

The Prophet's physical characteristics

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Allaah (*Glorified be He*) perfected Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) and blessed him with the most gracious outward appearance and inward noble nature. Thus, he (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) was the highest in all human characteristics, both the physical and the ethical.

Learning about the physical characteristics of our Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) will benefit the believer in many ways:

First, increase of `Eemaan (belief); the more a Muslim knows about the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), his life, his person, and the details of his Message, the more perfect will be their faith in him and the greater will be their love for him.

It is related by Anas (*may Allaah be pleased with him*) in an agreed upon Hadeeth that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

“Whoever has seen me in a dream, has indeed seen me, for Satan cannot assume my shape. And the true dreams that a believer sees are one of forty-six parts characteristic of Prophethood.”

The only way for a believer, who has not seen the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), to know who he really is will be through learning about his different characteristics, which have been given in detail in the Saheeh (authentic) narrations of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, *may Allaah be pleased with him*).

Among the informative accounts is the Hadeeth of Al-Bara' ibn `Azib (*may Allaah be pleased with him*) who said: “The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) was of moderate height, having broad shoulders, his hair reaching his earlobes. I saw him once wearing a red cloak; never have I seen anyone more handsome than him.” Yoosuf ibn Ishaq reported that his father said: (His hair reached) his shoulders.¹

¹ Related by Al-Bukhaaree

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Also, according to the Hadeeth of Jabir ibn Samurah: “The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) had a large mouth, a red tinge in the whiteness of his eyes, and slender heels (i.e. his heels were not fleshy).”²

‘Alee ibn Aboo Taalib (*may Allaah be pleased with him*) described him, saying, “The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) was neither tall nor short. He had thick hands and feet, a grand head, large joints, and a long chest-to-navel line of hair. When he walked, he would lean forward, as if he were descending a slope. I have never seen anybody like him, neither before nor after him.”³

He (*may Allaah be pleased with him*) further said: “The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) had a grand head, large eyes, and long eyelashes, with a tinge of red in his eyes. He had a thick beard, a rosy complexion, and thick hands and feet. When he walked, he would lean forward as if he was walking up an incline. When he turned, he would turn his whole body.”⁴

Thick hands means strongly built. Al-Zamakhshary said in his book Al-Fa'iq: "It is admired in men, for a tighter grip, and a stronger and more enduring hand."

The large bone joints, i.e. the knees, elbows, and shoulders, are signs of his strongly-built body (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*).

² Related by Muslim

³ Related by Al-Tirmidhee who ranked it as Hadeeth Hasan Saheeh [a Hadeeth that stands at a higher level than a mere Hasan (good) Hadeeth, but at a bit lower level than Saheeh (authentic)]

⁴ Related by Imaam Ahmad