

# The Legacy of Prophet Muhammad (saw):

## What & Who Did He Leave Behind

Speech by Dr. Nazreen Nawaz, Director of the Women's Section in the  
Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

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### NETHERLANDS

#### (1) Introduction:

• Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a pleasure and honour to be amongst you today. I would like to thank the brothers and sisters for their invitation to speak at this conference, and I make dua that Allah (swt) rewards all those who organized this important event and all of you who have attended. Ameen.

• Dear brothers and sisters, Allah (swt) says in Surah Al-Ahzab,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا \* وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا﴾

***"O Prophet! Lo! We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner and a summoner unto God by His permission and as a lamp that gives light (sirāaj munīran)." [33:45-46]***

• In this beautiful verse of the Qur'an, Allah (swt) summarises the legacy of our beloved Prophet, Muhammad (saw) – as the bringer of good tidings, the warner, the summoner unto Allah (swt), and as-Sirāaj al-Muneer – the lamp spreading light in a world that was plunged in darkness; a man who delivered a message to humanity that enlightened every aspect of human life, carrying with it solutions to every problem that humanity would ever face - political, economic, social, judicial, moral and spiritual – for all times, places and people, to take mankind from the darkness and oppression of man-made ways of life and systems to the light and justice of the System from the Lord of the Worlds (swt).

• There are many great characters in history, but none of their legacies impacted the world nor shaped the politics and lives of nations to the extent that the life and legacy of Prophet Muhammad (saw) did. Indeed he (saw) was the most influential man in history, as agreed by many historians and writers, including Michael H. Hart, the American author, who ranked Muhammad (saw) as number 1 in his book, "The 100 Most Influential Persons in History", writing, *"Of humble origins, Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive."*

• Therefore to view the great legacy of our dear Prophet (saw) simply as the one who was perfect in his morals, or the most generous, kind and merciful of creation, or the best father, husband, friend, or neighbour – is a great injustice to the light he brought to this world to illuminate all fields of human affairs. AND to have knowledge about his unrivalled legacy and not seek to change to change the world with it, is also a great injustice to our Rasul (saw), for it confines and contains his light without bringing its goodness to mankind.

#### (2) The Legacy of the Political System the Prophet (saw) Left Behind:

• So what was the legacy of our dear beloved Prophet, Muhammad (saw)? Well it is impossible to do justice to this subject in one talk, indeed in any number of talks. So I'd like to focus on 3 areas which exemplify the unrivalled nature of his legacy.

- First, is the unparalleled political system he (saw) pioneered and left behind through the Wahi (Revelation) of Allah (swt) – a system that was emulated by the Muslims following his death – and continued for 1300 years - right from the Khilafah Rashidun of Abu Bakr, Umar bin Al Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA), through the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Uthmani Khilafah until the destruction of this magnificent state at the hands of the western colonialists and their agents in 1924.

- It was a political system that was the embodiment of guardianship and care of the people and whose distinguishing qualities were justice and accountability in governance – as acknowledged by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. A system shaped upon the words of Allah (swt) in Surah an-Nisa,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلُؤُا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾

**“O you who believe, be staunch in standing firm in justice as witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents or relatives; whether (the case be of) a rich man or poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (than you are). So follow not your desires, lest you not be just. If you distort your testimony or refuse to give it, then Allah is aware of what you do.”** [An-Nisa 4:135]

- It was this exalted principle of justice engrained within the Islamic political system and practically demonstrated by the Prophet (saw), and achieved through ruling by the Laws of Allah (swt), Al-Adl (the Most Just) alone, and not the fickle desires of human beings, that meant that ruler and ruled, rich and poor, Muslim and non-Muslim, male and female, black and white were all equal under the law, and subject to the same rules of justice.

- This was exemplified in a famous incident in which Khalifah Ali ibn Abu Talib (ra), the leader of the Muslims at the time, took a Jewish man to court when he found him with his armour which he had lost. Ali (ra) said to the judge - *“This is my armor and I have not sold it nor given it away.”* The judge said to Ali, *“O leader of the believers, do you have proof?”* Ali (ra) replied that he did not have proof. So the judge ruled in favour of the Jew. The Jewish man was astonished and responded, *“As for me, I testify that this is the judgment of the Prophets. The leader of the believers himself takes me to his judge and the judge rules against him! I testify that there is no God except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”*...becoming Muslim, and saying, *“By Allah, the armor is yours, O leader of the believers. I followed the army when you were on your way to the Battle of Siffin and the armor fell from your equipment.”*

- Subhaanallah! It is a level of justice that can only be dreamed about in the states of today – whether democracies OR dictatorships!

- This elevated principle of justice was also reflected in the Prophet (saw)'s words and actions regarding the protection and good treatment of the non-Muslims of the state. He (saw) said,

«ألا من ظلم معاهدا أو تنقصه حقه أو كلفه فوق طاقته أو أخذ منه شيئا بغير طيب نفس فأنا خصمه يوم القيامة»

**“The one who oppresses a person under (our) covenant (i.e. a non-Muslim citizen of the state) or degrades him, gives him work beyond his ability or takes something from him without right, I shall be a complainant against him on the Day of Judgement.”** [reported by Abu Dawud and al-Bayhaqi].

- Indeed, the Prophet (saw), through the Wahi of Allah (swt) pioneered the model that showed the world how to care for the rights of religious minorities within a state, including through his formulation of the Covenant of Sahifa, known as the charter of Madinah, considered by many to be the first document that contained articles maintaining the rights of citizenship. It established that the non-Muslim citizens of the state had the right to practice their religion free from harassment and to enjoy the same protection and rights of the Muslims.

- This great sense of responsibility towards religious minorities of the state continued under the rule of the Caliphs. Indeed, the level of protection and rights afforded to the non-Muslims of the Khilafah, even led to its Christian citizens supporting the state in wars against other Christian nations as we saw at the time of the Khilafah Rashidun, when Syria had fallen into the hands of the Muslims. Following this victory, the Roman Empire gathered a huge force to regain the region. Abu Ubaidah (ra) who was the military commander at the Syrian front could not be sure that he could guarantee the protection of the people of Syria from this attack, so he returned the Jizya to its Christian residents, which is a tax paid by the non-Muslim citizens of the state, saying, *“We have returned your money to you because we have been informed of the gathering of the enemy troops. You people, according to the conditions stipulated in the contract, have obliged us to protect you. Since we are now unable to fulfill these conditions, we are returning your money to you.”* The Christian citizens of Syria prayed for the Muslim commanders, saying, *“May Allah help you to overcome your enemies and return you to us safely. If the enemy were in your place, they would never have returned anything to us, but rather they would have taken all our remaining property.”* (Imam Tabari, *Tarikh At-Tabari, Volume 1, p. 2050*)

- Under this exemplary political system, the Prophet (saw) also showcased to the world an economic model that would bring to life his words,

- «من حقّ الولد على والده ثلاثة: يحسن اسمه، ويعلمه الكتابة ويؤججه إذا بلغ» **“The son of man has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live, a piece of cloth by which he can hide his nakedness, a piece of bread and some water.”**

- Lifting people from poverty and establishing prosperity in lands, through the Islamic economic principles and laws that the Prophet (saw) demonstrated through his rule. This economic model created a state under the Khilafah that overflowed with wealth, such that no citizens were in need of the Zakat. Indeed, under the rule of Khalifah Umar bin Abdul Aziz, in the 8<sup>th</sup> CE, there was so much wealth in the central treasury, that even after his official in Iraq had used state funds to pay the people their dues, pay off their debt, give funds to those who needed it for marriage, there was still huge excess wealth remaining. So the Caliph told his official to look for everyone who owed the kharaj (the land tax) and lend him whatever was needed to help him cultivate his land. Indeed, he went further – ordering for state funds to be used to buy seeds and scatter it on mountain tops for the birds, so that even the birds would not go hungry in Muslim lands! Subhaanallah!

- All this brothers and sisters is only a glimpse of the achievements of the political system of the Prophet (saw), for this was also a system that created a state that stood for the oppressed and against the oppressor, rescuing those facing persecution and opening its borders without a moment hesitation to provide them sanctuary - as under the Uthmani Khilafah when Khalifah Suleyman I sent an armada of 36 ships to Spain to rescue 70,000 Muslims of Al-Andalus who were being persecuted by its Christians rulers and settled them in Algeria. It was also a system that created a civilisation that became the centre of learning in the world due to its academic excellence, and that led the world in discoveries and inventions as we know. And it was a system that unified tribes and nations of differences races, ethnicities and languages from China to Spain, some that were once at war with one another, under 1 system and 1 state, establishing peace between them such that they became brothers in Islam.

- All this was the unsurpassed political legacy of the Prophet (saw) that he achieved through the system of Islam.

### **(3) The Caliber of Leaders the Prophet (saw) Left Behind:**

- The second area of the legacy of the Prophet(saw) I wanted to discuss today is the legacy of the caliber of leaders he (saw) left behind – a caliber that this Ummah should expect of those who rule them and NOTHING less!

• Leaders who truly understood their heavy duty to be the guardians and servants of their people, caring for their every need, based upon the hadith of the Prophet(saw),

«أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْإِمَامُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

**“Each of you is a guardian and each of you is questioned over his subjects, the Imam is responsible over the people and he is questioned over his responsibility.”**

• Leaders such as Khalifah Umar bin Al Khattab (ra) who during the famine in Madinah refused to eat anything but coarse food. His health began to deteriorate and he was advised to take care of himself, but he replied, *“If I don’t taste suffering, how can I know the suffering of others?”*. This was a ruler who would patrol the streets at night to ensure every single one of his citizens had their needs met and was cared for. One night he came across a woman in a tent who was groaning from labour pains. He immediately returned home, bringing his wife to aid her with the delivery of the baby as well as provisions to cook a meal. He cooked the meal with his own hands for the woman and her husband, saying to him, *“Come to me tomorrow and I will see what can be done further to help you.”*

• He (saw) left behind a legacy of leaders of Taqwa, who would use their own wealth to make their people rich even if they died poor – like Khalifah Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Before he became a ruler he was a rich man; infact it took 100 camels to bring his possessions to the city. But he died with only one shirt to his name despite the Khilafah enjoying economic prosperity at the time, because he had spent his wealth for the sake of his Ummah. This was a man who refused to use even a drop of public oil to fuel his lamp for his personal affairs or even use water heated from the state charcoal for his wudu due to his immense sense of accountability over state funds. Subhaanallah!

#### **(4) The Impact the Prophet(saw)’s Legacy Had on Women:**

• And finally brothers and sisters, one of the greatest areas of the legacy of the Prophet(saw) was the impact he had on the lives of women, raising their status and rights to a level the world had never seen before, and indeed that the world today has many lessons to learn from.

• From a time when women were seen as worthless, a commodity, used and abused by men as they wished and where baby girls were buried alive because they were viewed as a dishonour, the Prophet (saw) through his words and actions raised the status of women such that the caliber of a man was measured by how he treated women, and his place in Jannah could be secured by how he treated his wives and daughters.

• The Prophet (saw) said,

«إنما النساء شقائق الرجال ما أكرمهن إلا كريم وما أهانهن إلا لنيم»

**“Women are the twin halves of men. None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignorant treats women disgracefully.”**

He (saw) said,

«أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ»

**“The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.” (Tirmidhi)**

And he (saw) said,

«مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ أَنْثَى فَلَمْ يَنْدُهَا وَلَمْ يُهْنَهَا وَلَمْ يُؤْتِرْ وَلَدَهُ عَلَيْهَا قَالَ يَغْنِي الذُّكُورَ أَنْدَخَلَهُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ»

**“Whoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, nor humiliate her, nor prefer his sons over her, then he will enter Paradise because of her.” (Abu Dawud)**

• The Prophet (saw) himself led by example to illustrate the respect that women deserved, through his noble, loving and kind treatment of his wives and daughters, never raising his hand to them or any woman within his society.

- From a time where women had no honour, the Prophet (saw) showed the people the status of dignity that a woman deserves when as ruler of Madinah he banished the whole Jewish tribe of Banu Qaynuqa for dishonouring a single Muslim woman. This great status of honour that the Prophet (saw) afforded women as well as the immense sense of duty to protect them from any harm was embraced by the Khalifahs who followed his rule – like the great 9<sup>th</sup> century Abbassid Khalifah, Al-Mu'tassim Billah, who mobilized a huge formidable army to Amurriyah in Turkey, the place of the strongest Roman fort, to rescue a single Muslim woman who was abused by a Roman soldier, even though the capital of the Khilafah was in Baghdad at that time. The Khalifah freed the woman with his own hands, even apologizing for the time she had to wait to be rescued, saying, *“Dear sister, I could not come earlier, for the way from Baghdad to you is quite a far one.”*

- From a time where women had no rights, the Prophet (saw) established that women deserved the same political, economic, and legal rights as men but also that they should enjoy the privilege of being financially maintained always – either by their husband, male relatives or the state, ensuring that they would never be abandoned to fend for themselves and their children or suffer financial hardship. Legally, women were given the right to independently raise their marital, financial or other grievances to a judge or ruler. These God-given rights of women were taken seriously by the Khilafah. The judicial records of the Uthmani Khilafah for example, show that women regularly used the courts for any violation of their rights or to resolve marital, financial and other disputes and that they often won their case. Infact a study of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman records, entitled “State, Society and Law in Ottoman Law in Comparative Study” published in 1994, found that women won 77% of the legal cases involving women verses men. According to the Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History - such was the level of justice that women received through the Khilafah’s judicial system, that non-Muslim women in the Ottoman state, frequently preferred to use the Qadi courts to seek recourse for their grievances rather than according to their own religious proceedings.

- And finally brothers and sisters, from a time where the position of women within society was viewed as insignificant – the Prophet (saw) showed the people, the important role that women should play in different fields of life and the state.

- When he (saw) sought and followed the advice from his wife Umm Salama (ra) about how to deal with the political crisis in Hudaibiyah when the Muslims hesitated in following his orders – he demonstrated the importance of valuing the political opinion of women. This inspired the political activism of countless Muslim women under Islamic rule, such as the 9<sup>th</sup> century female scholar Nafisa bint Al-Hassan who lived in Egypt under the Abbassid Khilafah and who was one of the teachers of Imam Shafi (rm). She was heavily involved in the politics of her society such that people would go to her to resolve disputes they had with the governor of Egypt and to get their rights met.

- The Prophet (saw)’s also created a thirst for knowledge within his wives and other women of his society. He (saw) said,

«وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ» (رواه مسلم)

**“Allah makes the way to Jannah easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge.”** (Narrated by Muslim)

- The Prophet (saw)’s and Khilafah’s high regard for female education explains why the history of the Islamic civilization is filled with thousands of examples of female scholars and experts in all fields of life. Scholars such as Umm Darda in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE who lectured in hadith and fiqh at the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the capital of the Khilafah at the time. One of her students was the Khalifah of the State, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. And scholars such as Sitt al-Wuzara bint Umar in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE who was popular for teaching al Bukhari’s Sahih hadith and taught in the Great Mosque in Cairo. Her lessons were attended by the scholars and other notables of the city – male and female.

- Under Islamic rule, women also excelled in other fields of study. Labana of Cordoba for example, was an expert in mathematics and literature in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (CE). She was able to solve the most complex geometrical and algebraic problems and her vast knowledge of general literature obtained her employment as a secretary to the Khalifah, al-Hakem II. Lubna of Andalus was a poetess who also lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (CE). She excelled in grammar, mathematics and calligraphy. She was one of the chief scribes of the state and was entrusted with official correspondence. And women from the Banu Zuhr family were physicians who served the 12<sup>th</sup> century (CE) Khalifah Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur. It is also known that the first degree-granting university in the world – the University of Qarawiyyin in Fes, Morocco was established in 859 CE by a woman under the Khilafah – Fatima Al-Fihri.

## (5) Conclusion:

- All this brothers and sisters, is just a drop in the ocean of the outstanding impact that the glorious legacy of the Prophet (saw)'s life, teachings and rule had upon women, society and indeed the world. It is understandable then why, George Bernard Shaw, the famous British writer and political activist once stated, *"I have studied Muhammad – the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.*

- So I ask you brothers and sisters – does such a magnificent legacy deserve to be buried in the pages of books OR confined to the words of lectures and speeches? Or does it deserve to be brought to life through the re-establishment of a state that will be a living model, representing the exemplary, unrivalled legacy of our beloved Rasul (saw) in every single way? That state is nothing other than the Khilafah based upon the method of the Prophethood.

- Dear Brothers and Sisters! We are the Ummah of Rasulillah (saw). We are the inheritors of his great legacy. Allah (swt) placed the light of what His Rasul brought to mankind in our hands, as a gift and Amana (a trust) to enlighten humanity with it. As such, this Ummah should not be sidelined and insignificant in the politics of this world. NO! It should take a leading position in transforming this world according to the model our dear Prophet (saw) showcased for us, bringing justice to mankind. So, let us follow the footsteps of our beloved Nabi (saw) by taking up the mission with all our efforts of re-establishing the System of Allah (swt), the Khilafah upon this earth, and by doing so, returning the treasures of the glorious legacy of Muhammad (saw) to the world.

- Allah (swt) says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

***"O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered."*** [Al-Anfal: 24]

Subhaana Rabbika Rabbil'izzati 'ammaa yasifoon. Wasalaamul 'alal mursaleen. Walhamdu lillaahi Rabbil 'aalameen.