

SUMMER IMMERSION

THE BATTLEFIELDS OF FAITH



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SESSION 1

Introduction

Prophecies Before the Prophet's Demise

- The Four Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661 CE):
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) advised Muslims to hold onto his teachings and the traditions of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Khulafa ar-Rashideen) during times of religious and social conflict.
 - It was narrated from 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Amr As-Sulami that: He heard Al-'Irbad bin Sariyah say: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) delivered a moving speech to us which made our eyes flow with tears and made our hearts melt. We said: 'O Messenger of Allah. This is a speech of farewell. What did you enjoin upon us?' He said:

" قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارُهَا لَا يَزِيغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ مَن يَعْشُ مِنْكُمْ فَمَسِيرَى
اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ عَصُوا عَلَيْهَا
بِالنَّوَاجِذِ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا فَإِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُ كَالْجَمَلِ الْأَنْفِ حَيْثُمَا قِيدَ انْقَادَ .
'I am leaving you upon a (path of) brightness whose night is like its day. No one will
deviate from it after I am gone but one who is doomed. Whoever among you lives
will see great conflict. I urge you to adhere to what you know of my Sunnah and the
path of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and cling stubbornly to it. And you must obey,
even if (your leader is) an Abyssinian leader. For the true believer is like a camel with
a ring in its nose; wherever it is driven, it complies.' (Sunan Ibn Majah)

- The first four leaders following the Prophet (ﷺ) were the Rightly Guided caliphs, chosen through consensus. They were:
 - Abu Bakr As-Siddiq
 - Umar ibn Al-Khattab
 - Uthman ibn Affan
 - Ali ibn Abi Talib
- Hereditary Empires (661–1258 CE):
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) foretells the Caliphate after him will last for thirty years, then there will be monarchies and empires.
 - Narrated Safinah: The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"خِلَافَةُ النَّبِيِّ ثَلَاثُونَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ - أَوْ مُلْكَهُ - مَنْ يَشَاءُ ."

The Caliphate of Prophecy will last thirty years; then Allah will give the Kingdom of His Kingdom to anyone He wills. (Sunan Abi Dawud)

- The title was passed through major dynasties like the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus and the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, which oversaw the Islamic Golden Age.
- Ottoman Era (1517–1924 CE):
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) predicted that the Turks would become a formidable and powerful force. He advised Muslims not to initiate hostilities against the Turks as long as they left the Muslims in peace, highlighting their eventual military dominance and power.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

وَاتْرِكُوا التُّرْكَ مَا تَرَكُوكُمْ

Leave the Turks alone as long as they leave you alone. (Sunan Abu Dawud)

- Their descendants (i.e. the Ottomans) later established vast Islamic empires and the Caliphate, claiming the title of Caliph.

- Allah said:

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ
And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors (28:5)

- Under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire was a superpower that spanned across three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- The Early 1900s: The End of the Caliphate
 - In the early 1900s, there was no single internationally recognized Caliph for the global Muslim community.

Political Landscape in the Era of the Prophet (ﷺ)

- There were two dominant global superpowers during the era of the Prophet (ﷺ).
 - 1. The Byzantine (Roman) Empire:
 - Based in the Levant ('Ash-Sham) and Anatolia.
 - The official religion of the Byzantine Empire was Christianity but its religious landscape was far from unified.
 - The groups were marginalized to various sects due to theological differences. Because the Byzantine church was essentially a department of the state administration, clerical corruption (i.e. priests and ministers) was a recurring issue.
 - 2. The Sasanian (Persian) Empire:
 - Based in Iraq and Iran.
 - The official religion of the Persian Empire was Zoroastrianism and there was heavy involvement of astrologers.

- The Arabian Peninsula (Makkah)
 - The 12 descendants of Ismail (AS) are the 12 tribes that spread across the Arabian Peninsula (Jaziratul Arab).
 - They maintained the original monotheistic faith of their grandfather Ibrahim (AS) before various societal changes.
 - The shift to idolatry among the descendants of Ismail (AS) was introduced by 'Amr ibn Luhay. He traveled to 'Ash-Sham and, upon seeing the people there worshiping idols, he thought to himself that this was something beneficial.
 - Amr brought home several statues and placed them around the Ka'bah in Makkah. He successfully convinced the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula to accept these idols as mediators to Allah, shifting them away from the original monotheism they inherited.
 - Along with idolatry, these tribes began relying on fortune-tellers to make decisions. These fortune-tellers obtain their information through contact with evil jinn. However, this knowledge is heavily fragmented and mixed with lies.
 - The Qur'an explains that the jinn used to take up stations in the heavens to eavesdrop on divine decrees and conversations of the angel then pass them down to fortune-tellers on earth.

The Prophethood of the Prophet (ﷺ)

- Allah does not punish anyone or any community without first providing clear guidance and a warning. The Prophet (ﷺ) was sent as the ultimate fulfillment of the prayers made by Ibrahim (AS) centuries earlier.
 - He prayed:

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Our Lord! Raise from among them a messenger who will recite to them Your revelations, teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, You 'alone' are the Almighty, All-Wise."(2:129)

- Across history, the anticipation of the Prophet's arrival was woven into the fabric of prior revelations and traditions.
- Following his first revelation in the Cave of Hira, the Prophet (ﷺ) was told by Waraqah ibn Nawfal — a Christian scholar and cousin of his wife, Khadijah — confirmed his prophethood but foretold that his own people would drive him out, as all messengers before him were met with hostility.
- Throughout the Qur'an, Allah consoles the Prophet (ﷺ) by narrating the trials of past prophets and their nations. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was eventually driven out of his community, these stories served as divine reassurance that rejection is a natural part of prophethood.
 - Mus'ab bin Sa'd narrated from his father that a man said: "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! Which of the people is tried most severely?" He said:

"الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ فَيَبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ دِينُهُ صُلْبًا اشْتَدَّ بَلَاؤُهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَمَا يَبْرَحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَتْرُكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ"

"The Prophets, then those nearest to them, then those nearest to them. A man is tried according to his religion; if he is firm in his religion, then his trials are more severe, and if he is frail in his religion, then he is tried according to the strength of his religion. The servant shall continue to be tried until he is left walking upon the earth without any sins." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

- Leaving Makkah was incredibly difficult for the Prophet (ﷺ), as it was his beloved birthplace. The journey was treacherous due to pursuing assassins, but he safely arrived in Madinah. He settled in smoothly because Mus'ab ibn 'Umar had already done an excellent job laying the foundation there as the first ambassador of Islam.

- Before the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah, Abdullah ibn Ubayy was poised to be crowned the sole king of Madinah. However, the migration of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the subsequent mass conversion of the city's inhabitants to Islam completely derailed these plans.
- Because of this sudden shift, Abdullah ibn Ubayy harbored resentment, believing the Prophet (ﷺ) had robbed him of his crown and throne. He publicly declared his acceptance of Islam to survive politically, but secretly, he became the leader of the munafiqun (hypocrites) who continually plotted against the Muslim community.

The Battle of Khandaq

- During the Battle of Khandaq (The Trench), the Companions had been digging the trench in freezing weather and were starving. The Prophet (ﷺ) had a stone tied to his stomach to suppress the intense hunger pains.
- The Companions encountered a massive, unbreakable boulder. The Prophet (ﷺ) stepped down into the trench and struck the rock three times, reducing it to sand. With each strike, a bright flash of light appeared, and the Prophet (ﷺ) prophesied the future Islamic conquests of Byzantine, Persian, and Yemeni lands.
 - It was narrated from Abu Sukainah, a man from among the Muharririn, that a man among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded them to dig the trench (Al-Khandaq), there was a rock in their way preventing them from digging. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood, picked up a pickaxe, put his Rida' (upper garment) at the edge of the ditch and said:

" { تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ } " . فَندَرَ ثُلُثُ الْحَجَرِ وَسَلْمَانُ الْفَارِسِيُّ قَائِمٌ يَنْظُرُ فَبَرَقَ مَعَ ضَرْبَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَرْقَةٌ ثُمَّ ضَرَبَ الثَّانِيَةَ وَقَالَ " { تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ } " . فَندَرَ الثُّلُثَ الْآخَرَ فَبَرَقَتْ بَرْقَةٌ فَرَأَاهَا سَلْمَانٌ ثُمَّ ضَرَبَ الثَّالِثَةَ وَقَالَ " { تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ } " . فَندَرَ الثُّلُثَ الْبَاقِي وَخَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخَذَ رِدَاءَهُ وَجَلَسَ . قَالَ سَلْمَانُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رَأَيْتُكَ حِينَ ضَرَبْتَ مَا تَضْرِبُ ضَرْبَةً إِلَّا كَانَتْ مَعَهَا بَرْقَةٌ . قَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يَا سَلْمَانُ رَأَيْتَ ذَلِكَ " . فَقَالَ إِي وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . قَالَ " فَإِنِّي حِينَ ضَرَبْتُ الضَّرْبَةَ الْأُولَى رُفِعَتْ لِي مَدَائِنُ كِسْرَى وَمَا حَوْلَهَا وَمَدَائِنُ كَثِيرَةٌ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُهَا بِعَيْنَيَّ " . قَالَ لَهُ مَنْ حَضَرَهُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَفْتَحَهَا عَلَيْنَا وَيُغْنِمَنَا دِيَارَهُمْ وَيُخَرِّبَ بِأَيْدِينَا بِلَادَهُمْ . فَدَعَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِذَلِكَ " ثُمَّ ضَرَبْتُ الضَّرْبَةَ الثَّانِيَةَ فَرُفِعَتْ لِي مَدَائِنُ قَيْصَرَ وَمَا حَوْلَهَا حَتَّى رَأَيْتُهَا بِعَيْنَيَّ " . قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَفْتَحَهَا عَلَيْنَا وَيُغْنِمَنَا دِيَارَهُمْ وَيُخَرِّبَ بِأَيْدِينَا بِلَادَهُمْ . فَدَعَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِذَلِكَ " ثُمَّ ضَرَبْتُ الثَّالِثَةَ فَرُفِعَتْ لِي مَدَائِنُ الْحَبَشَةِ . وَمَا حَوْلَهَا مِنَ الْقُرَى حَتَّى رَأَيْتُهَا بِعَيْنَيَّ " . قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ " دَعُوا الْحَبَشَةَ مَا وَدَعُوكُمْ وَاتْرُكُوا التُّرْكَ مَا تَرَكُوكُمْ " .

'And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.' [1] One-third of the rock broke off while Salman Al-Farisi was standing there watching, and there was a flash of light when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) struck (the rock). Then he struck it again and said: 'And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower' And another third of the rock broke off and there was another flash of light, which Salman saw. Then he struck (the rock) a third time and said: 'And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.' The last third fell, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out, picked up his Rida' and sat down. Salman said: 'O Messenger of Allah, Each time you struck the rock there was a flash of light.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: 'O Salman, did you see that?' He said: 'Yes, by the One Who sent you with the truth, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'When I struck the first blow, the cities of Kisra and their environs were shown to me, and many other cities, and I saw them with my own eyes.' Those of his Companions who were present said: 'O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah to grant us victory and to give us their land as spoils of war, and to destroy their lands at our hands.' So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed for that. (Then he said:) 'Then I

struck the second blow and the cities of Caesar and their environs were shown to me, and I saw them with my own eyes.' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah to grant us victory and to give us their lands as spoils of war, and to destroy their lands at our hands.' So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed for that. (Then he said:) 'Then I struck the third blow and the cities of Ethiopia were shown to me, and the villages around them, and I saw them with my own eyes.' But the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said at that point: 'Leave the Ethiopians alone so long as they leave you alone, and leave the Turks alone so long as they leave you alone.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Hearing this declaration of future expansion of the Muslims, Abdullah ibn Ubayy expressed his disdain to his followers saying: "If we return to Madinah, the most honorable person will surely drive out the most dishonorable person." By "most honorable," he was referring to himself, and by "most dishonorable," he was referring to the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Prophet's Vision for the Ummah

- The Prophet (ﷺ) always remained positive and frequently encouraged his Companions with glad tidings. He prophesied that Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) would be conquered by the Muslims.

- Narrated by Abdullah ibn Bishr Al-Khath'ami, from his father that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say,

"لَتُفْتَحَنَّ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةُ، فَلَنَعَمَ الْأَمِيرُ أَمِيرُهَا، وَلَنَعَمَ الْجَيْشُ ذَلِكَ الْجَيْشُ"

"You will conquer Constantinople. The best commander is its commander and the best army is its army." (Ahmad)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"أَوَّلُ جَيْشٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَغْزُونَ مَدِينَةَ قَيْصَرَ مَغْفُورٌ لَهُمْ."

'The first army amongst my followers who will invade Caesar's City (Constantinople) will be forgiven their sins.' (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Despite being an inland civilization with no naval tradition, the Prophet (ﷺ) foresaw his nation undertaking a naval expedition decades before they took place during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"أَوَّلُ جَيْشٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَغْزُونَ الْبَحْرَ قَدْ أُوجِبُوا."

"Paradise is granted to the first batch of my followers who will undertake a naval expedition."

- This teaches us that the Prophet (ﷺ) always maintained optimism and hope, no matter the adversity he faced. He shared that part of Allah's principle is that He responds to us exactly as we expect Him to. Therefore, by keeping a positive mindset through life's hardships, we invite Allah's continuous blessings and generosity.

The Battle of Mu'tah

- The battle started after the assassination of a Muslim envoy. The Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched Al-Harith ibn Umayr to deliver a letter to the Byzantine governor of Busra (Shurahbil ibn Amr al-Ghassani). The governor, an ally of the Byzantine Empire, intercepted and executed the emissary.
- In response to this breach of diplomatic immunity, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent a force of roughly 3,000 men to seek justice. He sent his beloved adopted son, Zayd ibn Harithah, as the primary commander of the Muslim army. He also appointed two other men in succession to take leadership if needed, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and Abdullah ibn Rawahah. Ultimately, all three commanders were martyred during this expedition.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) mobilized the army led by Usama ibn Zayd shortly before his death to confront Byzantine forces and avenge the losses at the Battle of Mu'tah, where Usama's father was killed.

- After the Prophet (ﷺ) passed, Caliph Abu Bakr prioritized executing this final command and insisted the army depart without delay. The departing army was not kept in Madinah to mourn.

