



The Radiance of His Face and Luminescence of His Countenance ¹

Imām ‘Abdallāh Sirājuddīn al-Ḥusaynī²

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Of all people, the Prophet ﷺ had the most beautiful face, and the brightest countenance. All of the Saḥāba who described the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ agreed that his face was bright and radiant, and shone with resplendent light, and clear brilliance. Some of them compared the brilliance of his ﷺ light to the sun, others to the moon. Some of them likened the shining light of his face to the beams of the moon. All of this confirms for us the clear radiance of his face, and his dazzling luminescence ﷺ.

Let us consider the clear evidence for this from the Ḥadīth:

Tirmidhi narrated that Abū Hurayra ؓ said : ‘I never saw anything more beautiful than the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ : it was as though the sun was shining from his face.’³

Imam Ghazālī ؓ said: ‘And they used to say: “He is as his companion Abū Bakr ؓ has described him:

*Honest, the chosen one who calls to goodness,
Like the light of the moon when it cleaves the darkness.”*

¹ [Publisher’s note] ‘Abdallāh Sirājuddīn al-Ḥusaynī, Sayyidunā Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ Shamā’il al-Ḥamīda Khiṣālat al-Majīda (Maktaba Dār al-Falāḥ, Aleppo) p. 19-24. Preview of the forthcoming English translation by Sunni Publications (www.sunnipubs.com).

² [Publisher’s note] For a biography of Imām ‘Abdallāh Sirājuddīn, see: Shaykh ‘Abdallāh Sirājuddīn, *The Light of Aleppo* [<http://www.marifah.net/articles/shaykhabdallahsirajuddin-hamoudeh.pdf>].

³ Also narrated by imam Aḥmad, al-Bayhaqī, ibn Hibbān, and ibn Sa’ad.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was in Medina with his companions in the mosque, ‘Amr ibn Sālim al-Khuzā’ī recited a poem of support for him ﷺ when Quraysh broke the treaty :

*O my Lord ! I implore Muhammad, The oath of our father and his father of old,
You were a son, and I was a father, Then I submitted, and never removed my hand,
So be victorious, may Allah guide you ! And call the servants of Allah to come in droves,
The Messenger of Allah is among them, unique: White as the full moon rising above.*

And on the authority of Abī ‘Ubayda ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, who said : ‘I said to Rubayyi’ bint Mu’awwidh : “Describe to me the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.” She said :

"O my son, if you had seen him, you would have seen the sun rising." ⁴

Tirmidhī narrated the Ḥadīth of Hind ibn Abī Hāla, on the authority of al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ؓ, who said : “I asked my uncle Hind ibn Abī Hāla – who was gifted at describing - about the beauty of the Prophet ﷺ, hoping that he would describe to me something I could hold on to and cherish, and he replied : ‘The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had great and stately attributes, and was honoured as such by others. His face shone like the light of the full moon...’ as in the Ḥadīth which will be mentioned later in full.

And on the authority of Jābir ibn Samra ؓ, who said : ‘I saw the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ on a moonlit night, and he was wearing a red shawl. I began to look from him to the moon, and to me he was more beautiful than the moon.’ ⁵

And on the authority of Abī Ishāq al-Sabī’ī, who said: ‘A man asked al-Barrā’ ibn ‘Āzib : “was the face of the Messenger of Allāh like a sword ?” ⁶ He replied: "No ; it was like the moon.”” ⁷

And Muslim related on the authority of Jābira ibn Samra ؓ that a man said: ‘Was the face of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ like a sword ?’ Jābir said : ‘No ; it was like the sun, and the moon, and it was round.’ ⁸

And we find in Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* the narration of Ka‘ab ibn Mālik, who said: ‘When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was pleased, his face would light up like a section of the moon.’

And al-Bayhaqī narrated on the authority of Abū Ishāq al-Hamdānī ⁹, that a woman from Hamdān (whom Abū Ishāq named) said: ‘I performed Hajj with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ several times. Once I saw him on a camel of his circumbulating the Ka‘aba, a staff in his hand, wearing two red robes, his hair reaching almost to his shoulders. When he passed the Black Stone, he saluted it with his staff, then raised it to his lips and kissed it.’ Abū Ishāq said: ‘Compare him ﷺ with something.’ She said: ‘Light the moon when it is full. I saw neither before nor after him anyone like him.’

When he ﷺ arrived in Medina, the people of the city began to sing:

*The full moon has risen over us
From the valley of Wadā’
Gratitude is incumbent upon us,
As long as Allāh is called to.
O you who has been sent among us,*

⁴ Narrated by Tirmidhi, al-Bayhaqī, and others.

⁵ Narrated by Tirmidhī

⁶ i.e. in the way it shone and lit up.

⁷ Narrated by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī

⁸ Meaning that his ﷺ face was bright like the sun, and resplendent like the moon, and that it had some curvature (*Sharḥ al-Mawāhib*).

⁹ He is al-Sabī’ī from the above Hadith. He was a famous Tabi’ī, from whom the six Imams related Hadith.

You have come with a command that will be obeyed.

His ﷺ face, radiant with light, overflowing with meanings and secrets, is a clear evidence that he is truly the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Abdullāh ibn Salām ؓ said: ‘When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ first entered Medina, the people rushed to him, and I was among them. When I saw his face, and examined it, I knew that it was not the face of a liar – rather it was the face of the leader of the Messengers. The first thing I heard him say was “People! Spread peace and salutations, and feed one another, and maintain your family ties, and pray at night when others sleep... and you will enter Paradise in peace.”’¹⁰

Because of this, Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥa said:

*If he had no other clear signs with him,
His very appearance would be enough to tell you the Message.*

‘Ā’isha ؓ said: ‘Of all people, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had the handsomest face and the lightest colour. Nobody would describe him without comparing his face to the full moon. The beads of sweat on his face were like pearls, and more fragrant than strong musk.’¹¹

On that note, Abū Ṭālib said:

*The very clouds seek whiteness from his face,
Succour of the orphans, protector of the needy.*

Ibn ‘Asākir, Abū Na‘īm and al-Khaṭīb narrated with a sound (*ḥasan*) chain on the authority of ‘Ā’isha ؓ, who said: ‘Once I was sitting and spinning thread, and the Prophet ﷺ was mending his shoe. His forehead began to sweat, and light began to shine from the sweat. I started in amazement, and so he ﷺ said: ‘What makes you start so?’ I replied: ‘Your forehead began to sweat, and the sweat gave off such bright light that if Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī had seen you, he would have recognised you as more deserving of the poem in which he said:

*And free of any recrudescence of menses,
Or corruption of nursing, or dangerous illness.¹²
And when you looked at the features of his face,
They shone with the radiance of a shimmering cloud*

Ibn Abī Khaythima said: ‘The Prophet ﷺ had a distinctive forehead: if his forehead appeared through his hair, or between the parting of his hair, or at night, or if he turned his face to the people, his forehead would appear as though it were a lighted lamp, shining. They used to say: ‘He ﷺ is just as his poet Ḥassān ؓ has said:

*When, in the dark night, his forehead appears
It shines and gleams like a lamp ignite;
So who ever was, or will be, like Ahmad ؓ?
A means to reach the truth; a warner to the heretic.*

¹⁰ Narrated by Tirmidhī, who declared it to be rigorously authentic.

¹¹ Narrated by Abū Na‘īm and others.

¹² Meaning that the child was not conceived during the end of a menstrual period, and that its mother did not become pregnant again whilst nursing him and so spoil his nursing (*Sharḥ al-Mawāḥib*)

And the *Sunan* of al-Dāraqaṭnī includes the Ḥadīth of Ṭāriq ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Muḥāribī, who related that al-Za‘īna said : ‘Do not criticise one another, for I have seen the face of a man who would not degrade you ; I have never seen any man whose face was more like the full moon than his’, meaning the face of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

