

**Lessons From The Biography Of The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)**  
**Taught by: Abū ‘Ammār ‘Alī Ḥudhayfah (حفظه الله)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

Class 01

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**Class 01: Introduction**

Shaykh Abū ‘Ammār ‘Alī Ḥudhayfah (حفظه الله) began by praising Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) for facilitating for us another gathering of knowledge to study something of great importance: the sīrah of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The events that took place in the life of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) are full of lessons. The scholars put great importance in studying this topic because this is knowledge that the layman amongst the Muslims are in need of.

**The Linguistic Meaning Of The Word Sīrah.**

The word sīrah refers to a condition that something is upon. Allāh mentions in the Quran,

﴿سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَى﴾

“We shall return it to its former state.” [Sūrah Ṭā-ḥā 20:21]

**This** āyah refers to the stick of Mūsá (عليه السلام). After the stick turned into a snake, Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) said that He would return it to its previous condition (a stick).

**The Islāmic Meaning Of The Word Sīrah.**

Islāmically, the word *sīrah* refers to all the events that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) went through from the time he was born, all throughout his upbringing and childhood, during his adulthood, including the time when he received the revelation throughout his Prophethood, all the way up until his death (عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ).

The *sīrah* is a general study of the conditions and events that happened to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) throughout his entire life. The *sīrah* includes the events before and after his Prophethood up until his death.

Many of the books of *sīrah* mention the condition that the people were in during the time of Jāhiliyah even before the birth of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). For example, the books of *sīrah* would mention some events from the life of the prophets (صلى الله عليه وسلم) grandfather ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib, the marriage of the prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) parents. These events are not actually part of the *sīrah*, but they give an introduction and help us understand the condition that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was raised in.

### **The Sīrah Is Different From Hadīth.**

The word **hadīth** refers specifically to everything that came after the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) received revelation and this was the opinion of Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله).

### **Why It Is Important To Study The Sīrah.**

Ibn Kathīr (رحمه الله) mentions in his book ‘Al-Bidāyah Wa Al-Nahāyah,’ that Al-Wāqifī said ‘we used to be taught the maghāzī (battles) of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and in the stories of these battles there is knowledge of the dunyah and Akhirah.’ The battles of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) are only some of the incidents in the life of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). There were other incidents that took place that were not war, but sometimes books were called ‘books of maghāzī’ and they included these battles as well as the other things that were not battles.

Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رحمهم الله) said, ‘we used to be taught about the battles of the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) just like we were taught a *sūrah*

from the Qur'ān' and 'Alī Ibn Al-Ḥussayn said a similar statement. Ibn Kathīr (رحمه الله) said this means much attention should be paid to the study of the sīrah.

These historical events (battles) were not memorized because they had the same importance as the Qur'ān. Rather, what is meant is that just as they would be required to memorize a sūrah from the Qur'ān, they would be asked questions and they were supposed to give answers about what they memorized to demonstrate their understanding of a sūrah as well as the sīrah. All of this shows that studying the sīrah is of great importance.

### **The Danger Of Remaining Ignorant Of The Sīrah.**

Our scholars have continually found fault with those who attribute themselves and are students of knowledge and are callers to the dīn, yet they remain ignorant of the events that took place in the sīrah.

**Ibn Taymiyah** (رحمه الله) said, 'many of the people that attribute themselves to knowledge do not know the battles of the sīrah. They do not know when they took place, in which order they took place, in which (battles) there was actual fighting and in which of them there was no fighting. They do not know if the battle of Badr came before the battle of Uḥud or if it was the opposite, or if Khaybar came before Al-Khandaq or if it was the opposite. They do not know which came first, the conquest of Makkah, or the battle of Tabūk. They do not know how many children the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had, and how many sons he had or how many daughters. They do not know how many years the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) fasted. They do not know how long he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prayed facing bayt Al-Maqdis in Jerusalem, and when the Qiblah was changed and he started praying towards Makkah after the hijrah. They do not know the year that fasting was made obligatory, or when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was commanded to fast 'āshūrā. They do not know whether or not he continually shortened his prayers while travelling. They do not know when he combined prayers. All of these events are mutawātir (numerously reported) and there are those amongst the people of knowledge that know the details of these (incidents) yet you find some people calling to the dīn and they do not know these details. In fact we might find some people calling to the dīn and when they are presented with these details, they say, 'no that is not true,' whereas this is

actually mutawātir, everybody knows this to be something that is true from the sīrah. This is the case, not only with the laymen but also with some of the students of knowledge. They remain ignorant of important details from the sīrah.'

**Ibn Al-Qayyim** (رحمه الله) said, 'from amongst the people that have studied the maghāzī and the sīrah, are those who know that the battle of Badr came before Uḥud, the conquest of Makkah was before the battle of Tabūk, that Tabūk was the last of the battles and that it was a battle between the Muslims and the Christians of Al-Shām, and that Badr and Uḥud were wars against the mushrikīn, and that there were four battles against the Jews, that Khaybar was after the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah.....These events are well known events that took place in the sīrah that some of the people of knowledge remain ignorant of. There may even be some from amongst the fuqahā' scholarly people that know the details of jurisprudence, yet when it comes to the history of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) they are ignorant of it.'

### **Some Benefits Of Studying The Sīrah.**

- 1) **Knowing the sīrah is part of knowing ones prophet.** This is an obligation on everyone that says 'Ash-hadu an Lā ilāha illā Allāh wa ash-hadu anna Muḥammadan rasūl Allāh.' This is one of the three principles, and one of the three questions that every person will be asked when they are put in their grave; 'Who is your Lord, what is your religion, and who is your prophet.' Part of knowing the prophet is knowing the sīrah.

**Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhāb** (رحمه الله) said in his well known treatise Usūl Ath-Thalāthah that this is an obligation upon you,

اعلم - رَحِمَكَ اللهُ - أَنَّهُ يَجِبُ عَلَيْنَا تَعَلُّمُ أَرْبَعِ مَسَائِلَ:  
الأولى: العِلْمُ، وَهُوَ مَعْرِفَةُ اللهِ، وَمَعْرِفَةُ نَبِيِّهِ، وَمَعْرِفَةُ دِينِ الإِسْلَامِ بِالأَدِلَّةِ.

'Know, my Allāh have mercy upon you, that it is obligatory upon the servant to know three things. Firstly, you must know Allāh and his prophet and the religion of Allāh with evidence.'

- 2) **Knowing the order that the events in the life of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) took place and knowing which abrogations took place.** For example, after

the death of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the Jews claimed that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) made an exception for the Jews that settled in Khaybar that were expelled from Madinah, that they would not have to pay the Jizyah. These Jews said that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) dictated this and had it written in a letter and took as witnesses, Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan (رضى الله عنهما). When this was presented to some of the 'ulemā', their automatic reply was that this was a lie without any hesitation because Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh died before Khaybar and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan did not accept Islām until after the conquest of Makkah which was in the eighth year after hijrah. This is automatically impossible.

**Ibn Al-Qayyim** (رحمه الله) has a book called 'Aḥkām Ahl Al-Thimmaḥ,' in which he mentions something similar to this. This is one of the many benefits of studying the sīrah; being able to unveil the truth from the falsehood.

- 3) **Knowing the khaṣā'is (unique characteristics) of the prophet** (صلى الله عليه وسلم). There were certain things that applied to him that did not apply to the rest of his Ummah.
- 4) **Having certainty that the messenger** (صلى الله عليه وسلم) **was indeed a messenger sent by Allāh** (سبحانه و تعالی). Whoever contemplates and looks at the events as they unfolded in his life, would be absolutely certain that this man was not lying nor was he claiming to have received revelation without actually doing so. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was given divine protection, that Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) enveloped him with His divine protection. Ibn Ḥazm (رحمه الله) said that studying the sīrah is one of the greatest means of believing in and declaring the truth of the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Even if he was given no other miracle than his life (the sīrah), it would be one of the greatest miracles and proof of his truth.
- 5) **Being able to refute the deviants who have come forward and spoken on behalf of the religion without knowledge.**
- 6) **There are lessons for any and everyone that is calling to Allāh in looking at how the messenger** (صلى الله عليه وسلم) **was a great example in being patient upon**



the hardships that he faced and how wise he was when calling others to the religion.

- 7) **Knowing the great virtue of the ṣaḥābah** (رضى الله عنهم). When we look at how much they sacrificed for the sake of Islām and how they reacted in the different situations when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was going through all these different hardships, they were ready to sacrifice everything that they had. They protected him and risked their own lives and wealth for the sake of protecting the messenger and his message. They migrated from their homes and went to Madīnah. This causes one to love those ṣaḥābah (رضى الله عنهم). No one studies the sīrah except that he walks away with a love of the companions of Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).
- 8) **Knowing Asbāb Al-Nuzūl** - the different occurrences when āyāt from the Qur'ān were revealed. Knowing when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said a ḥadīth, in which context did he say it. This helps to understand the ḥadīth and the āyah.

وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم