

Prophets and Messengers were tasked with inviting people to worship of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) alone and not ascribing partners to Him. It was their duty to forewarn their people regarding the perils and penalties of polytheism. While some people heeded their words of caution, others remained uncompromising.

In most cases, we find that only a handful of people followed and assisted the Prophets. For example, Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) had the Disciples, Moses (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) had a group from the Jews, and Prophet Muḥammad had the Companions [as-Ṣaḥābah] - a set of individuals who devoted their lives, wealth and blood for him.

WHO IS A COMPANION OF THE PROPHET?

Anyone who encountered Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), believed in him and died as a Muslim is a Companion [Ṣaḥābī]; it does not matter whether he or she was blind or saw him from a distance. Allah had specifically elected and bestowed the Companions with the honour of accompanying His Final Prophet. In the words of the great Companion, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ): *“Allah looked at the hearts of the creation and found that the heart of Muḥammad was the best among them so He chose him for Himself and He sent him with His message. Then, He looked at the hearts of His creation after Muḥammad and He found that the hearts of his companions were the best among them. Thus, He made them the helpers of His Prophet.”* [Musnad Aḥmad (no. 3589) and authenticated by al-Albānī]

THE QUALITIES OF THE COMPANIONS

The Messenger of Allah found his worthy successors in the noble Companions. Ethically principled and conscientious, they bridged the gap between us and him. Under his guidance and teachings, they acquired immense knowledge of Islam.

It is through them that the Qur’ān reached us. Abū Bakr

collected the Qur’ān in written form and, later, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) commissioned the collection into the official written form which Muslims have passed down from generation to generation across centuries – each receiving it directly from the previous one.

Throughout this time, billions of Muslims have moulded their lives according to the knowledge passed down from the Companions. Not only did the Companions work towards spreading Islam across nations, they established a chain of transmission regarding everything we know about Allah, the Prophet and Islam today. The Prophet said: *“When a person dies his deeds come to an end except for three: continuous charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.”* [Muslim no. 1631] What charity is greater than teaching the Qur’ān? The Prophet said: *“The best of you are those who learn the Qur’ān and teach it.”* [al-Bukhārī no. 5027] Without a doubt, the Companions will have a share of the reward of every good deed we do today as the Prophet said: *“Whoever guides to something good will have a similar reward to the one who does it.”* [Muslim no. 1893]

WHAT THE COMPANIONS DID FOR ISLAM

- They continued the call of the Prophet after his death
- Abū Bakr and ‘Umar delivered the teachings of Islam to Africa, Syria, Iraq, India and Persia
- ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān compiled the Qur’ān we read, study and memorise today
- As a community, they learnt, educated and reported the sayings, actions and rulings of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) which are conserved in the books of ḥadīth today
- They refurbished the Two Holy Mosques, Makkah and Madīnah, and protected them

ALLAH’S PRAISE FOR THEM

The Qur’ān bears witness to the various times Allah has praised and honoured the Companions of the Prophet. For instance, Allah promised them Paradise when He said: *“The first to embrace Islam among the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared Gardens for them under which rivers flow. They shall dwell there eternally. That is the supreme success.”* [Qur’ān 9:100] Furthermore, He expressed His pleasure while saying: *“Indeed, Allah is pleased with the believers who gave you (Muḥammad) a pledge under the tree.”* [Qur’ān (48:18)] Their labours in serving His Prophet and Religion did not go unnoticed either: *“But the Messenger and those who believed with him strove hard and fought with their wealth and their lives. It is them for whom the good things are and it is them who will be successful.”* [Qur’ān 9:88] Also, Allah pardoned them: *“Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār who followed him in the time of distress.”* [Qur’ān 9:117]

Only Allah, with His Perfect Knowledge, is aware of the past and the future and He never makes a mistake. Therefore, He Knew who the most reliable in receiving and propagating His message was and who the most appropriate successors should be, and He Chose them to spread the message of Islam. Therefore, it goes without saying that we must love and be pleased with those whom Allah Loves and is Pleased with as He informs us that those who are successful supplicate for the Companions: *“And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith and do not put in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! Indeed, You are full of kindness, Most Merciful.’”* [Qur’ān 59:10]

PROPHET MUḤAMMAD’S PRAISE FOR THEM

For 23 years, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had witnessed the conduct and actions of the Companions.

This implies that these actions were approved of by Allah since the Prophet could not approve of something which was wrong fundamentally. Of course, Allah would never allow His Final Prophet to befriend vile people.

The Prophet (ﷺ) shared a close relationship with the Companions; they were his followers, aides and friends. They served the Prophet with their wealth and blood, and he acknowledged their love as he said: “No one loves the Anṣār but a true believer and no one hates them but a hypocrite. Whoever loves them, Allah will love him. Whoever hates them, Allah will hate him.” [al-Bukhārī no. 3572] Also, he said: “Do not revile my Companions. I swear by the One in Whose Hand my soul lies, if any of you spent gold equal to Mount Uḥud [in charity], it would not equal a handful or even half a handful spent by them.” [Muslim no. 2540] Likewise, he said: “The best of people are my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them.” [al-Bukhārī no. 2652]

THE SUNNĪ POSITION TOWARDS THEM

One aspect that unequivocally differentiates the Shī'ah and the Sunnīs is the latter's love for the Companions. Their commendation for the Companions lies in harmony with the praise and pleasure of Allah and His Prophet as Allah (ﷻ) said: “And those who came after them (i.e. the Companions) say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith and do not put in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! Indeed, You are full of kindness, Most Merciful.’” [Qur’ān 59:10] Likewise, the Prophet said: “Do not revile my Companions. I swear by the One in Whose Hand my soul lies, if any of you spent gold equal to Mount Uḥud [in charity], it would not equal a handful or even half a handful spent by them.” [Muslim no. 2540].

Their beliefs are in accordance with the Qur’ān and Sunnah. They endorse the leadership in Islam, after the Prophet, with Abū Bakr first, ‘Umar second, ‘Uthmān third and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib fourth.

Likewise, they respect and honour the Prophet’s wives. They understand that the Companions are not infallible and, thus, refuse to be drawn into argumentation that is centred around reviling and criticising them. Allah honoured and praised them and His Prophet did so, too. As a result, the Sunnīs honour and praise them.

ADVICE TO THOSE WHO CRITICISE THEM

My dear brother and sister, understand that Allah’s endorsement of the Companions, as mentioned in the Qur’ān, will never be altered. “Verily, it is We Who have sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur’ān) and, surely, We will guard it.” [Qur’ān 15:9] Thus, every Muslim must accept wholeheartedly that the Prophet passed away whilst being pleased with them. Therefore, no sincere Muslim can speak ill of, or harbour hatred for, the Companions – the very men whom Allah (ﷻ) Loves and has promised Paradise to. Backbiting is a great sin in Islam and the Prophet (ﷺ) defined it as: “Saying something about your brother that he dislikes.” It was asked: “What if what I say about my brother is true?” He said: “If what you say is true then you have backbitten him and if it is not true then you have slandered him.” [Muslim no. 2589] So, what about slandering those beloved to Allah? It is our duty to love, defend, honour and supplication for them. Know that if you hear anyone speaking ill of any Companion then he has an evil heart. Imām Aḥmad said: “If you see a man speaking ill of any of the Companions then doubt his Islam.” [al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah (v. 8 p. 148)]

I ask Allah that He make me and you from those whom He Loves and is Pleased with, and that He gathers us with the Prophets and Companions in Paradise for most certainly, Allah is capable of answering supplications.

Written by Ṣalaḥ al-Irānī

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THE VIRTUES OF THE COMPANIONS AND REASONS WHY WE SHOULD LOVE THEM

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