

CULTIVATING THE CULTURE OF ISLAMIC NATION: A LIVING EXAMPLE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S INTEGRITY

Nurul Mukminah Zainan Nazri^{1*}
Nurul Jannah Zainan Nazri²
Mohd Arif Nazri³

¹ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Bandar Baru Nilai, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

(E-mail: nurulmukminah@usim.edu.my)

² Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, Abdulhamid Abusulayman Kulliyah Of Islamic Revealed Knowledge And Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

(E-mail: jannahnazri@iium.edu.my)

³ Research Centre for Quran and Sunnah, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

(E-mail: mohdarif@ukm.edu.my)

*corresponding author

Article history

Received date : 22-7-2024

Revised date : 23-7-2024

Accepted date : 15-8-2024

Published date : 30-8-2024

To cite this document:

Zainan Nazri, N. M., Zainan Nazri, N. J., & Nazri, M. A. (2024). Cultivating the culture of Islamic Nation: A living example of Prophet Muhammad's integrity. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 9 (65), 86 – 93.

Abstract: *This study scrutinizes the concept of integrity and various dimensions of integrity in human life, with a specific focus on the journey of Prophet Muhammad as a living example. The topic of integrity has been discussed due to its association with the predicaments of corruption and bribery. Numerous studies have established that a deficiency in integrity is identified as a contributing factor to corrupt practices. The approach employed in this qualitative study is content analysis. Data collected through content analysis are thematically analyzed using descriptive and analytical methods. Findings demonstrate that Prophet Muhammad was a man full of integrity throughout his life as a wage earner, Allah's messenger and leader. Thus, the implications validate the notion that Prophet Muhammad serves as a quintessential exemplar for humanity. Consequently, through a reflective exploration of the life journey of Prophet Muhammad, valuable insights can be derived to combat the problem of corruption and bribery.*

Keywords: *Integrity, Islam, Muhammad, Anti-Bribery, Anti-Corruption.*

Introduction

The subject of integrity has been a topic of discussion due to its association with the issues of corruption and bribery. According to Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) (2024), in 2023, Malaysia managed to improve its position, with an improvement in its score from 47th to 50th position out of 180 countries, an increase of three points after a downward trend since 2019. While this is a positive development, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) needs to consistently fulfil its role by intensifying investigations, making more arrests and securing convictions in high-profile corruption cases. This is because corruption will continue to thrive until justice systems can punish wrongdoing and keep governments in check (François Valérien 2023).

Integrity encompasses various definitions that highlight its various dimensions in human life. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2024), integrity means the quality of being honest and having strong principles or the state of being whole and not divided. Kamus Dewan (2024) defines integrity as honesty, transparency and perfection. Integrity in general means superior quality exists holistically and synergistically within individuals and organizations. Integrity is closely linked to ethics (The Malaysian Institute of Integrity 2004).

According to The Malaysian Institute of Integrity (2004), integrity is the characteristics of individuals and organizations that are founded on pure values such as honesty, truth, trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility, transparency, efficiency and wisdom. A deficiency in integrity is identified as a contributing factor to corrupt practices thus, integrity must be nurtured in oneself to combat corruption.

There is an opinion from the Islamic point of view that integrity means *al-ihsan* as stated in a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ إِذْ أَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ يَمْشِي فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ الْآخِرِ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ " الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَقْرُوضَةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ " الْإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ".

Meaning:

Narrated by Abu Hurairah: One day while Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was sitting with the people, a man came to him walking and said, O Allah's Messenger (PBUH). What is Belief? The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the meeting with Him, and to believe in the Resurrection. " The man asked, O Allah's Messenger (PBUH) What is Islam? The Prophet (PBUH) replied, "Islam is to worship Allah and not worship anything besides Him, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the (compulsory) charity i.e. Zakat and to fast the month of Ramadan. The man again asked, O Allah's Messenger (PBUH) What is Ihsan. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you." ((Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book Prophetic Commentary on the Qur'an (*Tafsir* of the Prophet (PBUH), Chapter The Statement of Allah the Exalted: "Verily, Allah! With Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour..." (V.31:34), *hadith* no 4777, 6:115)).

Cultivating The Culture of Islamic Nation

The original culture of Islamic nation is represented in the practices of its people who adhere to the two main sources: the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. At present, as the Muslims are far from the Prophet's time and his companions which is regarded as the best Muslim era, some cultures have not been adopted as they were. Hence, Muslims need to revive the culture of Islam by going back to the Quran and Sunnah.

Integrity can manifest itself in multiple aspects of a person's life, whether it be their role within a family, their participation in society or their performance as a worker in a professional setting. In other words, integrity can be observed in individuals across various dimensions, including familial, societal and occupational spheres. In the realm of business, integrity is among the most crucial attributes for success. Integrity is highlighted as a core value guiding business behavior, essential for sustainable success and moral responsibility in global practices (Robert 2023).

During the time of Prophet Muhammad, trade was the most dominant source of income for Arabia people. Surah Quraish illustrates the lifestyle of the Quraish tribe who traveled during the winter and summer as stated in *ayah 2*: (إِيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ) 'the caravan of winter and summer'. It is a well-known practice among the businessmen in Makkah that they headed to Syam during summer and to Yaman during winter (Al-Waqidi 1989).

The family members inherited the Quraishi tradition of engaging in trade, business and commerce. One notable example is the Prophet's grandfather, Hashim, who traded in Madinah and encountered Salma bint Amr, a noblewoman from Khazraj. Tragically, Hashim passed away in Gaza while on one of his trading expeditions. This tradition persisted through the generations, including the Prophet's father, Abdullah, who was a businessman involved in trade ventures to Syam (Al-Buti 2003).

In Madinah, there were individuals who actively participated in business endeavors. One such prominent figure was Saad bin Rabiha, who held a position among the wealthiest businessmen in the city. He demonstrated his generosity by offering his wealth to Abdul Rahman bin Auf. Additionally, several *muhajirun* who arrived in Madinah continued their entrepreneurial legacy, contributing to the growth and expansion of business activities in the city (Badr 1993). Among the most remarkable individual was Abdul Rahman bin Auf as narrated by Anas bin Malik:

أَنَّسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ: قَدِمَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ فَأَخَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ سَعْدِ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ وَعِنْدَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ امْرَأَتَانِ، فَعَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يُنَاصِفَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمَالَهُ فَقَالَ بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ فِي أَهْلِكَ وَمَالِكَ دُلُونِي عَلَى السُّوقِ، فَأَتَى السُّوقَ فَرَبِحَ شَيْئًا مِنْ أَقِطٍ وَشَيْئًا مِنْ سَمْنٍ.

Meaning:

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Abdul Rahman bin Auf came (from Makkah to Madinah) and the Prophet (PBUH) made a bond of brotherhood between him and Sa'd bin al-Rabi' al-Ansari. Al-Ansari had two wives, so he suggested that Abdul Rahman take half, his wives and property. Abdul Rahman replied, May Allah bless you with your wives and property. Kindly show me the market. So Abdul Rahman went to the market and gained (in bargains) some dried yoghurt and some butter. ((Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Wedlock, Marriage (*Nikah*), Chapter; The Saying of a Man to His Brother in Islam, *hadith* no 5072, 7:4)).

The first Islamic nation in Islamic history demonstrate that the Muslims during the Prophet's time were among the man of integrity in their work-life. The Prophet is the best living example because his *akhlak* is the Quran and being chosen as a messenger, his mission was to refine and perfect the moral character of his *ummah* as narrated in these *ahadith*:

وَعَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ هِشَامٍ قَالَ انْطَلَقْتُ إِلَى عَائِشَةَ فَقُلْتُ يَا أُمَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْبِئِي عَن خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ: أَلَسْتَ تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ؟ قُلْتُ: بَلَى. قَالَتْ: " فَإِنَّ خُلُقَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ الْقُرْآنَ ."

Meaning:

Sa'd b. Hisham said: I went to Aishah and said, Mother of the faithful, tell me about the nature of God's Messenger. She asked, Do you not recite the Quran? On my replying that I certainly did, she said, "The Prophet's nature was the Quran." ((Al-Khatib, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, Book of Prayer, Chapter The Witir, *hadith* no 1257, 1:394. Al-Albani graded this narration as *sahih*)).

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ ."

Meaning:

Narrated Abu Hurairah: The Prophet said: " I was only sent to perfect the noble qualities of character". ((Al-Baihaqi, *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Chapter Elaboration on the Nobility of Moral Character, *hadith* no 20782, 10:23)).

In the present time, Muslims need to follow this living example and strive to embody integrity in their work-life.

Integrity in Prophet Muhammad's Life before His Prophethood

Before his prophethood, Prophet Muhammad was known as Muhammad *Al-Amin*. At a certain point in time, the Quraish reached a consensus on the necessity of rebuilding the Ka'bah. They divided the work among themselves, with each sub-clan gathering stones and constructing a specific part of the structure independently. However, a controversy erupted when they reached the Black Stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*). Each sub-clan fiercely contended for the exclusive honor of placing the black stone in its designated corner. Abu Umayyah, the oldest man in the Quraish, suggested that they agree to the judgment of the first person entering the gate of the Holy Sanctuary and they accepted his proposal (Al-A'zami n.d.).

Remarkably, the first to enter happened to be Muhammad. Upon seeing him, the Quraish exclaimed: "Here comes the *amin*, we are pleased with him [as a judge]. Here comes Muhammad." Informed of the dispute, Muhammad requested a cloak. He placed the Black Stone on the cloak and instructed each sub-clan to hold a side of the garment and lift it together. They complied and once they reached the designated spot, he raised the Black Stone and set it in place with his own hands. With the controversy resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the construction continued without further incident (Al-A'zami n.d.).

Prophet Muhammad showed his integrity in his work. Emulating the Quraishi tradition, the Prophet engaged in commerce from a young age of 12 when he accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a trading expedition to Syam. During this journey, they encountered a knowledgeable priest named Buhaira at a location called Basra. Buhaira was well-versed in the teachings of the Injil and Nasrani. This particular account of the Prophet's encounter with the priest holds significant prominence as it is the only *hadith* which was narrated the most by scholars of *sirah* (Al-Buti 2003).

Prophet Muhammad was known for his honesty and integrity in his dealings as a wage earner. He upheld fair trade practices, ensuring that he fulfilled his obligations and treated others with honesty and transparency. His integrity and success as a merchant attracted the attention of an older and intelligent rich widow, Khadijah, who eventually married him. Khadijah was said to be the wealthiest merchant in Makkah (Ibn Saad 1990).

Integrity is an essential quality for shepherds. Shepherds are entrusted with the care and management of livestock and their actions directly impact the well-being of the animals under their supervision. Shepherding involves adhering to ethical standards, treating animals with respect and compassion and making decisions that prioritize the welfare of the flock. By upholding integrity, shepherds establish trust with owners, colleagues and the community and maintain a reputation for being conscientious and trustworthy in their role. The Prophet worked as a shepherd for Bani Sa'd in Makkah. Abu Hurairah narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا رَعَى الْغَنَمَ. فَقَالَ أَصْحَابُهُ وَأَنْتَ فَقَالَ نَعَمْ كُنْتُ أَرْعَاهَا عَلَى قَرَارِيطٍ لِأَهْلِ مَكَّةَ.

Meaning:

Abu Hurairah narrated: Allah did not send any Prophet but shepherded sheep. His companions asked him, Did you do the same? The Prophet (PBUH) replied, Yes, I used to shepherd the sheep of the people of Makkah for some *Qirats*. ((Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Hiring, Chapter to Shepherd Sheep for *Qirat*, *hadith* no 2262, 3:88)).

Integrity in Prophet Muhammad's Life after His Prophethood

As the messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad carried out his responsibilities with utmost trustworthiness. He conveyed the divine message accurately and faithfully without distorting or manipulating it for personal gain. Prophet Muhammad fulfilled all these main qualities as a messenger of Allah; *al-siddiq* (truthfulness), *al-amanah* (trustworthiness), *al-tabligh* and *al-fatonah* (wisdom). The two main qualities that are very crucial in the topic of integrity are truthfulness and trustworthiness.

The Makkan society at that time acknowledged the Prophet as a truthful individual, as evidenced by this statement: «we have not found you telling anything other than the truth» as reported by Al-Bukhari (2001) on the authority of Ibn Abbas:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ (وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ) صَعِدَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الصَّفَا فَجَعَلَ يَنَادِي " يَا بَنِي فَهْرٍ، يَا بَنِي عَدِيٍّ ". لِبَطُونِ قُرَيْشٍ حَتَّى اجْتَمَعُوا، فَجَعَلَ الرَّجُلُ إِذَا لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولًا لِيَنْظُرَ مَا هُوَ، فَجَاءَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ وَقُرَيْشٌ فَقَالَ " أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ لَوْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلًا بِالْوَادِي تُرِيدُ أَنْ تُغِيرَ عَلَيْكُمْ، أَكُنْتُمْ مُصَدِّقِيَّ ". قَالُوا نَعَمْ، مَا جَرَّبْنَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا صِدْقًا. قَالَ " فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ". فَقَالَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ تَبًّا لَكَ سَائِرَ الْيَوْمِ، أَلْهَذَا جَمَعْنَا فَنَزَلَتْ (تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ * مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ)

Meaning:

Narrated Ibn Abbas: When the Verse: 'And warn your tribe of near-kindred, was revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) ascended the Safa (mountain) and started calling, "O Bani Fihri! O Bani `Adi!" addressing various tribes of Quraish till they were assembled. Those who could not come themselves sent their messengers to see what was there. Abu Lahab and other people from Quraish came and the Prophet (PBUH) then said, "Suppose I told you that there is an (enemy) cavalry in the valley

intending to attack you, would you believe me?" They said, "Yes, for we have not found you telling anything other than the truth." He then said, "I am a warner to you in face of a terrific punishment." Abu Lahab said (to the Prophet) "May your hands perish all this day. Is it for this purpose you have gathered us?" Then it was revealed: "Perish the hands of Abu Lahab (one of the Prophet's uncles) and perish he! His wealth and his children will not profit him...." (111.1-5). ((Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Prophetic Commentary on the Quran, Chapter And warn your tribe (O Muhammad PBUH) of near kindred. And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you." (V.26:214-215) *hadith* no 4770, 6:111)).

His quality of al-amanah can be seen in many circumstances. The Prophet (PBUH) was a person whose honesty was common knowledge to those around him. In fact, his clansmen had officially titled him al-Amin (the Trustworthy) (Ibn Hisham 1955). Even when they persecuted him and rejected his message, they still trusted him with their most precious possessions as portrayed in this narration:

فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفَ حَتَّى يُؤَدِّيَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْوَدَائِعَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ لِلنَّاسِ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَيْسَ بِمَكَّةَ أَحَدٌ عِنْدَهُ شَيْءٌ يَخْشَى عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا وَضَعَهُ عِنْدَهُ لِمَا يَعْلَمُ مِنْ صِدْقِهِ وَأَمَانَتِهِ.

Meaning:

He (PBUH) instructed Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) to remain behind (in Makkah), until he (Ali) to return all the property the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had held in trust for people. There was nobody in Makkah (even his enemies) who had valuables that he feared for except that he kept them with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), due to the honesty and trustworthiness that was known [to all] about him. ((Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Chapter Regarding the Reason for the Migration of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) with His Noble Self, 3: 218-219)).

As a trustworthy and truthful individual, Prophet Muhammad stressed on the importance of truthfulness, fulfilling promises and maintaining trustworthiness, while warning against the traits of hypocrisy.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ "

Meaning:

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest)". ((Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book Good Manners and Form (Al-Adab), Chapter "O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true", *hadith* no 6095, 8:25. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Book of Faith, Chapter The Characteristics of the Hypocrite, *hadith* no 107, 1:78)).

Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of refraining from lying and maintaining integrity even in casual or light-hearted conversations.

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بِبَيْتٍ فِي رَيْضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا وَبَيْتٍ فِي وَسْطِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْكُذْبَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَارِحًا وَبَيْتٍ فِي أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ حَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ "

Meaning:

Narrated Abu Umamah: The Prophet (PBUH) said: I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good. ((Abu Daud, *Sunan Abi Daud*, Book of General Behavior (Kitab Al-Adab), Chapter Regarding Good Character, *hadith* no 4800, 4:253. This hadith is hassan according to Al-Albani.

Al-Azami (n.d.) states that the conversion of Hamza (one of the Prophet's uncles) was noted by Quraish with considerable alarm. Al-Azami (n.d.) quoted the conversation between Utba bin Rabiah and the Prophet (PBUH):

“Utba bin Rabiah, a chieftain, observed the Prophet praying in the Holy Sanctuary alone and informed the Quraishi assembly, "I will go to Muhammad with some proposals which he might accept. We will offer him whatever he seeks, and then he will leave us in peace. So, Utba went to the Prophet and said, "O my nephew, you are one of us, of the noblest of the tribe and of admirable ancestry. You have come to your people with a great matter that has divided their society and mocked their way of life, have insulted their gods and their religion and stated that their forefathers were disbelievers, so pay attention to me and I will make you offers and perhaps you will consent to one of them." The Prophet approved and Utba continued, "O my nephew, if you seek with what you have brought: money, we will gather from our wealth so that you will be the richest among us; if you seek honour, we will make you our leader so that no decision can be made without you; if you wish sovereignty, we will make you king; and if this thing that comes to you is a bad spirit that you can see but cannot get rid of, we will find you a physician and will use our riches in having you cured, for often a spirit possesses a man till he can be cured of it." Having listened patiently, the Prophet then replied, “Now listen to me:

(حم (1) تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (2) كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (3) بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ (4) وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّا نَعْمَلُونَ (5))

Ha, Meem (1). [This is] a revelation from the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful (2). A Book whose verses have been detailed, an Arabic Quran for a people who know (3), As a giver of good tidings and a warner; but most of them turn away, so they do not hear (4). And they say, "Our hearts are within coverings [i.e., screened] from that to which you invite us and in our ears is deafness and between us and you is a partition, so work; indeed, we are working (5). (Surah Fussilat 41: 1-5)”.

Conclusion

Even before becoming a prophet, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified the traits of a person of complete integrity. The two defining characteristics of his character were that he was utterly truthful and entirely trustworthy. To be a truly devoted Muslim and a true believer

(*mu'min*), one must strive to embody the quality of *al-ihsan* - spiritual excellence and perfection in one's faith and deeds. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) served as a living example of integrity, which is crucial for cultivating the culture of the Islamic nation. His exemplary character and strong moral laid the foundation for building a society grounded in honesty, trust and spiritual excellence.

References

- Abu Daud, Sulaiman bin al-Ash'ath. (n.d.). *Sunan Abi Dāud*. Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Asriah.
- Al-A'zami, Muhammad Mustafa. (n.d.). *The History of Quranic Text from Revelation to Compilation*. Leicester: UK Islamic Academy.
- Al-Baihaqi, Ahmad bin Al-Hussin. (2003). *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*. Muhamad Abdul Qadir Ata (ed.). 3rd Ed. Beirut: Dar al- Kutub al-Ilmiah.
- Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Ismail. (2001). *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Muhammad Zuhair Nasir al-Nasir (ed.). Dar Tauq al-Najah.
- Al-Buti, Muhammad Said Ramadan. (2003). *Fiqh al-Sirah al-Nabawiah*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Muasir.
- Al-Khatib, Muhammad bin Abdullah. (1985). *Mishkat al-Masabih*. Muhammad Nasir al-Din Al-Albani (ed.). 3rd Ed. Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami.
- Al-Waqidi, Muhammad. (1989). *Al-Maghazi*. 3rd Ed. Beirut: Dar al-A'lami.
- Badr, Abdul al-Basit. (1993). *Al-Tarikh al-Syamil li al-Madinah al-Munawwarah*. Madinah al-Munawwarah.
- François Valérian. (2023). Available from: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>
- Ibn Hisham. Abdul Malik. (1955). *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah*. Mustafa Al-Saqa (ed.). 2nd Ed. Misr: Sharikah Maktabah wa Matba'ah Mustafa al-Bab al-Halabi wa Auladahu.
- Ibn Kathir. Ismail bin Umar. (1988). *Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*. Ali Shiri (ed.). Dar Ihya' Al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Ibn Saad, Muhammad. (1990). *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*. Ziyad Muhammad Mansur (ed.). 2nd Ed. al-Madinah al-Munawwarah: Maktabah al-Ulum wa al-Hukum.
- Kamus Dewan. (2024). Available from: <https://prpm.dbp.gov.my/Cari1?keyword=integriti>
- Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). (2024). Available from: <https://www.sprm.gov.my/index>
- Muslim bin al-Hajjaj. (n.d.). *Sahih Muslim*. Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi (ed.). Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al- Arabi.
- Oxford Dictionary. (2024). Available from: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/integrity?q=integrity>
- Robert, C. Solomon. (2003). *A Better Way to Think About Business: How Personal Integrity Leads to Corporate Success*. OUP Catalogue.
- The Malaysian Institute of Integrity (Institut Integriti Malaysia IIM). (2004). *National Integrity Plan*. Available from: [https:// www. iim.gov.my/en/penerbitan/](https://www.iim.gov.my/en/penerbitan/)