) revealed to him chapter "Al-Muddaththir." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) later recounted,

«بَيْنَمَا أَنَا أَمْشِي إِذْ سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَرَفَعْتُ بَصْرِي، فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحِرَاءٍ، جَالِسٌ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ، فَرُعِبْتُ مِنْهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَقُلْتُ: زَمُّونِي»

"As I was walking [outside], I suddenly heard a voice in the sky. I raised my gaze, and there appeared above me the very angel that had come to me at Hira; he was seated on a throne (or chair) between the heavens and the earth. I was terrified of him, and so I returned [to my home] and said [to the people of my household], 'Cover me.'"

Allah (SWT) then revealed to him the Verses,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝١ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ... إِلَى قَوْلِهِ... وَالرَّجَزَ فَأَهْجِزْ﴾

"O you (Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) enveloped (in garments)! Arise and warn! ... until the Verse... "And keep away from Ar-Rujz (the idols)." (Qur'an 74:1-5)

Revelation then intensified and came to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) frequently. [Bukhari (4).]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) began his mission by secretly preaching to those he trusted the most; it was during this stage of his mission that the most eminent of Muslims - those known as "As-Sdbiqun Al-Awwalun [The Ones that Preceded Others (to the Faith), the Ones Who Were First (to embrace Islam)] - embraced Islam. The first person to embrace Islam was Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her); she was followed by 'Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), who in turn was followed by Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him). The members of the Prophet's household having thus become Muslims, the next to accept the Prophet's invitation to Islam was Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him). Then people entered into the Faith, one after another, until Islam spread throughout Makkah; even every had members that became Muslims.

In the next stage of his mission, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), was ordered to preach openly to everyone, and not just to those whom he trusted. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received this order with the revelation of the following verse:

﴿وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ ۖ وَخَفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ﴾
 ﴿فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

"And warn your tribe (O Muhammad) of near kindred. And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you. Then if they disobey you, say: "I am innocent of what you do." (Qur'an 26:214-216)

Ibn 'Abbas reported that, when "And warn your tribe O Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of near kindred" was revealed, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ascended Mount As-Safa and began to call,

«يَا بَنِي فِهْرٍ، يَا بَنِي عَدِيٍّ»

"O children of Fihir, O children of 'Adi,"

these being the various sub-tribes of the Quraish. They gathered together before the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and if a man was not able to go himself, he sent a messenger on his behalf to find out what was happening. The Quraish, Abu Lahab (The Prophet's uncle) included, came, and the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلًا تَخْرُجُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِسَفْحِ هَذَا الْوَادِي
 أَكُنتُمْ مُصَدِّقِيَّ؟»

"Suppose I informed you that horses (i.e., an army riding on horses) were in the valley (i.e., behind this mountain), intending to attack you would you believe me?" "Yes," they said, "We have experienced nothing from you but truthfulness." the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَّكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ»

"Then I am a warner to you before the time of a severe punishment ." [Bukhari (4971) and Muslim (808).]

"Woe to you for the rest of this day!" exclaimed Abu Lahab. "Is it only for this that you have gathered us together?" Then Allah (SWT) revealed the following verses, making it clear who it was that was headed for destruction:

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۚ ۝١ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۚ﴾

"Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab (an uncle of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and perish he! His wealth and his children (etc.) will not benefit him!" (Qur'an 111: 1, 2)

Abu Lahab was not the only Makkan chieftain that rejected the Prophet's message; in fact, most others did the same. It was not enough for them to reject the Prophet's message; nor was it enough for them to hate him, scorn him, and mock him; no, they were not satisfied until they made clear their enmity

to him, persecuting him and his followers with an intensity that grew with the passing of every day. They wanted to accuse the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of some defect or evil quality, so as to turn people away from his message. But they had a hard time finding the appropriate accusation to level against him, because they knew that, in order to truly turn people away from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), their lies about him had to be at least plausible. Therefore, they could not call him a liar or an untrustworthy man, for they themselves had - through years of knowing him - given him the title "The Trustworthy One." Furthermore, deep down inside their hearts they knew that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was truthful; it was simply a matter of arrogance that prevented them from accepting the truth. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ إِنَّمَا يُدْرِكُ الْبَاطِلُ أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ أَتَيْنَاهُمُ بِالْحَقِّ فَرِيقٌ كَذَّبُوا وَفِرَاقٌ يُضِلُّونَ﴾

"It is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses (the Qur'an) of Allah that the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers) deny." (Qur'an 6:33)

Quraish's leaders knew the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for forty years, and they knew for a fact that his character was impeccable. Therefore, the only accusation that was even remotely plausible in their minds was to say that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a soothsayer or magician. This is because one of the main practices for which soothsayers and magicians were known for, was to sow seeds of dissension between relatives - between a father and his son, between two brothers, and between husband and wife. Islam, in their minds, was having the same effect on the families of the Quraish: All families became divided since Islam had spread to every sub - tribe, and since most, if not all, families had a member that was a Muslim. Also, they called the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) a madman, since, according to their twisted logic, one had to be a madman if one shunned the practice of worshipping idols.

In spite of the constant persecution he faced, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) continued, both patiently and steadfastly, to invite others to embrace Islam. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) faced many disappointments, and even more hardships, but he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was comforted by the fact that, as sure as day follows night, with every hardship, there is ease. So yes, when he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) went to Taif, he was met by scorn and rejection, but Allah (SW) comforted him, when, during the return journey to Makkah, a group of jinns embraced Islam at his hands. And when the situation in Makkah worsened, with the polytheists resorting to crueller and harsher methods of persecution, Allah (SWT) comforted the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with the journey of a lifetime: a trip to Jerusalem and to the heavens and back in a single night.

The Prophet's journey began when Jibril (Peace be upon him) came to him, split open his chest, and washed it with Zamzam water. Jibril (Peace be upon him) then took a basin that was filled with wisdom and faith, and poured it into the Prophet's chest; and then, finally, Jibril (Peace be upon him) closed his chest, held him by his hand, and took him on his night journey. [Bukhari (349) and Muslim (164).]

As Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (May Allah have mercy on him) pointed out, this was the second of three occasions on which the Prophet's chest was split open by Jibril (Peace be upon him): "The Prophet's chest was also split open when he first received revelation; this we learn from a Hadith that is related by Abu Na'im in Dalail An-Nubuwwah. What distinguished the first splitting of his chest - which occurred when he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a child living among the people of Banu Sa'ad - was the cleansing process that is described in Anas's account that is related in Muslim: Jibril [extracted his heart,] removed from it a blood clot, and said, 'This is the portion of Shaitan (the Devil) in you.' Since, while still a child, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was cleansed from the evil effects of the Shaitan, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) grew up in the best way possible: He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was protected from the Shaitan (the Devil) at all times. Then his chest was split open when he first received revelation, a

cleansing that took place as a way of honoring him, and so that his heart would be pure, strong, and fully prepared to receive revelation. Finally, his heart was split open when he undertook a night journey to the heavens; this cleansing took place so that he could be in a ready and pure state to speak privately with his Lord [upon reaching the seventh heaven]. It is also possible that the wisdom behind the last washing [and splitting of his heart] was so that he could be completely purified with a third washing, for it is a part of his Shari'ah that a complete and well-done purification (Wudu) involves washing each body part three times." [Fathul-Bdri, a Commentary of Sahih Bukhari, by Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajr (May Allah have mercy upon him) (7/ 204, 205).]

During his night journey, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ascended so high into the heavens that he was able to hear the sounds of pens being used for writing above the seventh heaven. Also during his night journey, the five daily Prayers were made obligatory upon him and the people of his Nation. In the early stages of his night journey, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led the Prophets (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of past nations in two units of Prayer; this was just one of the many amazing things that happened that night.

Upon returning to Makkah in the last part of the night, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) proceeded to tell others about his miraculous journey. Disbelievers rejoiced, hoping that the Prophet's account of his journey would shake the hearts of some believers and turn them away from their faith; initially, they were pleased to see some Muslims waver in their faith. But then their hopes were crushed when Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) stood resolutely beside the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), informing the Quraish that if he believed, as he most certainly did, that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received news from the heavens in the passing of an instant, why should he not believe him about his night journey. This, among other incidents, resulted in Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) being given the title "As-Siddiq (The Truthful One)."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was not discouraged by the way he was treated by the Quraish; instead, he patiently continued to preach the message of Islam. Three more years went by, years during which he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would perform the five daily prayers, but years that became increasingly more difficult for him (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions (May Allah be pleased with them). With his uncle, Abu Talib, dead, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had little protection from his family; thus the Quraish became even more emboldened in their campaign of persecution and torture against the Muslims. Finally, when thirteen years had went by since the beginning of his mission, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was granted permission by Allah (SWT) to migrate to Al-Madinah, a city whose inhabitants had embraced Islam and who were eager to shelter and protect the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) against his enemies.

After the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) settled down in Al-Madinah, Allah (SWT) began to reveal to him the rest of Islam's legislations - such as Fasting, Zakat (obligatory charity), and Hajj. Allah it continued to reveal laws and legislations to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for the next ten years, a process that culminated with the revelation of Allah's saying:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Qur'an 5: 3)

The more detailed aspects about the Prophet's life after he migrated to Al-Madinah - such as the wars he fought in, the manners he taught his Companions (May Allah be pleased with them), the family life he led, the pilgrimage he performed to Makkah, his return to Al-Madinah, and then finally his death - we will discuss in more detail in the forth coming chapters, In Sha Allah (Allah Willing). [Refer to

Zdd Al-Ma'dd, by Ibn Al-Qayyim (1/71-135); Al-Biddyah Wan-Nihayah, by Ibn Kathir (3/353-563); Al-Fusool Fee Seeratih-Rasool, by Ibn Kathir (pgs. 91- 330); and Tahdhib Al-Asmd Wal-Lughat, by An-Nawawi (1/22-33).]

His Physical Description, and a Description of His (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) Morals

One cannot say enough about the Prophet's character, and so the following is only a brief summary of his wonderful qualities and manners. Wise and intelligent, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the best of company; no one knew more about Allah (SWT) and no one feared Allah (SWT) more than he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did. [Regarding the Prophet's fear of Allah, 'Abdullah ibn Ash-Shakhr said, "I once went to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was praying. As a result of his fear [of Allah], the sound of his crying resembled the noise a boiler makes." This Hadith is related by Abu Dawud (904), and, in Mukhtasar Ash-Shamail, Al- Albani ruled that it is authentic (276).] He was braver, wiser, fairer in his judgments, and nobler in his dealings than anyone else. No one strove harder than he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did to please Allah (SWT), and no one was more steadfast or patient. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the epitome of modesty and he was more merciful than anyone else towards his fellow human beings.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never became angry on account of being hurt on a personal level; rather, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) became angry only if one of Allah's divinely revealed laws was violated, in which case the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would exact retribution for the sake of Allah (SWT); in such cases, no one would be able to appease his anger. The weak and the strong, relatives and strangers, the noble and the lowly, the rich and the poor - when it came to the truth, these were all equal in the judgment of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a balanced approach to food: He never spoke ill of any kind of food; instead, if he liked a particular dish, he would eat it; if he didn't, he wouldn't eat it, but nor would he say anything negative about it. Therefore, one would never hear from him the kind of remarks that are often heard these days by people who are spoiled with too much food - remarks such as, "This kind of food smells," or, "This food is awful," or, "This food is disgusting." He would eat of the kind of lawful foods that were readily available, and he would not go to extravagant lengths to procure any particular kind of food.

In his dealings with others, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would accept gifts, and would reciprocate the giver's generosity with a gift of his own. While he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would accept gifts, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would never accept charity. In his private life, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was simple and independent: He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would mend his own shoes, patch his garments, milk sheep, and even help his wives with housework.

Without even an iota of pride in him, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the epitome of humbleness. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would not allow people to venerate him by walking behind him. [Ahmad (3/398), Ibn Majah (346), Al-Hakim (4/481), and Ibn Hibban Mawarid (2099); also, refer to Al-Ahadith As-Sahthah (1557).] He would accept people's dinner invitations regardless of whether they were rich or poor, noble or lowly in status. In fact, of all people, it was the poor that he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved the most; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would give them charity, attend their funerals, and visit their sick. Balanced in his way of viewing others, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never disparaged a poor person for being poor, and he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never feared a king because of his power or strength.

Even in his choice of riding animals, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was not picky: He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was equally satisfied to sit on a horse, a camel, a donkey, or a mule. And even though he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the leader of an entire Nation, he didn't think of himself as being so important that he had to have a riding

animal all to his own self; in fact, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) often made it a point to have someone ride behind him.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) wore a silver ring whose stone was also made of silver; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would wear it on his right little-finger, and sometimes on his left little-finger.

Throughout his life, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) endured many hardships; at times, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) went without food for so long that, in order to reduce the pangs of hunger, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would have to tie a stone around his stomach. And this, in spite of the fact that Allah Si offered him the keys to the treasures of the earth; rather than take those keys, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) chose the Hereafter.

As for his physical description, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was neither short nor noticeably tall. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) wasn't brown-skinned; nor was he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) very white, but instead was white with some redness in his complexion. His hair was neither very curly nor flowing. [Mukhtasar Shamail, by At-Tirmidhi (1); Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic; furthermore, it is also found in Bukhari (3549).] And he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a good-looking face. [Bukhari (5908).]

His feet were large, and his shoulders were broad. He had a lot of hair on his forelocks. His hair came down to his earlobes; at times, until his shoulders; and at times, halfway down his ears. His fingers and toes were rough; his head was large; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was large-boned; and the soft hair that came down from his chest until his navel was long.

When he walked, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) leaned forward with a purpose, as if he were walking down a slope. His mouth was large, and he had very little flesh around his ankles. Overall, looking at him was better than looking at the moon; in fact, his face has been described as resembling the moon. The seal of Prophethood was between his shoulders; in size, it resembled the egg of a pigeon. The seal of Prophethood was either a spot of some kind or, some have said, a cluster of hair between his shoulders.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would part his hair and dye it. His beard was thick, and he would allow it to grow; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would not trim it, and he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered others to allow their beards to grow as well.

He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would order people to anoint their eyes with a substance called Ithmid, which is a powder that consists of antimony sulphide. In a narration that is related in Ash-Shamail, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْإِثْمِيدِ عِنْدَ النَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ يَجْلُو الْبَصَرَ وَيُنْبِتُ الشَّعَرَ»

"Use Ithmid before you go to sleep, for it clears one's vision and causes one's hair to grow." [At-Tirmidhi, in Ash-Shamail; in Mukhtasar Ash-Shamail, Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic. (Hadith number 43, pg. 45).]

According to another narration, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«إِنَّ خَيْرَ أَكْحَالِكُمُ الْإِثْمِيدُ، يَجْلُو الْبَصَرَ، وَيُنْبِتُ الشَّعَرَ»

"Verily, the best ointment you can use for your eyes is Ithmid: It clears one's visions and causes one's hair to grow." [At-Tirmidhi, in Ash-Shamail; also in Mukhtasar Ash-Shamail, Al-Albani graded this Hadith as being authentic (Hadith number 44, pg. 45).]

Both in his beard and on his head, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had very few white hairs. When he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would dye his hair, no white hair could be seen upon him; and when he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) wouldn't dye his hair, some white hairs could be seen. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had approximately 20 white hairs, which, according to certain narrations, resulted from the terrifying events and stem warnings that are mentioned in various chapters of the Qur'an. According to one narration, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ وَأَخَوَاتُهَا»

"[Chapter] 'Hud' and its sisters (another group of chapters of the Qur'an) have caused my hair to turn white."

In another wording of the same Hadith, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ، وَالْوَاقِعَةُ، وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ، وَعَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ، وَإِذَا
الشَّمْسُ كُورَتْ»

"These [chapters of the Qur'an] have caused my hair to turn white: 'Hud,' 'Al-Waqi'ah,' 'Al-Mursalat,' 'Amma Yatasa- alun (i.e., chapter 'An-Naba'),' and 'Idhashshamsu Kuwwirat (i.e., chapter 'At-Takwir')." [Mukhtasar Ash-Shamail, by At-Tirmidhi; Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic (34, 35).]

When dyed, his hair was red.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved wearing a shirt with a Habirah, a kind of robe that was common in Yemen; he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would also wear a turban and a lower garment, which would reach halfway down his calf. [Mukhtasar Shamail, by At-Tirmidhi (97); Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic.] He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved wearing perfume, about which he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«طِيبُ الرِّجَالِ مَا ظَهَرَ رِيحُهُ وَخَفِيَ لَوْنُهُ، وَطِيبُ النِّسَاءِ مَا ظَهَرَ
لَوْنُهُ وَخَفِيَ رِيحُهُ»

"The perfume of men should be such that its smell is apparent while its color is hidden, and the perfume of women should be such that its color is apparent while its smell is hidden." [Mukhtasar Shamail At-Tirmidhi (188); Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic.]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved cleanliness at all times, but on 'Eid and whenever he would receive foreign delegates, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) strove to look his best. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) disliked the arrogant ways of kings, and so based on that knowledge, the Companions A. would not stand up in his presence. [Ahmad (3/134).] Cleanliness of the mouth was a particular matter of concern for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him): He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved to clean his teeth and the inside of his mouth with Siwak (a cleaning stick for teeth). He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) liked to clean his teeth with Siwak both when he would enter his home and when he would wake up after sleeping at night.

As for his night schedule, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would sleep during the first part of the night; then he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would stand up, pray, and continue to pray for so long that his feet would swell up. Finally, at the end of the night - or in other words, before Fajr Prayer - he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would perform the Witr Prayer (an odd number of units to conclude one's prayers during the night).

The Qur'an being very dear to his heart, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved to hear it being recited by someone else. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would visit the sick, attend funerals, and perform the Funeral Prayer for the dead. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was very modest, and if he disliked something, one could see the displeasure on his face.

He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved covering the faults of others. And he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) placed his trust in Allah (SWT) more so than anyone else. Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "I served the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for 10 years. And whenever he sent me on an errand that I was not able to complete, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would always say, 'Had it been decreed (i.e., had the completion of the errand been decreed), it would have happened (i.e., do not worry, for Allah has not decreed for that errand to be completed at this time).' [Ahmad (1/352), in an authentic Hadith.] While he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) trusted in Allah (SWT), the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also made sure to take all of the relevant and practical steps that are necessary in order to achieve his goals.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade people from acting treacherously. Even prior to the advent the Islam, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led a noble and honest life: At one time during his youth, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), like all Prophets (Peace be upon them) before him, worked as a shepherd; and he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), while still a young man, would receive greetings of peace from a stone, a strange phenomenon that was a harbinger for great things to come. [Muslim (2277).]

"Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)" was not the only name of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him); in fact, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had many names. This was not strange, for it is a common feature of the Arabic language that anything or anyone of significance has many names; hence, for instance, the many names of Allah (SWT), and the many names for the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was no exception, for in a narration that is related in Sahih Bukhari, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ، وَأَنَا أَحْمَدُ، وَأَنَا الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يُمَحِّى بِي الْكُفْرَ، وَأَنَا
الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ عَلَى عَقِبِي، وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ»

"I am Muhammad; I am Ahmad; and I am Al-Mahi (literally means "eraser"), for through me disbelief is erased; I am Al-Hashir (derived from the word Hashr, which means resurrection), the one after whom all other people will be resurrected; and I am Al-'Aqib (the one who comes after others), the one after whom there is no Prophet." [Bukhari (3532) and Muslim (2354).]

In another narration, he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ، وَأَحْمَدُ، وَالْمُقَفِّي، وَالْحَاشِرُ، وَنَبِيُّ التَّوْبَةِ، وَنَبِيُّ
الرَّحْمَةِ»