

# Lessons from the Sunnah and Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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# The Sunnah and the Seerah

**The Sunnah is the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):**

-His sayings

-His actions

-What he approved or did not object to

**The Seerah is the life story of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) before and after the revelation**

We need to understand the Sunnah and the Seerah according to the guidance in the Qur'an. The Qur'an is closely associated with the life of Prophet Muhammad and the difficulties that he faced and solved

# Lessons from the Seerah

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) serves as:

- God's messenger and prophet to all mankind
- As an example of human behavior and noble character

Therefore, in studying his life-story we should derive lessons and morals that can help us in our lives today. The Prophet of God may be dead but his teachings remain alive

# The life of Muhammad before the revelation

-He was an **orphan**

His father died before he was born; his mother died when he was 3 years old; he was raised by his grandfather who died when Muhammad was 6 years old, then his uncle took care of him

-He was **poor but had dignity**

-He was from the most **noble family** in Quraish

-He is a **descendant of Prophet Abraham**

-He worked as a **Shepard**

-Later on he worked as a **merchant**, and gained experience as how to deal with people

# Muhammad before the revelation

- He was known among his people as **Al-Ameen (The one to be trusted)**; and they kept their valuables with him for safe-keeping
- He also was known as **As-Sadiq (The one who is truthful)** since he never lied or cheated
- He was also known for his **sound judgment**. When the chiefs quarreled among themselves who will have the honor of putting the black stone in the Ka'Ba, they accepted Muhammad as the judge, and he placed the stone in his robe and each chief held one corner of the robe carrying the stone, then he placed the stone himself in its place in the Ka'Ba

# Allah chooses His messengers and knows where to put His trust

“Allah chooses Messengers from among the  
Angels and from among mankind, for Allah  
is All-Hearing, All-Seeing”

Al-Hajj 22: 75

“Allah knows where to place His message”

Al-Ana'am 6: 124

# The experience that Muhammad (PBUH) gained helped him

- Being an orphan made him kind and sensitive to the plight and needs of those who are weak and vulnerable
- Being a Shepherd taught him patience and gave him time to think, reflect and consider
- Being a merchant taught him how different people are especially in financial transactions, and how to interact and deal with others of different characters and dispositions

# His marriage to Khdeeja

- She was his only wife for 25 years. He married her when he was 25 years old and she was 40 years old. She was a wealthy merchant and Muhammad worked for her.
- All his children came from Khadeeja (except for Ibrahim from Marium): 4 daughters and 2 sons. His sons died in infancy. All his daughters died during his life except for Fatima, his youngest daughter who died shortly after his death
- She supported him, stood by him, and provided for him a peaceful home and was given the good news that she will have a house in heaven made of pearls.
- She was the first to believe in him and accept Islam

# Lessons from the marriage to Khadeeja

- The norm in Islam is to marry only one wife, as Khadeeja was Muhammad's only wife for 25 years. Only after she died and then he assumed the responsibility of being head of state did he marry other women
- A Muslim woman can work and have a career as Khadeeja was a wealthy merchant
- Both husband and wife should support and help each other

# The revelation

- Muhammad used to meditate in the cave of Hara'a searching for God. He spent the month of Ramadan in seclusion and his soul became purified and got close to God
- The Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) brought him the first verses of the Qur'an when he was 40 years old. It said:  
**“Read in the name of your Lord who created man. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most honorable. Who taught man the use of the pen. He taught man that which he did not know”**  
Al-Alaq (Clot) 96: 1-4

# The revelation

The Angel appeared to the Prophet in his true form: huge with wings

Muhammad was frightened

The Angel shook him and ordered him to read, but he was illiterate and could not read

After this revelation the Qur'an kept coming down in stages for the next 23 years: guiding the life of Muslims, answering questions and giving hope

# Why did the Qur'an come down interrupted over 23 years?

This question is posed and answered in the Qur'an:

“Those who reject faith say: “Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? Thus it was revealed that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have rehearsed to you, in slow well-arranged stages gradually. No question do they bring to you but We reveal the truth and the best possible explanation thereof”

Al-Furqan 25: 32 & 33

# Why was the Qur'an revealed over 23 years?

- 1-The Qur'an came down from time to time to **answer questions** and to **guide** the Muslims during their struggle, and to **strengthen** their hearts and to **give them hope**
- 2-If the Qur'an came down all at once, it would have been impossible for the Prophet or his companions to memorize it, understand it or apply it in their lives. It is a mercy of God that the Qur'an came down slowly over many years

# The first Muslims

- 1-**Khadeeja**, his wife, was the first Muslim to believe in Muhammad as God's messenger and to accept Islam
- 2-Among the men **Abou Bakr**, Muhammad's close friend was the first Muslim
- 3-Among the children **Ali**, his cousin whom he took care of was the first Muslim
- 4-Among the captives **Zaid**, his slave was the first Muslim. Muhammad gave him his freedom and adopted him

The early Muslims learned the Qur'an and their Islam from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This **secret Da'wa** lasted for 3 years

Then the order came to **proclaim the message:**

**“And warn your nearest relatives and kin”**

**Ash-Shura'a 26: 214**

So Muhammad gathered his people and told them about his mission and message, and invited them to worship God

# The 13 years of struggle in Macca

His own tribe, the Quraish, opposed him and accused him of being a poet, a magician or a sorcerer. They refused to believe in his message though they respected him for being truthful and honest

**The reasons for this refusal to accept Muhammad as God's messenger were political and economic**

They did not want to lose their power and influence over the Arabs since Macca was a shrine that attracted many people, and they benefited from the pilgrims who came to visit the shrine in Macca

# Why did the Quraish oppose Muhammad?

“They say: “If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be snatched away from our land”. Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary, to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds? A provision from Ourselves, but most of them understand not”

Al-Qasas 28: 57

# Those in power resist social change

“Every time We sent a Warner to a population the wealthy ones among them said: “We believe not in the message with which you were sent. We have more in wealth and in sons and we cannot be chastised”. Say: “My Lord enlarges and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, but most people know not. It is not your wealth nor your sons that will bring you closer to Us, but only those who believe and work righteousness, these are the ones for whom there is a multiplied reward for their deeds”

Sa Ba 34: 35-37

# The Ka'Ba (Sacred shrine in Macca)

This shrine was built by Prophets Abraham & Ishma'il to praise God

With time the Arabs changed the pure monotheistic religion of Abraham and began to worship idols. By the time Muhammad came the Ka' Ba was full of idols

Pilgrims used to come to Macca to pray and pay homage to the Ka' Ba, and the tribe of Quraish benefited from this pilgrimage because they were guardians of the shrine. They also were religious leaders and had influence among the rest of the Arab tribes

# Being guardians of the sacred shrine is no substitute for faith in God

“Do you consider the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the sacred mosque equal to the pious service of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and strive in the cause of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah, for Allah guides not those who do wrong”

At-Tawba 9: 19

# The Quraish tried to discredit Muhammad

They called him a mad person and a magician who tried to distort the religion of their forefathers

“O you to whom the message is being revealed!  
Truly you are mad and possessed! If you are telling  
the truth, why don't you bring us the Angels?”

Al-Hijr 15: 6 & 7

“And they say: “Tales of the ancient, which he has  
caused to be written, and they are dictated to him  
morning and evening”

Al-Furqan 25: 5

# The Quraish tried to distort the message

“Those who reject faith say: “Listen not to this Qur’an, but talk at random while it is being recited, that you may gain the upper hand”

Fusselat 41: 26

Similar tactics are being used nowadays to discredit the message of the Qur’an. They attack the messenger and try to burn the Qur’an. They do not listen or study the Book to find out if it is true and authentic

“It is not you they reject; it is the signs of God which the wicked deny”

Al-Ana’m 6: 33

# The Qur'an asks us to read it and consider its verses

“Do they not consider the Qur'an! If it came from any source other than God, they would have found in it a lot of contradiction”

An-Nesa'a 4: 82

# The immigration to Habasha (Ethiopia)

The early Muslims faced rejection, abuse and discrimination by the Quraish.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised them to immigrate to Habasha where they can safeguard their faith, since it was ruled by a Christian king who was just

If we cannot practice our religion safely then we should move to another place where it is safe:

“O My servants who believe My earth is spacious indeed, therefore worship and serve Me”

Al-Ankabut 29: 56

# Safeguard your faith

If we are unable to practice our religion then we must move to another place that is safe:

**“Spacious is Allah’s earth; those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure” Az-Zumar 39: 10**

**“When the Angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their own souls, they say: “In what plight were you?” They say: “Weak and oppressed were we on earth” They say: “Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move away” An-Nesa’a 4: 97**

# The Christian king listened to the Qur'an and understood it was a divine revelation

“When they listen to the revelation received by the messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth. They pray: “Our Lord, we believe, write us down among the witnesses. Why do we not believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?”

Al-Maeda 5: 83 & 84

# The Qur'an has an effect on those who open their hearts to its guidance

“Allah has revealed the most beautiful message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, yet repeating its teaching in various aspects. The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble of it, then their skins and their hearts do soften to the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah. He guides therewith whom He pleases. But such as Allah leaves to stray can have none to guide”

Az-Zumar 39: 23

# The boycott

The Kuffar (Those who reject faith) boycotted Muhammad and his clan: they did not buy or sell to them, did not talk to them, enter their homes or interact with them. The Prophet and his clan were forced to retreat to a narrow passage in the mountain around Macca where they stayed there for 3 years. They faced hunger and great difficulty

The boycott had the opposite effect. It publicized Muhammad and showed the injustice inflicted on him and those who followed him

# The year of morning

The prophet's uncle, **Abou Talib**, protected him though he did not become a Muslim himself. He died in the 10<sup>th</sup> year after the revelation. With his death Muhammad lost a strong backing and became an easy target for discrimination and abuse

Then shortly afterwards, the Prophet's wife **Khadeeja** also died, and he lost his companion who supported him and provided for him a peaceful home and was the mother of his children

**This year was called the year of morning.**

# The Night journey (Isra'a) and the ascension to Heaven (Mira'j)

This occurred one year before the immigration to Madina  
The Angel Gabriel took the Prophet on a night journey from the sacred shrine in Macca to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem

**“Glory to Allah, who took His servant for a journey by night, from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque, whose precincts We did bless in order to show him Our signs. For He is one who hears and sees all things”**

**Al-Isra'a 17: 1**

# The ascension to the Heavens (Mir'aj)

The Prophet (PBUH) ascended to the Heavens with the Angel of revelation. He met other prophets. Then got the order from Allah to establish regular prayers

**“The Prophet’s mind and heart in no way falsified what he saw. For indeed he saw him a second time, near the Lote-tree of the utmost boundary. Near it is the Garden of Abode. Behold, the Lote-Tree was shrouded with what shrouds. His sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong. For truly he did see of the signs of his Lord”**

**An-Najm 53: 11-18**

# How to understand these journeys?

- They were miracles intended to strengthen the heart of the Prophet (PBUH) after he was rejected and abused
- Were they journeys in spirit only, or both in body and spirit?
- They were not intended as a miracle to defy people; rather it was a private showing to the prophet
- We are limited by laws of physics. Such laws do not apply to God

# Isra'a and Mi'raj

-When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) met other prophets they confirmed the pledge they gave to God to believe in Muhammad and his mission.:

**“Allah took the covenant of the Prophets saying: “I give you a Book and Wisdom, then comes to you a Messenger, confirming what is with you. Do you believe in him and help him. Allah said: “Do you agree and take this My covenant as binding on you? They said: “We agree” He said: “Then bear witness and I am with you among the witnesses”**

**Al-Imran 3: 81**

Prophets complement each other and serve as a guide to humanity

# Allah bears witness that Muhammad is His messenger

“Messengers who gave good news as well as warning, that Mankind after the coming of the messengers should have no plea against Allah, for Allah is exalted in power, wise. But Allah bears witness that He has sent unto you, He has sent with His own knowledge, and the Angels bear witness, but enough is Allah for a witness”

An-Nesa'a 4: 166

# All religions came from the One and Only God

The journey from Macca( where Al-Haram or the sacred mosque is) to Jerusalem (where the Al-Aqsa or the farthest mosque is) illustrates **the bond between all religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.** All religions teach morals and ethics, and they all came from the same God of Abraham. Jews and Christians cherish Jerusalem, whereas Muslims cherish Macca.

# The Hijra (Immigration to Madina)

## The Aqaba pledge

A group of people came from Madina and met with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and gave their pledge to help and support the Prophet if he came to their town. This is called the Aqaba pledge

In this pledge the Muslims vowed to:

- Hear and obey
- Spend when times are good or bad
- To enjoin good and forbid evil
- Not to be afraid of blame when serving Allah
- To defend and support the Prophet when he comes to Madina

In return the Prophet (PBUH) promised them paradise

# The duty of Muslims as exemplified in the Aqaba pledge

“The answer of the believers when summoned to Allah and His messenger, in order that he may judge between them is no other than: “We hear and we obey”: It is such as these that will prosper”

An-Nur 24: 51

“And they say: “We hear and we obey. We seek Your forgiveness our Lord, and to You is the end of all journeys”

Al-Baqara 2: 285

# **The Prophet gives his companions permission to immigrate to Madina**

Since Muslims now had a base in Madina the Prophet (PBUH) gave permission for the Muslims to immigrate from Macca. They left their homes and possessions, to flee from persecution and to safeguard their faith, and to join their brothers in Madina

# The Hijra (Immigration) of Prophet Muhammad & Abou Bakr

They traveled secretly avoiding those from Quraish who tried to capture them.

They hid in a cave for few days, and their pursuers were blinded from seeing them:

**“If you help him not, Allah did help him when the unbelievers drove him out; being the second of the two in the cave, when he said to his companion: “Have no fear, for Allah is with us”; then Allah sent down peace on him and strengthened him with forces which you saw not”**

**At-Tawba 9: 40**

# What are the lessons of Hijra?

- 1-When we are oppressed and not able to practice our religion in one place, then it is important to immigrate to a safer place
- 2-God will help us as long as we have faith, have trust in Him and shoulder our responsibility. He will guide our steps and gives us peace.
- 3-Any important decision needs planning and organization to be successful

# Lessons from the Hijra

## Safeguarding our faith

The whole earth belongs to Allah. We can move from one place to another as long as we feel safe and are able to practice our religion with no oppression

“O My servants who believe My earth is indeed spacious, therefore serve Me”

Al-Ankabut 29: 56

# Hijra is to move away from evil

**Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:**

(The believer is the person whom other people trust him; and the Muhajer (immigrant) is the person who avoids what Allah has made forbidden; and the Muslim is the person whom other Muslims fear no harm from his words or deeds)

Bokhari & Muslim

# Hijra is to move away from evil

- The Prophet and the early Muslims stayed in Macca for 13 years inviting others to Allah, yet very few people believed or accepted Muhammad as God's messenger.
- The early Muslims faced oppression, abuse and persecution. They tolerated their plight with faith in Allah and patient perseverance
- It became clear after 13 years of hard work that it is time to move on and leave Macca and those who refuse to accept God, and to have a fresh start in Madina. So the Prophet and the Muslims were moving away from evil and safeguarding their faith and continuing their work of Da'Wa and establishing a Muslim state.

# **Allah will help us as long as we have faith and shoulder our responsibility**

We cannot sit idle and do nothing and expect God to help us or come to our rescue. We must work and have faith. God's help will come in due time

“Allah will certainly aid those who aid His cause, for indeed Allah is full of strength, exalted in might (able to enforce His will)”

Al-Hajj 22: 40

# Allah will help those who have faith and do righteous work

“Allah has promised those among you who believe and work righteous deeds that He will surely grant them power in the land, as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion, the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change their state after the fear they experienced to one of security and peace: they will worship Me alone and not associate partners with Me”

An-Nur 24: 55

# We need planning and organization if we are to succeed

The Hijra required meticulous planning and organization, and paying attention to detail.

Several people helped this Hijra to be successful including Abou Bakr and his children, the guide, the Shepherd, Ali and many others and of course God's Prophet (PBUH)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) took all precautions and had trust in Allah

We too must do our work and prepare then we should put our trust in Allah and accept His judgment