

Lessons From The Biography Of The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

Class 02

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Class 02: Sources Of Sīrah

The Two Main Sources For The Sīrah

- 1) **Verses of the Qur’ān.** The verses in the Qur’ān show us what is important about the lifestyle of the mushrikīn and how very terrible their beliefs and practices were, as well as what their situation was and the shirk that they were upon. The Qur’ān also mentions the childhood and upbringing of the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as an orphan in Makkah, as well as mention of some of the battles that he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) fought along with the ṣaḥābah (رضى الله عنهم).
 - **Sūrah Āli-‘Imrān** mentions the battle of **Badr** as well as the battle of **Uḥud**.
 - **Sūrah Al-Anfāl** also mentions the battle of **Uḥud**.
 - **Sūrah Al-Tawbah** mentions the battle of **Tabūk** and what happened to the hypocrites.
 - **Sūrah Al-Nūr** mentions **ḥādith Al-Ifk** – a narration of the false accusations that were launched against the mother of the believers Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها).
 - **Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb** mentions details of **Al-Khandaq**.
 - **Sūrah Al-Fath** mentions details about the treaty of **Ḥudaybiyah** and the **‘Umrat Al-Qaḍá**, which stated that the Muslims were not allowed to make ‘umrah during the year that they travelled to Makkah from Madina. Rather

the peace treaty was signed and in the following year they came back and made up for that 'umrah.

- **Sūrah Al-Ḥashr** mentions of the battles that took place between the Muslims and the **Jews of Banī Naḍīr**.

2) **The Aḥādīth of the messenger** (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The aḥādīth that are authentic that are mentioned in the different compilations of the Sunnah, many of these provide information about the sīrah.

The Different Compilation Of Books Of The Sunnah.

Among the **Ṣiḥāḥ Al-Sittah** (six authentic books), there is Bukhārī and Muslim which are the two most authentic compilations after the book of Allāh (عز و جل). After these two, there is Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, and there is a difference of opinion regarding whether or not everything in Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah is authentic, but according to the correct opinion, everything is.

As for the **Sunan**, there is Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd. From the compilations of the Sunnah we have several books, including the three different Ma'ājim of Al-Ṭabarānī (رحمه الله), there is Dalā'il Al-Nubuwah by Al-Bayhaqī (رحمه الله), Al-Shamā'il by Al-Tirmidhī (رحمه الله), the Khaṣā'iṣ by Al-Suyūṭī (رحمه الله). All of these are compilations that include narrations that shed light upon the sīrah.

How To Know Which Compilations And Narrations Are Authentic.

When it comes to how to depend on the different narrations with regards to their authenticity, the student of knowledge has to have some clarity on **what to take and what not to take**. The scholars past and present have had more than one school of thought when it comes to what is acceptable from the Sunnah about the sīrah.

1. **The first school of thought are those scholars that say they only accept those narrations that are known to be ṣaḥīḥ, either in and of themselves, or because they are so many different chains of narrations.** Either one chain of narration is ṣaḥīḥ so we accept it, or there are several narrations about an incident, and because there are so many of them, we cannot reject it. Even if these narrations

individually have chains of narration that are not the strongest, so many of them collectively show us that it is something that is acceptable.

2. **This school of thought holds that whatever cannot be proven by its chain of narration, is not to be relied upon in the study of the sīrah.** This school of thought is that of a group of scholars from the contemporary scholars that held this view, Shakh Rabīʿ ibn Hādī Al-Madkhalī (حفظه الله), and Shaykh Muqbil bin Hādī (رحمه الله).
3. This school of thought is from those scholars that have mentioned about a narration from the Sunnah in the sīrah is that it is to be relied upon, even if its chain of narration is not the strongest. This is the school of thought of a group of scholars and the methodology they employed when writing about the sīrah.
4. Some scholars hold that when it comes to the study of the events of the sīrah, particularly the details of the battles of the wars fought by the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his companions, as long as the information does not contradict something that we do have an authentic narration about, then we can accept it. If there are details that are provided with a chain of narration that are not authentic, but those narrations do not contradict something that is authentic, then we can accept it.

A Question To Shakh Rabīʿ Ibn Hādī Al-Madkhalī (حفظه الله) About Accepting Narrations That Are Not Authentic Regarding 'Aqīdah?

Shaykh Abū ʿAmmār ʿAlī Ḥudhayfah (حفظه الله) asked Shakh Rabīʿ ibn Hādī Al-Madkhalī (حفظه الله), 'what about a comparison between this and a study of 'aqīdah. Do we take that which is not authentic, yet it does not contradict that which is not authentic?' Shakh Rabīʿ ibn Hādī Al-Madkhalī (حفظه الله) said, '**no, we only accept that which is authentic.**'

Shaykh Abū ʿAmmār (حفظه الله) said to Shakh Rabīʿ (حفظه الله) that he has noticed that there are many people that have explained Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd, and they have not paid attention to the chains of narrations in Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd. They simply accepted everything in Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd and explained it as it was. Shaykh Rabīʿ (حفظه الله) said the

same principle applies not only to sīrah, but to ‘aqīdah as well. If there are narrations that are not authentic in Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd, then we are not to accept them. Shaykh Abū ‘Ammār (حفظه الله) said that those narrations that are in Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd that are not authentic are very few in number.

When Can We Rely On A Narration That Does Not Have An Authentic Chain?

Ibn Ḥajr Al-‘Asqalānī (رحمه الله) talked about some narrations from the sīrah, saying that if what is mentioned has a narration, but it does not contradict what is ṣaḥīḥ, then it can be relied upon. This was the methodology he used in his book *Fatḥ Al-Bārī*.

There are also some contemporary books about the sīrah. **Akram Ḍiyā’ Al-‘Umarī** has a book about the history of the sīrah and he talked about the different methodologies that scholars have followed and how they incorporate the study of ḥadīth, and the principles of the study of the chains of narrations of ḥadīth and how they apply this to the study of the sīrah.

It Is Important To Know The Condition Of The People Of That Time When Studying Sīrah.

Shaykh Abū ‘Ammār (حفظه الله) said that in our study of the sīrah, it is important to take things in the correct historical context. And look at the events that happened in light of the condition of the people at that time. For example, why were the Mushrikūn at that time so attached to the idols that they worshiped? At face value, a person could simply read the books of sīrah and deduce that they were blindly following their forefathers and that they did not have any real reason to. However there is an ‘aqīdah that goes behind this. It was not only due to blind following that the mushrikūn were so attached to their idols. There were reasons that were a little deeper and it is easy to remain unaware of them. The Mushrikūn had shubuhāt (doubts) that entered upon them and caused them to blindly follow their forefathers and become attached to their idols.

Why Were The Mushrikūn So Attached To Their Idols.

The ‘aqīdah behind this is that the mushrikūn knew about the soul, and they knew that at the time of death there is a departure between the soul and the body. However, what

they believed was that once the body died and was buried, the soul was free to roam around the earth and if the soul found a shape that it was impressed with, it could enter into that new body, which is essentially reincarnation. The Mushrikūn believed that souls could enter into bodies, and some of these souls chose to enter into idols. They believed that the souls that were in the shape of these idols, were able to answer the prayers of the living who prayed to those idols. Thus it is important for students of knowledge to have a historical reference of these things so that we do not miss out on important things like the beliefs that go behind these historical things.

Comparing The Condition Of The People Of Jāhiliyah To The Condition Of The People After Islām.

It is important to know the condition of the people of Jāhiliyah so that we can compare it to the condition of the people once they accepted Islām. It is also important to know and to make a comparison between the condition of the ṣaḥābah (رضى الله عنهم) and the believers of today and the differences between them. In studying the sīrah, we have to look at the different events, and cite things in their proper context. This is very important because it is possible for someone to take an event from the sīrah and apply it to modern day times and use it as proof for something that it does not actually prove.

Some Deviant Groups Use Ahādith And Cite Them Out Of Context.

For example, some of the deviant modern day groups like Al-Qā'idah and Isis say that political assassinations are ḥalāl and are from the dīn. **They say that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) ordered for Ka'b Al-Ashraf (a Jew) to be executed therefore political assassinations are totally from Islām.** This is citing something out of context. Did this event take place in the sīrah? Yes. Does it prove what you are trying to prove, and is it applicable to our day and time? No! We must look at things in their proper historical context and not use anything for proof that it does not actually prove. This event that they have used does not prove that political assassinations are part of the dīn. Much less that those people are qualified to make any calls on political assassinations.

Let us look at when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was in Makkah. When the people who were harming him and the Muslims the most, did he ever command for his companions to carry out any assassinations? The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) could have gotten a gang of people to take out Abū Jahl but did he ever do this? No. So we have to look at the context in the bigger picture and that there is more to politics than just taking one incident and copying and pasting it and applying it to any situation.

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had no political authority in Makkah.

In Makkah there was no such thing as calling soldiers to go and fight war. There was no such thing as assassinating an enemy. This was not applicable because he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not have any political authority.

The Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn have no political authority and are rogues. With what right do they call for the assassination of anyone anywhere? They have no such authority. The Muslim Brotherhood say however, that political assassinations are permissible, so wherever and whenever we want to use this, we can, because we find an example for it in the sīrah, which is totally out of context.

The Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn Are A Secret Society.

Another pitfall that the Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn fall into is looking at the events in the Makkan period and how the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had secret meetings. So what is this organization of the Ikhwān based on? It is a whole secret society. They look at certain incidents that happened during the time of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and apply them out of context. Why is it that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had these secret meetings in Dār Al-Arkam? Because they were persecuted and were a religious minority. They were living amongst Non-Muslims and were persecuted because of their faith. You who are living in a Muslim country, you go and have secret meetings for what? Nobody is going to bother you for practising Islām. You are free to go to the masjid and pray in public. They take things out of context which are totally incorrect.

Taking From The Proper Sources When Studying The Sīrah.

When studying the sīrah we have to take from the proper sources. There are many contemporary books that try to cast doubt on some things that are known from the sīrah and some things that have authentic chains of narrations. The position that Ahl Al-Sunnah should take when it comes to events from the sīrah is that there are incidents from the sīrah, for example the miracles of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم),

1. the **splitting of the moon**,
2. the night of **Al-Isrā' wa Al-Mi' rāj**,
3. What happened when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had his **chest split open**,
4. the **water springing forth between the fingers** of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم),
5. the mountain of **Uḥud trembling** was upon it and then calming down,
6. the **trunk of the palm tree crying** and yearning for the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم),
7. the **she camel complaining** to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

Some Modern Day Writers Reject The Miracles Of The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

All of these were miracles that happened to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and there might be some modern day writers that totally throw these out the window and say, 'no we do not accept these miracles because science does not back them up and it is not logical.' What we have authentic narrations for, we do not need science or opinion or philosophies for. If Allāh (عز و جل) allowed for a miracle to happen, then it happened. End of story.

The same goes for what happened during a battle when **the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) threw pebbles and they struck the faces of all the enemies** and it gave the believers a heads up at the beginning of the battle.

The position that Ahl Al-Sunnah must take when it comes to the study of the sīrah is that we have the isnād (the chain of narration). If the isnād is ṣaḥīḥ, then we accept it without any other questions being asked.

As for the deviants, when it comes to the study of the sīrah, they belong to a few categories.

1. **The open enemies of Islām.** The likes of the **Orientalist**. They are Non-Muslim academics from the west that study everything that comes from the east, the

languages, cultures, religions and history of eastern people. They study both Muslims and Non Muslims. They are part of a three branch operation:

- **Gathering information on these cultures.** This means studying their language, history, societies, cultures, values, and morals.
- **Missionaries that come to preach Christianity.**
- **The military branch that go to conquer those lands.**

All three of these branches cooperate with one another (Orientalist academics, Christian missionaries, and military) and they all have the same goal which is to conquer other countries.

The Orientalist intentionally delved into the realm of the sīrah and wrote extensively about the history of Islām and the sīrah of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) **with the intention of distorting and causing doubt amongst the Muslims about their own history.** One of the biggest doubts that they have is that they say that revelation (waḥyī) is something that comes from within. They say that waḥyī is not something that comes from above the seven heavens from Allāh (عز و جل), rather it comes from within you. They say that it is a type of possession or having a seizure, and they totally disregard all of the miracles.

2. **Arab Christians and Arab Muslims that have the same agenda as the orientalists.** Along with the Orientalist, there are some who may be from the ranks of the Muslims and have the same agenda as the Orientalist. Whether they be Arab Christians, Arab Muslims, there are many intellectuals and writers that have jumped on the band wagon with these Orientalists and basically held the same agenda.

From those who have written about the sīrah is someone called **Jurji Zaydān**, a Lebanese Christian who settled in Egypt and was a well know Mason and wrote a book about Freemasonry. He wrote a book on the sīrah and agreed with the agenda of the Orientalists.

There is also Ṭaha Ḥussein who had some very flowery poetic words and was known to be a very eloquent individual and he rejected Islām.

3. **An intellectual school of thought.** This intellectual school of thought rejects authentic narrations including Bukhārī and Muslim. The only thing that they have to back up their belief system is their desires and intellect.

One thing that all three of these groups have in common is rejecting the aḥādīth, a little or a lot.

Some Books That Have Been Written About The Sīrah.

There are people that have written about the sīrah in the **style of ahl al-ḥadīth**. There are also authors that have written about the sīrah in the **style of a book of fiqh**, for example Ibn Al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) in his book Zād Al-Ma‘ād. Every incident Ibn Al-Qayyim wrote about, he derived a fiqh ruling ḥalāl and ḥarām.

There are also those that have written about the sīrah in a **historical fashion**, writing about the incidents as they happen from year to year. These authors include Al-Dhahabī (رحمه الله) and Ibn Kathīr (رحمه الله) in his book Al-Bidāyah Wa Al-Nihāyah.

There are compilations of the sīrah that talk about all the incidents from beginning to end and there are those compilations that mention only a portion or a specific incident from the sīrah. For example there are books that are only about

- The battle of **Badr**.
- **Dalā’il al-nubuwah** – evidences that prove the Prophethood of the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).
- The names of those that made **hijrah**.
- **Al-Sābiqūn Al-Awwalūn** (the first forerunners, the early shahādas). The first of the ṣaḥābah to accept Islām (رضى الله عنهم).
- The **birth of the prophet** (صلى الله عليه وسلم).
- The **Karamāt**, the miracles and out of the ordinary incidents that took place during the time period of the history of the sīrah.
- The rights of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) like Al-Shifā’ by Al-Qādī Iyād.

(المصطلحات)The Terminology That We Must Know About The Sīrah.

Sometimes the study of the sīrah is called maghāzī which means battles. The battles are part of what took place during the sīrah not all of it. We often find the entire sīrah being referred to as al-maghāzī – the battles.

The battles are of different types:

- Some that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) fought in,
- In some battles the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) dispatched a group of companions to go to a location and engage with a particular enemy.

These different battles are given different names in the books of sīrah.

Ghazwah – a battle that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) took part in.

Sariyah – a battle that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not take part in and he sent a group of ṣaḥābah.

Sometimes these names intertwine and the battles will be referred to with both names, or one name or the other.

For example the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sent an army that he had despatched and he himself did not go.

وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم