

Advancing the Approach of *Fiqh al-Sīrah*. An Analytical Study of Rehmani's *Payam-e-Sirat*

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Abstract

The writing of Prophet Muhammad's biography (*Sīrah*) in modern times has witnessed the emergence of a distinct approach known as *Fiqh al-Sīrah*. This methodology goes beyond the mere narration of the Prophet's life, offering a comprehensive framework that draws lessons across social, political, economic, and legal domains. It has found expression particularly in Arabic, Urdu, and English, reflecting a growing interest in contextualizing the *Sīrah* for contemporary audiences. In the Urdu language, scholars such as Shibli Nomani, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, Shah Muhammad Jafar Phulwari, Idris Khandelvi, and Khalid Saifullah Rehmani have made significant contributions to this genre. Among them, Rehmani emerges as a prominent contemporary Indian scholar, jurist and author contributing to this field according to the modern requirements for the Muslims. His work on the approach of *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, entitled *Payam-e-Sīrah: Asr-e-Hazir kay Passe Manzar Mein*, not only builds upon the existing literature but also introduces new dimensions, rendering the discourse more dynamic and discursive. The present paper, therefore, seeks to highlight the role of Rehmani's work in advancing the *Fiqh al-Sīrah* approach. Furthermore, it aims to assess how this scholarship positions the *Sīrah* as a living, practical embodiment, relevant for the contemporary Muslim life and thought.

Keywords: *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, *Uswah Hasanah*, *Fiqh al-Aqalliyāt*, Theology of Seerah

1. Introduction

Regarding the importance of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ conduct for the humanity, the Quran says: Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example.¹ This ideal of *Uswah* must be fully realized in the study and writing of *Sīrah*. Throughout

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history, *Sīrah* writing has witnessed numerous approaches. Yet, the most comprehensive approach—*Fiqh al-Sīrah*—developed initially in medieval times and refined in modern scholarship, stands out as uniquely suited to justify and exemplify the concept of *Uswah*. Unlike other approaches, *Fiqh al-Sīrah* seeks to uncover dimensions of the Prophet’s life often overlooked, portraying the essence of his personality and deriving lessons across diverse domains: legal, social, economic, moral, and more. In the modern era, this trend emerged primarily in the Arabic language, with scholars such as Syed Ramadhan al-Buti, Mohammad al-Ghazali, Muhammad Ali al-Sallabi, Mahdi Rizqullah, and Mustafa as-Sibaie pioneering the approach. Scholars across the globe have since sought to adapt *Fiqh al-Sīrah* into other languages. In the Urdu language, however, this approach has yet to receive widespread attention and remains in a growing stage. Prominent scholars who have contributed include Shibli Nomani and Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (*Sirat-un-Nabi*), Shah Jafar Phulwari (*Paygambar-e-Insaniyat*), Idris Khandelvi (*Seerat-e-Mustafa*), Jalaluddin Umri (*Auraq-e-Seerat*), Razi-ul-Islam Nadvi (*Seerat Nabvi kay Dareechun se*), and Khalid Saifullah Rehmani (*Payam-e-Sirat*).

The distinctive contribution of Rehmani’s work lies in its contextualization of *Sīrah* within the Indian milieu; an aspect largely absent in other Urdu works on *Fiqh al-Sīrah*. His book also enriches the genre in terms of content, including sections such as, “Reflections on the Science of *Sīrah* and Rights of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ upon the *Ummah* (Muslims)”, which add new layers of analysis to the study. The present work seeks to analyse this approach to *Sīrah* within the broad spectrum of *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, exploring how it can uncover new dimensions and potentially shape the future discourse on *Sīrah* studies.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative analytical framework that synthesizes descriptive, interpretive, discourse, and contextual analyses to critically evaluate Khalid Saifullah Rehmani’s approach to *Fiqh al-Sīrah* as reflected in his work *Payam-e-Sirat*. The descriptive analysis outlines the structural organization, main arguments, and overall objectives of Rehmani’s text. It identifies the way he systematizes the *Sīrah*, his division of chapters, and the range of issues—juristic, moral, social, and spiritual that he addresses within the Prophetic framework. The interpretive analysis explores the underlying meanings, intellectual motivations, and theological assumptions that shape Rehmani’s reading of the *Sīrah*. It examines how he interprets the Prophet’s life not merely as historical narrative but as a source of enduring guidance and moral law, reflecting the broader aims of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* to derive practical lessons from Prophetic conduct. The discourse analysis focuses on

Rehmani's language, rhetorical tone, and textual strategies. It analyzes how his choice of terms, Qur'anic references, and narrative style function to construct the *Sīrah* as a living discourse relevant to contemporary Muslim identity and reform. The contextual analysis situates Rehmani's thought within the socio-religious realities of Indian Muslims, highlighting how his approach adapts the universal lessons of the *Sīrah* to the challenges of minority life, pluralism, and modernity. Together, these methods provide a multidimensional understanding of Rehmani's methodology in *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, allowing for an appreciation of his contribution to the evolving *Sīrah* discourse in modern Islamic scholarship.

3. Structural Overview of the Book

The book *Payam-e-Sirat* is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, there are introductory articles that discuss: 'what should be the proper method of studying the *Sīrah*', 'why do human beings need the model of the Prophet ﷺ', and 'why, among all the leaders of various religions, it is only the personality of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that possesses the complete capability to present as a perfect model (*uswah-e-hasanah*)'. The second chapter contains a brief account of the life of the Prophet ﷺ. It has been written in such an easy manner that every layman can read it, and would be able to grasp the entire personal life of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ at a glance, despite its brevity, a need that is quite pressing in our times. Because of the increasing distance from religious education, the younger generation today remains unaware even of the basic facts of the Prophet's life. In this concise account, an effort has also been made to positively respond to the misconceptions propagated by antagonists about certain aspects of the Prophet's life. The third chapter is the actual essence of the entire book. It presents various events from the *Sīrah* in summary form and highlights the practical lessons they offer for the human life. In fact, this is the real purpose of studying the *Sīrah*—to draw lessons for action from it—yet this dimension is often overlooked. This section makes clear the guidance that the *Sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ provides for the conditions of our present time. The fourth and final chapter deals with the rights of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ upon the *Ummah* and the responsibilities that arise from the faith in him. In this section, not only are the rights of the Prophet ﷺ clarified, but also extensive discussions related to the doctrine of *Khatm-e-Nubuwwah* (Finality of Prophethood) are included.

4. Dimensions of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* reflecting in *Payam-e-Sirat*:

The discourse of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* represents a vast and multidimensional field encompassing diverse intellectual trajectories. It involves scholarly engagement with the science of *Sīrah*, the deduction of juridical, ethical, and spiritual insights from the Prophet's life, and the critical assessment of modernist interpretations that

tend to fragment or historicize the Prophetic experience. In the present work, however, the treatment of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* adopts a comparatively focused and thematic orientation, recurring in five distinct dimensions that reflect deep interpretive contemplation rather than mere reiteration.

These dimensions through which Khalid Saifullah Rehmani articulates his understanding of the Prophet's life are: (1) the establishment of *ʿIlm al-Sīrah* as a distinct and methodologically rigorous discipline ensuring historical authenticity and epistemic reliability; (2) the derivation of *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt*—the jurisprudence of Muslim minorities—from the Prophet's experiences within pluralistic societies such as Makkah and Madinah; (3) the formulation of lessons rooted in the Prophet's strategic wisdom and moral integrity during the propagation of Islam; (4) the exploration of the essence of *Nubuwwah* (prophethood) and the Prophet's personality as the complete embodiment of divine guidance and human perfection; and (5) the normative reading of the *Sīrah* as a dynamic moral-legal framework transcending temporal and contextual boundaries.

Collectively, these dimensions indicate that Rehmani's engagement with *Fiqh al-Sīrah* extends beyond the mere narration of historical events. It represents an effort to construct a holistic interpretive paradigm that connects the Prophet's timeless guidance with the moral, social, and intellectual challenges of contemporary Muslim society.

5. Rehmani's Reflections on the Science of *Sīrah*

The scholars who adopt the *Fiqh al-Sīrah* approach generally begin their works by delineating the most fundamental theme 'the significance and indispensability of studying the *Sīrah*'. They do not merely discuss why the Prophet's life should be studied but also elaborate on how it ought to be studied. Their concern extends beyond a purely historical or chronological narration; rather, they emphasize a normative and purposive engagement with the Prophet's biography one that derives moral, juristic, and spiritual principles relevant to contemporary Muslim life. In this way, they move from a descriptive historical approach to a prescriptive and applied understanding of the *Sīrah*. The same concern is articulated by Khalid Saifullah Rehmani, though in his own distinctive way.

5.1. Significance of Studying *Sīrah*

According to Rehmani, the study of *Sīrah*—the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—is not an occasional activity to be confined to a particular month or season; rather, it is a lifelong spiritual and intellectual commitment. The Prophet's message is universal

and eternal, and his teachings encompass every dimension of human existence. Therefore, believers must maintain a continuous connection with his life and example, for through the consistent study of the *Sīrah* one's heart is revived with love, faith, and spiritual warmth. Rehmani beautifully remarks that just as the tongue finds its noblest nourishment in the remembrance of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, so too the pen finds its highest honor in writing about him.²

Rehmani stresses that the commands and actions of the Prophet ﷺ form the foundation of faith and Sharī'ah. True obedience to Allah cannot exist without obedience to His Messenger, and sincere love of God is demonstrated through following the Prophet's model. The Qur'an itself establishes the Prophet ﷺ as the "best example" (*al-Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 33:21*) and demands that believers emulate his conduct in all aspects of life. This obedience and imitation, however, require a deep understanding of his personality, teachings, and decisions—something that can only be achieved through the systematic study of *Sīrah*. Moreover, genuine love and reverence for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, which are essential components of faith, cannot be cultivated without knowledge of his life and character.³

Rehmani highlights the urgent contemporary need to study the *Sīrah* as a means of protecting faith from modern ideological and intellectual challenges. He notes that, after their military defeats, Western powers and Orientalists turned to literary and academic attacks on the Prophet's character, seeking to undermine Islam by questioning its foundation. Their writings, often biased and linguistically detached from authentic Arabic sources, have influenced even educated Muslims. Therefore, studying *Sīrah* is both an act of devotion and a form of defence preserving the true image of the Prophet ﷺ and ensuring that Muslims, especially the youth, remain intellectually grounded and spiritually inspired. He highlights that studying the *Sīrah* should not be limited to merely lauding the virtues and merits of the Prophet ﷺ, even though they are innumerable and remarkable. He highlights that the core purpose of engaging with the *Sīrah* is practical and transformative: it should act as a mirror for self-reflection, helping individuals improve their character, behaviour, and moral conduct. Instead of simply admiring or reciting the Prophet's ﷺ qualities, one must internalize his example and endeavour to apply it in everyday life.⁴

Rehmani asserts that the study of *Sīrah* extends beyond personal piety. Just as the *Sunnah* guides acts of worship and legal rulings, it also offers direction in social relations, political decision-making, and interactions with other communities. By examining current situations in light of the Prophet's ﷺ life, including periods like the Makkan and Madinan phases or events such as the Treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*,

Muslims can determine when patience, negotiation, courage, or assertiveness is required. Thus, the *Sīrah* serves as a practical framework for informed and principled decision-making in both individual and collective life. Furthermore, Rehmani cautions that ignoring the Prophet's example in decision-making reduces Islamic life to mere material calculations, akin to the approach of those who lack faith. He underscores that Muslims should continually refer to the *Sīrah* in all aspects of life, ensuring that their actions are guided by divine wisdom and prophetic insight. For Rehmani, this approach to studying the *Sīrah* is essential not only for achieving worldly success but also for spiritual growth and eternal well-being.⁵

5.2. How to Approach *Sīrah*

Rehmani further emphasizes that all the Prophets, most notably the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Seal of Messengers—serve not merely as historical figures but as sources of a normative and practical framework that addresses the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of human existence. He asserts that human beings, endowed with intellect and free will, possess the capacity for both virtue and vice, thereby necessitating divine guidance to regulate conduct, social relations, and ethical behaviour. In contrast to other creatures governed by instinct and natural law, humanity requires explicit revelation to direct its moral agency and fulfil its divinely ordained purpose.⁶ Rehmani highlights that just as the entire creation functions according to God's embedded order the humans depend on Prophetic guidance to align with divine will. The Prophet ﷺ serves as the practical manifestation of Allah's instruction, directing human faculties toward righteousness, justice, and humility while restraining negative impulses. Prophethood, therefore, extends beyond ritual or spiritual guidance to encompass a comprehensive system for moral, social, and personal flourishing. Without it, humans may achieve material life but remain spiritually and ethically unfulfilled.⁷ Within a *Fiqh al-Sīrah* framework, Rehmani positions the study of Prophets as both prescriptive and practical. The Prophets exemplify divine principles in action, offering a universal template for ethical living and societal organization. Their guidance is indispensable, serving as a critical framework for sustaining human life in accordance with its intended divine purpose.

Ramdhan al-Būṭī shares the same view regarding the true objective of studying the *Sīrah*. He explains that exploring the Prophetic biography is not meant to be a mere historical exercise or an academic narration of events, as one might study the life of a caliph or a specific era. Instead, its purpose is far deeper to transform one's understanding of Islam from a purely intellectual or theoretical awareness into a

living practical realization. Through the *Sīrah*, Muslims are meant to perceive Islam as a complete and embodied reality, reflected in the life, character, and example of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.⁸

5.3. Historicity, Universality, and Comprehensiveness of the Prophetic *Sīrah* ﷺ

Rehmani underlines that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ serves as the perfect exemplar (*Uswah Hasanah*) and guiding light for the entire humanity. Rehmani highlights that this status is not merely a matter of devotional reverence but is grounded in historical reality: the life of the Prophet ﷺ has been meticulously preserved through authentic and reliable sources, allowing scholars and believers to trace his actions, decisions, and character with confidence.⁹ According to Rehmani, a true model for humanity must satisfy three essential conditions. First, the historical transmission of his *Sīrah* must be accurate and trustworthy. Second, the guidance he provides—the moral, social, spiritual, and practical instructions—must be universally applicable, addressing the needs of all people rather than being limited to a particular tribe, nation, or generation. Third, his life must offer comprehensive direction for every aspect of human existence, such that adherence to his guidance leaves no gap in ethical, spiritual, or social conduct.¹⁰

According to Rehmani, the historicity of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is unparalleled among religious figures, making his life a reliable guide for humanity. Unlike other traditions where sources are disputed, delayed, or mediated through secondary authors, the Qur'an and Sunnah were meticulously preserved under the Prophet's ﷺ supervision and through authentic chains of narration. This meticulous preservation ensures that scholars and believers can confidently trace his actions, decisions, and character, establishing a firm foundation for the *Sīrah* as both authentic and applicable across generations. For Rehmani, this historical reliability underscores the indispensability of Prophethood for human guidance.¹¹

This view of Rehmani resonates with the view of Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, prominent *Sīrah* scholar of India, who states that historicity is the most significant aspect of the Prophetic biography. He maintains that there exists a near-universal consensus among scholars that even the minutest details of the Prophet's life have been meticulously preserved—preservation truly unparalleled in human history. According to him, the compilers of *Hadith* and *Sīrah* literature recorded not only the Prophet's sayings and actions but even his gestures and expressions. The Companions, their Successors, the Successors of the Successors, and scholars up to the fourth century A.H. collectively participated in this monumental intellectual and spiritual enterprise. Once these accounts were compiled, their sources were

carefully verified and documented. Nadvi notes that we possess comprehensive information about the narrators, their names, lives, and moral conduct whose number is estimated to be around one hundred thousand. The systematic study of these transmitters came to be known as *‘Ilm al-Rijāl* (the Science of the Narrators) or *Asmā’ al-Rijāl* (Names of the Narrators). According to Dr. Sprenger, as cited by Nadvi, “no community other than the Muslims can be credited with inaugurating the discipline of *Asmā’ al-Rijāl* (biographies of the narrators). One can readily check the credentials of half a million people.”¹²

Nadvi further observes that a true role model must be comprehensive in every aspect of life, for only then can people fully emulate him. No incident of such a person’s life should remain obscure or hidden; rather, his entire life should be lived in the open, accessible to public scrutiny. This openness alone determines whether an individual can genuinely serve as a role model for humanity. Nadvi asserts that when measured by this criterion, the lives of the founders of various religions fall short except that of Prophet ﷺ whose *Sīrah* alone meets this standard in its entirety.¹³

Rehmani also emphasizes the universality of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent as *Rahmatan lil- ‘Alamin*—a mercy to all worlds. His companions hailed from diverse regions such as Arabia, Persia, Abyssinia, Rome, Yemen, and India, reflecting the inclusive and global nature of his mission. The Prophet ﷺ established a social ethic that judged individuals by righteousness rather than lineage, race, or status, making his teachings relevant and applicable to all human beings regardless of cultural or temporal context.¹⁴

Adil Salahi, a Syrian *Sīrah* scholar, author and journalist also draws attention to a short yet profound Qur’anic verse that succinctly defines the mission entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: “We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds”¹⁵. He explains that this verse encapsulates the Prophet’s universal message of mercy and compassion. While some interpreters confine the meaning of “all the worlds” (*al- ‘ālamīn*) to humankind alone, Salahi argues that such a reading restricts the verse’s broader intent. In his view, the Prophet’s mercy extends to all creation, humans, animals, and even to the plants illustrating the truly comprehensive nature of his message.¹⁶ In presenting this interpretation, Salahi extends the view of Khalid Saifullah Rehmani, who argues that the *Sīrah* must be studied not merely as historical narration but as a living embodiment of divine mercy and ethical guidance for human society. Salahi builds upon this framework, expanding the Prophet’s role as a mercy not only to humankind but to all other forms of existence.

Rehmani also highlights the comprehensiveness of the Prophet ﷺ as a model for human life. His guidance encompasses every aspect of existence—spiritual, moral, social, legal, political, and personal. From daily rituals and family life to governance, commerce, and international relations, his actions provide a living example that can be emulated in all circumstances. This holistic model, *Uswah-e-Hasanah*, ensures that adherence to his guidance leaves no aspect of life unguided, equipping humanity to live balanced, ethical, and purposeful lives. In Rehmani's view, the Prophet ﷺ is thus the unparalleled exemplar whose historicity, universality, and comprehensive example make him indispensable for human flourishing.¹⁷

Nadvi also maintains that the ideal life should embrace the concerns and aspirations of all sections of society, offering comprehensive guidance for every human situation. Such a personality, he argues, must guide mankind in matters of social relations, rights, and duties. According to Nadvi, only the life of Prophet ﷺ fulfils this ideal of all-embracing perfection. Faith, he explains, concerns both man's relationship with Allah and his obligations toward fellow human beings; hence, religion demands that we perform our duties in both these spheres. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every religious community to ascertain authentic details about the founders and exemplars of their faith so that they may follow them as true models.¹⁸ Yet, after careful examination, Nadvi concludes that only the Prophet Muhammad's life emerges as comprehensive enough to guide humanity in every aspect of existence. This view runs parallel to Rehmani's assertion that the study of the *Sīrah* should not be confined to historical curiosity or literary appreciation; rather, it must serve as a living framework for ethical, social, and spiritual guidance in contemporary life.

5.4. Aspects of the Prophet's ﷺ Mercy

While discussing the attribute of the mercy of Prophet ﷺ, Rehmani asserts that the Prophet ﷺ represents universal mercy, a quality whose significance extends across time, space, and human civilization. Rehmani highlights that this mercy is not abstract; it manifests concretely in ethical, social, and civilizational guidance. Among its aspects, the teaching of Tawheed stands foremost. According to Rehmani, the belief in the Oneness of God liberated humanity from polytheism, superstition, and moral degradation, instilling accountability and moral consciousness. By connecting this principle with historical and societal realities, Rehmani illustrates how the Prophet ﷺ elevated human dignity, replacing fear of created beings with the fear and love of God, and transforming societies through ethical responsibility and devotion.¹⁹ Rehmani further underscores the Prophet's ﷺ

mercy in fostering human equality and promoting knowledge. He explains that before Islam, rigid social hierarchies and inherited privileges dominated societies, leaving many in permanent oppression. The Prophet ﷺ abolished distinctions based on lineage, race, or status, and emphasized piety and good deeds as the true measures of worth. Similarly, Rehmani notes that the Prophet ﷺ encouraged learning for all, integrating religious and worldly knowledge, challenging superstition, and opening pathways for rational inquiry and scientific exploration. Education, justice, and social equity were all components of this comprehensive vision. For Rehmani, these dimensions of mercy extend to shaping political and social orders, providing every individual a dignified place in society, and ensuring the development of moral, intellectual, and spiritual capacities. The Prophet's life, according to Rehmani, serves as a model for personal conduct and societal reform, demonstrating how divine guidance can be realized practically across every sphere of human existence.²⁰

6. Prophetic Paradigm of Minority Conduct

Fiqh al-Aqallīyyāt (the jurisprudence of Muslim minorities) emerged in the 1990s as a distinct legal doctrine introduced by two prominent contemporary scholars, Dr. Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī of Virginia and Dr. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī of Qatar. This school of thought maintains that Muslim minorities particularly those residing in Western, non-Muslim-majority societies—require a specialized legal framework to address their unique socio-religious circumstances, which differ significantly from those of Muslims living within Islamic states. Developed as a modern Islamic response to the challenges of minority existence, *Fiqh al-Aqallīyyāt* seeks to provide context-sensitive rulings while maintaining fidelity to the foundational sources of Islam, namely the Qurʾan and the Sunnah.²¹

However, it is noteworthy that although the proponents of this approach have extensively drawn upon the Qurʾan and the Prophetic *Sunnah* to substantiate their views, their engagement with the *Sīrah* as a source of jurisprudential guidance has remained relatively limited. But, in recent times, owing to the evolving and dynamic nature of *Sīrah* studies, the scope of *Fiqh al-Aqallīyyāt* has been extended to include *Sīrah*-based analysis. This development is notably reflected in the works of neo-traditionalist²² or progressive scholars such as Ṭāriq Ramadan, Yasir Qadhi, Yāsīn Mazhar Siddīqī, Jalāluddīn Umari, and Khalid Saifullah Rehmani, who have each sought to derive insights from the *Sīrah* to guide Muslim minorities in contemporary contexts.²³

Rehmani stresses that the life of the Prophet ﷺ provides ever-lasting guidance for Muslims, especially those living as minorities. The Prophet's ﷺ example teaches

that ethical excellence, moral uprightness, and social responsibility are not abstract ideals but practical tools for navigating difficult circumstances. The Prophet's ﷺ Makkan life shows that even under minority conditions, Muslims can thrive by leveraging lawful means to protect their economic, cultural, and religious interests. In present times, this includes engaging fully with constitutional rights, civic institutions, and societal networks to safeguard the community while promoting moral and ethical excellence.²⁴

Rehmani underscores the Prophet's ﷺ life as a comprehensive model for Muslims living as minorities, emphasizing ethical responsibility, sustained care for families, and active engagement with civic and constitutional structures to protect and uplift the community. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqi complements this by highlighting the importance of collective action and dignified use of societal networks, drawing lessons from the Prophet's ﷺ reliance on familial and tribal support in Makkah. Together, their views show that minority Muslims must combine moral integrity with an organized engagement to thrive²⁵.

7. Da‘wah Methodology

Da‘wah is unanimously recognized by scholars as the ultimate mission of all prophets, as affirmed by the primary sources of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ entire life is deeply interwoven with the duty of Da‘wah, serving as the ultimate model for calling people to Islam with wisdom, patience, and compassion. Scholars traditionally divide the Prophet's life into two major phases: the Makkan and the Madinan periods. When the Prophet ﷺ received prophethood, Allah commanded him to begin the message with those nearest to him: “*and warn your nearest relatives.*”²⁶ In obedience to this command, the Prophet ﷺ summoned the families of Banū Hāshim and Banū ‘Abd al-Muttalib to a meal. After feeding them, he presented the message of Islam. Some people, like Abū Lahab, rejected it harshly; others kept silent a refusal expressed politely but firmly.²⁷

From this episode Rehmani draws a fundamental lesson that da‘wah must begin at home. It is in vain to travel from town to town, winning fame for eloquence, while failing to reform one's household. A lamp of clay lights only its immediate surroundings; a more powerful light may reach farther, but if the immediate space around the lamp remains dark, observers will question the authenticity of the light. When a preacher's private life contradicts his public message, people will rightly suspect insincerity, and his words will lose their force. Rehmani also accentuates that the Prophet's method included creating human warmth before delivering the message. Hospitality — inviting people to meals, fostering companionship, and using communal occasions is part of the Prophetic Sunnah and an effective

approach to making hearts receptive. Thus, occasions like *iftār* gatherings, *Eid* meet-ups, weddings, ‘*aqīqah*, medical camps, and community service can serve as legitimate compassionate platforms for outreach.²⁸

When the command came to make the call public, the Prophet ﷺ used the public means and customs of his time. He stood on *Ṣafā*— the traditional place for public announcements near the *Kabah* — asked his people about his character, and after they attested to his truthfulness and trustworthiness, he declared the message openly. Rehmani extracts from these two enduring principles: first, use every legitimate medium available in your age to convey the message; second, the moral integrity of the caller is indispensable. A true *dā‘ī* must live transparently so that his life itself bears witness to his message.²⁹ The Makkan period teaches that when Muslims are oppressed and lack the collective strength, they have two legitimate options: continue *da‘wah*, and if remaining steadfast in faith becomes impossible despite sincere invitation, then migration.³⁰

Rehmani writes:

The Prophet’s life in Makkah indeed serves as a valuable example for Muslims living as minorities. However, it would be inaccurate to claim that the circumstances of contemporary democratic nations fully resemble those of the Prophet’s Makkah period, or that Muslims today should replicate precisely the same stance adopted by the early companions during that time.³¹

Jalaluddin Umari, renowned scholar from India, endorses this view and introduces a legal and contextual dimension as highlights the principle of remaining in Muslim-minority countries and engaging in *da‘wah*, noting that the Companions were permitted to migrate to Abyssinia only when conditions in Makkah became too restrictive, making it difficult to uphold their faith and propagate their message. This implies that if Muslims live in a country where they can freely practice their religion and have open opportunities for *da‘wah*, they have no reason to leave. Instead, their religious obligation is to stay, practice their faith, and actively work for Islam and enhancing its status. Umari clarifies that relocating for livelihood or other worldly pursuits does not constitute migration in this context.³²

Consequently, Rehmani highlights that *da‘wah* is both the key to divine support and the criterion by which communities are held accountable. The persecution endured in Makkah and the wounds of Taif proved instrumental in the spiritual and social preparation that led to people of Madinah embrace the Prophet ﷺ and to the eventual triumphs.³³

8. Personality of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Another recurring theme that emerges from his book is the evaluation of the Prophet's dual essence being both a Prophet and a human — and the unique characteristics he possessed, as well as how he exemplified them throughout his life. Rehmani underscores that the *Sīrah* is not merely a chronological record of events but a living manifestation of moral and spiritual ideals embodied in human form. Through the Prophet's ﷺ actions Rehmani identifies a pattern of defining characteristics that together form the core of the Prophetic model (*Uswah Hasanah*). First among these is the Prophet's ﷺ commitment to justice and compassion. As Rehmani observes, the Prophet ﷺ viewed the removal of oppression, the defense of the weak, and the establishment of fairness as essential dimensions of faith. For him, righteousness was not confined to ritual observance but extended to the social realm where silence in the face of injustice was deemed unacceptable.³⁴

Another trait that Rehmani underscores is the Prophet's ﷺ truthfulness and integrity (*sidq* and *amanah*). From his early life as a merchant, the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated an unwavering commitment to honesty. Rehmani points out that while deceit may offer momentary material gain, true prosperity — both temporal and eternal — lies in moral uprightness. The trust and admiration of Khadijah were direct results of this integrity, a quality that later became foundational to his Prophetic mission. Equally significant, according to Rehmani, is the Prophet's ﷺ patience, perseverance, and spiritual surrender (*sabr* and *tawakkul*). The episode of Ta'if stands as one of the most poignant demonstrations of his moral fortitude. Despite rejection, humiliation, and physical harm, the Prophet ﷺ neither retaliated nor despaired. Instead, he turned to Allah in one of the most heartfelt supplications in human history a prayer that, as Rehmani interprets, reflects the Prophet's complete humility before Divine will and his unwavering hope in Allah's mercy.³⁵

Rehmani further highlights the Prophet's ﷺ strategic wisdom and balance between faith and reason during the Hijrah. This event, in his view, exemplifies that reliance on Allah does not negate the use of worldly means. The Prophet ﷺ employed prudence, secrecy, and planning while maintaining absolute trust in Divine protection. His honesty in returning the trusts of even his enemies, despite being under mortal threat, demonstrates a profound ethical consistency a moral victory that silenced even his detractors. Rehmani draws attention to the Prophet's ﷺ humility and egalitarian spirit in Madinah. Despite his elevated status, he lived among his companions as one of them without barriers, attendants, or privileges. His leadership was not characterized by domination but by empathy, inclusion, and

accessibility. Rehmani views this simplicity as the essence of Islamic moral leadership, where authority is exercised through service, not superiority.³⁶

In Rehmani's reading, these qualities such as justice, integrity, patience, wisdom, and humility collectively form the moral architecture of Prophethood. They demonstrate that the Prophet ﷺ was both fully human and divinely guided, embodying a synthesis of spiritual elevation and human accessibility. His life thus becomes the ideal framework through which believers must navigate moral, social, and spiritual challenges in every age.

8.1. Love, Reverence, and Obedience: Holistic Framework for Understanding Prophethood

Due to the onslaught of Western scholarship and their intellectual allies in the East, who either misinterpreted or directly challenged the Prophetic miracles and even some of the distinctive qualities of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, particularly *Khatm-e-Nubuwwah* (the Finality of Prophethood), scholars of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* such as al-Būṭī, al-Sibā'ī, al-Sallābī, and Rehmani have emphasized the theological dimensions of the *Sīrah* as their central concern. They underscore the necessity of nurturing love for the Prophet ﷺ and fulfilling the collective responsibility of the Muslim Ummah in preserving his legacy. Furthermore, these scholars intellectually refute the orientalist propaganda, describing it as a continuation of the Western ideological crusade against Islam and its Prophet ﷺ.

In line with this, Rehmani presents one of the most comprehensive devotional-cum-reformist treatments of the Prophet's rights upon the Muslim *Ummah*. Thematically anchored in the broader discourse of *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, Rehmani merges legal reasoning, theological conviction, and emotional spirituality to construct a holistic vision of Prophethood and Muslim responsibility. His discussion of the Prophet's "rights"—faith, love, reverence, obedience, emulation, and acknowledgment of the Seal of Prophethood transcend a mere theological enumeration; rather, it becomes an ethical and spiritual framework for Muslim life.³⁷ Rehmani's approach here is evident in his insistence that belief in the Prophet ﷺ is not static but performative it must translate into a lived moral order. He critiques superficial religiosity, where devotion is confined to ceremonial commemoration, and instead calls for a transformative faith that moulds behaviour, social relations, and communal ethics.³⁸

Within this framework, Rehmani's emphasis on *Khatm-e-Nubuwwah* reflects his concern for preserving doctrinal integrity in a modern context marked by ideological confusion and false claimants. By grounding the defence of the Prophet's finality in the Qur'an and historical experience, he turns theology into a

form of resistance protecting Muslim identity from both external subversion and internal apathy. Simultaneously, his portrayal of love for the Prophet ﷺ as an existential and salvific emotion transforms love from sentiment into a moral force that sustains faith. Rehmani fuses reason with reverence, showing that spiritual affection must lead to ethical action, communal unity, and social compassion. In this sense, his work reinterprets the *Sīrah* not merely as historical memory but as a living *Fiqh*—a normative guide to spiritual and moral renewal.³⁹

Thus, under the title “Prophethood and Our Responsibilities,” Rehmani articulates a theology of devotion rooted in practical ethics, reaffirming that the Prophet ﷺ remains the central moral and spiritual axis around which the entire life of the believer must revolve. His approach toward understanding the rights of the Prophet ﷺ particularly emphasizes reverence and respect as the foundational demand of Prophethood. In line with the title “Reverence and Respect the Primary Demand of Prophethood,” Rehmani systematically presents the theological and practical dimensions of honouring the Prophet ﷺ. He begins by grounding faith in its two essential pillars: *Tawhīd* and *Risālah*, highlighting that the finality of prophethood is central to Islamic creed. Rehmani underscores that reverence for the Prophet ﷺ is not merely formal or legalistic but an intrinsic spiritual and ethical obligation. Through Qur’anic evidence, prophetic traditions, and historical examples of the Companions, he illustrates the elevated status of the Prophet ﷺ, Allah’s unique reverence toward him, and the meticulous care with which the Companions observed his presence, words, and Sunnah. Rehmani further extends the concept of respect to encompass love for the Prophet ﷺ, observance of salutations, veneration of the Sunnah, and appreciation of all knowledge linked to him, emphasizing that neglect or mockery of these aspects undermines faith.⁴⁰

He also critiques contemporary trends where modern education, Orientalist scholarship, and societal indifference have weakened this reverence, particularly among youth, urging a revival of *Sīrah* education that nurtures love, awe, and ethical transformation. Conceptually, Rehmani’s argument aligns with the idea that reverence is both a spiritual duty and a protective mechanism for the integrity of Islamic belief. By framing respect as the primary right of the Prophet ﷺ, the text reinforces that true devotion must manifest in both internal conviction and external practice, making reverence the bedrock upon which all other duties toward the Prophet ﷺ are built. Rehmani integrates devotional warmth, theological precision, and educational reform, presenting reverence not merely as etiquette but as the cornerstone of faith, a moral compass, and a means to safeguard the spiritual and communal life of the Ummah.⁴¹

In relation to the title “Obedience and Following of the Prophet ﷺ”, Rehmani emphasizes that the Prophet ﷺ is the ultimate guide whose commands, teachings, and personal example must be obeyed and emulated in every sphere of life. He integrates theological, juridical, and historical reasoning to underscore that obedience to the Prophet ﷺ is in essence obedience to Allah, and disobedience is a rejection of divine guidance. Rehmani situates this obedience within both personal piety and communal responsibility. He explains that following the Prophet ﷺ entails acceptance of the Hadith as binding proof, adherence to his Sunnah in worship, character, and social dealings, and immediate response to his directives, as exemplified by the Companions’ meticulous emulation. Through vivid historical examples—such as the Companions discarding gold rings, levelling upper floors of houses, or following the Prophet’s prayer positions, he illustrates the depth of devotion and the comprehensive nature of prophetic guidance. At the same time, Rehmani contrasts this ideal with contemporary Muslim society, noting a decline in practical adherence and moral integrity, highlighting disconnect between professed love and actual obedience.⁴²

Importantly, Rehmani links obedience to theological imperatives of *Khatm-e-Nubuwwah*, situating the finality of Prophethood as the ultimate framework for guidance. He argues that the rise of false claimants to prophethood represents “another form of rebellion” against divine order. By demonstrating historical, theological, and moral dangers posed by such deviations, he reinforces that obedience to the Prophet ﷺ preserves the integrity, unity, and spiritual life of the Ummah. Rehmani portrays obedience and following the Prophet ﷺ as both a personal duty and a communal safeguard, grounded in faith, love, and reverence.⁴³ The work fuses devotional zeal with scholarly rigor, showing that the Prophet’s guidance is universal, timeless, and comprehensive, and that true adherence requires integrating his Sunnah into ethical conduct, social life, and defense of doctrinal integrity.

9. Normative Readings of Sīrah Events

Another distinctive feature of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* scholars and also in the methodology of Rehmani is the approach of treating the *Sīrah* as a normative science. They seek to derive lessons of varied nature that encompass all aspects of both individual and collective life of Muslims. In other words, the concept of *Uswah* is applied to demonstrate how the Prophet’s guidance and example remain relevant and practical in addressing the challenges of contemporary life. He presents the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not merely as a chronicle of sacred events but as a normative framework that offers enduring principles for Muslim conduct in every age.⁴⁴

According to Rehmani, the *Sīrah* is the practical demonstration (living commentary) of the Qur'an, where divine revelation takes tangible form in the Prophet's life. Each episode—whether it concerns peace, battle, governance, or personal conduct—serves as an eternal model for faith and action. Thus, the *Sīrah* is not confined to history but continues to function as a juridical and ethical compass guiding the Muslim Ummah. For Rehmani, the Prophet ﷺ embodied the Qur'an in its totality, translating divine ideals into social realities, and this embodiment is what makes his life a binding source of law, ethics, and civilization.⁴⁵

Through this lens, events from the Prophet's life are interpreted as living principles rather than isolated stories. The Prophet's perseverance amid persecution in Makkah and his trust in Allah during moments of despair for Rehmani exemplify enduring trials with faith and dignity. Likewise, the setback at the Battle of *Uḥud* becomes a timeless reminder that the success or failure of Muslims is directly tied to obedience to the Messenger ﷺ, forming the principle that divine help accompanies submission to prophetic guidance.⁴⁶ In each instance, Rehmani draws moral and spiritual laws that convert *Sīrah*'s historical experiences into living doctrines for contemporary Muslim life.

Rehmani's normative approach also highlights the Prophet's strategic wisdom and social organization as practical model in governance and community-building. The *Hijrah* to Madinah, for example, represents the transformation of faith into a collective polity—an act of migration and social order. Similarly, the construction of *Masjid al-Nabawi* reveals the primacy of spiritual unity over personal comfort and wealth. The Prophet's humility—personally lifting stones during the construction of his mosque—illustrates that sincerity gives moral weight to action beyond material grandeur. Rehmani sees in this a lesson for modern Muslims who often mistake religious performance for spirituality. The Prophet's actions teach that devotion is measured not by ornamentation but by intention, humility, and service to the collective cause of faith.⁴⁷

Most strikingly, Rehmani interprets events like the Treaty of *Hudaybiyya* and the Conquest of Makkah as the pinnacle of Prophetic ethics and framework of peace and mercy. The Prophet's acceptance of seemingly humiliating terms at *Hudaybiyya*, later described by the Qur'an as a "*Fath-e-Mubeen*," is a model of reconciliation and diplomacy showing that peace, when guided by foresight and faith, yields deeper victories than war. Likewise, the Conquest of Makkah exemplifies mercy—where forgiveness, not revenge, became the Prophet's ultimate triumph. Even the Incident of *Ifk*, which deeply affected the Prophet ﷺ personally, demonstrated forgiveness and patience.⁴⁸ In all these moments, Rehmani finds the

normative essence of the *Sīrah*: that moral strength, patience, and mercy are not passive virtues but active laws shaping the moral civilization of Islam.

10. Conclusion

The study analyses Rehmani's meticulous and methodical reflections on the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. His contribution not only aligns with the existing discourse on the "Philosophy of the *Sīrah*" but also introduces new dimensions that enrich and expand the field. Through his nuanced understanding and juristic insight, Rehmani deepens the intellectual and practical engagement with the *Sīrah*, thereby offering a fresh interpretive framework within contemporary Islamic scholarship. He not only presents the *Sīrah* as a normative framework for Muslims but also contextualizes it within the socio-religious realities of the Indian context, thereby making the Prophetic model relevant and applicable to contemporary Muslim life in India. His use of devotional language in the *Sīrah* reaffirms the neo-traditional stance within *Sīrah* scholarship, reflecting both reverence for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and a commitment to preserving the spiritual and moral essence of the Prophetic narrative. He primarily focuses on the essence of Prophethood (*nubuwwah*), thereby opening new inroads into *Sīrah* studies by emphasizing its transcendental and spiritual dimensions. In doing so, he moves away from the excessive historicization or mere human portrayal of the Prophet's life, thus resisting the dehumanization of the *Sīrah* and reaffirming its sacred and revelatory nature. The study makes a meaningful contribution to the growing body of scholarship on *Sīrah* studies. It situates the discourse of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* across multiple linguistic traditions, particularly emphasizing Urdu scholarship. Moreover, it highlights that the *Fiqh al-Sīrah* approach is not confined solely to works explicitly titled as such; rather, it can be discerned in numerous writings that implicitly adopt its methodological framework.

The central focus of the study, however, lies in examining Khalid Saifullah Rehmani's distinctive perspective on *Fiqh al-Sīrah*. Future research on *Fiqh al-Sīrah* can expand upon Khalid Saifullah Rehmani's framework by engaging in comparative and contextual explorations. Moreover, given Rehmani's deep concern for the condition of Indian Muslims, further inquiry could examine how his contextualization of the *Sīrah* contributes to the discourse on *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt* (Jurisprudence of Minorities). This would help assess how the Prophetic model can be applied to the ethical, social, and political realities of Muslims living as minorities in plural societies. Additionally, future studies could explore the devotional and neo-traditional elements in Rehmani's writings to understand their pedagogical and spiritual significance in the preservation of Prophetic reverence. A

comparative analysis with other Indian scholars—such as Wahiduddin Khan, Razi-ul-Islam Nadvi, Yasin Mazhar Siddiqi could further highlight the evolution of *Sīrah* thought within the subcontinent. Scholars might also extend Rehmani’s insights to address contemporary challenges, including interfaith harmony, social justice, and ethical leadership, thereby demonstrating the enduring relevance of *Fiqh al-Sīrah* in shaping modern Muslim consciousness.

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