

SUMMER IMMERSION

PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP



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SESSION 2

The Character of the Prophet (ﷺ)

- Allah endowed the Prophet (ﷺ) with a beautiful and perfect character.
 - He tells us:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And indeed, you are of a great moral character. (68:4)

- The Prophet's leadership was built upon:
 - Truthfulness
 - Humility
 - Mercy
 - Patience
 - Justice
- **1. Truthfulness**
 - Honesty is the first step toward becoming a great leader.
 - Abu Sa'eed narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
"التَّاجِرُ الصَّدُوقُ الْأَمِينُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ"
"The truthful, trustworthy merchant is with the Prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) was known as a truthful and trustworthy person long before Prophethood. He was known throughout Makkah as Al-Sadiq Al-Amin (The Truthful, The Trustworthy).

- His reputation for honesty was so strong that even as the Quraysh persecuted and plotted against him, they continued to use him as a safe-keeper for their valuables because of his unwavering reputation.
- When the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, he instructed Ali RA to remain in Makkah to ensure all trusts and valuables were returned to their rightful owners.
- Throughout his life, whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) joked, he clearly established that while he did enjoy a good laugh, he never said anything except the truth.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) highlighted that a person's faith and religious practice are fundamentally tied to their trustworthiness.
 - Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ وَلَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا عَهْدَ لَهُ

"There is no faith for one who cannot be trusted. There is no religion for one who cannot uphold a covenant." (Musnad Ahmad)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned when moral standards decline near the end of times, unlawful (haram) earnings become prevalent.
 - Abu Hurairah reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,
- لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يُبَالِي الْمَرْءُ بِمَا أَخَذَ الْمَالَ أَمِنْ حَلَالٍ أَمْ مِنْ حَرَامٍ
- "An era will surely come to people in which a man will not care from where he acquires his wealth, either lawfully or unlawfully." (Sahih al-Bukhari)*
- When the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan if the Prophet (ﷺ) ever lied, Abu Sufyan admitted he had never accused the Prophet (ﷺ) of lying prior to his prophethood. Heraclius reasoned that a man who was known never to lie to people throughout his entire life could not possibly turn around and lie about God.

- Honesty and trustworthiness build the foundation for success and wealth.
 - Example of Musa (AS):
 - When Musa fled to Madyan, he was in a state of absolute need (faqir). By stepping in to help the daughters of Shu'ayb water their flocks, he displayed both his physical strength and his chaste integrity.
 - Observing his noble character, one of the daughters specifically advised her father to hire him, noting that the best person to hire is one who is "strong and trustworthy".
 - Her recommendation — grounded purely on his honesty — directly led to his employment, financial stability, and marriage into Shu'ayb's family.
 - This demonstrates that when people of authority recognize true integrity, they entrust them with responsibility, turning honest effort into lasting prosperity.
- Before prophethood, Khadija (RA) was a prominent and wealthy businesswoman in Makkah who managed vast trade caravans spanning from Yemen to Sham. She hired the Prophet (ﷺ) to manage a commercial caravan. Following a highly profitable journey overseen alongside her servant Maysara, she was so thoroughly impressed by his exceptional trustworthiness and moral character that she proposed marriage to him.
- Trust isn't built on grand gestures, but on small, daily actions. It is the foundation of everything from family to business. Without it, societies fray and families fall apart.
- **2. Humility**
 - Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it's simply thinking of yourself less.

- A truly great person is humble. The Prophet (ﷺ) was very humble and therefore, he was revered.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was the epitome of true greatness, ruling with divine right. Despite commanding absolute power, he remained deeply humble, never elevating himself above his followers. Orientalists often observe that he was a king without power and a ruler without a palace.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) modeled profound humility through his daily lifestyle. For example, the straw mat he slept on was rough, leaving visible marks on his back when he woke up.
- The peak of his humility and talented leadership was seen at the Conquest of Makkah. He entered on the day of the conquest with his head bowed so low that his beard nearly touched the saddle of his camel. He offered complete forgiveness to the enemies who had persecuted Muslims for decades.
- While today's environment often encourages self-promotion and narcissism, a respected leader combines genuine talent with a quiet humility, always giving all credit and success back to Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) set the ultimate standard for this, consistently embodying humility in both poverty and wealth. His character remained unchanged. He proved that authority does not require arrogance.
- Humble leaders continuously learn from others. They rarely claim to be the smartest person in the room, yet they become smarter over time precisely because they remain committed to lifelong learning and growing from their mistakes.
- Humble leaders embrace vulnerability as a measure of maturity rather than a sign of weakness. They hold strong to their core identity while remaining accountable for their actions and willing to correct course when necessary.

- Humble leaders don't take the credit for positive results; instead, they elevate their team members. When results are negative, they accept full responsibility and take the fall.
- **3. Mercy**
 - Allah granted Prophet (ﷺ) a gentle, compassionate nature, which was central to his mission. This divine mercy made him a source of love, guidance, and forgiveness for all of humanity and creation.
 - He said:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds. (21:107)

- Firm leadership does not equate to a lack of mercy. For example, Umar ibn Al-Khattab, was widely regarded as an exemplary leader. He balanced a famously stern disposition with profound taqwa. This deep consciousness of Allah kept him humble and compassionate.
- **4. Patience**
 - The Prophet's leadership was defined by strategic patience. For example, when facing persecution in Makkah, he traveled to Ta'if for support. Even after being brutally rejected, he persevered, keeping his focus on the long-term vision, ultimately laying the foundations for the prosperous community of Madinah.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) navigated challenges with unwavering persistence and absolute trust in Allah.
 - Life requires us to lead, and Islam teaches that the best believer engages with society, embracing the trials of working with others rather than retreating from them.

- It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لَا يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ".

"The believer who mixes with people and bears their annoyance with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not put up with their annoyance." (Sunan Ibn Majah)

- Patience in leadership isn't just about weathering tough seasons; it requires active discipline. Leaders who chase their own desires and do as they please act selfishly rather than serving others.
- Allah tells us:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا

And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient (32:24)

The Vision of the Prophet (ﷺ)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) was a highly visionary leader with remarkable foresight. He could always foresee the results long before taking action.
- To become a great leader, you must first believe in yourself, trusting that Allah will make the way. True success comes when you put your trust in Him, work diligently, and do things the right way.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) had a vision that the message of Islam would reach every corner of the globe.
 - Narrated `Adi bin Hatim: While I was in the city of the Prophet (ﷺ), a man came and complained to him (the Prophet) of destitution and poverty. Then another man came and complained of robbery (by highwaymen). The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"يَا عَدِيُّ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ الْحِيرَةَ". قُلْتُ لَمْ أَرَهَا وَقَدْ أَتَيْتُ عَنْهَا. قَالَ " فَإِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتَرَيْنَ الظُّعَيْنَةَ تَرْتَجِلُ مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ، حَتَّى تَطُوفَ بِالْكَعْبَةِ، لَا تَخَافُ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ " - قُلْتُ فِيمَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ نَفْسِي فَأَيْنَ دُعَارُ طَيْئِ الَّذِينَ قَدْ سَعَرُوا الْبِلَادَ " وَلَئِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتَفْتَحَنَّ كُنُوزَ كِسْرَى ". قُلْتُ كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ قَالَ " كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ، وَلَئِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ، لَتَرَيْنَ الرَّجُلَ يُخْرِجُ مِلَّةً كَفَّهُ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ فِضَّةٍ، يَطْلُبُ مَنْ يَقْبَلُهُ مِنْهُ، فَلَا يَجِدُ أَحَدًا يَقْبَلُهُ مِنْهُ، وَلَيَلْقَيْنَ اللَّهَ أَحَدُكُمُ يَوْمَ يَلْقَاهُ، وَلَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تَرْجُمانٌ يُترجمُ لَهُ. فَيَقُولَنَّ أَلَمْ أبعثْ إِلَيْكَ رَسُولًا فَيُبَلِّغَكَ فَيَقُولُ بَلَى. فَيَقُولُ أَلَمْ أَعْطِكَ مَالًا وَأَفْضِلُ عَلَيْكَ فَيَقُولُ بَلَى. فَيَنْظُرُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا جَهَنَّمَ، وَيَنْظُرُ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا جَهَنَّمَ ". قَالَ عَدِيُّ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " اتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقَّةِ تَمْرَةٍ، فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ شِقَّةَ تَمْرَةٍ فَبِكَلِمَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ ". قَالَ عَدِيُّ فَرَأَيْتُ الظُّعَيْنَةَ تَرْتَجِلُ مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ حَتَّى تَطُوفَ بِالْكَعْبَةِ، لَا تَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ، وَكُنْتُ فِيمَنْ افْتَتَحَ كُنُوزَ كِسْرَى بْنِ هُرْمُزٍ، وَلَئِنْ طَالَتْ بِكُمْ حَيَاةٌ لَتَرُونَّ مَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يُخْرِجُ مِلَّةً كَفَّهُ " .

"Adi! Have you been to Al-Hira?" I said, "I haven't been to it, but I was informed about it." He said, "If you should live for a long time, you will certainly see that a lady in a Howdah traveling from Al-Hira will (safely reach Mecca and) perform the Tawaf of the Ka`ba, fearing none but Allah." I said to myself, "What will happen to the robbers of the tribe of Tai who have spread evil through out the country?" The Prophet (ﷺ) further said. "If you should live long, the treasures of Khosrau will be opened (and taken as spoils)." I asked, "You mean Khosrau, son of Hurmuz?" He said, "Khosrau, son of Hurmuz; and if you should live long, you will see that one will carry a handful of gold or silver and go out looking for a person to accept it from him, but will find none to accept it from him. And any of you, when meeting Allah, will meet Him without needing an interpreter between him and Allah to interpret for him, and Allah will say to him: 'Didn't I send a messenger to teach you?' He will say: 'Yes.' Allah will say: 'Didn't I give you wealth and do you favors?' He will say: 'Yes.' Then he will look to his right and see nothing but Hell, and look to his left and see nothing but Hell." `Adi further said: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, "Save yourself from the (Hell) Fire even with half a date (to be given in charity) and if you do not find a half date, then with a good pleasant word." `Adi added: (later on) I saw a lady in a Howdah traveling from Al-Hira till she performed the Tawaf of the Ka`ba, fearing none but Allah. And I was one of those who opened (conquered) the treasures of Khosrau, son of Hurmuz. If you should live long, you will see what the Prophet (ﷺ) Abu-I-Qasim had said: 'A person will come out with a handful. of gold...etc.(Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Although the Prophet (ﷺ) was granted visions of future triumphs regarding the conquests of Sham and Yemen, they were only fulfilled during the expansions of the Rashidun Caliphate. This emphasizes that the exact timelines of his visions rested entirely upon the decree of Allah.
- True leadership demands both a clear vision and the ability to communicate it; a leader who cannot articulate their vision effectively essentially has none.
- Every individual must have a clear vision for their life. Even if things do not go as planned, holding onto that vision gives us purpose. The Prophet (ﷺ) beautifully modeled this. He never lost sight of his vision despite the immense challenges he faced.
- What is a vision?
 - Having a vision answers these foundational questions:
 - Why are we here?
 - What are we trying to accomplish?
 - What future are we striving toward?
 - Without a vision, effort becomes scattered, motivation fades and challenges become overwhelming.
- Before building institutions and systems, the Prophet (ﷺ) first established a clear mission.
 - Our mission cannot be compromised. The Prophet (ﷺ) was offered boundless wealth, power, women and kingship, but he rejected worldly temptations.
 - His only desire was to call people to La ilaha illa Allah, and he remained completely loyal to that mission of calling people toward Islam.
 - In the mission of spreading Islam, there are many challenges that will derail us, but we have to remain focused and sincere.

- Ultimately, our every effort is aimed at earning the pleasure of Allah and reaching Jannah.
- People do not sacrifice for tasks or projects. They sacrifice for purpose and values.
 - Our lives must revolve around the Akhirah. If we are certain of our eternal vision — serving Islam and seeking the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) — every hardship becomes easy.
 - When we align our choices with this vision and stay focused, our sacrifices make sense and Allah will give us strength.

