

SUMMER IMMERSION

PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP



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SESSION 6

Strategic Leadership and Decision Making (Cont.)

- The importance of seeking counsel:
 - Whoever makes Istikharah (seeking Allah's guidance) will not fail, and whoever makes Mashwarah (consulting wise people) will not regret.
 - Jabir bin Abdullah (RA) said:

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، يُعلمنا الاستخارة في الأمور كلها كما يعلمنا السورة من القرآن ، يقول : إذا هم أحدكم بالأمر فليركع ركعتين من غير الفريضة

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to teach us to seek Allah's Counsel in all matters, as he used to teach us a Surah from the Qur'an. He would say: When anyone of you has an important matter to decide, let him pray two Rak'ahs other than the obligatory prayer. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Ali ibn Abi Talib taught that arrogance ruins a person, while seeking advice brings wisdom.
- Once a decision is made through consulting, have tawakkul in Allah; put your trust in Him completely. Move forward without any regrets, knowing that it is what Allah had written for you.
 - It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

- " الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ اخِرٌصَ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ فَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَذَا وَكَذَا . وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرَهُ اللَّهُ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ " لَوْ " تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ " .

'The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of Allah, and do not feel helpless. If anything befalls you, do not say, "if only I had done such and such" rather say "Qaddara Allahu wa ma sha'a fa'ala (Allah has decreed and whatever he wills, He does)." For (saying) 'If' opens (the door) to the deeds of Satan.'"
(Sahih Muslim)

- Prophetic Examples:
 - Hijrah to Madinah:
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) showed this during the Hijrah by using all available means and making careful choices. Then, he reminded Abu Bakr in the cave that Allah is with them.
 - A believer should keep in mind that Allah is always with us throughout every challenge or decision we make. We accept the outcome as what Allah wrote for us and we trust that Allah is the best of planners.
 - The Battle of Badr:
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) strategized every single move. Prior to Badr, he planned every action carefully, including sending scouts like Ali ibn Abi Talib, Zubair al-Awwam, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas to gather intelligence on Quraysh. They captured Makkan water-carriers near the wells of Badr.
 - When the boys could not directly state the size of the Quraysh army, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked how many camels they slaughtered for food each day. The boys replied they slaughtered nine to ten camels on alternate days, meaning 9 to 10 camels daily.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) deduced that an average of one camel feeds roughly 100 men, revealing an enemy force of about 1,000 fighters.

- The Battle of Khandaq:
 - During this battle, the Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated willingness to accept strategic advice and adopt foreign tactics regardless of origin.
 - Salman al-Farsi, a Persian Companion, proposed digging a defensive ditch around Madinah, a defensive method used in Persia that was completely new to traditional Arab warfare.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) immediately approved the plan and joined the Muslims in the physical labor of excavation.
 - By embracing non-Arab tactical expertise and prioritizing meticulous planning over rigid cultural tradition, the Prophet (ﷺ) successfully protected the Muslim community against overwhelming odds.
- Everyone has something to teach us, young or old, so we must learn from all people and value advice from those we trust.

Conflict Management

- Conflict is a normal part of life. Even the Companions disagreed and had conflicts. The only healthy way to deal with it is by using the Sunnah and acting with prophetic character.
- Great leaders are aware and know how to resolve conflicts. The Prophet (ﷺ) taught solving disputes means seeking Allah's forgiveness first, as worldly arguments do not matter compared to the ultimate goal of akhirah.

- Narrated Abu Darda': The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

" أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَفْضَلِ مِنْ دَرَجَةِ الصَّيَامِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ " . قَالُوا بَلَى . قَالَ " إِصْلَاحُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ وَفَسَادُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ الْحَالِقَةُ " .

Shall I not inform you of something more excellent in degree than fasting, prayer and almsgiving (sadaqah)? The people replied: Yes, Prophet of Allah! He said: It is putting things right between people, spoiling them is the shaver (destructive). (Sunan Abi Dawud)

- This hadith teaches that hatred and discord between people is al-haliqa (the shaver). It does not literally mean shaving hair, but rather it shaves away and destroys one's deen.
- The importance of working with others:
 - Good teamwork and wise leadership help people excel. This was clear when the Prophet (ﷺ) helped the tribes put the Black Stone back in place together.
 - The Quraysh leaders were about to fight over who should lift the sacred stone into the wall of the Ka'bah. Every clan wanted the great honor of putting the stone back. They almost started a war because no one wanted to give up this right.
 - An elder suggested they let the very next man who walked through the gate decide. When the Prophet (ﷺ) walked in, they trusted him because he was known for being honest and fair.
 - He spread out a cloth, placed the Black Stone in the middle of it, and told a leader from each clan to hold a corner of the cloth together.
 - They all lifted it as a team, and then he placed the stone into the wall with his own hands, keeping peace among everyone.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) exuded emotional intelligence as a leader. He understood each one wanted to play an important role.

- People often misuse Islamic concepts, causing conflict over halal issues, deepening community divisions in Allah's name rather than uniting people.
 - For example, sparking needless conflicts inside sacred spaces like mosques that should foster peace.
- Ways to handle conflict:
 - 1. Early resolution
 - Early conflict resolution stops small disagreements from turning into major community divisions.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) practiced this by noticing tensions quickly and addressing issues right away.
 - 2. Listen to understand
 - Effective communication relies on active listening, empathy, and seeking shared solutions.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) listened with full attention to the Companions, focusing on understanding them completely rather than rushing to form a reply. He gave each person his full focus, waiting until they finished speaking before he responded.
 - 3. Separate the problem from the person
 - This means attacking the wrongful action while keeping respect and care for the individual.
 - This approach stops conflicts from hurting relationships and helps people find a real solution together.
 - When others judged a person harshly, the Prophet (ﷺ) protected their overall good standing. He addressed the wrong behavior directly without destroying the person's dignity.
 - 4. Focus on the interests rather than positions

- Focusing on underlying interests instead of rigid positions helps resolve conflicts by uncovering true needs, such as safety, growth, or respect, rather than arguing over titles or demands.
- For example, separate the status of being a leader from the actual work of helping the group succeed.
- 5. Emotional intelligence
 - Research suggests that emotional intelligence is one of the strongest predictors of effective leadership.
 - It consists of five key components:
 - 1. Self-awareness: Knowing your own inner feelings, strengths, weaknesses, and how your moods affect others.
 - 2. Self-control: Managing disruptive impulses and staying calm during stressful or changing situations.
 - 3. Motivation: Having an inner drive to pursue goals for personal growth and passion rather than just money.
 - 4. Empathy: Sensing and understanding what other people feel to respond with care.
 - 5. Social skills: Communicating clearly, working well in teams, and managing conflicts.
 - Prophetic examples:
 - The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah: This event shows the Prophet's high emotional intelligence via self-regulation. He calmly absorbed the shocked and upset reactions of his Companions to the unfair terms without getting angry or defensive.
 - Signs of Mood: The Prophet (ﷺ) showed high emotional intelligence by noticing small changes in how Aisha spoke to him. He knew her state of mind from her words, noting when she was happy or upset.

- Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah said,

إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُ غَضَبَكَ وَرِضَاكَ قَالَتْ قُلْتُ وَكَيْفَ تَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ إِنَّكَ إِذَا كُنْتَ رَاضِيَةً قُلْتَ بَلَى وَرَبِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَإِذَا كُنْتَ سَاخِطَةً قُلْتَ لَا وَرَبِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَتْ قُلْتُ أَجَلُ لَسْتُ أَهَاجِرُ إِلَّا اسْمَكَ

"Indeed, I can tell when you are angry or pleased with me." I said, "How do you know that, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet said, "Verily, when you are pleased, you say: Yes, by the Lord of Muhammad! But when you are upset, you say: No, by the Lord of Abraham!" I said, "Yes, I do not leave out anything but your name." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Five tactics used by leaders:
 - 1. Competing
 - This involves high assertiveness and low cooperativeness. Leaders pursue their own goals to make quick, decisive actions. For example, in emergency situations.
 - Prophetic example: Usama ibn Zayd was chosen by the Prophet (ﷺ) to lead a major military expedition to Syria, despite protests from some older Companions who worried about his young age of around 20 years old.
 - True leaders hold firm and reject negotiation on core values, specifically rooted in what is halal
 - 2. Avoiding
 - Strategic avoidance in leadership means knowing when to delay conflict.
 - Effective leaders must choose which battles are truly worth fighting.
 - Prophetic example: The Prophet (ﷺ) tolerated Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul to maintain community unity. He also smiled when a man roughly pulled his shirt—while Umar was angry and wanted to react — it shows how patience and restraint are stronger than immediate anger.

- 3. Accommodating
 - Good leaders yield to others' needs to preserve harmony. Maintaining the relationship matters more than winning an argument.
 - Prophetic example: The Prophet (ﷺ) showed this during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah when Suhayl ibn Amr asked to remove his title, and he agreed because peace and a greater Islamic goal mattered more than the wording.
- 4. Compromising
 - Compromising in leadership means finding a fast middle ground where everyone gives up a little bit to show teamwork.
 - Prophetic example: During the return from the Battle of Banu Mustaliq, a dispute broke out when an Ansari and a Muhajir clashed over water or pushed each other. This minor scuffle triggered tribal calls for support that threatened Muslim unity until the Prophet (ﷺ) intervened. He rebuked them, saying, "Leave it, for it is repulsive," and condemning the return to the ways of the Days of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah).
 - This lesson serves as a timeless reminder that using group labels to fuel tribalism is harmful as it fractures community unity.
- 5. Collaborating
 - Good leaders work together with their teams to find a win-win solution that satisfies everyone. This builds a strong bond that lasts.