

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THE SEERAH



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SESSION 1

The Seerah

- There are two things that should always make us certain in Islam:
 - The Quran
 - The Seerah
- Ibn Hazam said that if Allah had not given this religion any miracle to prove that it is true, other than the seerah of the Prophet SAW, then it would be sufficient to know this religion is true.
- One of the ways to present the seerah is to do it topically by choosing one topic within the seerah and analyzing it.
- One of themes being focus on is how the Prophet SAW dealt with the battles and stress of life

Stress in Our Lives

- This world is a world meant to induce stress and grief
- This is the world of tests and trials and tests are stressful by their nature
- This world is the abode of stress and the next world is the abode of peace
- Everyone is being tested even though it might not seem like it apparently.
- Everybody's tests are different. Allah made everyone's tests unique to them.

- Allah tests you with something that He knows you are capable of passing. He does not test you with something that you cannot handle.
- If you are facing a test that is getting overwhelming, know with certainty that Allah would not put you in that test unless He knows that you have the skills to pass the test with flying colors.
- The fact that you are being tested is an indication that whatever test you are in, you are qualified to pass it. It is up to you whether to pass it or not.
- Some other religions believe that if God loves you, then you will live a comfortable and luxurious life. In Islam, it is the contrary. When Allah loves someone, He tests them and the more Allah loves them, the more they are tested.
 - The Prophet SAW said, "The ones who are tested the most are the prophets and then the ones closest to them, and then the ones closest to them."
- The attitude of the believer when they are being tested is very different from the attitude of the one who does not have iman. The believer knows that Allah is testing them to raise their ranks.
- A test is an opportunity to earn that high level because you may have not earned it through your deeds alone, so Allah is giving you that chance.
- If you ever think your tests are difficult, go back to the first test in this world, given to Adam and his wife Hawaa. They were in Jannah and all of a sudden, they found themselves on earth. They had no idea how to do anything. So, if anybody has been tested, it was them and they lived through the test.
- Take consolation in the fact that people better than you have been tested with more difficult tests than you.
- The fact that you are being tested is not a sign that you are being punished. It could become a punishment based on the way you react to it.

- If you react in a way that draws you close to Allah, then know that the test is a blessing in disguise for you.
- If you react by turning away from Allah, then it is a sign that you are failing the test.
- The passing of the test does not mean that the test is removed from your life. It is that you cope with the test in a manner that is pleasing to Allah. If Allah removes the test, then that is something to be grateful for.
- There are many verses in the Quran that criticize Quraysh for turning to Allah only at times of stress and difficulty. Shaytan might use this as a trick against you and make you think it is wrong to suddenly start becoming religious just because you are going through a difficulty. This is a plot of Shaytan. He makes you think that you are being a hypocrite by remembering Allah only in difficult times.
 - If a test acts as a catalyst to make you come closer to Allah, then it is a blessing for you.
 - Allah criticizes Quraysh for the way they neglected Him after He removed their problem. The criticism is not in becoming religious because of the stress. It is in forgetting that Allah blessed you and turning your back after Allah answered your dua.
 - It is good that the faith that you have causes you to turn to Allah because it shows that your faith is real. When you are in trouble, you are going to turn to the one who can protect you.
 - It is healthy to turn to Allah because of difficulty and it is wrong to forget Allah after your problem goes away.
 - Even if you do forget Allah, then, the next time you are tested, make it a point to never do it again. That struggle to be perfect is what brings us the closest to perfection.

- We do not want to be tested. We ask Allah to protect us from being tested. We do not ask for tests. But, if it happens, then we have to be prepared to accept it.
- The Prophet SAW taught his uncle Abbas RA a dua: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ
 - الْعَافِيَةَ is the absence of tests
- Never complain that your life is boring. If there is a level of stagnancy, then it means that you are not dealing with a stressful situation.
- The Prophet SAW said, "Do not desire to meet the enemy."
 - Do not desire to be in a difficult situation, but if you find yourself facing a battle, then stay firm and pass the test.
- We are being tested for the opposite things. For those that have wealth, their test is in their wealth. For those that are in poverty, their test is in their poverty. For those that have kids, their test is in their kids. For those that do not have kids, their test is in their lack of kids.
 - Everyone is being tested by having something or by the absence of that thing.
- The dhikr that the people of Jannah will say when they enter is: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ
 - This will help you deal with the stress of life
 - When you step foot in Jannah, that is the only time that you will be stress-free
- No one should think that in this world, you will live a stress-free life.

How the Prophet SAW Dealt with Difficulty

- The Prophet SAW endured so much difficulty in his lifetime.
 - He was born an orphan and inherited no money
 - His mother passed away when he was 6
 - His grandfather passed away when he was 8

- He was raised in extreme poverty
- He had a job that was the lowest on the socioeconomic ladder. He worked as a shepherd when he was 15 and would get paid pennies for working long hours.
- He was physically threatened multiple times
 - Abu Jahl almost choked him to death in front of the Ka'bah
- He was spat on
- Dead animals were thrown on him while he was in sajdah
- He was wounded 3 different times in the Battle of Uhud
- He buried 6 of his 7 children in his lifetime with his own hands
- If being safe from tests was a sign that Allah is pleased with you, then the Prophet SAW would have lived a luxurious life. But, when Allah loves someone, He tests them.
 - Don't ask for tests, but when they come, appreciate that you are being given an opportunity. Your frame of mind has to be different.
- The one thing that causes you to rise in ranks without any proportionality is patience.
 - Every good deed that you do, you will get the reward of it back in a ratio, from 10 up to 700. If you give one dollar in charity, you will get back at least 10 rewards from Allah.
 - Patience is the only thing that does not have a ratio.
 - Those that are patient will be given their rewards with no counting. Allah will give you rewards and He will not be counting them.
 - Going through the difficulty gives you the opportunity to go far higher than your deeds would actually get you otherwise. This should be our attitude when faced with trials.
- Feeling anxious and stressed is not a sign of lack of iman
 - Some people say if you had iman, then you would not have any stress. But, that is wrong.

- The seerah teaches us that the Prophet SAW had anxiety and stress.
 - Allah consoles the Prophet SAW for that anxiety. Allah says in the Quran:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

We are aware that your heart is strained by what they say.
 - Allah is validating the pain of the Prophet SAW.
 - This is a part of therapy
 - Do not be dismissive of someone's pain. First, validate it and then work on it.
 - When you dismiss their pain, you make them feel worse.
 - In that affirmation, you feel a sense of relief knowing that you are not crazy for feeling this way and that there is a reason you are feeling like this.
 - Aisha RA asked the Prophet SAW what the most difficult day of his life was. She thought that it would be the day of Uhud. But, the Prophet SAW said the day of Taif was more difficult than the day of Uhud.
 - On the Day of Taif, the Prophet SAW was publicly ridiculed in front of an entire city.
 - Sometimes, words are more painful than physical pain.
 - To be mocked was a more painful thing for the Prophet SAW than the physical pain he endured in Uhud.
 - Words pierce deeper than swords, so be careful with your words.
 - The Prophet SAW cried sometimes too.
 - Most of the crying he did was alone in front of Allah in Salatul Tahajjud crying for his ummah.
 - We know this because his wives would narrate it
 - He cried out of fear and love for his ummah

- The other times that he cried were due to the death of a loved one.
 - He never cried because of physical pain or what the people said. It is not wrong for a person to cry because of these things and it is not a sign of a lack of iman, but the Prophet SAW is at a different level than us.
 - When his son Ibrahim passed away at the tender age of two, the Prophet SAW cried. The sahaba saw him and asked, "You also cry?" This indicates that they rarely saw him cry. The Prophet SAW said, "Yes, crying is a mercy that Allah places in the hearts of His servants."
 - No one should make you feel guilty for crying
 - Crying can be therapeutic
 - There was only one scenario in which the Prophet SAW was seen sobbing. That was when he visited his mother's grave. He cried until his beard was soaked and he began to sob.
 - To feel anxiety and grief and to cry is prophetic. There is nothing wrong with those feelings.
- Sometimes, what happens is so overwhelming that you might go into a minor shock and you do not know how to react. We see this reaction in the seerah multiple times.
 - In the Battle of Mu'tah, the Muslims fought the Byzantine empire. Major tragedies happened during that battle, one after the other. Three of the sahaba closest to the Prophet SAW passed away during the battle and Allah allowed the Prophet SAW to see the battle live as it was happening. The Prophet SAW saw Abdullah ibn Rawaha get killed, then Jafar, his cousin, and then Zayd ibn Harithah.

- Zayd ibn Harithah is the only companion mentioned by name in the Quran.
 - After the Prophet SAW passed away, Aisha RA said that if Zayd was alive, nobody would have chosen Abu Bakr RA over him.
 - Zayd was like a son to the Prophet SAW and for a while, he was referred to as the son of the Prophet SAW.
 - Ibn Abbas, the Prophet's SAW cousin, said he always thought that Zayd was the Prophet's SAW real son.
- When the Prophet SAW saw Zayd die, his face became pale, tears came down, and he sat down in grief not knowing what to do.
 - Do not feel guilty for being a human and having reactions like these.
- When you are going through tragedy, you do not say or do something that goes against servitude to Allah. The first thing you should do as soon as possible is connect your soul to Allah by saying some type of dhikr.
 - Allah says in the Surah al-Baqarah:

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Those who, when a calamity afflicts them, say, "To God we belong, and to Him we will return."
 - Saying this situates everything that is happening to you. You understand that Allah is in charge, not you.
 - Connect with Allah and remind yourself who you are versus who Allah is
 - The faster we connect, the stronger our iman is and the more we delay, the weaker our iman is.
 - The Prophet SAW said, "Patience is demonstrated at the first stroke of a calamity."
 - How you react when you first hear the news is what demonstrates your iman.

- Allah created human beings so that eventually, they are able to deal with and recover from any tragedy. But, it is in the first moments when having iman will help you cope more.
- We also learn from the seerah to demonstrate **صَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ** in the face of tragedy, not just minimal patience.
 - The minimal level of patience is to not say something that is unIslamic.
 - If you are able to do this, then you are not being sinful. But, there are levels that are higher than just not being sinful.
 - The highest level of patience is attained by not becoming an object of pity for the creation and you do not intentionally aim to obtain the pity of the creation and you only try to obtain the pity of the one whose mercy actually benefits you, which is Allah.
 - We complain to Allah, not to the creation.
 - Minimize complaining to the people and try to present yourself in a dignified manner.
 - This is the highest level and it is something that we should strive for, but it is ok if we are not at this level.
 - The Prophet SAW never complained to other people about how Quraysh treated him.
- Try your best to regain as normal of a lifestyle as possible after a tragedy. Do not allow the calamity to stop you from your life. Force yourself to move on and get back into your regular schedule.
 - In the Shari'ah, a person is not allowed to mourn the dead for more than 3 days. After 3 days, you have to try to move on and not let the tragedy affect your entire future life.
 - The grief might not ever leave, and that it ok. But, you cannot let the grief stop you from continuing to live your life.

- When Khadijah RA passed away, the Prophet SAW was not seen smiling for an entire year. Five years later, Anas ibn Malik said that he never saw anyone smile more than the Prophet SAW.
 - The pain and grief was there, but he still moved on.
- When Jafar passed away, his wife Asma could not cope with his loss. She began wailing because she was used to the custom, although it was not allowed in Islam. The Prophet SAW attempted to stop the wailing via the servants, but they did not succeed. So, on the 3rd day, the Prophet SAW visited the house of Asma and said that from now on, there will be no more wailing for Jafar. He called the children of Jafar and called for a barber to cut their hair. He also gave them new clothes and food.
 - Our religion teaches us that we do not dwell in the past.
- When Safiyya bint Huyayy's brother passed away, she wore a new dress and put on perfume. She said to her servant, "I have no desire to dress up, but I am only doing this because the Prophet SAW said it is not allowed to mourn past 3 days and today is the end of the 3rd day."
 - She was doing it psychologically for herself
- You do not allow a past tragedy to dictate your future happiness. You cannot dwell because of a past tragedy.
- One of the things a tragedy should do is increase your connection to Allah, especially through the medium of salah and dua.
 - These are the most therapeutic rituals to relieve the stress in your heart.
 - Allah says in the Quran, "Seek the help of Allah through patience and prayer."
 - Aisha RA said that whenever the Prophet SAW was feeling anxious, he would rush to stand up in salah.

- Tahajjud prayer is a salah that will allow you to cope with much of the problems that you are dealing with.
- In the last 3rd of the night, Allah asks the people, "Who is wanting something so I can give them what they want? And who is asking for something so I can reply to them?"
- Whoever truly desires something but is not praying Tahajjud for it, does not truly desire it.
- Make dua in the sajdah in your native language
- When a communal tragedy took place, the Prophet SAW prayed Tahajjud and asked a servant to wake up his wives and ask them to pray Tahajjud as well.
- The secret of attaining patience is desiring patience. If you want it, you will get it.
 - The Prophet SAW said, "Whoever desires patience, Allah will make him patient."
 - Allah promised us patience by simply wanting it in our hearts.