



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY





Understanding The Sunnah

The Path of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ

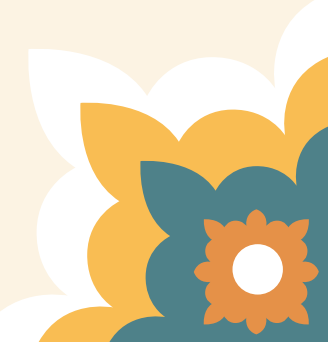
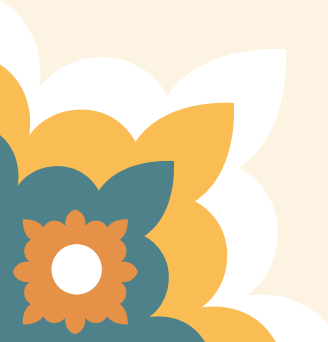
God sent human messengers to mankind as guides. They were the bearers of scripture and role models for their people. God tells us the stories of the Messengers in the Quran. The final Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was sent with the purpose of being a bearer of God's words, a leader and guide. Since he was the final Messenger of God, he was sent to all of mankind as opposed to only a specific nation or group.

ﷺ



This symbol is a prayer that is written using Arabic calligraphy. It is said/written whenever the Messenger Muhammad is mentioned, as per the command in the Quran 33:56. It means "May Allah honor, bless, and protect him."



As Muslims, we are commanded to follow him and take him as our example. God says, “The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put their hope in God and the Last Day and remember God often.” [33:21] In another passage, God commands us to obey the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, “He who obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed God; but those who turn away – We have not sent you over them as a guardian.” [4:80] Following the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ is a religious duty that brings rewards and God’s forgiveness. God says, “Say, ‘If you love God, then follow me, God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is all Forgiving and Merciful.’” [3:31]





Where do we take this example from? We take it from something called the Sunnah. The Sunnah, generally speaking, refers to the teachings and way of life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. It is the lived example and model of the life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, taken from the narrations that were reported by the Messenger Muhammad's ﷺ disciples, in which they narrated his sayings, described his actions, mentioned incidents which took place in his presence and his tacit approval of them, and even his physical descriptions, mannerisms and etiquette. All of the above is called the Sunnah. The word Sunnah literally means "way" or "path," and thus the Sunnah of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ is his way and example.





The scholars of Islam know pretty much every detail of the life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. We are taught to learn about his habits such as how he slept, ate, sat, walked, and greeted others etc. We are instructed to know about his ritual worship and devotional life.



The physical descriptions of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, such as his height, build, and complexion are recorded so we can envision him. We are invited to know how he lived, what he ate and drank, the kinds of clothes he wore, and descriptions of the rooms he lived in. We should know about his character, his kindness, gentleness, and mercy, his justice and fairness.



How did he deal with the times when he became angry as a result of some injustice or harm committed? We have reports through which we can piece together his general daily routine from the time he woke up until he went to sleep. We have detailed reports of his life and the major incidents that took place.







Just as God preserved the Quran in an oral tradition that was also recorded in written form, similarly, the lived example and model of the life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was also preserved orally and in written form. The disciples of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ not only memorized the Quran, but they also accurately noted and memorized the statements and actions of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. These narrations would then be relayed to others orally, recorded and documented, memorized and passed on. Eventually these traditions were written and books were compiled containing these narrations. This field of knowledge in Islam is known as hadith, or literally “narration” or “tradition.”









In order to ensure accuracy and authenticity, early Muslim scholars would mention the names of the narrators in the chain that led to the tradition of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. They would essentially name their teacher, his teacher, and so on, until the name of the disciple who heard or saw the tradition directly from the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. This naming of narrators is called a chain of narrators.

Expert scholars would memorize the chains, but would also know the detailed biographies of the individual narrators with key details such as their year of birth and death, where they lived and traveled, which scholars they met and learned from, and in turn, the students they later taught, their strength and accuracy of memory and recalling narrations. All of this would allow scholars to judge the accuracy and authenticity of narrations. Scholars categorized narrations as acceptable or unacceptable. This is a whole science with many disciplines that have been developed and codified over the centuries.




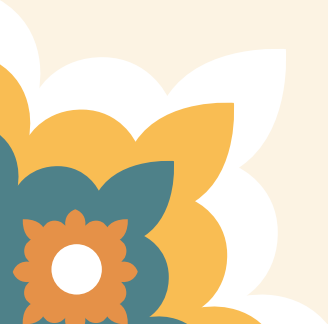


Later scholars compiled narrations in books by theme. For example, narrations to do with legal rulings and matters of ritual law, or narrations describing the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, or narrations about his prayers or narrations about his character and mannerisms. Others would compile books of narrations about a singular topic such as the daily ritual devotions or an aspect of belief. There are thousands of narrations that we have from the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ.



To love, learn, and follow the lived example and model of the life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ is important in the life of a Muslim. It is the way in which we can ensure we are worshipping God correctly and as God Himself commanded. We can also ensure we are following the example of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ as God told us to in the Quran.

Let us remember that our testimony of faith means that we believe in the One True God, and reject false Gods. It includes that Muhammad ﷺ is the Only Way to God. We must believe in what Muhammad ﷺ brought, obey his commands, refrain from his prohibitions, and only worship God in accordance to his example and teachings.





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