

# The Prophet of Islam

## The Best Leader for Mankind

A lecture by Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Shirazi

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

The Prophet of Islam, *peace be upon him and his pure family*, remained in the city of Mecca for approximately thirteen years when he was sent as a messenger. He then migrated to the city of Medina and remained there until his death on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Safar<sup>[1]</sup>. During the thirteen years that the Prophet remained in Mecca, historians report that the number of converts to Islam was less than two hundred.

In Medina, the Prophet implemented the teachings of Islam practically (through devising laws and policies based on those teachings), and thereafter throngs of people started to join Islam such that Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur'an,

**And you see people entering the religion of Allah in troops**  
<sup>[2]</sup>

During the short period that the Prophet was in Medina, hundreds of thousands of people converted to Islam, most of which occurred during the last two or three years of the holy Prophet's life. How, one might ask, did the Prophet achieve such a goal?

The Prophet Mohammad is the greatest and most honourable person that Allah has ever created. Imam Ali was once asked if he was superior to Prophet Mohammad. Imam Ali replied, "I am but one of the servants of Mohammad"<sup>[3]</sup>. Moreover, the quality of the traditions, laws, and the system that Prophet Mohammad chose for Muslims are in line and consistent with his character and merits. There is a direct relationship between his personal, intellectual, and spiritual qualities and those of the laws he brings. Just as the Prophet is the best of creation, his laws too are the best and most perfect of laws and regulations.

Throughout his stay in Mecca since the start of his Prophetic mission, the Prophet's plans and policies did not materialize; his teachings were not implemented or practiced as the right environment was not yet available for them to be implemented, nor did he have the necessary means to do so, such that it would become known how he would deal with people:

- How will he deal with his supporters and opponents?
- What is his monetary policy?
- What are his policies for a war and its aftermath?
- What type of government would he create?
- What is his personal lifestyle and practice?

All of these questions were addressed [when the Prophet established his base] in Medina. Almost twenty-five years after the death of the Prophet, when Imam Ali assumed the office of government, he revived and implemented the same policies and principles that the Prophet had, during his reign of less than five years.

The life of Prophet Mohammad contains great many examples of his conducts and policies that if they were collected and presented to humanity, many people would be so impressed by them that they would ultimately adopt Islam as a way of life. If we truly follow the genuine laws and traditions of the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali in every aspect of our lives, then what occurred fourteen centuries would happen again, which is what Allah states in the abovementioned verse in the Holy Qur'an. Then you would see millions of non-Muslims would willingly join Islam.

## **What Was the Prophet's Policy?**

The Prophet's history reveals many lessons and examples that elucidate the matters we previously discussed. My brother, the late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammad Shirazi, *may Allah elevate his status*, always encouraged his audience and students, through his lectures, teachings, and books, to study the history of Prophet

Mohammad. Examining the history of the Prophet allows us to see what he was and why he was so, such that Allah states in the Qur'an, **And you see people entering the religion of Allah in troops**

The reality is that this event was not a miracle, but it was rather a natural outcome emanating from the Prophet's policies and conduct.

So who were the people that embraced Islam in huge numbers during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammad? A great number of those converts were idol worshippers, but Christians, Jews, and the citizens of the city of Medina were also among the converts to Islam. These people did not adopt Islam individually, but they became Muslims in large groups. How was it that these people embraced Islam en masse, as Allah describes in the aforementioned verse? What did they see, and what did they hear [to go through such transformation]? What beliefs did they adopt?

If today the conduct, teachings and policies of the Prophet were to be made available in any corner of the world, then people would embrace Islam en masse, with conviction and enthusiasm. Furthermore, Muslims would also acquire a greater confidence to guide others to Islam.

The life of Prophet Mohammad is filled with great many examples. If these were to be presented to Christians, Jews, and atheists, we will witness their conversion to Islam. Furthermore, the faith of Muslims would strengthen after learning about the Prophet's way of life and his teachings and the principles he upheld.

It is mentioned in a narration that a day will come when a phenomenon opposite to that observed in the holy verse aforementioned above would occur, "And you see people renouncing the religion of Allah in troops". This comes about when the people abandon the Prophet's teachings, and stop believing in them.

If you implement the genuine teachings of Islam within your families, your neighbours and relatives, then they would gradually come to believe in those teachings – this is because the system of Islam is the most harmonious way of life known to humankind.

## An Example from the Laws of the Islamic Government

I will give one example of the Prophet's policy, which is referred to in various historical reference books compiled by Muslim and non-Muslim authors. This widely accepted narration states that when the Prophet was in Medina and was Head of State, he declared,

**“Whoever dies and leaves a wealth behind, it belongs to his or her heir.”** <sup>[4]</sup>

If this narration is presented to any nation, state, of any country or religion, it will certainly change its people's [perception of Islam] once they are convinced of its authenticity.

The imposition of taxes on inheritance is common today in most countries, even in the countries that claim to have the best laws. The inheritance tax is not a new law. It dates back to pre-Islamic eras, as it was common amongst the pagans. In the laws of the Pre-Islamic pagans, as well as those that were developed in the course of history of Jewish and Christian faiths inheritance tax was upheld. So, if a person dies and leaves some wealth behind, the government or the dominant tribe, or those in authority, would usually take a part of the money in the form of inheritance tax. In Islam, however, as the Prophet states, there is no such law that imposes any taxes on inheritance.

The Prophet Muhammad further states,

**“Whoever dies and leaves a debt or a poor family behind, then it is to me and upon me.”**<sup>[5]</sup>

This means that if a person dies and leaves behind a poor family with no money, 'then they should come to me for they are now my responsibility', i.e. the Prophet Mohammad would be responsible for the poor family's expenses. But, naturally, the Prophet of Islam went even further than that by extending his hand to those who were in debt. I believe that such a law does not exist anywhere in the world. Today, even the rich countries that claim to be civilised do not have laws such as these.

Is there a law today in any country in the world that the Head of State pays off the debt of a deceased? Sometimes it may happen, but not before the inheritors spend endless hours going through so many bureaucracies when they might receive some of the money to pay off a fraction of the debt. However, there is no such law in any country that provides debt assurance. <sup>[6]</sup>

It is noted that some countries today do offer welfare support. Some rich countries have laws that allow poor families financial support, but not enough to meet the families' needs.

Now let's suppose that a country declares the following laws:

1. No inheritance tax,
2. If a person dies and leaves a poor family behind, the government will take care of the family's expenses, and if he was in debt, we will pay off his debt.

Don't you think many people from around the world would leave their countries and migrate to such a country to be its citizens? Even though there is no such law today, you still notice that many people migrate from Islamic countries and less developed countries to countries that enjoy only partial economical comfort and safety, regardless of state religion there.

In general, what is certain is that in Islam, the leader of Muslims must take care of, up to sufficient level, the expenses of a poor family, and pay off its debt. Imam Sadiq states, "It is upon the Imam (leader or Head of State) to pay it off [the debt], and if he does not, then upon him is the sin [of not paying off the debt]." <sup>[7]</sup> However, the word 'Imam' in this narration refers to any head of state that has the capability to do such things.

The Prophet of Islam did indeed give this great gift to the world – a gift that truly carries with it the prosperity for mankind. Similarly, this is what will happen again after the appearance of Imam Mahdi, when Allah's promise will be fulfilled, **To proclaim [Islam] over all religions.** <sup>[8]</sup>

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq, which follows the Prophetic tradition, that can be found in our books, and this is a source of pride for us, for the Ahl al-Bayt<sup>[9]</sup> are bestowed with knowledge that others do not have, alas some of our people are not aware of what our Imams possess. Imam Sadiq states, "The reason behind the conversion of most Jews to Islam was none other than this saying of Prophet Mohammad."<sup>[10]</sup> When Prophet Mohammad was in charge, as the Head of State, in Medina, he made those declarations and set them as legal laws. As an outcome of these laws, many Jews joined Islam as they realised that Islam was a good religion, and embracing it as a way of life was a sensible idea. Perhaps they thought that:

1. If we die rich, then the Islamic government will not take anything from our wealth that we leave behind. Thus, our sons/daughters would receive all of our wealth.
2. On the other hand, if we die poor, then the Islamic government will provide for our families' necessary needs. Moreover, if we die while we are in debt, our families would not carry the burden of our debts, for the Prophet of Islam would take care of our debts.

Thus, the Jews [who were opposed to Islam such] that the Qur'an said about, **Certainly you will find the roughest of people in enmity to those who believe, (to be) the Jews**<sup>[11]</sup> joined Islam individually, as whole families, and in groups.

While most Jews converted to Islam for economic incentives, their children and grandchildren saw the light of Islam by living amongst Muslims and growing up in the haven of Islam. Hence, it is possible that some of our Muslim scholars might have been the descendants of early Jews who embraced Islam.

This is but one example of hundreds of examples from the history of Islam that portray its beauty.

If Christians come to realize that Islam is the true, practical religion that is not merely the utterance of words and phrases, but is applied in practice—the way the Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali implemented it—would they not embrace Islam? Wouldn't the Jews join Islam if they were to know the truth about this great religion? Isn't this example alone enough for the Christians, Jews,

Buddhists and other non-Muslims to adopt Islam as a way of life? How did Prophet Mohammad change and guide so many people to Islam, such that Allah said,

### **And you see people entering the religion of Allah in troops?**

Why was this phenomenon not realised during the thirteen years Prophet Mohammad stayed in Mecca, but rather they joined Islam in large groups during the nine or ten years he spent in Medina?

Prophet Mohammad was able to guide so many people to Islam because the proper grounds and circumstances were available in Medina, but they were not in Mecca. Therefore, if such condition becomes available anywhere in the world, including in non-Muslim countries, and the laws of Islam are taught and implemented, the majority of the people would join Islam.

The world has not witnessed a person more superior than the Prophet Muhammad who had the best of teachings and policies for mankind. Who would choose not to follow and emulate someone who had the best policies? The elevated dignity and noble honour for a human being offered by Islam, and the social welfare system that Prophet Mohammad and Imam Ali implemented have not been matched anywhere in the world. No laws exist that surpass the pristine and ideal laws of Islam.

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari was a young polytheist. What inspired him to embrace Islam? What did he see and witness that motivated him to become a Muslim and ultimately an exceptional exemplar? His influence was so great and resonant that there have hundreds great Muslim scholars who are the direct results of his efforts.

### **Imam Ali's Management of Government**

For a few years, the government was in the hands of Imam Ali when he was in the city of Kufa. Kufa was a large city, and according to some chroniclers, its area exceeded 500 squared kilometres. Kufa was also the capital city of Imam Ali. History has recorded that during Imam Ali's reign of four years and few months, an unprecedented incident took place. Closely examining history, no other accounts similar to this incident ever occurred

during Imam Ali's reign. One day Imam Ali was crossing a street in Kufa and noticed someone begging. Imam Ali asked, "What is this?" Someone, who was not well versed with Islam, replied, "This beggar is a Christian man who has grown old and can no longer work, so he begs." Perhaps the man might have thought it made a difference to the Imam if the beggar was non-Muslim, whereas from Islam's perspective, this made no difference. Some people today might not know these things; and seeing the negative actions of Muslims and how they treat peoples of other faiths, might not believe such historical incidents that portray the beauty and tolerance of Islam. They wonder that if such accounts did occur, why Muslims do not act accordingly.

Imam Ali, disturbed by the Christian man's condition and the reply he received, admonished his companions, and said, "You took advantage of him (during his youth), and when he grew old and disabled, you abandoned him!"

Is there a country in the world today that is free of beggars? If we look at the richest country in the world, we would still find many beggars and poor people. While the degree of poverty and the proportion of impoverished people vary from one country to another, poverty exists everywhere. Some countries have many poor people and beggars, others have less. As we all know, even in the most advanced countries and under the most sophisticated laws of our time, we still find beggars. Meanwhile in Islam, beggars and poverty, amongst other social problems, are not (pushed aside because they are) considered personal problems, for there is no room for begging in an Islamic country.

## **Islam: For this Life and the Hereafter**

Islam is not only concerned about the Hereafter. Islam is also concerned about conferring humankind with the felicity of this life as well. Islam means:

- Peace and security
- Healthy economy
- Healthy politics
- Clean and orderly society
- The well-being of everything

When Prophet Mohammad was in Medina, and even when he was in Mecca but did not have authority over the people, he called onto the people,

**“Heed my call and you will be kings in this world and in the hereafter.”<sup>[12]</sup>**

The Prophet meant that if you adopt Islam as a way of life, you will find the felicity of this life and the hereafter. This world will be as a paradise to you, and in the hereafter you will end up heaven.

Similarly, Imam Ali's government represented the authentic and accurate form of Islam, theoretically and practically, it was not an Islamic government by name only, as the Prophet described the 'Islamic' faith of some peoples when he said, “There will come a time upon my nation in which nothing of Islam will remain but its name.”<sup>[13]</sup>

Therefore, practicing the genuine Islam, Imam Ali ordered that the Christian beggar be paid a salary enough for his living from *Bayt-al-Mal*, or the Muslim treasury.

The Prophet of Islam did indeed present the world this gift that carries with it the bliss for humankind. When Imam Mahdi will reappear, God's promise will be fulfilled, as stated in the Qur'an, “To proclaim it (Islam) over all religions.”<sup>[14]</sup> At that time the banner of Islam will spread across the entire world, and all will join Islam.

## **Two Pieces of Advice**

I leave two recommendations for my brothers and sisters, and I hope they seek to act upon them by the will of God.

1. The first recommendation is what my late brother used to emphasize upon continuously. In fact it is actually the recommendation of God before He created humankind. We must all strive to conduct *majalis* for Imam Hussein. We should all attend these programs from the beginning of the month of Muharram until the end of the month of Safar, and throughout the entire year as well. This blessed endeavour will never go in vain,

not even the smallest measure of it. Furthermore, it will be a saving for you and will be recorded as a good deed for you. Once the month of Safar ends, try to achieve this great success during the following months. I hope that you will deliver this message to others and act upon it yourselves. We must all, whether we are young or old, have families or are single, give an hour or two, or even a half an hour to Imam Hussein. In our private homes we should conduct *majalis* for Imam Hussein, beginning in Safar. If someone is less well off, he can do as much as his financial state allows, even if it means lighting a candle in the name of Imam Hussein for a few minutes each week in the presence of his friends and family. If a better opportunity is available, you can invite your neighbours, relatives and friends to such gatherings. Try to maintain these programs such that a week does not pass in which the tragedy of Imam Hussein is not mentioned in your homes, for in this there is the blessing of this life and the Hereafter. Even if you are a member or a supervisor of a *Hussainiya* and you hold *majalis* regularly at the *Hussainiya*, do not leave your house without a candle for Imam Hussein. The *majalis* for Imam Hussein may serve as the main pathways that lead us to success in life.

2. The second recommendation concerns the endeavour to protect our youth, and try to keep them firmly fastened on the path of Allah, Prophet Mohammad, and Ahl al-Bayt *peace be upon them*. No matter how firm is their faith, never stop the endeavour to strengthen their faith. If you cannot do that yourselves, you can facilitate the means required to guide them, such as providing them with books or lectures. We must teach our youth about Prophet Mohammad and his family the way that they presented themselves and the way that the Qur'an presents them. We should not introduce them in ways that either underestimate their status or overestimate it. There are certain groups that intend to misguide people by altering the reality about them, either by degrading their status or highly exaggerating it. So, for example, we may not ascribe any of God's exclusive attributes to the Imams. We should teach our youth about the infallibility of the Imams or any other matters or facts concerning them.

## Imam Sadiq Disavows Impostors

It has been related that a man named Mohammad bin Miqlas, also known as Abul-Khattab, used to feign himself as a Muslim while in reality he was not a Muslim. He would gather with the companions of Imam Sadiq and listen carefully until he learned some of their words. After some time passed, this man started to introduce himself as the representative of Imam Sadiq. One day he claimed that Imam Sadiq was God, and that he was Imam Sadiq's prophet. Upon learning about Abul-Khattab's mischievous claims, Imam Sadiq cursed him. On several occasions, Abul-Khattab was informed that the Imam had cursed, but it did not seem to matter to him that the Imam cursed him. He used to say, this is a "show", and in doing so the Imam wants to achieve (something more) important.

What should Imam Sadiq do with such a person? Things usually do not work by miracles, for people must be tested. Miracles are only performed in order set the proof for the truth.<sup>[15]</sup> In fact, the mere presence of Imam Sadiq sets the proof for the truth. The Almighty states, **That he who would perish might perish by clear proof.**<sup>[16]</sup> And if there are no clear proofs, miracles are performed.

Meanwhile, Mohammad bin Miqlas went to Mecca to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. A man came to Imam Sadiq and said, "O son of the Messenger of God! Mohammad bin Miqlas went to perform the Hajj, and before observing the *ihram*<sup>[17]</sup> at the *miqat*,<sup>[18]</sup> he recited the *talbiya*<sup>[19]</sup> in your name". Tears streamed down from the Imam's blessed eyes, and his facial expressions changed. He then raised his hands toward the sky and humbly addressed the Almighty, "My Lord! It is not I...I ask for your forgiveness...my Lord, I apologize to you!" Then he prostrated in humbleness to Allah.

One might ask: What harm do the actions of Mohammad bin Miqlas have on Imam Sadiq? Does not the Qur'an state, **and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another**<sup>[20]</sup> Imam Sadiq knows this verse better than you and I, and it was Mohammad bin Miqlas that claimed those lies about the Imam after all. The Imam himself did not claim those lies, so why did the Imam cry and worry? Furthermore, doesn't God know that the Imam did not say those words?

Mohammad bin Miqlas committed a sin when he declared *talbiya* in the name of Imam Sadiq. God knows that when Imam Sadiq declares *talbiya* which means "Oh Allah, I heed your call," a disturbance interrupts his looks, he begins to shake, and he does not rush in saying the *talbiya*. We, on the other hand, rush to declare the *talbiya* because we do not understand the real meaning of it, while the Imam understands it completely.

Some of the people around the Imam might have been surprised seeing the Imam ask for forgiveness in this manner. Imam Sadiq says to Zaid al-Narsi, the narrator of this *hadith*, "I ask Allah for forgiveness so that I settle in my grave,"<sup>[21]</sup> meaning that I can be confident and assured in my grave. Does this mean that the Imam will be questioned in his grave? Of course not, and the Imam himself knows that he will not be questioned. So what does his statement "so that I settle in my grave" mean?

Throughout history some people have claimed that Jesus is God. The Qur'an says that on the Day of Judgment, at the vast justice court of Allah, the Almighty will ask Jesus in the presence of all the creations, **O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to the people: take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?**<sup>[22]</sup> Allah knows that Jesus did not claim that he was God, but perhaps Allah wants to admonish the people who perpetrated those false claims about Jesus, as a result of their ill souls.

Some scholars say that probably the meaning of Imam Sadiq's anguish and his repentance to Allah, and the meaning of his words "so that I settle in my grave" is that: "I ask Allah for forgiveness so that I would not be questioned in my grave as if I was responsible for the actions of Mohammad bin Miqlas." The Imam did not want to be asked this question because merely being questioned in the grave is stressful and difficult.

There is no need to exaggerate and unjustly elevate the status of the Imams. Such statements, such as the one of Mohammad bin Miqlas, disturb and hurt the Imams, for they have said, "relegate us from divinity."<sup>[23]</sup> Exaggerations do not serve as the "right paths" to knowing our Imams. This type of action may bring upon us the curse of the Imams. Imam Mahdi might curse those who assign him a status above his actual status.

The characteristics of God are for Him alone, and the Names of Allah are strictly reserved for Him. Imam Ali is quoted as saying, "Two people will be destroyed because of me: a zealous one who exaggerates, and an enemy who disdains." This *hadeeth* means that the one who overestimates the status of Imam Ali by rendering him as a divine figure, and the one who carries contempt against him will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment.

## Conclusion

It is our obligation to protect our youth. This obligation lies primarily on the shoulders of mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts and those youths who proactively participate in promoting observance of and adherence to Islam and its teachings. Organise religious gatherings and promote them. Hold gatherings about Ahl al-Bayt and the discussion of the holy Qur'an, and always endorse these types of meetings. Dissemination of booklets and pamphlets about God, the Hereafter, and other tenets of our faith is very important, for they rectify the faith of our youth. Try to protect the youth in every proper way, and speak with them in a gentle, kind, and peaceful manner. No matter how many times you fail in trying to guide a young man, never give up. Every youth who is guided to the right path can guide many others to the right path in the future. Likewise, a youth who has deviated from the right path might cause other youths to deviate too. In conclusion, I re-emphasize the two recommendations that I previously mentioned:

First: Hold weekly *majalis* for Imam Hussein in your homes.

Second: Our youth...protect them and secure their faith.

I hope, by the grace of Prophet Mohammad and Ahl al-Bayt, all your good deeds are accepted and recorded for you. By the will of God, you will all be successful in acting upon the two recommendations.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be on Prophet Mohammad and his immaculate progeny.

- [1]. Safar is the second month in the Islamic lunar calendar.
- [2]. The Holy Qur'an, The Succour (110): 2
- [3]. al-Kafi vol. 1, p 89
- [4]. al-Kafi vol. 7 p.167
- [5]. Kanz al-Ommal vol. 11 p10
- [6]. In some countries there are life cover policies, but they require a monthly payment for the rest of a person's life as a condition for the insurance.
- [7]. al-Kafi vol. 1 p. 407
- [8]. The Holy Qur'an, Repentance (9): 33
- [9] Literally means "members of the household [of the Prophet]" and this term is used in reference to the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, his successor and son-in-law Ali, their sons Hasan and Husayn, as well as the nine impeccable imams descendents of Husayn. They are also referred to as the 14 Ma'soom (impeccable).
- [10]. al-Kafi vol. 1 p. 407
- [11]. The Holy Qur'an, Table Spread (5): 82
- [12]. Bihar al-Anwar vol. 18, p 185, hadith 15
- [13]. Bihar al-Anwar vol. 36 p 284
- [14]. The Holy Qur'an, Repentance (9): 33
- [15]. So that people would not have a pretext before God for disobeying him after the miracle.
- [16]. The Holy Qur'an, Public Estate (8): 42
- [17]. Ihram is the rite of declaring the state of Ihram by wearing two pieces of cloths, hence initiating the Hajj.
- [18]. Miqat is the place where one performs the Ihram for Hajj.
- [19]. Talbiya literary means "compliance." After performing the Ihram, one must recite a few words as a compliance with God's invitation to Hajj.
- [20]. The Holy Qur'an, The Cattle (6): 164
- [21]. Mostadrak al-Wasael vol. 9 p 198
- [22]. The Holy Qur'an, The Table Spread (5): 116
- [23]. al-Lom'a al-Baidha' p. 64