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# 5 The Legacy of Muhammad

## *The Sunna*

Tariq and Muslimah ‘Ali Najee-ullah are a second-generation Muslim African American couple. Muslimah is a trained anatomist with a PhD from Howard University, and Tariq currently serves as the imam and Muslim chaplain at Johns Hopkins University. In January 2020, they invited their colleagues and family friends to an event celebrating the birth of their fourth child, Zuhayrah Manar, at the Johns Hopkins Interfaith Center in Baltimore. Zuhayrah’s parents and siblings educated the audience on the religious significance and meaning of the occasion, and a local imam offered reflections. In addition, the speakers recited chapters from the Qur’an. The event concluded with food and festivities.

With these birth rituals, parents fulfill one of the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad known as *aqiqa*.<sup>1</sup> *Aqiqa* usually refers to the sacrifice of an animal as a form of gratitude toward God following the birth of a child. The infant’s family cooks and eats the meat of the animal, shares it with family and friends in the form of a banquet, and also distributes some to the needy. The *aqiqa* ritual also involves naming the child, shaving the infant’s head, and giving the weight of its hair in silver or gold to the poor.<sup>2</sup> The Qur’an does not mention *aqiqa*, but the Prophet Muhammad strongly recommended it. Therefore, Muslims around the world as well as in the United States often have an *aqiqa* for their newborns as part of the Prophet Muhammad’s legacy, which is referred to as Sunna. In this chapter, we examine the role of Muhammad’s Sunna, or his example in the lives of Muslims.

The death of the Prophet Muhammad is, for Muslims, one of the saddest events in the history of Islam. He was the transmitter of divine words, and early Muslims had direct access to new revelations through him. His death marked the end of this unique revelatory period. The story of Umm Ayman, a woman the Prophet referred to as “my mother after the death of my mother,” reflects this loss. Umm Ayman took

1. Imam Tariq Najee-Ullah, telephone interview with the author, January 31, 2020.

2. Matthew B. Ingalls, “Aqiqah,” Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t349/e0002#>.

care of Muhammad during his childhood and numbered among his first followers. The Prophet had profound respect for Umm Ayman and visited her often up until his death. After the passing of the Prophet, his companions spent time with Umm Ayman out of respect for Muhammad's special relationship with her. One day, as they arrived for a visit, the Prophet's companions found Umm Ayman distressed and crying about his death. The companions tried to console her, saying, "Don't you know that being with God is better for the Prophet?" Umm Ayman affirmed she did not have any doubt that the Prophet was in a better place, yet she said, "I am sad that with the Prophet's death we are disconnected from divine revelation."<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet's death meant the end of the revelation and also created challenges for understanding the Qur'an, which contains ambiguous verses. During the Prophet's lifetime, people turned to him directly when questions arose. But now that Muhammad was gone, they wondered how they could understand the Qur'an, practice their religion, and conduct their lives in a way that was pleasing to God. They turned to the way or example of the Prophet, which is known as the Sunna (literally, "path" or "custom"). *Sunna* usually refers to what Muhammad said, what he did, and what he approved of.<sup>4</sup>

Many Muslim scholars regard the Sunna of Muhammad as the most valuable resource for understanding the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself repeatedly instructs Muslim believers to follow and obey the Prophet. In one case, the scripture says that if one loves God, then they should follow the Prophet.<sup>5</sup> The Qur'an implies that the love of God requires following the Sunna. It also characterizes the Prophet as the best model for believers.<sup>6</sup> Based on interpretations of these Qur'anic references, Muslim scholars consider the Prophet's words and actions as "the archetype of a life lived in full submission to God."<sup>7</sup> Many Muslims regard living in accordance with the prophetic example, both in conducting one's life and in practicing the rituals, as a way of remembering and loving God.<sup>8</sup> As a result, Muslims take every aspect of the Prophet's life seriously. After the Qur'an itself, the Sunna has served as the

3. Muhammad bin Yazid Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Sunnah.com, accessed February 2021, <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah>, book 6, hadith 1704.

4. Hamza Yusuf Hanson, "The Sunna: The Way of the Prophet Muhammad," in *Voices of Islam*, vol. 1, ed. Vincent J. Cornell (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 129.

5. Qur'an 3:31.

6. Qur'an 33:21.

7. Joseph E.B. Lumbard, *Commentary on Surat al-Ahzab*, in Nasr et al., *Study Qur'an*, 1025.

8. Qur'an 3:31.

most important source for Islamic spirituality and moral conduct. The Prophet himself emphasized the Sunna. One of the hadiths reports that he admonished the community: “I have left two things by which, as long as you hold to them, you will not go the wrong way: the Book of God and my Sunna.”<sup>9</sup>

## The Sunna as Guidance for Manners and Moral Conduct

The Sunna also serves as a guide for moral conduct in the Islamic tradition. As mentioned before, Muslims regard the Prophet Muhammad as the embodiment of the Qur’an and as the pinnacle of moral character. Even his opponents called him “the Trustworthy” (al-Amin). The Qur’an establishes the moral excellence of the Prophet and the authority of the Sunna. Muslim scholars agree that the verse “Truly you have an exalted character” refers to the beautiful and noble conduct of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>10</sup> When one of the companions asked Muhammad’s wife Aisha about his personality, she answered that the Prophet’s character was the Qur’an (*khuluquhu al-Qur’an*).<sup>11</sup>

One of many proofs that the Prophet was indeed the Qur’anic embodiment of perfect morality and reflected the highest ideal of ethical behavior was his radical transformation of a society that was, morally speaking, deficient. If he had not embodied strong moral qualities himself, he would have failed to bring about such a large-scale social revolution as the religion of Islam. Muhammad’s transformation of pre-Islamic tribal society was a permanent one because he conquered the hearts of people before they turned to Islam.<sup>12</sup>

By following the Sunna, every habit and human act becomes a prayer, sacred and meaningful for a Muslim believer. Following the Sunna is not just a matter of simple imitation; every detail of the Sunna contains wisdom, light, and a moral lesson.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the Sunna defies the dichotomy between sacred and profane by demonstrating that all human acts—even smiling, dressing, or studying, for example—can be acts of

9. Malik bin Anas, *Muwatta*, Sunnah.com, accessed April 28, 2021, <https://sunnah.com/malik>, book 46, hadith 1623.

10. Qur’an 68:4.

11. Abu Dawud al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Sunnah.com, accessed February 8, 2021, <https://sunnah.com/abudawud>, book 5, hadith 93.

12. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *İşaratül İ‘caz* (Istanbul: Söz Basım, 2009), 227–28.

13. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes* (Istanbul: Sözciler, 2004), 85.

worship. Therefore, life in all its aspects becomes full of worship and meaning. God values all human deeds, and by following the Sunna, humans add sanctity and meaning to their lives. Emulating the Prophet leads to the remembrance of God, who is the most compassionate and sovereign of the world. He is the one who sends messengers as moral ideals and human models to be followed. Practicing a simple Sunna, like entering a house with the right foot, connects the observant believer to the heavenly realm. One then lives in a state of constant awareness of God and is conscious that God is at the center of human life. Knowing that God concerns himself with his creation in every act creates a deep sense of connection to the divine. One then feels valued and honored, and a sense of meaning and sacredness infuses human life.

## The Sunna as Guidance for Islamic Ritual Practices

The Sunna is not only a source of instruction on manners and moral conduct; it also guides Islamic ritual practices. The Qur'an does not provide the details about how to conduct a specific ritual and points to the Prophet as the one who can clarify and explain its meanings.<sup>14</sup> The Qur'an contains references to ablution (*wudu*), the five daily prayers, and fasting. However, it is the Sunna that details how Muslims are to perform these rituals.<sup>15</sup>

From the beginning, therefore, Muslims followed the prophetic example for conducting Islamic practices. For example, the Qur'an calls on believers to pray five times daily but provides no details about how they should do so.<sup>16</sup> Thus following the Sunna becomes essential to performing Muslim rituals. Prominent jurist Imam al-Shafi'i (d. 820) explained,

The Prophet specified that daily prayers shall number five, that the number of cycles in the noon, afternoon, and evening prayers shall number four, repeated twice in the towns, and that the cycles for the sunset prayer are three and for the dawn prayer two. He decreed that in all the prayers there should be recitation from the Qur'an, audible in the sunset, evening, and

14. Qur'an 16:44.

15. Hanson, "Sunna," 127.

16. Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 211.

dawn prayers, and silent in the noon and afternoon prayers. He specified that at the beginning of each prayer, the *takbir* should be said and at the end, the *taslim*, and that each prayer consists of *takbir*, recitation, bowing and two prostrations after each inclination but beyond that, nothing is obligatory [only recommended]. He decreed that the prayer made on a journey can be shorter, if the traveler so desires, in the three prayers that have four cycles, but he made no change in the sunset and dawn prayers.<sup>17</sup>

Al-Shafi'i demonstrates the Prophet's crucial role in modeling how to conduct the rituals laid out in the Qur'an. Following the example of the Prophet in rituals is the cornerstone of Islamic spirituality.

## Hadith in Relation to the Sunna

Hadith is regarded as the most important source of the Sunna after the Qur'an. While the term *hadith* is often used synonymously with the Sunna, it more properly refers to reports concerning the Prophet's sayings and actions rather than the sayings and actions themselves. In order to reveal and preserve the example of Muhammad, Muslim scholars tried to record almost every detail about the Prophet. Those details later found their way into the hadith collections. Muslim scholars distinguish three stages of development of hadiths. One is the prophetic stage, which refers to the time when companions in the Prophet's circle learned from him and absorbed his teachings. After this period came the compilation stage, during which many hadiths were collected after Muhammad's death. Last is the codification stage, when scholars approached hadith literature critically and classified the reports.<sup>18</sup> Muslim scholars regard this stage as the golden age of hadith scholarship.

Following the first civil war after the death of Muhammad, many hadiths were forged in order to justify political beliefs. Within this context, Muslim scholars developed the field of hadith scholarship in order to assess the authenticity of the reports concerning the Prophet's sayings and actions. According to this science,

17. Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafi'i, *Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala*, trans. Majid Khadduri (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 158–60, cited in Mattson, *Story of the Qur'an*, 211.

18. Muslim jurist Ahmad Zarruq's (d. 1493) made this classification. See Hanson, "Sunna," 131.

one of the most important principles for determining authenticity was whether the chain of transmission (*sanad* or *isnad*) was reliable.<sup>19</sup> Scholars sorted hadith narratives into three broad groups: sound (*sahih*), good (*hasan*), and weak (*da'if*). They then grouped the sound hadiths into subcategories: (1) *mutawatir*, a hadith many narrators reported throughout the first three generations of Muslims and considered to be authentic; (2) *mashur*, a tradition narrated by multiple chains of transmission at most stages; and (3) *ahad*, a hadith that only a few narrators reported.<sup>20</sup> Around five hundred *mutawatir* hadiths exist.

Scholars also evaluated hadiths based on their type (*qudsi* and *nabawi*), their number of narrators, their soundness, and the existence of possible disconnections in their chain of transmission (*sanad*). In addition, hadith scholars evaluated the character of the narrators based on their state of memory, moral conduct, and piety.

In the Sunni tradition, six hadith collections became prominent. First is *Sahih al-Bukhari*, which Imam al-Bukhari (d. 870) compiled. For his work, he traveled to major Islamic areas—including Syria, Egypt, Basra, Balkh, Kufa, and the Hejaz—in order to both study with well-known scholars and gather hadith narratives.<sup>21</sup> His anthology includes around seven thousand hadiths. Scholars believe he studied around six hundred thousand hadith narratives to select the most reliable ones. *Sahih al-Bukhari* consists of ninety-seven chapters on such broad topics as revelation, belief, knowledge, peacemaking, marriage, fasting, jihad, prayers, pilgrimage, medicine, and food. The second collection is the *Sahih Muslim*, which Imam Muslim (d. 875) compiled and includes over seven thousand hadiths. Scholars report that he studied more than three hundred thousand hadiths during the process of compilation.<sup>22</sup> The other four books are *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* of Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 883), *Sunan* of Muhammad bin Yazid b. Majah (d. 886), *Sunan* of Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (d. 888), and *Sahih al-Nasai* of Ahmad bin Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i (d. 915). The collections of al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim are considered more authentic compared to other hadith works.

Hadith collections are also important in the Shiite tradition, which also holds that following the Prophet's example is essential to Muslim life. Shiites, however, attribute unique authority to Muhammad's descendants through his daughter Fatima

19. Hanson, 132.

20. Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, 110.

21. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, *Hadislerle İslam* (Istanbul: Diyanet Yayınları, 2011), 1:74.

22. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1:75.

and his cousin and son-in-law, Ali bin Abi Talib. Shiites usually refer to hadiths as *akhbar*, meaning “news” or “reports.” While in the Shiite tradition, hadith collections remain a key source of jurisprudence after the Qur’an, Shiites reject some of the narratives that the Prophet’s prominent companions relayed. From a Shiite perspective, the political position of these companions regarding Ali’s leadership after the Prophet’s death is problematic. Also, unlike Sunnis, Shiites believe the twelve imams played a key role in transmitting the hadiths. Nevertheless, many of the traditions that made their way into the Shiite collections are similar to those that are part of the Sunni sources.<sup>23</sup>

Women played a key role in the transmission of hadiths. Just four of Muhammad’s companions related more than two thousand hadiths. One was the Prophet’s wife Aisha. Those who study hadiths will recognize the names Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Umm Salama, and Maymuna, all of whom reported hadiths directly from the Prophet. Women even played key roles in the field of hadith in later centuries. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 1449), a major hadith expert, lists over 170 women scholars in his biographical work. Umm Hani Maryam of Cairo (d. 1466), for example, was known for her knowledge of Islamic sciences and traveled widely in the Muslim world to study hadith. Umm Hani was also a prominent lecturer in Cairo schools. According to her biographer,

She taught hadith for a long time, and many eminent scholars heard them from her; everything I have learned from her teachers, I learned through her. However, I believe that she knew much more than I was able to learn. Her grandfather presumably taught her the rest of the Six Books and taught her Nashawiri’s (d. 1388) version of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. She was a good woman who used to weep profusely when the names of God and the Prophet were mentioned; she was consistent in her fasting and night prayers and firm in her religion. . . . She performed the pilgrimage thirteen times, often staying for months to study and teach in Mecca and Medina.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike their male counterparts, one could barely find any woman hadith scholar who forged reports about the Prophet.

23. Hanson, “Sunna,” 137–38.

24. Hanson, 139.

Hadith collections contain descriptions of every aspect of the Prophet's life, including his spirituality, outward appearance, manners, morals, social relations, and family life. Significant portions of the hadiths are concerned with what the Prophet said about certain rituals and how he performed them. For example, see the following excerpts:

On the implications of being part of good Islam: A man asked the Prophet (pbuh),<sup>25</sup> "What sort of deeds or (what qualities of) Islam are good?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied, "To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know."<sup>26</sup>

None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself.<sup>27</sup>

If a man spends on his family (with the intention of having a reward from God) sincerely for God's sake then it is a (kind of) charity in reward for him.<sup>28</sup>

You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for God's sake even if it were a morsel which you put in your wife's mouth.<sup>29</sup>

Gabriel kept recommending treating neighbors with kindness until I thought he would assign a share of inheritance to one's neighbor.<sup>30</sup>

A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) asking his permission to take part in jihad. The Prophet (pbuh) asked him, "Are your parents alive?" He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet (pbuh) then said to him, "Then exert yourself in their service."<sup>31</sup>

25. Whenever Muslims mention the Prophet Muhammad's name, they say, "Peace be upon him," often abbreviated as "pbuh." They use the same phrase for other prophets too.

26. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 2, hadith 5.

27. Al-Bukhari, book 2, hadith 6.

28. Al-Bukhari, book 2, hadith 48.

29. Al-Bukhari, book 2, hadith 49.

30. See a translation at Imam al-Nawawi, "Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi," Sunnah.com, accessed February 8, 2021. <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40>.

31. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 56, hadith 213.

These examples show that the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad address many aspects of Muslim life, guiding followers to conduct themselves in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet.

## Criticism of Hadith Literature

With the rise of modernity, both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars posed challenges to traditional hadith scholarship. Hungarian scholar Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921), for example, specialized in Jewish law and used the historical-critical method in his study of both the Jewish legal tradition and hadiths. Given that hadiths were mainly transmitted orally, Goldziher believed they are subject to fabrication and manipulation and thus cannot be relied on as historical truth.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the later hadith collections have disproportionately larger numbers of reports than earlier compilations, and many of them contradict each other. Goldziher argued that scholars should approach later hadith additions with skeptical caution. Those who forged hadiths had political, sectarian, and legal motivations.<sup>33</sup> Joseph Schacht (d. 1969) echoed Goldziher's arguments, claiming that legal hadiths emerged during the Umayyad dynasty (661–750) in order to justify state policies.<sup>34</sup> He argued that the early followers of Muhammad did not consider him to be a law maker and pointed out that early scholarly writings do not use arguments from hadiths.<sup>35</sup>

Several Muslim hadith scholars have refuted the claims of Goldziher and Schacht in their works. Muhammad Azami (d. 2017) pointed out that both Goldziher and Schacht drew major conclusions concerning hadith literature without providing substantial evidence. Schacht not only relied on a few sources in his broad generalizations but also misunderstood the nature of early Islamic legal studies.<sup>36</sup> Yasin Dutton, a scholar specializing in early Islamic law, also challenged the views of Goldziher and Schacht. He contended that Imam Malik's (d. 795) *Muwatta* disproves their approach to hadith scholarship because *Muwatta* included hadiths based on the teachings and practices (*amal*) of Muslim scholars in Medina. In this regard,

32. Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (London: Oneworld, 2009), 205.

33. Brown, 206.

34. Hanson, "Sunna," 141.

35. Brown, *Hadith*, 211.

36. Brown, 219–20.

the hadith accounts were not only transmitted in oral and written forms but also based on the actions of Muslims in Medina. Goldziher and Schacht have dismissed this aspect of the hadiths.<sup>37</sup>

Muslim scholars have also critiqued hadith scholarship. Rashad Khalifah rejected hadiths and proposed that Muslims should rely only on the Qur'an for guidance. Similarly, Muhammad Shahrur noted that there was no need to rely on the example of Muhammad, as his Sunna served only in his time and environment for understanding the Qur'an. He argued that Muslims should not interpret the Sunna too literally and should instead apply the Prophet's guidance within the specifics of their own time and context.<sup>38</sup>

US Muslim scholars like Fazlur Rahman and Amina Wadud have questioned the reliability of hadiths and emphasized the overall principles of the Qur'an as sufficient guidance for Muslims. Rahman, like some Western historians, believed that many hadiths were fabricated and unreliable. He argued that the Sunna should not be understood as a set of fixed rules; the teachings should evolve according to the conditions of human life and society.<sup>39</sup> Wadud has stated that many hadiths are not only misogynistic but also interpreted by male scholars who do not provide gender-inclusive readings.<sup>40</sup>

## The Legacy of Muhammad in the United States

In his 1978 book *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Michael H. Hart ranks Muhammad as number one. Hart explains, “[Muhammad] was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.”<sup>41</sup> He concludes, “It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.”<sup>42</sup>

37. For more details, see Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law: The Qur'an, the Muwatta' and Madinan 'Amal* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

38. Hanson, “Sunna,” 141.

39. Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy* (London: Oneworld, 2014), 202.

40. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad* (London: Oneworld, 2007), 7.

41. Michael H. Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* (New York: Citadel, 1978), 2.

42. Hart, 6.

Muhammad's legacy and his Sunna continue to be major sources of inspiration for Muslims in the United States. In matters concerning charity, good citizenship, love, or coexistence, Muslims often refer to the hadiths of the Prophet alongside qur'anic verses. Today, many of the rituals in which US Muslims engage—for example, at weddings, births, and funerals—are still based on the Sunna.

Major American figures like Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, and Elijah Muhammad either renamed themselves after the Prophet or were inspired by his legacy. Muslim leaders addressing questions of race have often turned to Muhammad's teachings on equality, as exemplified by his relationship with Bilal bin Rabah. A native of what is today Ethiopia, a young Bilal was abducted by a tribal leader of Mecca and enslaved. With the coming of Islam, he was drawn to the Prophet's message of the equality of all people in the eyes of God, and he became Muslim. His conversion led his master to persecute him. Abu Bakr, another companion of the Prophet, eventually purchased Bilal's freedom. Bilal then became not only a major companion of the Prophet but also the one who offered the call to prayer (*muezzin*) for the Prophet's community in Medina. On one occasion, a companion of the Prophet referred to Bilal as the "son of a black woman." Perturbed, the Prophet retorted, "You are the man who still has the traits of *jahiliyya* or ignorance in him."<sup>43</sup>

During the Prophet's farewell speech, he stressed the importance of dismantling injustices of the *jahiliyya* in Arabia, including racism: "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action."<sup>44</sup> Islamic practices rely significantly on the Sunna of the Prophet. In prayer, for example, believers should stand shoulder to shoulder during worship regardless of their color, rank, or ethnicity.

Muhammad's legacy in the realm of law is so vast that the US Supreme Court building contains a marble frieze of the Prophet. When the building was completed in 1935, the architect hired a sculptor to create friezes of the "great lawgivers of history" that would adorn the courtroom. The sculpture depicts eighteen figures,

43. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 2, hadith 23. It is important to note that this hadith does not mention Bilal's name. However, hadith commentaries widely point out that the discriminated person mentioned here is Bilal bin Rabah.

44. Bünyamin Erul, "Veda Hutbesi," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV, 2012), 42:592.

including Hammurabi, Moses, Solomon, and Confucius. According to the Office of the Curator of the Supreme Court, the Prophet of Islam “is depicted holding the Qur’an. The Qur’an provides the primary source of Islamic Law. Prophet Muhammad’s teachings explain and implement Qur’anic principles. The figure above is a well-intentioned attempt by the sculptor, Adolph Weinman, to honor Muhammad and it bears no resemblance to Muhammad. Muslims generally have a strong aversion to sculptured or pictured representations of their Prophet.”<sup>45</sup>

In relation to their US neighbors, Muslims often remember this hadith of the Prophet: “He is not a true believer whose neighbor is not safe from his annoyance. Give to the one whose door is nearer to you. He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbor to his side goes hungry.”<sup>46</sup> In conducting their lives according to God’s will, Muslims turn to Muhammad’s Sunna. Following the prophetic example shows one’s love for God and his messenger in Islam. In times of spiritual and moral turmoil, the Sunna serves as a compass for Muslims and provides a meaningful perspective for the followers of Islam everywhere, including in the United States. In many ways, from birth to death, the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad shapes Muslims’ lives. And yet, throughout the centuries, Muslims have faced many issues that neither the Qur’an nor the Sunna explicitly addresses. In those cases, they have turned to sharia, the subject of the next chapter.

45. “Courtroom Friezes: South and North Walls,” information sheet, US Supreme Court, accessed April 18, 2020, <https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/northandsouthwalls.pdf>.

46. For the Prophet Muhammad’s hadiths on the rights of the neighbor, see Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, *Hadislerle İslam* (Istanbul: Diyanet Yayınları, 2014), 4:335–43.