

Muhammad ﷺ
Perfect Model for Mankind

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SPIRITUAL LIGHT
PUBLICATIONS

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده و نصلي على رسوله الكريم

INTRODUCTION

Allaah Ta'ala states,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

There is definitely an excellent example in Allaah's messenger for the one who fears Allaah and the Last Day, and remembers Allaah abundantly. (Ahzaab verse 21)

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is undoubtedly the perfect model for humanity. This book is a summary of a series of lectures delivered by Allamah Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi (rahimahullaah) in Madras in October and November 1925. There are a few English translations of the book. Many years ago, I read the translation by Mohiuddin Ahmad and I was very taken aback by the book. I therefore made a summary of the book and I present it to my Muslim brothers and sisters for us to appreciate our Nabi and to have conviction that he is the ideal example and model for us to imitate. I did not complete it till this Jumuah morning, the 28th Rabiul-Awwal 1448. May Allaah Ta'ala forgive my shortcomings, accept this work, and make it a means of our salvation in the Hereafter.

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28 Rabiul-Awwal 1448

WHY IS RASULULLAAH (SALLALLAAHU ALAYHI WA SALLAM) THE PERFECT MODEL FOR HUMANITY?

All the different segment of humanity which have done anything to make this world a better place to live in deserve our gratitude, but the most deserving are those whom we call the Messengers of Allaah. Each one of them has, in his own era, presented an endearing example of sublime conduct and moral behaviour. If one was a model of endurance, others were emblems of selflessness, sacrifice, fervour for the truth and Oneness of Allaah, submission to the will of Allaah, chastity and piety. In short, each of them was a lighthouse of guidance showing the exalted behaviour in one or the other walk of life every man has to tread in his journey on the earth.

Man, however stood in need of another guide who would illuminate the entire scope of human behaviour, in all its diversity, by his comprehensive example of goodness and virtue. In other words, man needed a perfect and universal exemplar who could place in his hands a guide-book, so that every traveller may reach his destination safely. This model did come to the world in the personality of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). Allaah Ta'ala announced this truth in the following words,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

O Nabi! We have sent you as a witness, a bringer of good tidings a warner, a caller unto Allaah by His permission and as a lamp which gives light. (Ahzaab verse 45/46)

Every Nabi of Allaah came to this world as a witness, a bringer of glad tidings, a warner, or as a caller, but never in the past there came a Nabi who combined all the qualities. There were witnesses to Allaah's majesty and grandeur like Yaqoob, Ishaaq and Ismail (alayhimus-salaam). Others like Ibrahim and Isa (alayhimus-salaam) were the giver of glad tidings. There were also warners like Nooh, Moosa, Hood and Shuayb (alayhimus-salaam), who explained that terrible punishment was awaiting the evil

doers. Then, there were Ambiya like Yunus and Yaqoob (alayhimus-salaam) whose teachings set the tone for callers to divine guidance. But the Messenger par excellence who possessed all these marks of nubuwwah (messengership) – a witness as well as a giver of glad tidings, a warner as well as a caller –and who was a distinguished Apostle in every respect was none other than Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). He was sent to the world as the last Messenger, after whom no other messenger was to be sent by Allaah Ta'ala. This is the reason why he was granted a shariah (divine code of law) that was perfect and final, requiring no revision in the days to come.

As his teachings were to remain forever till the end of time, he was sent as the pinnacle of perfection with ever-blooming guidance and resplendent light. This is an undisputable fact attested by the pages of history.

A character held out as an ideal or model for humanity needs must fulfil certain criteria before such a claim can be universally accepted. Here four criteria will be mentioned:

1.) Authenticity
2.) Perfection
3.) Comprehensiveness
4.) Practicality

1.) **Authenticity**: This means that the genuineness of the accounts of life and character of any man put forth as a model should not proceed from any fable or legendary tale, but from reputed sources and methodical records of what we call as history. Man is never deeply impressed by any happening, event or biography, which he knows to be fictitious. For a lasting impression of any character, one needs the assurance that every detail of the life, saying and doing of such a personality is perfectly genuine and verifiable. Historical narratives have, for that very reason, a greater appeal than that of fiction. Another reason is that no bed-time fable can be utilized to be a model for emulation. No one is expected to

follow a mythical or imaginary character. Therefore the emblem of virtuous human conduct should be perfectly authentic in accordance with the criteria set for acceptance of any event as historical.

We hold all the Ambiya in reverence, and regard every one of them as a truthful messenger of divine guidance. However, as Allaah Ta'ala Himself states that some have been granted excellence and virtue over others. The highest virtue and status was granted to Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam); and he was sent as a standard of virtue and goodness for the guidance of mankind. His teachings were to last till Qiyaamah. Other messengers were undoubtedly sent as model teachers and guides; but for a particular age and people. Whatever they taught eventually and gradually vanished from the memory of humanity.

Hundreds of thousands of messengers were sent to all nations and countries. The names of only a few are known:

a.) The Hindus claim their civilization is the oldest in the world. Their scriptures mention innumerable sages, but there is none to be put forth as a historical personality. Some knowledge of these personalities is described in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, but a majority of experts do not regard them as historical and deny that many of the mythological personalities described in these books ever lived.

b.) Zoroaster, the founder of then Iranian faith named after him, is still revered by a large number of people, but his historical personality is hidden behind the mist of obscurity. Several orientalists of Europe and America have doubts if a man with this name ever lived. Even those who accept his historical existence, have succeeded in giving, through guess work, paltry details about his life. These accounts are so contradictory that no reasonable standard of practical life can be based on them. Where and when he was born, what was his nationality, language and family, what was the religion he preached, is the scripture attributed to him genuine, when and where he died – each of these questions have produced a hundred contradictory answers since no authentic records

about him are available. This shows that his teachings were never meant to be everlasting.

c.) Another religion of ancient Asia was Buddhism which was once the dominant faith of the people of India, China, and the whole of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Turkistan; and is still a living faith in Burma, Indo-China, China, Japan and Tibet. However, the life of Buddha as well as well as his works are not historically preserved.

d.) Even more scant details about the life of Confucius is known, although the number of its adherents are reported to be more than ten million.

e.) Semites have hundreds of messengers; nevertheless; history knows hardly anything about most of them except their names. Only a few incidents about the lives of Nooh, Ibrahim, Saalih, Ismail, Ishaaq, Yaqoob, Zakariya, and Yahya (alayhimus-salaam) are known to people. All the important links transmitting the details of their lives and doings are missing from the chain of history. These incomplete, disjointed accounts of their lives cannot serve as beacons of guidance to humanity today. Barring the description of their morals and conduct given in the Qur'aan, all which is told about them in the Jewish scriptures is held to be spurious by many competent scholars.

g.) The Torah is the chief source of information about Moosa (alayhis salaam), but if experts are to be believed, the Scripture in existence today was written hundreds of years after the death of Moosa (alayhis salaam). If these criticisms of the scholars are deemed to be correct, as they are generally accepted, what historical validity can be claimed for the records of other events prior to Moosa (alayhis salaam).

h.) The Bible records the life of Isaa (alayhis salaam). The Christian world only accepts four of them and reject others, like the Gospels of Thomas and Barnabus, as fictional. However, none of the writers of these four 'authentic' Gospels ever saw Isaa (alayhis salaam). Nothing is known about the sources on which these Gospels are based. Doubts have been

raised whether the Gospels bearing the names of their authors were actually written by them. Even the time and language of the original Gospels are uncertain. Biblical scholars hold the view that the four Gospels were compiled from various sources from about 60 A.D onwards. In regard to these dubious elements as well as the stories of the birth and 'death' of Isaa (alayhis salaam) as well as the concept of Trinity, certain critics have expressed this view that the story of Isaa (alayhis salaam) is purely fictitious, adopted from Greek and Roman myths containing similar stories of birth, death and resurrection of some pagan gods.

For any human to be a guide for man, it is essential to have the entire life of that model before us. No incident, no part of his life should remain in the dark. Like an open book, it should be known inside out so that humanity may be able to make out how far that life can serve as an ideal guide and teacher.

Viewed from this angle, none of the preachers and founders of the religions would stand the test of authenticity except the Messenger of Islam. The uniqueness of Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) in this regard furnishes yet another proof to the fact that he alone was sent down to this world as the seal of messengers.

The way Islam has preserved not only the biography of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), but everything even remotely connected with him is a miracle of Islam. The people who had handed down, collected and codified the sayings and actions of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) are known as narrators – from the Sahaabah to people living in the fourth century of Islam. The biographies of these people were also put in writing, which equals about a hundred thousand biographies. There is no nation in the past or at present who has done such a mind-boggling achievement.

These narrations were taught by the Sahaabah to the next generation who then passed it onto the next, with great reverence, hope in the great

rewards promised for conveying the noble words together with fear in attributing any statement to Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) which he did not say. These narrations were passed on orally and in writing. No other historical material of past events found today is so methodical, continuous and reliable as the Hadeeth literature.

Almost every nation normally recorded their oral traditions after the passing of centuries. They jotted down whatever they could find or heard without caring to know the sources of these stories. Thereafter probable events were selected by historians through the process of elimination of unbelievable reports, and this is how the history of every nation has been written. The ancient accounts of the Europeans are no exception.

The criterion set by the Muslims was much more severe however. Its first principle was that the initial narrator of any event should be an eye-witness to the happening related by him. similarly, if there was a chain of narrators who had transmitted the information from one person to another, the details of each one had to be known. The scholars had to be satisfied about the moral conduct, intelligence and reliability of each intervening narrator. It was a huge task to find out all these details of about a hundred thousand people who formed the chain in the transmission of Ahaadeeth, but the scholars devoted themselves to this task. They wandered from city to city, met people acquainted with the narrator of even one hadeeth, and gathered all the necessary information about the transmitting links of the Hadeeth. The science called Asmaur-Rijaal thus came into existence. Then rules were laid down for internal criticisms and evaluation of the Hadeeth by the narrators. These were meant to evaluate rationally the content of every narration. However, the scholars gave foremost priority to the reliability of the narrators, and were extremely honest in giving their verdicts about them, that at times they had to undergo hardship in speaking the truth against the rulers of their times or even close family members, like their fathers, but they did

not waver from the truth. There is no example of such genuineness and accuracy in the history of other nations.

The sources of the biography of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam): The most important, the most authentic and the noblest part of the biography is the part based on the noble Qur'aan. This part of his biography includes all the main features of his life: his life before he was ordained as a messenger, his being an orphan and poor, his messengership, the Divine revelation, his declaration of his mission and preaching, his ascension to the heavens, the enmity of the non-believers, his migration to Madinah Munawwarah, his battles, his character, in short, every significant event of his life has been referred to in the Qur'aan. This has made his biography the most authentic life history that exists in the history of mankind. It simply has no parallel.

The second source of his biography is the Ahaadeeth (sayings and actions of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), which come close to a hundred thousand. They have been sorted out and classified (depending on their chain of narration) as absolutely authentic; slightly less so; and the ones that are not the genuine sayings of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). Certain books in which only the most authentic narrations are placed are called Saheeh. The most famous of these books are Saheeh Bukhaari and Saheeh Muslim. Then there are collections called Masaaneed. The best known of these collections is the Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hambal in which there are over thirty thousand narrations.

The third source is known as Maghaazi. They are books that mostly give an account of the wars and battles in which Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) took part himself. Some of the well-known Maghaazi include that of Urwah ibn Zubair (passed away in 94 A.H.), Imam Zuhri's Maghaazi (124 A.H.), Maghaazi of Moosa ibn Uqbah (141 A.H.), Maghaazi of Ibn Ishaq (150 A.H.), Maghaazi of Ziyaad al Bakai (182 A.H.) and Waqidi (207

A.H.). These are some of the oldest sources of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s biography.

The fourth source is the books of Islamic history whose early sections deal with the events of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life. Among these books, the most reliable ones with accuracy of detail are Tabaqaat of Ibn Sa'd (230 A.H.), Taareekh-ar-Rasul-wa al-Mulook by At-Tabari, At-Taareekh-al-Kabeer and At-Taareekh-As-Sagheer of Imam Bukhaari, and works of Ibn Hibbaan and Ibn Abi Khuzaimah.

The fifth source is a collection of books which deal with the miracles of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). They include works like Dalaail-An-Nubuwwah by Ibn Qutaibah (255 A.H.), Dalaail Imam Baihaqi (430 A.H.), Dalaail Abul Qaasim Ismail Asbahaani (535 A.H.), Dalaail Mustaghfiri (432 A.H.). but the most comprehensive book on this subject remains Khasaais-Al-Kubra by Allamah Suyuti.

Then there are books on Shamaail. They are concerned with the morals, manners and details of the dignified daily routine of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). The first and best known of these is Ash-Shamaail of Imam Tirmidhi who passed away in 279 A.H. Another famous book on this subject is Shifaa fi Huquq- al-Mustapha by Qaadhi Iyaadh.

The earliest Muslim biographers did not remain content with the oral or written evidence mentioned so far. In order to protect and preserve this immense amount of information for future generations, they established special institutions. These were dedicated for the teaching and training of specialists.

Since the blessed time of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) till this day, thousands upon thousands of books have been written about his life and teachings in different languages, in different countries, at different times. Even in the English language, hundreds of books have been written on different aspects of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

Leave aside Muslims, even his opponents have written books about Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). In India, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Brahmo Samajis have written biographies of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). In Europe, many books had been prepared by missionaries, either to serve their interests or to satisfy their taste for knowledge or world history. Before 1920, over 1300 books had been published in various European languages about his biography. Today, when Islam has spread to a great extent in Europe, there are tens of thousands of books on this subject.

Can such care, such accuracy and soundness of sources ever be matched by the life history of any other messenger or founder of a religion? This historicity was to be the lot of none other than Muhammad, the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

2.) **Completeness**: For a life history to become an ideal, it is essential that every aspect of such a person's life should be in the open. No event should be left to secrecy. If the life histories of the great men of the past, including the founders of the great religions of the world, no one comes near this standard except the last Messenger of Allaah. From all the great reformers and messengers, only a few can be regarded 'historic' in the sense that the details of their life history can be verified through authentic historical sources. However important, comprehensive details of their life are not available nowadays. It is only the life of Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) which is completely known today, to the minutest detail. This fact makes it clear that he was the last Messenger of Allaah, who would remain a guide till the end of time.

Look at the following famous men in history and study how much of their lives are known, leaving aside the facts being authentic or historically proven.

a.) Very little is known of Buddha, who still has millions of followers worldwide. Only basic facts about his life are known. He was the son of a

Raja. When he grew up, he noticed the plight of some people in different conditions. Their suffering left a deep impression on him. He left his home forever, and while meditating, is said to have found the truth. He preached his new-found truth for a period of time and then passed away. This is generally all that is known about him.

b.) Zoroaster is the founder of a religion. Very little is known of his life.

c.) Moosa (alayhis salaam) lived to approximately 120 years. Apart from his birth, migration, marriage, being ordained as a messenger, inviting Firawn to the oneness of Allaah Ta'ala, defeating the forces of falsehood, and eventually migrating with his people, no other essential details of his biography is known to us. Some personal details are mentioned, but no biography is mentioned with essential details to be followed as a role model of great moral conduct.

d.) Isaa (alayhis salaam) is the second-last messenger of Allaah. His followers are regarded to be greater in number than any other religion in the world. Most amazing is that biographically he is the least known of all the Messengers and founders of great religions. Rev. Dr. Charles Anderson Scot says that an attempt to write a 'life of Jesus' should be abandoned as no material for it exists. He has calculated that the total number of days of his life regarding which we have any record does not exceed fifty.

According to the Bible, Isaa (alayhis salaam) had a life of 33 years. Leaving aside the unreliability of the Bible, only events of the last three years of his life are mentioned. All we know of him is that he was born miraculously and then taken to Egypt. At the age of 30, he baptizes people and advises them. A few people follow him, and he then enters into debate with some Jews. The Jews capture him, produce him in the court of the Roman governor, and a sentence of crucifixion is passed on him. According to the Bible story, he is then crucified, and on the third day, his grave is found empty. No other finer details of his life are known.

On the other hand, we find that every significant moment of the life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) from his birth to death was known to the people of his time, and since then has been preserved in the history of the world.

His birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, manhood; his business deals, his travels, his marriage; his friends before Nubuwwah, his participation in the fight of the Quraish and the subsequent peace treaty; the title of 'Trustworthy' given to him by his people; his amicable solution to the problem of fixing the sacred stone in the Ka'bah and thus avoiding bloodshed amongst the Quraish; his gradual withdrawal from the then corrupt society of Makkah and his retreat to Mount Hira outside the city; his contemplation and the first revelation of the word of Allaah; his call to Allaah; his preaching of the Divine Message; the opposition of the elite of Makkah Mukarramah; his journey to Taif; the Mi'raaj; his migration to Madinah Munawwarah; his battles against the non-believers; the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah; his letters to the various rulers of the world calling them to embrace Islam; his acts of worship before Allaah; the spread of Islam; the completion and perfection of the Divine Message; the final Hajj and his death; in short every one of these events is before the whole world, clear and complete to the smallest detail. There is not a single aspect of his life hidden from history. Even the false and fabricated stories about him have been preserved and passed down history so that everybody could see the truth from falsehood, the right from the wrong, and then form their own independent opinion. Perhaps Allaah Ta'ala had decreed it such so that none of Rasulullah's opposers could say that his followers had tried to cover up the alleged weakness of their Messenger by omitting certain traditions. Therefore all the narrations were collected and presented, together with rules to tell the difference between the true and the false.

Every detail of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life, as clear as daylight, is known, written and preserved in books. Even the everyday

routine is recorded, such as his manner of sitting and standing, sleeping and waking up; his marriage and children; his friends and companions; his salaah and fasting; his worship during the day and night; his wars and peace; his travels; his manner of washing, bathing, eating, drinking, smiling, weeping, walking, talking; his jokes; his privacy, his public appearances, his manner of meeting others; his habits; his personal appearance; and even the intimate relations between a husband and wife.

See what detail the scholars wrote regarding the various facets of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life. As an example, the subtitles of one chapter from Ash-Shamaail at-Tirmidhi will be mentioned here:

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s personal appearance; his hair; his comb; the number of grey hairs; his hair-dye; his use of an eye cleansing substance; his clothes; his daily life; his socks; his shoes; his ring; his sword; his armour; his helmet; his head-dress; his trousers; his manner of walking; how he shielded his face with a piece of cloth; his manner of sitting; his bed and pillow; how he leaned back on his pillow; his food; his bread; the meat and soup that he ate; the manner of washing for prayers; the prayers he said before and after eating something; the bowl he used; the kinds of fruit he ate; what he drank; how he drank; his use of perfume; his manner of talking; the way he recited poetry; his way of telling stories at bedtime; his manner of sleeping; his manner of worship; the way he smiled; his sense of humour; his prayers in the early morning; his performance of optional prayers at home; his fasting; his recitation of the Qur'aan; his weeping and crying; his bed; his modesty; his kind manners; his hair-cut; his names; his life style; his age; his death; what he left behind after death.

All of these subtitles are concerned with his personal life; and under each one several traditions have been collected to create a very clear, detailed and bright image of his personality. Not a single minute detail of his life

was hidden. At home he was surrounded by his family and children, and outside he used to be among his followers and friends.

It was actually Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s instruction to everyone, and at all times, to make everything be known about him whether it concerned his private life or public life. There were instructions to note everything about him and let others know, whether it concerned his presence in the masjid or battle-field, praying to Allaah Ta'ala alone at night or leading an army in battle, delivering a sermon or quietly meditating. His wives have told the world about his private life and his behaviour as a husband. In Masjid-An-Nabawi, a place had been reserved for those of his followers who were homeless. For their livelihood, they used to cut firewood during the day turn by turn, so that they could spend the rest of their time in the company of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), learning the Divine Message from him. Their time was spent in observing Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s activities and listening to his teachings. The number of these companions varied. At times, there were about seventy of them. One of the most famous amongst them was Abu Hurairah (radiyallaahu anhu). These companions used to watch Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) with great enthusiasm and then passed on to others whatever they learnt from him and about him. Besides this, there were those who witnessed his actions in the masjid 5 times a day, during the battles he participated in, and during the farewell Hajj. They watched his every movement and conveyed this knowledge to others, not only because permission was given, but because it was his order.

Look at Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life from another angle. He did not spend all his time amongst his followers and well-wishers. In Makkah Mukarramah, he lived amongst the Quraish, his avowed enemies. Because he was commissioned as a Messenger, he had spent forty years of his life with them. Due to his integrity, fairness and honesty in every deal that he made as a businessman earned him the title

of Al-Ameen (the trustworthy) and As-Saadiq (the truthful.) Even when they bitterly opposed him as the Messenger of Allaah, they continued keeping their valuables in his trust. That is why at the time of migration, Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) stayed back to return the valuables to the people. When he declared his messengership, the Quraish became his bitter enemies, and in their rage, cut off all relations with him. They persecuted him, threw refuse and stones on him, plotted to kill him, called him names, called him a sorcerer, a poet and a lunatic, but none of them could ever lay a finger on his spotless character and pure morals. To lay claim to messengership means to lay claim to total purity of character and infallibility in conveying the Divine Message. In order to discredit him, all the Quraish needed to do was to find a few faults in his character and collect some evidence to prove their point. But history has shown us that in their opposition to his mission and to falsify his claim to Messengership, the Quraish spent their wealth lavishly, lost their sons in wars against him and sacrificed their own lives too, but could not find any blemish in his immaculate character. Does this not prove that he was as pious and noble even in the sight of his enemies as he was to his friends?

Even his arch enemies like Abu Sufyaan (who later accepted Islam), Nadr ibn Haarith and Abu Jahl were forced to testify to his truthfulness.

No one in the world likes to flaunt even the smallest of mistakes, particularly when he happens to be the moral and spiritual leader of a nation. But there are several places in the Noble Qur'aan wherein Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is admonished by Allaah Ta'ala for his apparent errors of judgement. However he conveyed each one of such verses to the people who memorized them (like the rest of the Noble Qur'aan). These verses were, and are, recited in every masjid; and even today wherever there are followers of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), they are being recited. The world would have never known about these negligible mistakes of judgement, had they not been

mentioned in the Qur'aan. But a noble life was to be presented as a whole and so it was done.

The marriage of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) to Zaynab (radiyallaahu anha), the divorced wife of his adopted son, was an act detestable to the Arabs. Yet the incident has been described at length in the Qur'aan. Ayeshah (radiyallaahu anha) said that if Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had the option to conceal any verse of the Qur'aan, he would have not disclosed these verses to avoid criticism. The very fact that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) recited and taught these verses testifies that nothing about his character and life remains in the dark.

More amazingly, Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) first presented himself as a messenger to those who knew him intimately well as an ordinary human being. He first claimed to be a Nabi to his wife, his personal servant, his cousin and his closest friend; and none showed any hesitation at all in accepting the truth of his claim. No one knows the inherent weaknesses of a person better than his own wife. It is a fact that the first person to believe and declare her faith in him was his wife, who had shared fifteen years of married life with him before his Call. She knew intimately all sides of his personality. She was prepared to share his ordeal when he was ostracised for three years in the Valley of Abu Taalib, often going without food and water. His slave Zaid (radiyallaahu anhu) refused to go with his own father even when Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had set him free. Zaid had been abducted and sold in Makkah; and his father had found him there are a long and painful search. He gladly allowed his son to remain in Makkah with Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), saying that he was in much better hands. His cousin Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) took his place in his bed the night when his bloodthirsty enemies had surrounded his house intending to murder him. His closest friend, Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) was his only

companion on his journey to Madinah Munawwarah, whilst his enemies searched high and low for him.

These supreme examples of selfless love, dedication and sacrifice are of those people who knew Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) well. Had he not been the perfect example in their sight, they would have not sacrificed their lives for him. Islamic faith requires its followers to hold their messenger as a perfect model and a guide, following whose example they can attain the love of Allaah Ta'ala. Since his life is the supreme model for a Muslim, all its aspects should be clearly known to everyone, and so they are. No event of his life is shrouded in mystery. No link is missing. Everything is as clear as a mirror, preserved for ever in the books of history.

The world has produced great civilizations such as that of Babylon, Assyria, India, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Great ethical systems were evolved. Rules for a polite and civilized behaviour were set. Etiquettes and standards were established for all kinds of human activities such as sitting, standing, eating and drinking, clothing, visiting people, sleeping, marriages, funerals, meeting, inviting, saluting, greeting, bathing and cleansing, offering congratulations, offering condolences and conducting burials, etc. it took centuries to establish these ancient civilizations, yet they could not stand the challenge of time. Centuries old rules crumbled in no time. All these great civilizations are now found only in history books. On the other hand, the Islamic civilization was evolved and established in just a few years. After a passage of 1400 years, it remains, constant and unchanged, present in hundreds of nations spread all over the world. The basic reason is that it originates from one source – the life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). This faultless and noble way of life was reflected in the lives of his worthy companions and then in those of their dedicated disciples, and thus it became the established way of life of the world of Islam. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life was the centre around which revolved the lives of his companions.

The later generations have expanded the circle. Although the present-day Muslims are at quite a distance from the centre of that circle, they are tracing the same path. The way of life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) became the way of life of his immediate followers and then that of the entire Muslim world throughout the ages. Today that picture is with us in its entirety, intact and complete. In today's Africa or India, if a tribe is converted to Christianity, it gets its religion from the Bible, but is taught the ways and culture of Europe. But when a wild tribe of remote Africa reverts to Islam, it gets its faith and a complete way of life from the same single source. When a person enters Islam, the complete picture of the life of the Messenger of Islam comes before him, guiding him through various human conditions and needs. This living picture becomes a reflection of the whole life of a Muslim.

Once some polytheists sarcastically remarked to a Sahaabi, "Your Nabi teaches you everything, even how to relieve yourself." He replied (with happiness and dignity), "Yes, he commanded us not to face the Qiblah, not to cleanse ourselves with our right hand, and not to suffice with less than three stones…" (Muslim)

The Muslim can proudly present his total guidance to the modern and complex world of today. The life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is a mirror which reflects human life in its entirety. Anyone can look at it and find guidance for all his deeds and actions – actions of body and mind, of his inner self and his outward appearance, of his tongue and his heart. It will show him a comprehensive and complete way of life. That is why no Muslim (society or individual) has ever needed to look outside their religion and their messenger's life for their moral, ethical and social conduct. By comparing it with other social norms and ethical and moral systems, they can easily differentiate between good and evil, between the beautiful and the ugly. And since no human life is available in such a complete and comprehensive form, the Messenger of Islam is the only ideal and perfect model following whose example the whole mankind can live a pure, decent and complete life.

3.) **Comprehensiveness**: For a biography to be a perfect whole and a complete model for others, it is essential that it should touch all aspects of human life. What is meant by wholeness here is that different classes or different groups of human society need an ideal example to follow. An individual too, in his various activities, his obligations and relations to others needs practical examples to follow. An ideal biography ought to provide that. From this perspective also, we can easily see that no other historical personality comes up to this standard except the last messenger of Allaah.

Religion is simply the recognition of one's obligations towards Allaah and towards fellow human beings. It is only logical and practical then, for the followers of every religion to find out the details of their duties and obligations in the life of their respective founders and apply them in their daily life. Besides the life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), you will not find such great detail anywhere else of man's obligation to Allaah Ta'ala and to his fellow human beings.

There are two types of religions presently found.

One does not recognize the existence of God, such as Buddhism and Jainism. Therefore there is no mention of God's attributes and what human beings owe to Him. It would be futile to look for such attributes as sincerity, love of God and faith in His Oneness in the life of the founders of these religions.

The other type of religion is that which believes in God in one form or the other. However the available records of the lives of their founders or messengers do not contain the details of their quest for Allaah Ta'ala. In what attributes of Allaah Ta'ala did they believe in? How devoted were they in their belief? Apart from the Oneness of Allaah, His Commandments and conditions for offering sacrifice, there is not a single sentence in the whole of Torah to show how devoted Moosa (alayhis salaam) was to Allaah Ta'ala. There is no mention of the intensity of his

love for Allaah, his faith and trust in Him, the deep impression that Allaah's glorious attributes left on his heart and his devotion and worship of Allaah.

The life of Isaa (alayhis salaam) is mirrored in the Bible. Although we know that the Father had great love for His son, it is not clear to what extent was the son's love and devotion for the Father. How did he offer prayers to Him? Did he ever ask Him for anything other than the daily bread? Was there any night other than the night of arrest where he is shown to be supplicating and praying to his Lord? If the life history of such a great messenger of Allaah Ta'ala is so sketchy and devoid of all necessary details, what spiritual benefit can be derived from such a biography?

Consider human rights and obligations towards one another. With the exception of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), the biographies of all other messengers and founders of other religions are devoid of this basic value of human life. For instance, Buddha left his wife and immediate family alone and took to the jungle. He never saw his loving wife and only son ever again. If Buddha's life was the ideal life, what attraction is there in it for the people of this world which includes kings and their subjects, the rich and the poor, masters and servants, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, friends and foes. Can his life become a model for the worldly traders and Buddhist monks at the same time? That is the reason his own followers never actually followed him, otherwise the flourishing industries and thriving businesses of China, Japan, Thailand, Tibet and Burma would have come to a standstill and their bustling cities would have turned into ruins.

The only outstanding feature of the life of Moosa (alayhis salaam) is his leadership of war. Apart from that, his followers cannot find a model for their guidance in their worldly affairs regarding their rights and obligations towards one another. What was his attitude with respect to the family relations, like that of a husband and wife, a father and son, and with respect to brothers and sons? In what useful projects did he spend

his money? How did he treat the sick, the orphans, the wayfarers, the poor and the needy?
Are there any details available of his personal example touching these important aspects of human life which his followers could follow? Moosa (alayhis salaam) was married, he had children, a brother and other relatives. It is our faith that being a messenger of Allaah Ta'ala, his treatment of them must have been perfect and beyond any blemish. Yet this very important chapter is missing from any available history of his life which could become an example for us to follow.

Isaa (alayhis salaam) had a mother, and according to the present version of the Bible, he had brothers and sisters and even a physical father. But the available records of his life are silent about his treatment and dealings with them. These very relations have always been the backbone of this worldly life and will always remain. Isaa (alayhis salaam) was never a ruler. Rather, he lived the life of the ruled. Therefore, his life does not show any example of a ruler's duties towards his subjects. He was never married. His life cannot become a practical example for married couples. Since most of the world's people lead a married life, they cannot find a practical example in Isaa (alayhis salaam)'s life. Family relations, monetary deals, affairs of war and peace, dealing with friends and foes are all worldly matters in which a role model is needed.

Variety is the essence of life. Life needs to have kings and leaders; the rulers and their obedient subjects; judges and courts to maintain law and order; army commanders to defend peace; the poor and the rich; pious men of Allaah who spend nights in worship or those who strive in His path spreading His message during the day; family and friends; merchants and businessmen and spiritual leaders. In short, this world continues functioning with the existence of all these different types of people. All of them need a code, a discipline, a way of life to make them successful in their own field and activity and contribute to the total richness of human life. Islam calls upon all human beings to follow the sunnah – the

way of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). It clearly means that it can offer practical examples to all kinds of people from his life. This very idea proves the comprehensiveness of his life which contains practical lessons and guidance for people in every walk of life. A ruler's life cannot become a complete model for the ruled. Similarly, a poor person's life is not a complete and practical example which a wealthy person could follow. What is needed here is the universal example of the comprehensive life of the Messenger of Islam which, like a bouquet of flowers, contains all the different colours and shades of human life.

In addition to the variety of different classes of human beings, there is immense diversity in the actions of an individual human being in different situations. We walk about and sit down; we laugh and we cry; we put on and take off clothes; we give and we take; we learn and we teach; we kill and we get killed; we save lives and we take lives; we eat and we feed; we do favours and we get favours; we sacrifice life and we rescue life; we worship and we do business; we become hosts and we become guests, etc. For all these actions, we need to have a practical example which could show us the best way of doing a thing in ever-changing situations and varying conditions of life.

Apart from these physical activities, there are the actions of the heart and mind which belong to the world of emotions and feelings. With changing moments, we experience different feelings and emotions. Sometimes we are pleased and sometimes we are angry; sometimes happy and sometimes gloomy; we sometimes suffer hardship and sometimes indulge in luxury; sometimes we taste success and sometimes failure. In different situations, we act under the influence of a variety of emotions. Our good moral conduct depends on the control and balance of these emotions. We need the sublime example of the selfless Messenger of Allaah which could inspire us to exercise control over the intensity of our basic desires and lead us safely through the ways he himself traversed under the Divine Guidance. In order to deal with many different

situations of our life, we need to have certain qualities of mind and heart like courage, fortitude, will-power, patience, gratefulness, faith, resilience, self-sacrifice, contentment, modesty, humility, etc. But only a practical example can inspire us in these noble emotions. Where else can we find them in one place except in the person of Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)?

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s personality displays miraculously balanced emotions found in a human being in a wide variety of situations. If you are wealthy, follow the example of the noble trader of Makkah Mukarramah and the trustworthy custodian of the treasures of Bahrain. If you are poor, look at his example when he was confined to the valley of Abu Taalib outside Makkah for three years when even the most basic necessities of life were denied to him and his children, or when he was forced to leave his hometown and emigrate to Madeenah Munawwarah. If you are a king, learn about him when he became the absolute ruler of Arabia. If you are the ruled, look how he endured the oppression of the Quraish in Makkah. If you are a victor, look at the commander of the battles of Badr and Hunain. If you are a loser, learn your lessons from the battle of Uhud. If you are a teacher, look at the noble teacher of Suffah. If you are student, look at the student receiving Allaah's message from Jibreel (alayhis salaam). If you are a preacher, listen to the preacher of Madinah delivering his sermons in his masjid. If you have to raise the voice of truth against oppression, look at the lonely and helpless messenger of Allaah conveying His message in Makkah. If you have, with Allaah's help, overcome your opponents and enemies, watch the conqueror of Makkah in triumph. If you want to organize your business or worldly affairs, look at the administration of the owner of the lands of Banu Nadheer, Khaibar and Fidak. If you are an orphan, look at the upbringing of the orphan child of Abdullah and Aminah. If you are a boy, watch him grow up under the loving gaze of Halimah Sa'diyyah (radiyallaahu anha). If you are an adolescent, study the character of the shepherd of Makkah. If you are a travelling tradesman, look at the

example set by the caravan leader of Basrah. If you are an arbitrator or a judge in the court of law, imagine him entering the Masjid of Makkah at dawn and settling the dispute among the blood-thirsty rival tribesmen of Makkah, and preventing bloodshed in the Sacred House with his wise judgement. Watch the judge sitting in the courtyard of his mud-brick house of Madinah, handing out impartial judgement in the cases of the high or the low, the rich or the poor with equal fairness.

If you are a husband, study the pure and faithful life of the noble husband of Khadija and Ayeshah (radiyallaahu anhuma). If you have children, look at Fatimah's father's upbringing of her and her sons, Hasan and Husain. Whoever you are and whatever your circumstance, if you are looking for guidance, correctness of conduct and the bliss of life, you will always find it in the shining example of Allaah's last Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

A Hindu person once remarked that he considered Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) to be the most perfect man in history. When asked why, he replied that he had seen in the life of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) such conflicting and diverse qualities present at the same time as has never been combined in a single personality. He was a ruler who had absolute power over a vast country like Arabia, and yet displayed such humbleness as if he had no power even on his own self, and was totally dependent upon Allaah. He was so wealthy that camel-loads of treasures were coming into his capital as a tribute, and yet in his own house no fire was lit for months together, and he went without food for days. He was a military commander of such calibre that he would enter into a battle with a handful of men against thousands of well-equipped, armoured enemies and would emerge victorious. Yet he was so peace loving that when he had thousands of warriors, who would gladly give up their lives for him, he signed a peace treaty without hesitation. He was so courageous that he would face thousands of enemies all alone, and yet so kind-hearted that he did not

shed the blood of a single human-being with his own hand. So mindful of human ties that he would care for the well-being of his family, his countrymen, the poor and the needy, and would worry himself to death for the salvation of the whole human race. But when he stood in prayer before Allaah, it seemed that he had known no one but Him. He never took revenge for himself, even from those who called him names and persecuted him. He forgave his worst personal enemies and wished them well. But he never forgave those who were Allaah's enemies and stood in the way of spreading the truth. He always warned them of the torture of Hell and Allaah's wrath. Just when we think he is a fighting swordsman, he appears to be a hermit who stands in prayer all night long. We look at him in great awe as a great conqueror, but at the same time, he appears before us as the innocent Messenger of Allaah. We want to call him the emperor of Arabia, but find him sitting on a humble mat made from the date-palm leaves. There comes a time when the courtyard of his masjid in Madeenah Munawwarah is piled with spoils of war from all over Arabia, yet in his own home his children are starving. When the prisoners of war are being distributed among other Muslim households, his own daughter Fatimah returns home empty handed though her hands are blistered and her body is scarred as a result of vigorous household chores. Half of Arabia has submitted to him, but when his companion Umar visits him, he finds him lying on a coarse mat which has left its marks on his bare shoulders. In a corner he finds a handful of barley of barley and an empty jar hanging from a hook. Umar's eyes are filled with tears at this austerity and self-denial. When he is asked why he is crying, he says, "O Messenger of Allaah! Can there be a greater reason for crying? The emperors of the Roman and Persian empires are living in luxuries, while you, the Messenger of Allaah, live in such poverty." Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "O Umar! Are you not pleased to know that their lot is this temporary world, and we are to get eternal bliss in the Hereafter?"

Only such a complete and comprehensive life which can produce numerous practical examples for the guidance and well-being of all kinds and classes of people in their varied situations and complexities of life deserves to lead the whole world in all times and in all places. He alone can produce shining examples from his own life to lead us through such diverse situations of life as love and sympathy yet wrath and anger; generosity and poverty and starvation; courage and bravery and mercy and kindliness; mundane household affairs and sublime relationship with Allaah; this temporary life and the eternity of the Hereafter. He not only gives the good tidings of success in this world but also gives a code of life which leads to the eternal bliss of the next world. It is generally believed that mercy and forgiveness, meekness and kindliness are the main traits of humanity, or perhaps the only virtues of perfect humanity. Therefore whoever possesses these virtues must be the greatest teacher and well-wisher of humanity. But are these the only traits found in a human being? A human being shows other equally powerful emotions too, such as anger, generosity, love, hatred, greed, contentment, revenge and forgiveness which cannot be separated from human nature. Therefore a perfect teacher and guide for all humanity will be one who can strike a balance between these diverse and sometimes conflicting human traits and give them a proper direction.

The salient feature of Nuh (alayhis salaam)'s life is the outrage against the evil of a faithless society. Ibrahim (alayhis salaam)'s life shows a fight against paganism. The life of Moosa is a constant struggle against the powers of oppression and tyranny, and then the establishment of administration and collective rules and regulations for a just social order. Isaa (alayhis salaam)'s life is a lesson in meekness, humility, mercy, forgiveness and contentment. Sulayman (alayhis salaam)'s life shows us the splendour of royal privileges. Ayyub (alayhis salaam)'s life is a model of patient acceptance of suffering. Yunus (alayhis salaam)'s life gives the supreme example of repentance and seeking Allaah's mercy and forgiveness. In Yusuf (alayhis salaam)'s life, there is a lesson in preaching

the truth even as a prisoner within the boundaries of a prison. Dawood (alayhis salaam)'s life is a story of celebrating Allaah's glory and crying to him in humble prayers. Yaqoob (alayhis salaam)'s life is an example of total surrender to Allaah's will, and faith and hope in His Mercy. But if you look at Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s noble life history, you will find that it is a paragon of the virtues found individually in the lives of all the Ambiya mentioned above. What was given to all the Messenger's individually was blended into Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s person collectively.

See another side of the comprehensive nature of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life history. There are usually two kinds of educational institutions in the world. Some are meant for specialized professional training such as a medical college, an engineering college, an arts school, a commerce college, an agricultural institute, etc. All of them produce doctors, engineers, artists, experts in business and agriculture respectively. Similarly, a military college will train only soldiers. And then there are bigger institutions, or universities, which usually include all these various schools and colleges. These universities have a much wider scope of knowledge where students come from different places and choose their particular field of study according to their inclinations and needs. Thus generals and soldiers, judges and lawyers, business executives and doctors and professional of all sorts are produced. But the human society cannot be formed by just one kind of education or one kind of professionals. It comes into being and exists with the sum of all these different branches of knowledge. If this world were to have one kind of knowledge or one kind of vocation, the complex machine of this civilization would immediately come to a standstill. Likewise, if this world was filled with ascetics and recluses, it will not achieve perfection. Look at the available biographies of different great people from this angle. An educational institute is judged by the achievements of its students. If a person has to study the schools of human society where the teachers are the Messengers of Allaah, you will find the number of disciples credited

to each messenger from 10, 15, 50, 70, 100 to a maximum of twenty thousand. But the last Messenger of Allaah had over a hundred thousand disciples at one and the same time. If you want to learn about the pupils of the earlier Messengers and ask where they were from; who they were; how they were trained; what their habits and morals were like; what their spiritual and other achievements were in life; what effect their education and training left on their societies, you cannot find any answer to these questions. But the disciples of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) have a well-documented history. You can find out the name, personal details, education and spiritual training and its influence on others, etc. of any of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s pupils, securely recorded in the history of Islam.

Look a step further. Nearly every religion claims that its doors are open to all human beings. But the history of its founder, its first teacher will tell you that in his lifetime, only one nation, one country, one race or one tribe entered that particular religion. Did they have a universal appeal or a common call for every human being? All the Messengers of the Torah never addressed their call beyond Iraq, Palestine or Egypt. They remained confined in their own homeland and concentrated on their own nation or own race. Most of them focussed on the Children of Israel. The early Arab Ambiyaa too were responsible only for their own nations. Even the disciples of Isaa (alayhis salaam) did not include any non-Israelite. The preachers of Hinduism never thought of taking it out of the sacred boundaries of the land of Aryan India. It is accepted that some Buddhist king carried his message beyond India but, like the Christians, it was the idea of the followers. The history of the founder is silent on this point.

Let us consider some of the outstanding pupils of the great Arab Messenger's school. Here are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Ali, Talha and Zubair (radiyallaahu anhum). They belong to the Quraish of Makkah. Then there are Abu Dharr and Anas from the Ghiffaar tribe of Tihama, from outside Makkah. Abu Hurayrah and Tufail ibn Amr are from the

Daws tribe and have come from Yemen. Abu Musa Ashari and Mu'aaz ibn Jabal are also from Yemen but from other tribes. Dhimaad ibn Tha'labah is from the tribe of Azd , Khabbaab ibn Arat from Tamim, Munqidh ibn Hibban and Mundhir ibn Ayyadh have come from Bahrain from the tribe of Abd al Qais. Ubaid and Jaffer are Omani chiefs. Bilaal is Abyssinian from Ethiopia; Suhaib is Roman; Salmaan is Persian and Firoz Dailami is from Yemen.

After the treaty of Hudaibiyah in 6 A.H., Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) sent letters to kings and leaders of many nations of the world calling them to the worship of Allaah Ta'ala and following the way of Islam. Dihya Kalbi carried this letter to the Roman emperor, Abdullah ibn Huzafah Sahmi to the Persian king, and Hatib ibn Balta'a to the Egyptian ruler. Amr ibn Umayyah was sent to the king of Abyssinia, Shuja'a bin Wahab Al-Asadi to the Syrian chief Harith Ghassani, and Sulait ibn Amr to different tribal chiefs in Yamama. This shows that admission to Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s school was open to all.
The sending of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s emissaries in his own lifetime, carrying Allah's message to various nations living in different parts of the world makes it quite clear that His Message was universal. It was not meant for the Arabs alone. It was meant for all mankind. Regardless of their colour, country, race, nation, tribe or language, it called all individuals, families, tribes and nations to the worship of Allaah, the one and only Deity, the Master of the Worlds. And this call remains the same today and forever, for all the people all over the world.

Let us look at the nature of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s centre of learning at Madinah. Was it like a school where only one kind of knowledge was imparted? Or was it like an all-round magnificent university where people from different countries and different nations came and received knowledge and education according to their needs and capacity? Among those trained and taught by Rasulullaah (sallallaahu

alayhi wa sallam), you will find men of diverse accomplishments. You will find kings, chieftains, the poor and the rich, the slaves and the masters, standing shoulder to shoulder in one row.

a.) The teaching of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) produced rulers who were able to administer vast territories. In the forefront are Abu Bakr Siddique, Umar Farooq, Uthmaan Ghani, Ali Murtadha and Mu'aawiya ibn Abi Sufyaan (radiyallaahu anhum). Their just rule extended from east to west, from Africa to the borders of India, setting up examples of civil administration and establishing new social, political and legal orders. Their decisions based on fairness and wisdom made the Roman and Persian systems look ineffective and worthless, and buried them in the pages of history forever. They have left such shining examples of fair, efficient and just rule that the whole history of mankind cannot match the standard set by them.

b.) Then you have courageous and resolute military leaders like Khalid ibn Walid, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas, Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah and Amr ibn Al As (radiyallaahu anhum) who shattered the most powerful oppressive regimes of their era in a matter of years and proved to be the most powerful conquerors of their time, who are still held by the world in awe.

c.) Scores of other companions served humanity by their fair and efficient administration of different regions and cities of the ever-expanding Islamic rule. Some of the outstanding names are Bazan ibn Sasan (Yemen), Khalid ibn Saeed (San'a), Muhajir ibn Omayyah (Kinda), Ziyad ibn Labeed (Hadaramaut), Amr ibn Hazm (Najran), Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan (Taima) and Alaa ibn Hadrami (Bahrain).

d.) There is an illustrious list of scholars and experts in Islamic law. Leaders among them are Umar ibn Khattaab, Ali ibn Abi Taalib, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, Abdullah ibn Abbass, Ubay ibn Ka'b, Mu'aadh ibn Jabal, Zaid ibn Thaabit, Ibn Zubair and Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s wives, Ayeshah and Umm Salamah (radiyallaahu anhum). They are the

pillars of Islamic law whose judgements and opinions are still highly regarded by the Muslim world and they have a special place among the leading law-givers of the world.

e.) There is yet another group of specialized scholars who focussed on compiling the historical and biographical details of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s life. They include hundreds of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s companions, prominent among them being Abu Hurairah, Abu Musa Ashari, Anas ibn Maalik, Abu Saeed Khudri, Ubaadah ibn Saamit, Jaabir ibn Abdullah, and Baraa ibn Aazib (radiyallaahu anhum).

f.) Then comes a dedicated group of self-sacrificing, self-denying men of Allaah, whose only interest in life was pursuit of Islamic knowledge. They were seventy in number and their only worldly possessions were the clothes they had on their bodies. They lived on a raised platform in Masjid Nabawi. They spent their extra time in worship. Learning the Divine Message and teaching it to others was the only purpose of their life.

g.) There is then the group of ascetics and mystics, who completely renounced the pleasures and enjoyments of this world. Abu Dharr Ghifaari had such strong trust in Allaah that he would not save anything for the next day's meal. Salmaan Farsi was a living picture of piety and Allah-consciousness. Abdullah ibn Umar refused the opportunity to be the caliph. Musab ibn Umair, who used to live in luxury before embracing Islam wearing clothes made of the most expensive silk, had patches sown on his clothes made from a coarse material. When he was martyred, his shroud was not enough to cover his whole body, so grass was used to cover his feet. Men like Abu Darda used to spend their days in fasting and nights in worship.

h.) Still there is a group of innocent martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the path of Allaah, spreading the Message of the truth. They preferred to give up their lives rather than give up the truth. Sumayyah was killed at the hands of Abu Jahl. Yaasir was tortured to death by the polytheists of

Makkah. Khubaib was killed on the cross. Zaid was put to the sword. Haram ibn Milham, along with 69 of his companions, was treacherously killed at Bir Mauna by the tribes of Ra'l, Zakwaan and Usayyah. In Islam, you will not find only one cross, but innumerable men and women who were put on the cross.

A greater test of will and patience is for those who spent long years of persecution, mental torture and suffering, but never wavered from the path of the Truth. Bilaal's master would put a heavy stone on his chest and make him lie on boiling sands. A rope was tied around his neck and he was dragged in the streets of Makkah. Abu Fukayha was similarly dragged in the streets. Ammar was made to lie on the hot sand and was mercilessly beaten. Zubair's uncle would wrap a mat around him and force him to inhale smoke. Saeed ibn Zaid was often tied and beaten. Uthmaan's uncle used to tie him down and beat him. None of these measures could take them away from the path of truth shown to them by Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

In conclusion, we can see that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s personality reflects the best and noblest side of human nature. His many-sided virtues are reflected individually through his companions. His blessed presence was like the sun that shines over the whole world. The high mountains, the vast valleys, the running rivers and the green fields all benefit from its light and warmth according to their own nature and capacity. His blessed presence can also be likened to a cloud full of rain that falls over mountains, forests, fields and deserts, each one absorbing according to their capacity, resulting in lush trees, green fields and flowers of many colours and shapes.

In whichever capacity a person wants to serve Allaah and His creation, whether you are a king or subject, rich or poor, commander or soldier, teacher or student, you will find the best example in the practice of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

4.) **Practicality**: The last criterion for an ideal model is that his life example should be practical and realistic. What is meant here is that the founder of a religion should set a personal example for the discipline he has proposed for others, and his personal life should explain and prove to the world that the rules he has set forth are realistic. It is not too difficult for anyone to present a charming philosophy, an attractive theory, or a fascinating saying. A person's lofty and pure thoughts, his innocent and noble sayings, his moral and ethical philosophies alone cannot make him an ideal and perfect model. Of the numerous law-givers and founders of different religions, which one can come forward and have the practical aspect of his biography be judged by this standard?

There are many sayings which are quite attractive. But if they are not accompanied by action, they only remain a combination of persuasive and charming words. How can a person set forth a practical example of forgiveness who has not actually overcome an enemy? How can one look after the poor, the needy and the orphans if he is himself penniless? How could one become a role-model for a husband or father or other human relations if he himself did not have a wife, children or other relatives? How can one preach the virtue of visiting the sick and destitute if he has not done so himself? If he has never got an opportunity to overcome his anger and forgive others, his life can never become a model for those who have a quick temper.

In order to follow a noble principle, we need practical examples. We need to have actual deeds in front of us in order to learn and make the right choice in different situations of life such as war and peace; poverty and prosperity; marriage and celibacy; our relations with our Creator and His creation; with the rulers and the ruled; our conduct in anger and tranquillity, in public and in private, etc. the greater part of our life, in fact our whole life, is concerned with these problems and these relationships. In order to deal with them properly, we need practical examples, not just words.

The Noble Qur'aan is the word of Allaah, revealed to Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) for the whole of mankind. He was the first to obey these commandments. Whatever beliefs, actions of worship and good moral behaviour he taught, he first demonstrated through personal example. His life was a complete reflection of the Qur'aan.

a.) He called people to Allah's love and remembrance in all circumstances. Personally, there was not a moment when his heart was not filled with Allaah's love and his tongue would not sing Allaah's praises sitting, standing or walking about; eating or drinking or lying on his side. At all times and in all circumstances, he would remember and praise Allaah. Hundreds of supplications are found narrated in the books of Ahaadeeth which Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) uttered on different occasions, which point to his love, awe and devotion to Allaah Ta'ala.

b.) He conveyed Allaah's command to the people to perform obligatory salaah five times a day. However, he would ensure that he would perform many other rak'ats before or after every obligatory salaah. Together with this, he was punctual with tahajjud and other optional prayers. After the five salaah became fardh, the compulsion of tahajjud salaah was abrogated, but he continued to perform it for the rest of his life. Occasionally, he would perform salaah the whole night. As a result, his feet would become swollen. When asked the reason for exerting himself so much, he remarked, "Should I not be a thankful servant?" Even in battlefield, he ensured that he performed his salaah. During the last days of his life, he had high fever, but he did not miss salaah in jamaat (congregation). Even when his illness had drained all his energy, he would come to the masjid supported by two of his companions.

c.) He enjoined the Muslims to fast. Muslims are required to fast during the month of Ramadhaan. But there was never a week or month when he was not fasting. He forbade the Muslims to fast longer than a day, but himself would fast for two or three days at a stretch without taking any

food. Every week, he would fast on Mondays and Thursdays. Monthly, he would fast on the 13, 14 and 15. The six fasts of Shawwal were kept as well as the majority of Shabaan.

d.) He ordered the Muslims to pay zakaah and spend on the needy. He was the first to set an example. He helped the poor as well as those unable to pay their debts. On the one hand, he did not ask his followers to give up everything they owned, but to spend a portion of their wealth for the sake of Allaah. On the other hand, he spent on others everything he owned. There was no shortage of money because spoils of war were coming into Madinah Munawwarah from everywhere, but that money was meant for others. A bare minimum would be spent on himself and his family. He never refused anyone who came to him asking him for help.

e.) He gave people the lesson of self-denial and contentment. But what was his own attitude in this regard? He left this world never having two full meals in a day. When he passed away, there was nothing in his house except a handful of grain for that day's meal. He had pawned his armour with a Jew for a small amount of oats. He used to say, "It is unbecoming for the son of Adam to have more than these things: a simple house for shelter, a piece of clothing to wear, a simple meal and water to fill the stomach." These were not just beautiful words. They painted the actual picture of his own life. His house consisted of one small room made from mud, and had a roof of date-palm leaves and camel wool. Ayeshah (radiyallaahu anha) says that she never had to fold Rasulullah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s clothes, meaning that he possessed no clothes other than the ones he had already on. Once a beggar came to him complaining that he was starving. He sent for some food from his house. The reply came that there was nothing except water. Abu Talha (radiyallaahu anhu) relates that once he saw Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) lying on the floor in his masjid. He was tossing and turning with the intense pain of hunger. Once the companions complained to him of starvation. They had each tied a stone to their stomach to lessen the pangs of

hunger. In reply, he showed them his stomach where two stones had been tied. He had had nothing to eat for two days.
He had great love for his daughter, Fatimah and her two sons, Hasan and Husain (radiyallaahu anhum). But he never showed this love by means of costly clothes or gold or silver. When he saw her wearing a gold necklace given to her by her husband, he remarked, "O Faatimah! Do you want people to say that Muhammad's daughter is wearing a necklace of fire around her neck?" Faatimah at once took of the necklace, had it sold and had a slave freed for its price. Similarly, when Ayeshah wore bracelets of gold, he told her that it was unbecoming of a messenger's wife and asked her to take them off. In the 9th year Hijri, the rule of Islam had extended to Yemen in the south and Syria in the north. But, as its ruler, his total possessions were: a piece of cloth that he wrapped around his waist, a bare bed, a pillow filled with the bark of date-palm, a handful of grain, a skin of an animal and a jar.

f.) He taught the lesson and virtue of self-sacrifice, and practised it first. As mentioned earlier, Faatimah had developed blisters on her hands from grinding in the hand-mill, and drawing water from the well had left rope marks on her body. One day, she asked Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) for a maid-servant. However, others were given preference and she returned without a maid. Once he was presented a shawl. Someone remarked that it was a beautiful shawl. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) gave it to him, even though he himself badly needed one at that time. At times, he would give whatever food was remaining in his house to others, leaving nothing in his own home for himself and his family.

g.) He taught faith and total reliance in Allaah and dependence on His Mercy. He was born amongst an ignorant and illiterate people. They were so severe in their bigotry that they could not hear a word spoken against their idols they worshipped. They were ready to kill for the sake of their beliefs. But Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) took no notice of them and raised the voice of the Oneness of Allaah in the middle of the

Ka'bah. He would prostrate before Allaah in front of the Quraish leaders, least concerned about his personal safety. When commanded by Allaah to openly proclaim the message of Islam, he climbs Mount Safa and preached the message. The Quraish of Makkah tried to dissuade him from his mission by all possible means. They persecuted him. They threw rubbish on him whilst he was performing salaah. They tried to strangulate him. They spread thorns in his way. But he remained steadfast and nothing could stop him from calling the people to the right path. When under pressure from the Quraish, his uncle Abu Talib hinted at withdrawing his support, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to him with great determination, "O uncle! If the Quraish were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in the left, I will never abandon my mission." At last, he was forced to live along with his family and his clan, Banu Hashim, in a mountain pass outside Makkah for three years. No food was even allowed to reach them. They were forced to eat leaves to survive. When all these measures failed, the Quraish decided to murder Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). He migrated to Madinah Munawwarah with the pagans of Makkah in hot pursuit. Even when the Quraish are standing a few meters away from him, he says to Abu Bakr, "Abu Bakr! Do not fear, Allaah is with us." During the same journey, Suraaqah approaches them on his horse with a threatening spear in his hand. Abu Bakr is worried, but Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is as calm as ever, reciting the Qur'aan and having complete faith in Allaah.

In the Battle of Badr, the small number of barely-armed Muslims are facing one thousand fully armed warriors of the Quraish. At this moment, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is imploring Allaah, "O Allaah! If this small group of faithful men are wiped out today, no one will be left to worship You in the world."

There were occasions when the Muslims were overwhelmed by the enemy and had to retreat from the battle. But Rasulullaah (sallallaahu

alayhi wa sallam) with complete reliance on Allaah's help, confidently faced the enemy and stood there like an adamant rock. In the Battle of Uhud and Hunain, he did not leave his position even though he was attacked from all sides by rocks, arrows, spears and swords.

h.) He taught the noble quality of forgiveness, and practically showed it. Abu Sufyan was Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s deadliest enemy, who led the campaign against the Muslims in Badr, Uhud and Ahzaab. Numerous Muslims were killed by his orders. He plotted many times to assassinate Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). After the conquest of Makkah, he was at the mercy of the Muslims. Nearly everyone suggested that he be killed, but Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) not only granted him pardon, but announced that whoever enters his house will be granted refuge.

Abu Sufyaan's wife, Hind, who participated in the Battle of Uhud, exhorted the Quraishi soldiers to kill the Muslims by singing war songs with her friends. She mutilated the body of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s uncle Hamzah and tried to eat his liver. After the Conquest of Makkah, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) granted her pardon, without even mentioning her previous crimes.

Wahshi had murdered Hamzah in the Battle of Uhud and torn out his liver. He flees to Taif after the Conquest of Makkah. When that too is captured, he is forced to present himself to Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), who looks at him with tearful eyes, forgives him and says, "Try not to come before me because that brings back memories of my uncle."

Ikrimah is the son of Abu Jahl, who had thrown rubbish at Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), attacked him during salaah, tried to strangle him, plotted with the rest of the Quraish to kill him, led the Quraish in the Battle of Badr, and thwarted all attempts of peace. Ikrimah himself had taken part in many battles against the Muslims. He fled to Yemen after the Conquest of Makkah. His wife accepts Islam, and brings him back to Madinah Munawwarah. When Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi

wa sallam) learns of his arrival, he is so overjoyed that whilst rushing to welcome him, his mantle falls off his body. In a voice brimming with joy, he welcomes him with these words, “O refugee rider, you are most welcome.”

Habbar ibn Al-Aswad is another criminal. He is believed to have killed Zainab, the daughter of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). He is sentenced to death after the conquest of Makkah. He wants to run away to Persia, but changes his mind and throws himself before Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) saying, “O Messenger of Allaah! I wanted to run away to Persia, but then I thought of your tolerance, kindness and forgiveness. Here I am at your mercy. All the information you got about my crimes is true.” Hearing this confession, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) forgives him, knowing well that this man is his beloved daughter’s murderer.

Umair ibn Wahab is sent to Madinah by Safwan ibn Umayyah to assassinate Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). He carries a poisoned dagger, but is captured and proven guilty. Yet he is pardoned and released. Safwan runs away after the conquest of Makkah, but Umair pleads on his behalf and Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) ensures him safety. He insists that he will not accept Islam and asks for two months to think about it. He is given four months, but before the termination of the time, he accepts Islam.

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) led a campaign against Khaybar, a great centre of Jewish power. After many battles, the city fell. A Jewish woman presented him some meat which had actually been poisoned. As soon as he put a piece in his mouth, he realized that it was poisoned. The woman was brought forward and she confessed her crime. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) took no revenge, and she was released without being punished. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) suffered from the after effects of the poison for the rest of his life.

The sanctuary of the Ka’bah was the place where the leaders of the Quraish had assembled and decided that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi

wa sallam) should be assassinated. After the Conquest of Makkah, it was the same place where all of them were standing vanquished before him, their heads bowed in shame. They had called him names, written poems against him, spread thorns in his path, drawn swords on him, killed and mutilated his innocent loved ones, tortured the poor Muslims by branding their bodies with hot irons, dragged them over the scorching sands of Makkah, burnt them over flaming coals, and pierced their bodies with spears. They were now surrounded by ten thousand Muslim warriors with swords drawn, waiting for a signal from their commander. Addressing the Quraish, he asked, "O Quraish! Tell me what I should do with you today." They said, "Muhammad! You are our noble brother. You are our noble nephew." He said, "I say to you what Allaah's Messenger Yusuf had said to his heartless brothers, "There is no reproach on you today. May Allaah forgive you!"

i.) He taught people that all human beings have equal rights. In the Arab society of his time, slaves were considered to be lowest in society. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) showed them that all are equal when he adopted a slave as his son. He then married his cousin, Zainab, who was from the noble Quraish, with his adopted son. Eventually this marriage did not work out and ended in a divorce. It was considered a shame for an Arab to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son. This evil custom had to be challenged and abolished. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), against the age-old custom of the Arabs, married the divorced wife of Zaid and thus set an example which led to the eventual end of an evil practice.

j.) He condemned false and cruel man-made traditions and abolished the unending habit of bloodshed. It is the occasion of the Final Hajj when this message is being taught. He first applies the law to himself. He says, "Today the ancient Arab tradition of retaliation is abolished. All murders committed before Islam are not to be avenged. They are all to be forgiven. First of all, I forgive the murderer of my nephew, Rabeea' ibn

Haarith." He thereafter declares, "All pre-Islamic deals based on usury are nullified today. First of all, I cancel all such transactions of my uncle, Abbaas ibn Abdul-Muttalib."

In conclusion, whichever model is chosen from the lives of great men of human history, it must possess these four qualities in order to be the ideal life or the ideal example to be followed by others. It must have authentical historical sources, and it must be comprehensive, perfect and practical. This does not mean that the lives of the other messengers lacked these qualities in their own times. Whatever remnants of their life histories reached the common people after their period, or the ones existing today, lack the qualities of authenticity, comprehensiveness, perfection and practicality. That was precisely the demand of Divine wisdom, so that it should become evident that those messengers were sent at particular periods of time to particular nations. The Divine message given to them was not meant to be universal. Therefore there was no need to preserve it for the other nations and times to come. Only Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was chosen to be the example for all nations, till the end of time. He was to be the perfect model, to be followed by everyone. That is why his life was preserved to its smallest detail, in its eternal glory and perfection for all times to come. This remains the strongest practical proof of his being the 'seal of Ambiyaa' and of his mission for all mankind. Allaah Ta'ala states, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allaah and the Seal of the Ambiyaa." (Ahzaab verse 40)

CONCLUSION FROM THE COMPILER

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) being the ideal model for mankind demands that we:

1.) Learn the sunnah lifestyle of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)

2.) Love every aspect of his life, even if due to our weakness, we are unable to follow it

3.) Practise on the sunnats of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)

4.) Propagate the lifestyle of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) to all of mankind, Muslim and non-Muslim, according to our ability.

جِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَآ

سُبْحَانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

الْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمُّ الصَّالِحَاتُ

مَا شَاء اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

جَزَى اللهُ عَنَّا مُحَمَّدًا مَّا هُوَ اَهْلُهُ

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ،سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ،أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ