

FORTY HADITHS

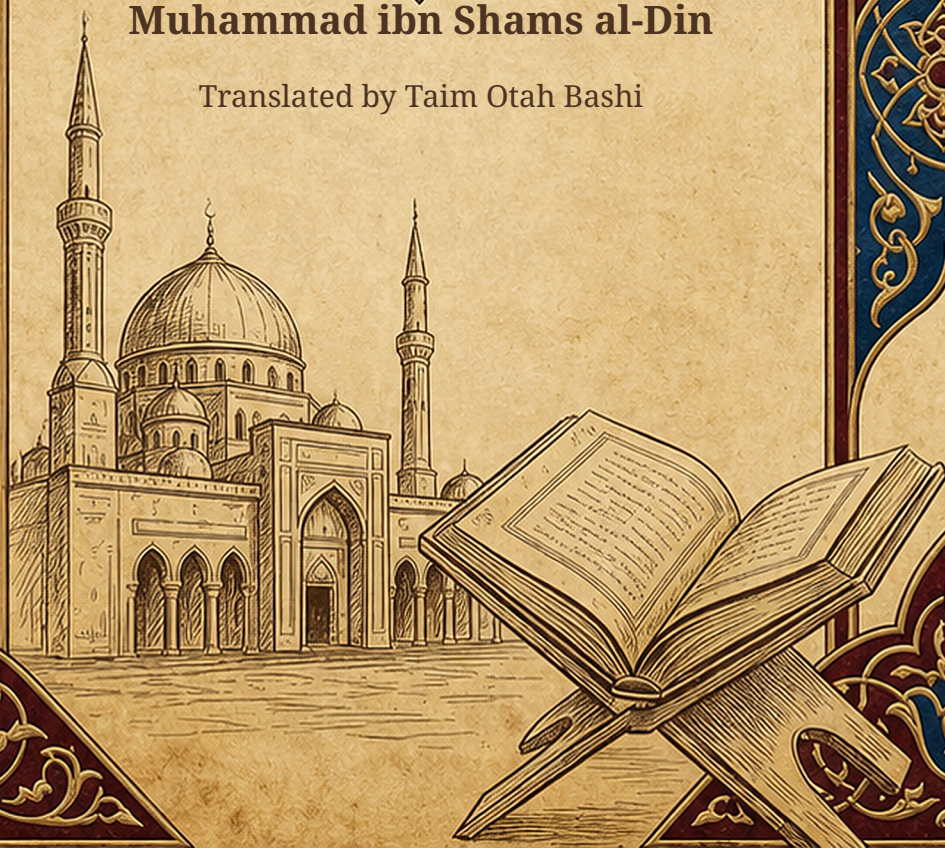
Selected from the Book

al-Shama'il

BY AL-TIRMIDHI

Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din

Translated by Taim Otah Bashi



In the Name of Allah

Introduction to the Book

All praise is for Allah, who adorned this world by sending the leader of mankind and made him a good example for us. May Allah bless him, grant him peace, and bestow blessings upon him and his family. To continue: Loving the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is one of the foundations of faith. This love cannot be complete without knowing him, and the way to know him is to study his life and think carefully about his qualities and character. For this reason, the scholars of this Ummah gave great care to writing about the Shama'il of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him - the knowledge that describes his physical appearance, his character, his daily life, and his habits in eating, drinking, clothing, and worship. The best-known of these books by far is al-Imam Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi's book Shama'il al-Nabi, peace and blessings be upon him. May Allah have mercy on him. Because people's determination has become weak, I wanted to select forty hadiths from it that bring together useful and beneficial material, by Allah's permission. I ask Allah, Mighty and Majestic, to make this work sincerely for His noble Face, to benefit everyone who reads it, to gather us among the followers of the one granted intercession, peace and blessings be upon him, to bring us to his Pond, and to give us a drink from his noble hand after which we will never be thirsty again.

Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din

1. Ali ibn Abi Talib, when describing the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was neither excessively tall nor short and compact in build. He was of medium height among the people. His hair was neither tightly curled nor completely straight; it was moderately wavy. He was not heavy and fleshy, nor was his face completely round, though there was some roundness in his face. He was fair-skinned with a reddish tint. His eyes were very dark and his eyelashes were long. He was broad at the shoulder joints and upper back. He had little body hair, with a fine line of hair running from his chest to his navel. His hands and feet were sturdy, with thick fingers and toes. When he walked, he walked with strength, as though he were going down a slope. When he turned, he turned his whole body. Between his shoulders was the Seal of Prophethood, and he was the Seal of the Prophets. He had the most generous heart of all people, the most truthful speech, the gentlest nature, and the most gracious in companionship. Whoever saw him suddenly felt awe of him, and whoever spent time with him and came to know him loved him. The person describing him would say, 'I never saw anyone like him, before or after him.'" Peace and blessings be upon him.

His Hair

2. Anas ibn Malik said: "The hair of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, reached halfway down his ears."

3. Abdullah ibn Umar said: "The grey hairs of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, were only about twenty white hairs."

4. Simak ibn Harb said: I heard Jabir ibn Samurah, when he was asked about the grey hair of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say: "When he put oil on his head, none of his grey hair could be seen. When he did not put oil on it, some of it could be seen."

His Face

5. Jabir ibn Samurah said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, on a bright moonlit night while he was wearing a red outfit. I kept looking at him and at the moon, and to me he was more beautiful than the moon."

His Eyes

6. Ibn Abbas said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, would apply ithmid kohl three times to each eye before going to sleep." Yazid ibn Harun said in his narration: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had a kohl container from which he would apply kohl three times to each eye at bedtime^[E1]."

His Teeth

7. Ibn Abbas said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, had a small gap between his two front teeth. When he spoke, something like light could be seen coming from between his front teeth."

His Smile

8. Jabir ibn Samurah said: "The lower legs of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, were slender. He would not laugh except with a smile. When I looked at him, I would think that his eyes were lined with kohl, though he was not wearing kohl^[E2]."

9. Jabir ibn Samurah said: "I sat with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, more than one hundred times. His Companions would recite poetry to one another and remember things from the days of Jahiliyyah, while he remained quiet, and sometimes he smiled with them^[E3]."

The Seal of Prophethood

10. Abdullah ibn Sarjis said: "I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was with some of his Companions. I went around behind him in this way, and he understood what I wanted. He dropped the cloak from his back, and I saw the place of the Seal on his shoulders. It was like a clenched hand, with moles around it that looked like warts. I then went back around until I stood in front of him and said, 'May Allah forgive you, Messenger of Allah.' He said, 'And you.' The people asked me, 'Did the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, ask forgiveness for you?' I said, 'Yes, and for you as well.' Then he recited this verse: 'Ask forgiveness for your sin, and for the believing men and the believing women.'"

Explanations

[E1] Applying it at bedtime indicates that it was not used merely for adornment.

[E2] His eyes naturally looked as though they had kohl around them. The report does not mean that he was always wearing kohl.

[E3] This shows his humility and how easy and gentle his gatherings were. People were not made afraid to speak simply because of his status; his Companions could talk among themselves, recite poetry, and remember stories from before Islam while he listened and sometimes smiled.

His Habits

- 11.** Aishah said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, liked to begin with the right as much as he could when combing his hair, putting on his sandals, and purifying himself^[E4]."
- 12.** Abu Hurayrah said: "I never saw anything more beautiful than the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. It was as though the sun was moving across his face. I never saw anyone walk faster than the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. It was as though the earth was being folded up for him. We would strain ourselves to keep up, while he walked without seeming to exert himself^[E5]."
- 13.** Abbad ibn Tamim reported from his uncle that he saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, lying on his back in the mosque with one leg placed over the other.
- 14.** Abu Said al-Khudri said: "When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sat in the mosque, he would sit in iḥtibā', drawing his knees up and clasping them with his hands."
- 15.** Jabir ibn Samurah said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, leaning on a cushion on his left side."

His Sleep

- 16.** Abu Qatadah reported that when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, stopped to sleep during the night^[E6], he would lie on his right side. If he stopped to sleep shortly before dawn, he would raise his forearm and place his head on his palm.

Explanations

[E4] The right side is begun with in good and clean matters where that is appropriate. When something is removed, one begins with the left.

[E5] This means the pace did not tire him, while his Companions had to work hard to keep up.

[E6] Ta'rīs refers to stopping to rest or sleep during the night, especially while travelling.

His Worship

- 17.** Umar ibn al-Khattab said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do not praise me excessively as the Christians praised the son of Mary excessively. I am only a servant, so say: Allah's servant and His Messenger^[E7]."
- 18.** Al-Mughirah ibn Shubah said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed until his feet became swollen. It was said to him, 'Do you put yourself through this when Allah has forgiven your earlier and later sins?' He said, 'Should I not be a grateful servant?'"
- 19.** Umm Salamah said: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would divide his recitation into separate parts. He would say, 'All praise is for Allah, Lord of all worlds,' then pause. Then he would say, 'The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful' [al-Fatihah], then pause. He would recite, 'King of the Day of Judgment.'"

His Joking

- 20.** Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to him: "O you with two ears!" Mahmud said: Abu Usamah said: "He meant it as a joke^[E8]."
- 21.** Abu Hurayrah said: They said, "Messenger of Allah, you joke with us." He said: "I only say what is true^[E9]."

His Speech

- 22.** Aishah said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, did not speak in the quick, continuous way that you speak. Rather, he spoke with clear and distinct words, so that anyone sitting with him could remember what he said."

Explanations

[E7] Al-Tirmidhi included this report under the Prophet's humility. I placed it here under worship to emphasise that remaining within the rank of Allah's servant is itself part of complete servitude to Allah.

[E8] This kind of joke may be harmless to one person but offensive or upsetting to another. Joking should suit the person, and gentleness includes knowing who you are joking with.

[E9] This means all his joking was truthful. Joking does not make lying acceptable, and making up lies simply to make people laugh is prohibited.

His Clothing

23. Umm Salamah said: "The clothing most loved by the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was the shirt."

24. Abu Juhayfah said: "I saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wearing a red outfit^[E10]. It is as though I can still see the whiteness of his lower legs." Sufyan said: "I think it was a hibarah (a striped Yemeni garment)."

25. Abu Rimthah said: "I saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wearing two green outer garments."

26. Ibn Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Wear white clothing. Let your living wear it, and shroud your dead in it, for it is among your best clothing."

27. Ibn Umar said: "When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wore a turban, he would let part of his turban hang down between his shoulders^[E11]."

Explanations

[E10] This shows that wearing red clothing is permissible. If a color is regarded by local custom as clothing specific to women, that is a separate matter.

[E11] A turban is cloth wrapped around the head, and the part hanging down behind is its loose end.

His Ring

28. Anas ibn Malik said: "The inscription on the ring of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was: 'Muhammad' on one line, 'Messenger' on one line, and 'Allah' on one line."

Muhammad
Messenger
Allah

29. Abdullah ibn Jafar reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wore his ring on his right hand^[E12].

His Sandals

30. Ibn Abbas said: "The sandal of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, had two front straps, with each strap doubled."

His Food

31. Kab ibn Malik's son reported from his father: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, would eat with three fingers and lick them."

32. Abu Juhayfah said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I do not eat while reclining^[E13]."

33. Abdullah ibn al-Harith said: "We ate roasted meat with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, in the mosque."

34. Anas ibn Malik reported that when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, drank, he would drink from the vessel in three breaths^[E14], and he would say: "It is more wholesome and more thirst-quenching."

Explanations

[E12] Other reports also mention the left hand, but the reports mentioning the right hand are stronger.

[E13] Eating while reclining can carry an air of pride and can also make it easier to eat more. A similar concern applies to eating while standing. A medical need is an exception.

[E14] This means drinking in three stages, pausing to breathe between them rather than drinking the entire vessel in one continuous draught.

His Zuhd^[E15]

35. Malik ibn Dinar said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, never ate his fill of bread or meat except when eating together with other people."

36. Ibn Abbas said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, would spend several nights in a row hungry, he and his family, unable to find an evening meal. Most of their bread was barley bread."

His Humility

37. Amrah said: Aishah was asked, "What did the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, do in his home?" She said: "He was a human being like other human beings. He would clean his own clothing, milk his sheep, and serve himself^[E16]."

His Perfume

38. Anas ibn Malik said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, had a perfume container from which he would apply scent."

Explanations

[E15] Zuhd means that worldly comfort does not fill a person's heart or become his main concern. This is different from humility: zuhd concerns attachment to worldly things, while humility is the opposite of pride.

[E16] Humility means not acting as though ordinary, honorable tasks are beneath you. A person of high rank may still do simple tasks himself without seeing them as beneath him.

His Character

39. Anas ibn Malik said: "I served the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, for ten years. He never once said 'uff' to me. He never said about something I had done, 'Why did you do that?' and he never said about something I had left undone, 'Why did you leave that?' The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was among the finest of people in character. I never touched khazz cloth, silk, or anything else that was softer than the palm of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. I never smelled musk or any perfume that was more pleasant than the sweat of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him."

40. Aishah said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was neither obscene nor deliberately obscene in his speech. He was not loud in the markets. He did not repay a bad deed with another bad deed. Rather, he pardoned and overlooked."

41.^[E17] Al-Hasan ibn Ali said: Al-Husayn said: I asked my father about the way the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, behaved with the people who sat with him. He said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was always cheerful, easy in character, and gentle with people. He was not rude or harsh, not loud, not indecent, not fault-finding, and not stingy. He would overlook what he disliked. He did not make a person who hoped for something from him lose hope, nor did he disappoint him. He kept himself away from three things: arguing, excess, and what did not concern him. He left people alone in three matters: he did not blame anyone, criticize anyone, or search for anyone's faults. He spoke only about things for which he hoped for reward. When he spoke, the people sitting with him lowered their heads as though birds were perched on them. When he became quiet, they spoke. They did not compete with one another for the chance to speak in his presence. When someone spoke in front of him, they listened until he finished. A later speaker received the same hearing as the first. He laughed at what they laughed at and was surprised by what surprised them. He was patient with the rough way a stranger might speak or ask a question, to the point that his Companions would bring such people to him. He would say: 'If you see someone seeking help with a need, then help him.' He accepted only fitting praise. He did not cut anyone off while he was speaking until the person went too far; then he would stop him either by forbidding it or by standing up."

His Death

42. Ibn Abbas said: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, remained in Makkah for thirteen years while revelation came to him, and in Madinah for ten years. He died when he was sixty-three years old."

Explanations

[E17] This report is weak, and some earlier reports in this selection are weak as well. A weak report is not the same as a fabricated report. Here it is included for descriptions of character that agree with general religious principles, not to make something lawful or unlawful.