

(.A Glance at the Life of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W

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Among all the Prophets, the Holy Prophet is the only Prophet about whose life even ordinary matters have been recorded in history and this is a great accomplishment of the Muslim nation because the biographical sketches of other Prophets have been written after a lapse of considerable time with alterations and incorrect accounts by some of their followers. However on the life and attributes of the Holy Prophets many books were written in Arabic language some details of which have been mentioned in our discussions on the signs of the Prophets. Thus it seems pertinent to give a brief account of the conduct and character of our Holy Prophet. It would be profitable for all the Muslims to know the details of the Prophet's character, morals, and private life. Whatever is written in the following pages has been derived from Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI; Sirah-i Ibn Hisham, Kuhlul Basar, Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. VI and .other authentic books

His Compassion and Sympathy:

Before the advent of Islam, it so happened that people were worried about the appalling conditions of famine. Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet was also equally perturbed because he had a large family to support and his resources were limited. The Holy Prophet decided with his uncle Abbas to go to Abu Talib and in order to lessen the burden of his daily expenses, each one of them should take one son of Abu Talib. Thus Abbas took Ja'far and the Holy Prophet brought Imam Ali to his house and became his guardian from his very childhood. .This was one example of the compassionate nature of the Prophet of Islam

His Morals:

The Holy Prophet used to sleep on the floor on a simple mat. He cobbled his shoes and patched his clothes himself. He smiled away any disgraceful remark. He would go to buy things for himself. Anas bin Malik says, "For years I was in the service of the Holy Prophet but never even for once did he reprimand me on my fault. The Holy Prophet milked the she-goat himself, greeted the children first and accepted the invitation of his slaves. He would never make a disparaging remark about the food which was not of his liking. He was particular about

cleansing his teeth with Miswak, applying perfume and taking bath on Fridays. While going out of the house he put on white dress. While taking his food, he would never lean upon anything .so that there might not be any sign of pride when he was sitting before Allah's bounties

His Family Life:

Despite the fact that most of the wives of the Holy Prophet were of advanced age, mothers of orphaned children, and were of varying nature and disposition, he treated them nicely as is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: Treat them kindly ... (Surah an-Nisa, 4:19). Though some of his wives treated him so badly that his companions used to advise him to leave them for the good. But he used to say that the shortcomings of a woman should be weighed with some of her good qualities also. One should not divorce one's wife on her minor fault or slight unpleasant behavior because women possess some good qualities and noble attributes also. The Holy Prophet said: "Anyone who is affluent with regard to wealth and property but still remains stingy with his wife and children, is not amongst us". (Mustadrak, vol. II, p. 643) After the passing away of his beloved wife, Lady Khadija the Holy Prophet treated all those ladies who were her intimate friends with high esteem and favour. The Holy Prophet used to say: "I treat my family members better than anyone else". (Wasa'il, vol. XIV, p. 122) 285 The Holy Prophet observed justice with his wives so strictly that even during his serious illness his bed .was made each night by regular turns in every wife's chamber

His Feelings for the New-born:

A newborn baby was brought to the Holy Prophet for blessings or for giving him a name. The new-born passed urine in the lap of the Holy Prophet and the parents as well as the people standing around became very much embarrassed. At this the Holy Prophet said: "Don't mind. The little one is getting frightened of your making a noise. I shall have my clothes washed". (Kuhlul Basar)

His Initiative in Greeting the Children: The Holy Prophet used to call the name of the boys and girls with respect. He gave special instructions about respecting the girls. In his code of conduct the injunction for giving respect to the females is present. This is the view of the Holy Prophet. But once when on the birth of a female child the father of the child became so furious that his face turned black. The Holy Qur'an says: When the glad news of the birth of their daughter is announced to them, their faces turn gloomy and black with anger. (Surah an-Nahl, 16:58) Under such ghastly condition of the society, respect for the sons and daughters

particularly of the daughter was a conspicuous thing. The Holy Prophet said: "The best of your offsprings are the daughters, and the sign of a woman's auspiciousness is that her first-born is a daughter". (Mustadrak, vol. II, p. 614–615)

A companion of the Holy Prophet was sitting with him. When he heard the news of the birth of his daughter he became displeased. The Holy Prophet then said to him: "When earth is her abode, the sky is her shelter and her livelihood is secure with Allah, why have you become so unhappy? She is like a flower spreading its fragrance and she will stand you in good stead". (Wasa'il, vol. XV, p. 101) A man told the if Holy Prophet that he had never kissed his child. The Holy Prophet said: "This is the sign of your cold bloodedness" . In the matter of giving equal treatment to all the children, the Holy Prophet said: "If you kiss a child before another, you .should kiss the other one also

He Was Not an Opportunist:

One of the sons of the Holy Prophet was Ibrahim who expired early in his infancy. When after his death there happened to be a solar eclipse, people thought it was as a consequence of the demise of the son of the Holy Prophet. At this the Holy Prophet assembled the people and said: "The occultation of the sun was not due to the sad demise of my son, Ibrahim". Thus the Holy Prophet got the people saved from falling into ignorance, superstition and undue love. On such an occasion if there had been a politician in place of the Holy Prophet he would have given a wrong interpretation of this incident and would have aroused the people to maintain undue love.

He Was Always on the Lead:

In the Battle of Ahzab all the enemies of Islam, including the infidels, idolaters and hypocrites decided to wipe out Islam altogether and for this purpose they prepared to make a heavy attack on Madina. The Holy Prophet decided to fight against the enemies and with the consultation of his companions it was decided that a trench might be dug around the city of Madina as a first measure of defence. On this occasion the Holy Prophet took the lead in digging the trench and he engaged himself in this task until the trench was ready while some of .the Muslims had taken leave and some others had gone away without taking permission

His Hospitality:

Salman Farsi, the loyal companion of the Holy Prophet said: "I happened to visit the Holy Prophet at his house. He offered me the same pillow which was the only one in his own use".

Such a treatment of his visitors was not particularly shown to Salman Farsi but it was for every Muslim. One day each of the foster brothers and sisters of the Holy Prophet separately came to the Holy Prophet. He treated the sister with greater respect than the brothers. When the people inquired about this distinction, the Holy Prophet replied: "As this sister used to respect her parents, I have greater regard and love for her". (Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, p. 281) Sometimes the guests of the Holy Prophet overstayed their welcome even after finishing with their meals and got themselves busy in conversation but still he tolerated it. At last a Qur'anic verse was.

revealed saying:

If you are invited, you may enter, but be punctual (so that you will not be waiting while the meal is being prepared). When you have finished eating, leave his home, and do not sit around chatting among yourselves. This will annoy the Prophet and he will feel embarrassed to tell you. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33 53)

His Extreme Dedication:

The Holy Prophet used to wake up from his sleep after midnight. After prostrating himself before Allah, brushing his teeth with Miswak, and reciting a few verses of the Holy Qur'an, he got himself busy with the worship of Allah. Some of his wives used to say to him: "You are innocent and infallible and yet you do a lot of imploration!" The Holy Prophet would answer them by saying: "Should I not try to be a grateful servant of Allah". During the month of Ramazan, the Holy Prophet used to free his slaves. While offering prayers he trembled with fear. When he offered his prayers alone he prolonged his bowing and prostration but in congregation he shortened them. One of his companions who was appointed to lead the congregational prayers was instructed by him to recite a short Surah after Surah al-Hamd so .as not to prolong the duration of the prayers in congregation

His Insight and Sagacity:

While solving any problem, the Holy Prophet used to apply his foresight, and sense of justice. When the different tribes of Arabia rebuilt the Holy Ka'ba, the dispute arose as to which tribe should install the sacred Black Stone (Hajar ul aswad) at its original place. This dispute was going to create an ugly situation. A man suggested that whoever came to the Masjidul Haram first of all in the early morning should be made to arbitrate between them. The following morning the Holy Prophet was the first to come to the Holy Ka'ba and hence he was accepted as an arbiter in this dispute. The Holy Prophet then ordered them to bring a sheet of cloth.

When the cloth was brought he placed the sacred Black Stone in the middle of the sheet of cloth and asked every chief of the tribes to lift it from each corner and carry it near the Holy Ka'ba. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet picked up the sacred Black Stone and placed it at its original place. It was because of the Holy Prophet's insight as well as the sense of justice that the dispute was settled amicably.

The Holy Prophet in the Battlefield:

Imam Ali says: "The Holy Prophet used to be always on the forefront in the battlefield to face the enemy. And in the Battle of Trench when it was decided to dig a trench around the city of Madina, the Holy Prophet was the first to pick up the pickaxe for digging the earth and he continued digging the trench along with his followers until the trench was completely ready". The Holy Imam further says: "In the battlefields whenever we Muslims were faced with some .difficulty, we took shelter of the Holy Prophet and sought his help and protection

His Decisiveness:

The Holy Prophet was never prepared to ignore his ideological programme or any of its principles for the sake of increasing the number of his followers. Some people from Ta'if came to the Holy Prophet and said: "We can profess Islam provided that you give us permission for idol-worship and exempt us from offering prayers". The Holy Prophet rejected their conditions straightaway. He did not care to increase the numerical strength of his followers at the cost of the fundamental principles of Islam. The Holy Prophet was not like those who would compromise on principles.

His Piety and Devotion:

Once the Holy Prophet gave twelve Dirhams to Imam Ali to buy a dress for him (the Prophet). The Holy Imam went to the bazaar and brought a dress costing the some amount of money. The Holy Prophet seeing the dress said: "If the dress had been more simple, it would have been better. If the shopkeeper agrees to take back the dress return it to him". The Holy Imam returned the dress and brought back twelve dirhams to the Holy Prophet. This time the Holy Prophet went along with Imam Ali to the bazaar. On the way he saw a slave-girl who was crying. The Holy Prophet asked her the cause of her trouble. She said: "My master gave me four dirhams to buy things from the bazaar but I lost that amount of money. I am afraid of going back home because of my master". The Holy Prophet gave that girl four dirhams and bought a dress for himself for four dirhams. On his way back home he saw a man who was without proper clothes. The Holy Prophet gave his dress to this man and came back

to the bazaar to buy another dress for the remaining four dirhams left with him. On his way back again the Holy Prophet saw the same slave-girl still standing there. She lamented that since she was already late for home she was scared of her master who would beat her for this. The Holy Prophet accompanied the slave-girl to her master's house. In deference to the Holy Prophet's coming to his house the master not only excused the slave-girl but also freed her. The Holy Prophet then said: "Those twelve dirhams were so auspicious that they enabled two needy ones to clothe themselves and a slave-girl to become free". (Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI. p. 215)

Indeed if we care to cut down our personal expenditure we can help the needy to procure some of their basic needs.

The Holy Prophet owed a few dirhams to a Jew. One day he came to the Holy Prophet and demanded his money but the Holy Prophet had no money with him to pay off his debt. The Jew said: "I will not leave this place until you give me my money back". He stayed there till it was the Zohr (midday prayers) time. People offered their Zohr prayers. Then the time for evening, dusk and night prayers came and the Jew was still there to pester the Holy Prophet. At last the people became annoyed. But the Holy Prophet said: "We are not supposed to be unjust to him". Consequently the Jew who shadowed the Holy Prophet until the following day embraced Islam, and distributed his money in charity in the name of Allah. He said: 'I was not actually meaning to harm the Holy Prophet, for my intention was to test the Holy Prophet's high qualities of character."

His Loyalty:

Ammar Yasir, one of the celebrated companions of the Holy Prophet narrates: "Before the announcement of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, he and I together used to tend the cattle. One day I suggested to the Holy Prophet that a certain place was most suited for tending our cattle and we should go over to that pasture. The Holy Prophet agreed. On the following day I found that the Holy Prophet had already reached there but he was holding his sheep off and was not allowing them to graze. On my asking the reason for this the Holy Prophet said: "There was an agreement between us that both of us together would graze our sheep and thus it was not proper on my part to graze my sheep without you doing the same at the same time".

His Method of Teaching:

While teaching the people Islamic faith and moral conduct or answering questions, the Holy

.Prophet used to repeat his instructions three times so as to drive the idea home

His Sheltering the Enemy:

In the eight year of the migration, when the Holy Prophet left Madina at the head of an army and conquered Makkah? he entered the Holy Ka'ba and smashed up all the idols in it. Safwan, one of the chiefs of the idolaters, who belonged to the tribe of Umayya fled away to Jeddah which was at a distance of a few miles from Makkah. Some people interceded with the Holy Prophet for his pardon. The Holy Prophet then sent his head-gear to him so that he should be under protection while entering Makkah. Safwan returned from Jeddah and asked for a grace time of two months until he could think of embracing Islam. But the Holy Prophet gave him the grace period of four months instead of two months. Safwan remained with the Holy Prophet on his many travels and after finding himself enchanted by the personality of the Holy Prophet and move by the powerful force of his preachings, voluntarily professed Islam as his religion. The

Holy Qur'an says:

If the pagans ask you to give them refuge, give them asylum so that they may hear the words of Allah. Then let them return to their towns for they are ignorant people. (Surah at-Taubah, 9:6) According to Islamic jurisprudence in Jihad (the Holy War against the infidels) the giving of shelter and asylum to infidels have been stressed.

His Behavior with the Enemies:

On the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet pardoned even his blood-thirsty enemies and not only that he even pardoned the unbelieving woman who had conspired to kill him by cooking for him a poisoned meal.

Once an enemy of Islam happened to come to the Holy Prophet and instead of greeting him with the celebrated Islamic Greeting "Assalam u Alayka" (Peace be in you) he said "Assamu Alayka" (Death be on you) and insolently repeated these words several times, but despite possessing the means for revenge, the Holy Prophet replied back by saying "Wa Alayka" (Same be to you). Some of those who were present there became very furious at the insolent behavior of the enemy. They said to the Holy Prophet: "Why did you not retaliate upon your enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied: "I reciprocated his greeting in his own words that is, "The same on you" which he had wished for me".

Affectionate Treatment of His Friends:

While on a journey people used to divide work among themselves and the Holy Prophet, too, had his work to do himself. He used to collect the firewood for cooking food. Despite his

worthy companions desire not to let him work, the Holy Prophet would not agree to it. Once when the Holy Prophet alighted from the camel's back and went to tether the animal to a tree, some companions rushed forward to do that little job but the Holy Prophet did not accept the help of the companions and instead said "You too should not throw yourself upon the help of other".

Some Special Traits of the Holy Prophet

- The Holy Prophet readily accepted the invitation of the slaves and he considered it necessary to hold them in high regard like other notables of the tribes. However he would entrust their leadership to those who were held in respect by them.
 - The Holy Prophet was not mindless of good or bad behavior. He used to encourage as well as admonish people as the occasion demanded. He was always much concerned about the proper guidance of the people In this context the following Qura'nic verse was revealed to him: We have not revealed the Qur'an on you that you should be burdened, but as admonition for whom who fear. (Sura Ta Ha, 20:2)
 - In a gathering the Holy Prophet gave so much individual attention to each other and every person that he thought that he was the only favorite of the Holy Prophet.
 - Sometimes the companions suggested to the Holy Prophet to curse the enemies but he never agreed and instead prayed to Allah to show them guidance. • Whenever he shook hands with somebody he would not withdraw until the other person withdrew his hand first.
 - Whenever he went on riding he never allowed anybody to follow him on foot and instead he asked the people to go separately until he met them on the appointed place.
- The Holy Prophet never disappointed a beggar. A woman sent his son to the Holy Prophet and asked for his dress. When the son came to the Holy Prophet he gave him his dress. On this occasion the following Qur'anic verse was revealed to him. Do not be niggardly nor extravagant that you may later feel reprehensive and constrained. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:29) • Whenever he happened to attend a gathering he always seated himself at a lower place. He would readily accept a present howsoever humble it was. • Whenever he found any Muslim or a companion missing in a meeting, he would immediately inquire after him. If he happened to be on a journey, he would pray for his safe return and if he happened to be sick he would pray for his speedy recovery.
- He would ask the people to sit in a circular seating arrangement so as not to give any distinction to anyone over the other. • In matters of enforcing laws, he never showed special favour to anybody. Once one of his companions interceded with him for a woman of a famous tribe to excuse her punishment. At this the Holy Prophet said: "By Allah! I am not the one to

relax the punishment ordained by Divine commandment in favour of anybody. If my own daughter Fatima had committed a theft, I would have not spared her even from the punishment".

- The Holy Prophet paid particular attention to the captives and the slaves and he himself married a captive woman and thus by this action of his the Muslims started showing regard to the captives and they freed many of them. The Holy Prophet asked the people to be kind to the captives and to feed them and clothe them like themselves and to call them by their names so as not to give them a feeling of inferiority.
- The Holy Prophet treated the poor and the rich alike and during the conversation he never allowed irrelevant or controversial things to be discussed, besides he never found fault with anybody nor did he indulge in laughter

His Concern of the Common Man:

Unlike those leaders who fled away from the scene of trouble and hardship or those who left their friends in the lurch and migrated from their town or country, the Holy Prophet stayed in Makkah all the time and instead sent his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). While migrating to Madina, the Holy Prophet first sent a batch of the loyal followers to Madina.

His Consulting the People:

In all those matters where there was no special command from Allah and they were left to the people's discretion, the Holy Prophet very often used to consult them before taking any decision. As for example on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, the Holy Prophet set up an advisory council and consulted the people as to whether the believers should fight the battle outside Madina or they should remain within the city of Madina. The Holy Prophet himself and a few of his companions were of the opinion that the battle should be fought in Madina and accordingly defense should be built up there, but most of the young people gave their opinion for fighting the battle outside Madina.

Here we see that the Holy Prophet gave preference to the opinion of young and zealous fighters over that of others including his own, and as such they all marched forward towards Uhud to face the enemy. What is more interesting is that the verse 159 of Surah Ale Imran was revealed after the set-back of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. (Tafsir-i Namuna, vol. III, p. 142)

The above-mentioned verse was revealed despite the fact that after accepting the opinion of the companions, Muslims had to suffer defeat. Allah says in the same verse as follows: Forgive them and ask Allah to forgive (their sins) and consult with them in certain matters. But

when you reach a decision trust Allah. Allah loves those who trust Him. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159)

His Behavior with His Opponents:

The treatment of the Holy Prophet with his opponents was based on the following Qur'anic injunction:

If they (the unbelievers) propose peace, accept it, and trust in Allah. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:61) Of course, in another verse we read that if the doubts arise the agreement should be revoked. The Holy Qur'an says: If you are afraid of treachery of some of your allies, you may disregard your treaty with them. Allah does not love the treacherous ones. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:58)

The Holy Qur'an says about the Jews and the Christians as follows: Muhammad, say to the followers of the Bible, 'We must come to a common term. Let us worship no one except Allah nor consider anything equal to Allah, nor regard any of us as our lord besides Allah. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:64)

A group among the followers of the Bible would love to mislead you but they mislead no one save themselves. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:68) Some of them speak ill of the Prophet saying, 'He listens to everything and believes what he hears'. Muhammad, tell them, 'He only listens to what is good for you, believes in Allah and has trust in the believers. He is Mercy for the believers among you. Those who speak ill of the Messenger of Allah will face a painful punishment'. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:61)

The Holy Prophet considered military preparations for fighting against the enemies of Islam, the necessity of coaching of youngster for the art and skill of archery and similar other skill of paramount importance. He used to say that in exchange for one single arrow that was shot at the enemy of Allah, its maker, its buyer who handed it over to the soldiers of Islam and the one who shot it at the enemy were ensured of Paradise.

In the case of hypocrites, we see that the Holy Prophet ordered the demolition of a Masjid that was built by the hypocrites. On the occasion of the Battle of Tabuk some hypocrites were conspiring against Islam in a room of a public inn. When the Holy Prophet learnt of such a conspiracy he ordered the storming of the room where the plot was being hatched and accordingly the believers stormed the room over the heads of the hypocrites, (and those who survived were treated harshly). The Holy Prophet did not offer the funeral prayers for these hypocrites. However, he was lenient towards the infidels when they wanted some more time to take a decision about their embracing Islam.

Family affiliations had no influence on his taking ideological decisions. It was the uncle of the Holy Prophet for whose condemnation a strongly worded Qur'anic verse was revealed. The

Holy Qur'an says:

May the hands of Abu Lahab perish! May he too perish! His property and worldly gains will be of no help to him. He will suffer in a blazing fire and so too will his wife (who threw thorns and firewood in the Prophet's way). Around her neck will be a rope of palm tree. (Surah Lahab, 111:1–5) Indeed the disruptionist's hands should be cut off no matter even if he happens to be the uncle of the Holy Prophet. In this connection there is clear injunction in the Holy Qur'an that believers cannot ask for the forgiveness of the infidels and polytheists. The Holy Qur'an says; After it was made clear that the pagans are to be the dwellers of Hell, the Prophet and the believers should not have sought forgiveness from Allah for them even if they may have been relatives. (Surah at-Tauba, 9:113)

In the following verse Allah encourages the Holy Prophet lest the enemy's plot might shake his decision. Do not yield to the disbelievers or the hypocrites, ignore their annoying you and trust in Allah. Allah is your all-Sufficient Protector. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:48)

Exercise patience and let it be only for the cause of Allah. Do not be grieved about them nor be disappointed at their evil plans. (Surah an-Nahl, 16:127) But they (the idols) will not be able to help them. Instead the disbelievers as the troops of the idols will be brought before Allah. (Surah Ya Sin, 36:75) Muhammad, exercise patience against what they say, glorify your Lord (with His praise before sunrise and sunset. (Surah Qaf, 50 39

An Apology to the Holy Prophet:

While writing on the merits of the Holy Prophet I am feeling helpless because of my limited knowledge. As a matter of fact an appreciation on the life and attributes of the Holy Prophet can only be undertaken by a person of the calibre of Imam Ali as it is the Holy Prophet whose praise has been done by Allah Himself, whom Allah takes him through the heavens and by whose auspicious presence the angels' abode becomes blessed. It is the Holy Prophet whom the Divine carrier takes away from the Holy Masjid (the Ka'ba) in Makkah to Baytul Muqaddas (the Masjid in Jerusalem). The Holy Qur'an says:

Glory to Him who carried His servant during the night for a visit from the Holy Mosque (at Makkah) to the Aqsa Mosque (at Jerusalem). Whose precincts We have blessed, that We may show him some of Our signs. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:1)

On the one hand these exalted destinations are the proof of the exalted personality of the Holy

Prophet. On the other hand we find his attributes and personal qualities of love and affection and refined thoughts and sympathetic behavior towards all. "Once a thirsty cat keeps an eye on the water container meant for the Prophet's ablution. The Holy Prophet instead of using that water for ablution places it before the cat. The Holy Prophet is harder than the rock against the enemies and is softer than snow toward his friends. He foregoes his personal rights against his enemies also but in the implementation of the laws he is very strict, so much so that he swears that he would not forgive even his own daughter, if she ever committed any wrong".

(Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI)

How dare we talk about the attributes of the Holy Prophet? We read in Nahjul Balaghah (Peak of Eloquence, ISP 1984) that when nobody could read or write, the Holy Prophet stressed the acquiring of knowledge by saying that it was obligatory for all the Muslims. Now after the passage of fourteen centuries we see that everybody is clamouring for acquiring knowledge.

At the time when on the murder of one person the entire tribe used to rise for taking revenge upon the murderer's people and several of their innocent people were put to death, the Holy Prophet stopped this heinous custom. That was the time when savagery was at its peak. The Holy Prophet said that if anyone would drive his animal even on his journey to Makkah too fast, his testimony would not be considered reliable because the one who cruelly fatigues his animal is hard-hearted. The example of compassion and mercy that the Holy Prophet set before the people in those days became the sign of the success and grace of the nation. The Holy Qur'an says:

Believers, listen to Allah and the Messenger when they call you to that which gives you life. (Surah al-Anfal, 8.24) The command of Allah is not without meaning when He says about the Holy Prophet of Islam as follows:

He who obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:80)

He does not speak out of his own desire. (Surah an-Najm, 53.3)

You are certainly on the right path. (Surah az-Zukruf, 43:43)

He will grant you a majestic triumph. (Surah al-Fath, 48:23)

How can one attempt to write something in praise of the Holy Prophet when Allah Himself has exalted his name and his mission in the following words? (Muhammad), haven't We comforted your heart and relieved you of the burden which had been a heavy weight upon your back, and exalted your fame? Surely with hardship there is ease. With hardship indeed there is ease. So when you are free, work diligently and turn to your Lord with all your love. (Surah al-Inshira, 94:1–7)

It is not possible that in these few pages we may throw light on the high morals of the Holy

Prophet about whom Allah Himself says in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an: You have attained a high moral standard. (Surah al-Qalam, 68:4) The Holy Qur'an which describes this world a poor and insignificant thing makes the position of the Holy Prophet exalted. There can be no better appreciation of the Holy Prophet than the one given in the Holy Qur'an as follows: (Muhammad), We have granted you abundant virtue. So worship your Lord with full dedication and sacrifice. It is surely your opponents whose line will come to end. (Surah al-Kauthar, 108:1–3)

And in the Hereafter too, Allah dignified the position of the Holy Prophet as an interceder. What can I write about the highly exalted attributes of the Holy Prophet whose birth extinguished the leaping flames of the Fireplace of Persia, and whose being installed as Prophet removed all disturbances and chaotic conditions from the land. When he was born the foundation of the palace of Kisra, the ancient monarchs of Persia (Iran), were shaken. When he was assigned to Prophethood the entire humanity got wonder-struck. It was he, whom the Holy Qur'an declared the "Mercy for the whole Universe". Who can write and how can we write about such a unique personality?

What can I say about him, who reaches such a lofty place of honour that he becomes the guest of Allah on the night of Ma'raj (ascension); and yet who, in his humbleness, declares that he would not turn down the invitation of a slave and would travel a far off distance in order to share a simple food with him?

For his journey to the heavens, Buraq, a Divine carrier, was provided to him, while at his own, he never hesitated to ride on a mule. The Archangel Jibra'il who brings the Divine revelation to him conveys him the greetings of Allah, and he himself is so humble in disposition that he first greets the children.

In the state of prostrating himself before Allah he submits his forehead and heart before Allah and when his two grandsons (Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn) find him under that position and ride on his back, he prolongs his prostration so that their feeling might not be hurt. How to speak of him, who at one and the same time is dedicated to the worship and remembrance of Allah and is also mindful of the feelings of the two children! The people should take lesson from this in the matter of upholding the rights of children, men, women and the labourers and they should be ashamed of raising empty slogans.

The Holy Prophet remains cheerful with the people while he is in their company He sheds tears also at the demise of his son, Ibrahim. But in either case he does not exceed the limit and does not do anything against the Will of Allah. In the morning he offers his prayers, passes the time in the midst of his companions during the day, and lets the companions with one another in

useful pursuits, not for fun and pleasure, including riding and archery which can stand them in good stead in times of self-defense against the oppressors. And the prize that is awarded is the date-palm tree, the leaves of which provide pleasant shade, the wood as fuel, and the fruit .as food

False Accusations:

Is it correct to make false allegations against Islam whose Prophet gives a grace period of four months instead of the two asked for, on the day of the conquest of Makkah; makes the house of his arch-enemy as sanctuary of peace; announces general amnesty and pardons to all his opponents and bears with patience hardships for fifteen years at the hands of the infidels of Makkah, and if he takes his sword in hand to protect himself and his faith and to defeat the nefarious designs of his enemies and asks the believers to wage Jihad (Holy War) against them so as to emancipate mankind from treachery, savagery, oppression, and to liberate man from all kinds of domination and subjugation? Certainly not.

Sometimes the opponents say that Islam was spread at the point of the sword and this is not correct because from historical facts and evidence the total number of those killed was not more than 1700 from both sides in all the battles of Islam against enemies. Sometimes the opponents find fault with the Holy Prophet that he married too many wives and mislead the people by insinuating, God forbid, that he was lustful, although the fact is that the Holy Prophet passed the youthful years of his marital life with only wife, the revered Lady of Islam, Khadija-tul Kubra up to the age of fifty years, and his wedding with her was solemnized at the initiation of Lady Khadija when she was forty and the Holy Prophet was twenty five years old.

Lady Khadija had already rejected the offer for marriage of several other men who wanted to marry her because of her financial standing. But Lady Khadija proposed to the Holy Prophet because he was found to be a trustworthy, truthful and righteous person enjoying high reputation in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula and besides, she had already heard from her uncle Warqa bin Nawfal the prophecies of the preceding Prophets about the appearance of the Holy Prophet as the Prophet of Allah and of her marriage with him.

The Holy Prophet spent 25 years of his married life with Lady Khadija and spent her wealth in the preaching of Islam and to relieve mankind from ignorance and tyrannies although there were some of the choicest girls wanted to marry him, but he always refused their offer. The other wives of the Holy Prophet were married to him only after the demise of his first wife Lady Khadija and that too when he had passed the age of fifty. These women were of elderly age

and were widows and had orphaned children and hence he had to lead a hard and strenuous life with them instead of life of ease, comfort, and indulgence. These wives of the Holy Prophet were of varying temperament and dispositions and as such it was not easy to get along with them. The husbands of some of these wives were martyred while fighting against the infidels and as such they needed protection for themselves and the orphans.

If they had not been married to the Holy Prophet they would have reverted to infidelity. One among them was Sauda whose husband died after he had migrated to Abyssinia and she was left without any patron and supporter. Umm Salama was another such wife who was of old age and was mother of orphaned children. Zaynab was also another wife of the Holy Prophet who was the daughter of his aunt from the father's side. She was first married to Zayd bin Harith, the slave and adoptive son of the Holy Prophet. Her marriage with Zayd did not last long and she was divorced by him. Then she married the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet married Zaynab at Allah's command so that the very root and basis of a wrong custom might be abolished. According to this custom of the Age of Ignorance nobody was allowed to marry the wife of his adopted son and in this case since Zayd was the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, the latter could not marry Zaynab, the divorced wife of the former. But Allah ordered this marriage in order to abolish this custom at the hands of the Holy Prophet himself.

Juwayria, another wife of the Holy Prophet was a captive. Her marriage with the Holy Prophet motivated the Muslims to treat the captives with great regards and kindness so much so that they freed many of them.

Besides, with a view to maintain cordial relations among various influential tribes, to prevent disruption among them, and to promote internal stability, the Holy Prophet married such women as Ayesha, Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Safiya and Maymuna. Safiya of course was the daughter of the tribal chief of a big Jewish tribe of Bani Nuzayr. When she was taken prisoner, the Holy Prophet married her and established relationship with a big tribe. In short, many of the wives of the Holy Prophet were those who had passed the age of youth and personal charm, and most of them had been married once or twice before, and had orphaned children with them, and whom the Holy Prophet married when he was past fifty, an age which by no means can be regarded as an age of youthful and lustful desires and by that time he had attained great reputation already, and that many a beautiful girl aspired to marry him. This is the proof of the fact that the purpose of the Holy Prophet in contracting various marriages was based on pious and noble cause only and as such no sane person can dare attack his personal character.

Besides keeping these wives, the Holy Prophet most often passed his nights in offering prayers and remembering Allah as he did in his youth also. The Holy Qur'an says about his dedication and worship of Allah as follows.

You, who have enwrapped in a mantle, worship (Allah) for only a few hours at night. (Surah Muzzammil, 73:1–3) It is only we who even for the sake of one wife forsake Allah. If the number of wives does not prevent anyone from getting right guidance, spiritual enlightenment, performing religious duties of offering prayers, attending jihad, uplifting the society and doing justice to wives themselves and instead it becomes the source of their support and protection, there cannot be any reason for criticism. If somebody feels the prick of conscience at the number of wives a man has then it may be due to any of the following reasons:

- (i) If the husband is not giving just treatment to his wives.
- (ii) If the idea of having many wives is aimed at satisfying ones lustful desires.
- (iii) If the husband gets himself involved in investing his energies and talents in pampering his wives.

If none of the above conditions is present then keeping of wives cannot be prevented from any moral or social standpoint.